

Visit(s) to the Birmingham College of Food, 8th & 14th January
Organised by Brian Mallett, Report by Mike Terry

Our annual visit to the Birmingham College of Food took a slightly different turn this year since—due to its popularity and the college's new policy of having smaller groups for lunch—we visited their restaurant twice, on two consecutive weeks.

Having been fortunate enough to get places on both days, I must say it worked very well, a most relaxing affair on both occasions. Some forty member came on the 8th and nearly the same number for 14th, showing that this is still a very popular social event with which to start the season, even though some of us were slipping and sliding on the pavements due to the first snowfall of the new year.

The stage was set for plenty of chit-chat to catch up after the Christmas and New Year festivities, the three-course menu was again what we have come to expect, with plenty of choice. The young chefs prepared our food to a high standard, and it was served by some very accomplished young waiters and waitresses, marshalled by their ever-vigilant tutors.

This was not only the first time our club had two sittings at the venue, but a first for President John who twice thanked and congratulated the students and their lecturers, with special thanks to Brian Mallett, also twice, who again organised the event with his usual expertise. After our second enjoyable occasion at the college we all departed for home, but not before some members visited the excellent in-house shop to stock up with some of their superb bread and cakes.

- Mike Terry



It's been a frustrating couple of months....

...since I last showed my face at a social occasion, and with one trouble and another I've managed to miss all the fun. While you were at Moor Hall I was at Good Hope having blood tests, and instead of going to the College of Food we were back at the hospital for chemotherapy. I did think of asking Brian if he could fit us in for the second visit, but that was before I experienced a peculiar side-effect of the treatment.

I was warned that it makes you abnormally sensitive to cold, and I realised what they meant as we walked back to the car; my eyes turned to blocks of ice and my fingertips went absolutely numb and tingling, so bad that I couldn't hold a key or even use my telephone. As a result I didn't dare go out of the house for over a week, and while it's fading now there are more sessions due so I'm probably going to miss everything else on Harry's busy list.

The good news is that our house-move is finally starting to happen, with a big skip outside the house and innumerable trips to the charity shops. We have to be out by the 31st, though we can't get possession until 20 February, so we shall be gypsies for three weeks, camping out between Moor Hall, daughters', and maybe our Bournemouth flat if I can manage the journey. We may need to invoke Tony's assistance with the February Newsletter since my equipment will all be in storage. It will be an interesting time!

- peter weston



MAKING YOUR APOLOGIES: If you are can't attend a General Meeting advise **Mike Terry**, If you can't do the Kitchen Rota, advise **Graham Jones**; can't provide Newsletter Report or Vote of Thanks contact me, **Peter Weston**, before the meeting concerned (pr.weston@btinternet.com).



Sutton Park Probus Club

(Founded 1998)

President: John Fellows

Newsletter

No. 193

January 2015

November Speaker:
'A Scientist turns to Crime'
by Rodger Ide
Report by John Carrington



Well, who would have thought it, Archimedes was the world's first Forensic Scientist Or so said Roger Ide in his November talk. Eureka! I hear you all shout.

As a former Police Officer I have utmost respect for the Forensic Science Service and found Rodger's presentation interesting with the appropriate amount of humour. His comment that 'we only catch the criminals who are a bit thick' is perhaps debatable, but overall his insight into his profession was stimulating and informative.

Too often television dramas portray the scientist as an omni-competent investigator who has expertise and authority to deal with everything from scenes of crime, criminal investigation, suspect interview, pathology and forensics. As with many dramas, 'exaggeration rules OK' and our speaker managed to paint a realistic picture as to where all the professions fit into the jigsaw of Investigation.

Rodger Ide worked for the Home Office Forensic Science Service for over 26 years, mostly at their superb Birmingham offices, specialising in fire investigation and other areas, including the analysis of glass, and I was particularly struck by his explanation of the various historical methods of manufacturing glass which enables tiny fragments to be traced.

David Roy gave a vote of thanks and highlighted other points from this and stimulating talk, which is a view I am sure was shared by the rest of the members

But I am still trying to work out how Rodger's little parlour-trick with a series of numbers always ends up with the word 'orange'!

- John Carrington

CHRISTMAS LUNCH AT MOOR HALL, Friday 5th December
Photographs by Tony Ferneyhough



"It was quite a bitter morning," writes **Tony**, "but once safely inside we were greeted by President John and Vice-President Fred with their good ladies and after a glass of wine the usual pre-lunch chat was well underway. That is, until we were summoned by a loud crashing and banging, as a member of staff with a large mallet hammered on the door frame to attract our attention and call us in for lunch. He did a pretty good job of trying to demolish the architrave which looked a bit battered afterwards!"



Paul Beaumont continues, "After that we were ushered into the magnificent Charter Suite dining room, where Harry started things moving and we were served with a good four-course meal after which came the merry sound of crackers being pulled."

"Then came speeches from John and Fred, followed by the draw for the raffle, which had magnificent prizes of wine specially sourced by Harry for 'Chateau Probus S.P.'. As one of the lucky winners I look forward to sampling my prize in the not-too distant future."



Above; Charles has pulled a cracker!

Right; First Probus Christmas lunch for Allan & Jackie, sharing stories with Sylvia & Jim

Pub Amble around Cannock Chase, Thursday 20th. November
Led by John Fellows, Report by Fred Nightingale



'Looks a nice pub—another one I've missed this year.' -pw]

On a bright and dry autumn morning, twenty-two amblers including ladies and a dog set out from the Park Gate Inn, Cannock Wood entering the Chase at Castle Ring. We immediately encountered a very steep path of some twenty wooden-supported steps. From then on the walk took us through mainly undulating forested areas which became increasingly muddier and slippery and required full concentration, which proved rather difficult when immersed in conversations! *[as Dale would say, you 'plodged' - pw]*

Although we were on the lookout for wildlife all we could see were trees, trees, and more trees. The conditions underfoot worsened so much that our intrepid leaders, President John and Geoff, after studying a map, decided to curtail the planned route and head back through the village. Or was this because we were lost? We arrived back at the Park Inn to join non-walkers and enjoy an appetising and well-earned meal. Thanks go to our President and Geoff Silvester for organising the walk and meal, and my personal thanks to Geoff for not dislodging my ear on this occasion!!
 - Fred Nightingale

Here's the latest report from our crazy mad Marathon man, Dale Lyons, who refuses to be beaten by minor matters like the total collapse of his legs and ankles but soldiers on anyway.... [pw]

Dale's 'Wheelie' in the London Marathon

The good news is that I've been allocated a place in the Standard Wheelchair category for the 2015 London Marathon on 26th April – my 35th. But why in a wheelchair? Well, last year's 26.2 miles on crutches severely strained the new ankle so I'm not risking further problems until it's fully recovered. So far my training has been good enough to indicate a 4 to 4.5 hour marathon time - about 3 hours faster than last year!

I've been generously donated the wheelchair by Bromakin Wheelchairs of Loughborough because I'm raising funds for AgeUK. Last year they sponsored the Ever-Presents (those who have run every London) with commemorative 'T' shirts and provided post-Marathon R and R. Another reason for sponsoring AgeUK is that I may need their services before too long! - Dale Lyons



Left; at the Robin Hood half-marathon.

‘A BLAST ON THE BEACON’

Long Walk, Thursday 15 January

Led by John Vickers,

Report by Dale Lyons, Photographs by Rita Rooke

Dire predictions of gale-force winds and torrential rain had the effect of reducing the stalwart Probusions from 25 to 15. In the event, like many forecasts the reality from Barr Beacon was a start in sunshine, balmy winds and even a rainbow to get us started. The inevitable downpour of 30 minutes fortunately didn't last and the sun came out, winds vanished and sou-westers were stored.



Above: We're having a whip-around to get Graham some new glasses!

Right; Janet looks cold and John just a little bit care-worn!



L. & R. Janet & Dale, Linda & Bob, all having a great time in a nice, warm pub!



Our merry band plodged* though the mud, slip-sliding away the eight-odd miles on this enjoyable and varied walk in woods, through fields and then along the Rushhall canal where we had a well-deserved coffee break at the four-mile mark.

The largely level walk was expertly organised and supervised throughout by John Vickers, ably supported by Margaret (who only fell over twice!).

Prospective members Martyn from Sutton Coldfield and David Tippins (with wife Anita) hugely enjoyed the walk and fellowship – the club's *liefmotive* and *raison d'être*. **

In thanking John over a satisfying lunch at Farmer John's hostelry (a 2-4-1 bargain), Rod bemoaned the improved weather which thwarted his hope of relinquishing the 'worst weather walk' title to John. As photo opportunities were limited on the walk Rita kindly took some candid shots at the hostelry for the newsletter. - Dale Lyons

* Technical term used by Marathon-runners when boot mud-thickness exceeds 2-inches.

** More technical terms meaning 'having a good time, usually in Germany or France'. [ed]



Above; Gwen on starting blocks!

Right; As IPP Rod doesn't have to worry any more!

Below; Big smiles from Bryan & Kath.



Then came the entertainment. "Chris King has been with us before," Tony recalls. "His superb voice and anecdotal humour put us all in good mood. He even managed to get us up and dancing in the aisles! And at the end he persuaded us - in the name of his children - to give him a standing ovation. A first class performer, all the way from sunny Wednesbury!"

Paul concludes, "It was a superb event, eloquently hosted by Harry, and thanks must go to David Rooke for staging it. Everyone was happy and enjoyed themselves, how could they not?"

But there is a postscript, as David explains, "On the Saturday before Christmas I went to pay the hotel bill only to be told that our account was clear and no payment was required. Then a farcical fifteen minutes ensued as I stated no payment had been paid and they said they could not accept payment for a debt that was not owed. We agreed to leave it to their accounts department.

"Meanwhile a hotel guest had patiently waited to check out. The receptionist finally turned to him, apologised for keeping him waiting and asked 'can I help?'. Then in a Meg Ryan cameo he said 'I would like my bill to be handled by the same accounts clerk as his'!"



Diary of events and activities to June 2015

Thursday 5th February
Long Walk led by Bob Badham

Thursday 19th February
'Bucks Fizz' walk
Hosted by Allan & Jackie Powers

Thursday 26th February
Club Meeting

'An Inspector Calls'
Speaker: Mr David Howe
Newsletter Report: Terry Booth
Vote of Thanks: Roger Phillips
Kitchen Rota: Brian Senior,
Brian Harbourne, Brian Spencer
Fred Nightingale, John Buckland

Friday 27th February
Skittles Evening at
Lea Marston Leisure Centre
Organised by Jim Bailey & Mike Gospel

Thursday 5th March
Long Walk led by Mike Haynes

Thursday 12th March
Visit to B'ham Assay Office
Organised by Bob Badham

Saturday 7th March
Spring Dining Event
at Walmley Golf Club
Organised by Harry Medcalf

Thursday 19th March
Pub Amble led by Brian Spencer

Saturday 21st March
'Voices and Brass' concert,
Sutton Coldfield Town Hall
Organised by John Cheale

Members are reminded that if you want to join the Amblers for a pub lunch you cannot just 'turn up' on the day but must book in advance.

Thursday 26th March
Club Meeting

'The Role of the Lord Lieutenant'
Speaker: Paul Sabapathy,
Lord Lieutenant of the West Midlands
Newsletter Report: Rod Crowley
Vote of Thanks: Barry Parsonage

Kitchen Rota:
Selby Betts; Neil Crabb; Bob Badham;
Mike Haynes; Keith Keeley

Friday 10-Saturday 11th April
Spring Weekend Break
at the Royal Boar, Sudbury
Organised by John Cheale

Monday 13th April
Long Walk led by John Carrington

Thursday 16th April
Pub Amble led by Rod Crowley

Thursday 23rd April
Club A.G.M
Newsletter Report: Peter Weston
Kitchen Rota: David Rooke,
Roy Willson, Philip Troman,
Terry Booth, Peter Terleski

Thursday 7th May
Long Walk led by Mike Lock

Thursday 14th May
Pub Amble to be advised

Thursday 28th May
Club Meeting
The Staffordshire Regiment;
The Battle of the Somme, 1916
Speaker: Mr David Shergold
Newsletter Report: Allan Powers
Vote of Thanks: Peter Terleski
Kitchen Rota: John Cheal,
Mike Lock, Alf Wallwork,
Ian Scholes, Roy Galloway

Thursday 5th February, Long Walk—Leamington Spa

Subject to the weather, this is a 7-mile circular walk from Cubbington via Offchurch. It will be over open fields (may be muddy), part of the Comyn Golf Course, and follows a section of the Millennium Way. Eight stiles (1 dog-unfriendly) and the walk will take approx 3½ hours.

Start from outside the Kings Head Pub, Church Hill, Cubbington (CV32 7JY), travel-time approx. one hour. There is no car park so parking is opposite the church in Church Hill. Meet at 9.45am., start 10.00am. Refreshments will be taken at the pub hopefully, I have yet to speak to them. The pub does not open until 12 noon so no toilet facilities will be available. Failing availability of this pub then my second choice is the Stag in Offchurch; if so then the walk will commence and terminate at the Stag. I will confirm to walkers in due course. - Bob Badham

Thursday 19th February— 'Bucks Fizz' Walk

Meet at the home of Jackie & Allan Powers, 33 Goldieslie Road, B73 5PE at 10.00am. for happy chatter and our 17th 'Bucks Fizz' walk in Sutton Park. We will then drive to the Wyndley Lane entrance and leave cars there, starting 11.00am.

The walk to The Parson and Clerk (Toby) Inn at Streetly, is about 2½ miles on roads and a wide footpath. There are no stiles, but being February it is likely to be wet underfoot, so please have proper footwear. You will need to make provision for collecting your car after lunch, so best to double up, and leave one car at the Carvery with the other at Wyndley. There will be a £1 per person charge for the Bucks Fizz which I will collect on the day. Chose meals in advance (board out at January meeting) so that we can give the lunch venue adequate time to be prepared for when we arrive. Cost approx. £7.00. - Brian Spencer

Friday 27th February, Skittles Evening at Lea Marston Leisure Centre

Booking should have been made by now, but talk to me if necessary at the January meeting. Starting time is 6.00pm., prompt, in view of the number of players. - Jim Bailey

Saturday 7th March, Spring Dining Event at Walmley Golf Club

Note date change from previous notice (14th March)

Saturday 21st March, 'Voices and Brass' concert, at Sutton Coldfield Town Hall

A charity concert featuring the Birmingham Schools Brass Band along with something mysteriously called 'the Grand Central Chorus'. Tickets £10, board will be out at the next meeting, programme starts at 7.30pm. - John Cheale

Friday 10-11th April Spring Weekend Break at the Royal Boar, Sudbury

Members have already been advised of this short overnight break, and I am considering various ideas for Saturday activities, possibly including a walk in Dovedale. Cost is £195.00 per couple, to include bed, breakfast and evening meal. While the hotel has now been advised of our numbers, places may still be available. - John Cheale

Thursday 4th June, Visit to see 'Buddy' at the Garrick Theatre

Put this date in your diaries if you want to see this superb musical on the life of the great Buddy Holly. Details and tickets will be available at a later date. - Brian Mallett

FEBRUARY MEETING—'An Inspector Calls' with Mr David Howe

Taking a cue from the musical of the same name, David Howe promises to take us on a journey through his experiences in education at junior, secondary and University levels. He joined the inspectorate 1979 and retired as chief inspector in 1992, only to become almost immediately involved in other capacities. David promises thoughts, reminiscences, and lessons he has drawn, including time spent in Sutton schools. - pw