

Strawberries in mid-October?

Were we lucky or were we very lucky? Once again we had perfect Roy Willson weather for our monthly walk – blue skies, very little wind and a crisp temperature. Our cheerful group welcomed our new member Mike and his wife Jan and, together with



Daphne and Obie (Ivor's dog), we all set off alongside one edge of the Whittington Barracks' rifle range. Here, there are attractive views over rolling countryside towards Hopwas Hays Wood and soon, much to our surprise, we were amongst fields of asparagus, strawberries and melons. Some of the party couldn't resist the temptation and sampled some end-of-season juicy strawberries! The walk continued alongside the Coventry Canal, a peaceful scene where two swans and a cygnet

kept their distance from us and a lone duck was being chased by nine drakes! A short meander through the village of Whittington brought us back to The Dog Inn for an excellent lunch and some boisterous Probus chatter. Congratulations to Roy and Mary for a most enjoyable amble. **Mike Lock**

As reminder to members that we have our own club website, the address is :-

<http://suttonparkprobus.wordpress.com>

During the course of the year many pictures are taken, all of which cannot possibly be included in the Newsletter. Please continue to review the site, on a regular basis.

By using the 'right-click' function of the mouse it is possible to copy (and save) pictures direct from our site onto your own computer (s). If you would like to contribute articles and/or pictures I will endeavour to upload them at the earliest moment.

Editor's Notes

Every effort will be made to include all articles - and photos - given \sent to me. News items will only be included for the current month if they reach me **no later than the Saturday before** publication at the Thursday General Meeting. Whilst it is understood that not all members have computers the preferred method of receiving articles\photos is by email. The number of pages in the Newsletter may vary and will be based on information supplied.

It would be appreciated if articles be restricted to **a maximum of 250 words**. Articles will be edited, major changes by agreement with the member\author concerned.

Any opinions expressed within the Newsletter are not necessarily those of the Editor or the Committee.

The Publicity Officer (**Harry Medcalf**) will submit extracts of articles and photos to the local press.



Sutton Park Probus Club

(Founded 1998)

President: Fred Nightingale

Issue 156 October 2011

Graham Baron Ash and Packwood House

Our speaker at the September meeting was Michael Miles who was a guide at Packwood House for over ten years. During this period he developed an obvious fondness for the house and the architect of its golden years, Graham Baron Ash, known as Baron.

Baron Ash was fifteen and studying at Radley when his father, a wealthy Birmingham industrialist bought the house in 1904. Apparently Baron had little interest in academia and instead chose to work in the family business and travel extensively, where his interests in antiquities and the fine arts flourished. He enlisted at the outset of the Great War and survived a number of perilous postings before the war ended. Following his father's death in 1925 Baron inherited the house and the major part of the estate. Although the original house had seen a number of alterations during the past 300 years, the timber frame and the massive Tudor chimneystack's, still formed the major part. Using reclaimed materials and furnishings from other great houses, including neighbouring Baddesley Clinton, the house was meticulously extended and remodelled over the next fifteen years to resemble an authentic Tudor manor house.



In the grounds the magnificent clipped yew garden, laid out to represent the Sermon on the Mount and the formal sunken gardens were both carefully augmented and preserved.

Always immaculately attired and variously described as loyal, shy, proud, patriotic, secretive and knowledgeable, Baron was nevertheless a generous and genial host. He entertained lavishly and his dazzling guest lists included nobility and royalty. In 1938 he became High Sheriff of Warwickshire, widening still further his circle of influential friends and acquaintances.

Michael Miles painted a vivid portrait of the life and times of a complex and refined man and the house he created. Although Baron Ash gifted the house and estate to the National Trust in 1941, the relationship was not a happy one and soon after the end of the war, he left Packwood and moved to Wingfield Castle in Suffolk. However he continued to take an interest in the development of the gardens at Packwood and when he died in 1980 his ashes were interred nearby. **Bryan Nicholas**

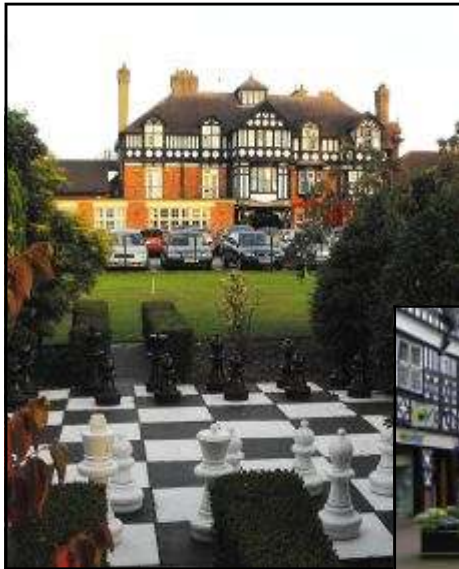


Our President, Fred Nightingale, shakes hands with our newest member to the club at the last General meeting. Mike Gospel is a welcome addition to the membership. We have meet up with Mike and his wife, Jan, on a few occasions at some of the social functions. We are looking forward to getting to know them both better as time goes on.

Nantwich – 80 degrees in October

A most interesting town that was greatly appreciated by 41 visitors from SPPC. Rebuilt in 1584 after the Great Fire, we had an opportunity to look at very old buildings that had been preserved and maintained. Nantwich was the only town in Cheshire to declare for Parliament in the Civil War.

We had been invited by Jim Bailey to join Sylvia and himself at our expense for a three night stay at Alvaston Hall, owned by Warners. Meals and entertainment were laid on and 2/3 drinks. Competitions, open to all visitors staying at Alvaston over the weekend, were won by Tony Ferneyhough – Arch-



ery, Harry Medcalf – Rifle shooting and the 'Streetly Oldies' won the Sunday Morning Quiz. I am awaiting confirmation that the SO were John & Pat Booth, Maureen Rose and Val Nightingale. Tony and Harry are awaiting a call should the Civil War happen again though will they be Royalists or Parliamentarians?.

Many National Trust and English Heritage properties were visited as well as local hostleries. It was a hot weekend that we all enjoyed and our thanks to Jim for making it possible.

Brian Mallett



Visit to the Museum of the Jewellery Quarter

Do you think working in a small manufacturing factory in the jewellery quarter was dangerous? Probably not particularly so but during the Probus visit we learnt that employees ran the risk of:

- Electrocutation through unsafe wiring and sockets containing multiple adapters each pushed one into the other.
- Having the tips of one or more fingers sliced off when operating a hand press.
- Suffering concussion or head injury if



hit by the one of the steel balls on the end of the operating arm on a hand press.

- Burning their fingers on the naked gas flame found at each bench.
- Suffering mouth or

gum deformities through having a brass blow tube in their mouth every working day for 30, or more years.

- Tripping and falling onto the metal grids on which they walked.
 - Permanent hearing damage because of the noise of motors, fans and presses.
- And finally if all of the above wasn't enough they were daily provided with tea made where the can of white sugar was kept next to the can of potassium cyanide which just happened to be white and crystalline also!

The Probus visitors made a fascinating visit to a workshop that contained all the above hazards. For more than 80 years the firm of Smith and Pepper produced jewellery from this workshop. When the 4 owners reached their 70s they decided after unsuccessful attempts to sell it as going concern to pay all outstanding wages, pay their creditors, remove the supplies of gold and silver and close the doors leaving everything else intact. It took Birmingham City Council - the freeholders - 9 years to visit and unlock the doors to find this veritable time capsule. With the building made safe and with modern electric wiring it is a true joy to visit.

Our visit was enhanced by having a personable and knowledgeable guide who took us through the various rooms and was also able to physically demonstrate some of the production processes. Not surprisingly at the conclusion we were not provided with any free samples! Many thanks to David Rooke who initially arranged the visit and Jim Bailey who deputised for him on the day.

Harry Medcalf.

All our yesterdays

On Thursday 13th October, 34 members, including wives and partners, set off by coach to the depths of Nechells, a part of Birmingham not often visited by the majority of us, however by the skilful handling of our driver John we duly arrived at the Birmingham Museum Collections Centre, a large warehouse on an industrial estate where we were met by our guides for the morning, Christina. and Janet.

After a short talk we were split into two groups and proceeded into what can only be described as an Aladdin's cave of magnificent proportions. Racks up to the ceiling where filled with artefacts, statues, machinery and household items such as a vacuum cleaner,



were sitting next to large machine tools many produced around the local area from companies such as Tangye, Chamberlain and Cook and

Boulton and Watt .Over half a million objects and works of art are stored in the main warehouse and some of our ladies positively swooned over the sight of an ancient plug in switchboard .

In a nearby extension we were greeted by the sight of many vehicles made in the local area of Birmingham such as a 1936 electric dustcart, A Bean car made in Tip-ton, an Austin Atlantic made at Longbridge, and BSA motorcycles galore. Models of ships in glass cases sat next to a ten ton traction engine.

There are 9000 square metres of storage space and it is impossible to describe our feelings of awe. In fact the time allowed did not do justice to all the sights available and in no time we were back on the coach and transported to the Jewellery quarter for lunch.

This turned out to be another experience as the buffet was laid out in a hostelry called the Drop Forge, the sandwiches looked to have been provided by the heavy press with the die cast set to Doorstep size. The chips and the beer went down well. By this time we were only half way around our tour and the Museum of the jewellery centre loomed on our horizons.. The story is continued by Harry Medcalf (on the next page).

Thanks must go to David Rooke for organising the trip and to Jim Bailey for smoothing out the Day.

John Buckland.



Graham, Janet and Laura Jones would like to thank their Probus friends, who contributed towards Laura's Sydney Charity Run for Motor Neurone Disease. To date she has raised over £500 in the U.K. and nearly £1,000 in Australian Dollars. All donations were much appreciated.

September Open Bowls Day

At the last meeting of season for crown-green bowling we met up with many of the lady bowlers. It was said that our weather guru had gone over the top this time and organised an Indian Summer !!

The format was slightly different this year with everyone playing four times out of six. Mike Lock stepped in again as the scorer, and preparing the format for the day. There not as many present this time as some of the regulars had more serious duties to perform.

In Mediterranean blue skies mixed pairs and men only set their sights on having a great time..All bowling was of a good standard.. With so many the green there were very few clashes as woods intersected each other on the way to the respective jacks..

A fine buffet lunch was laid and, whilst we were all seated, the chat from the room never seemed to pause..



Mary Willson came a resounding top for the ladies.. Jim Bailey doing his best at coming top for the men. Both received a liquid reward for their splendid effort !! Our President, Fred Nightingale, gave sincere vote of thanks to Mike Lock and Geoff Silvester for looking after the day.. We were informed the indoor bowling would commence next week at Eagle Drive, Tamworth, A very pleasant environment and new bowlers are always welcome..

Tony Ferneyhough

For Sale

Two sets of indoor bowls in excellent condition.

Made by Taylor.

Size 1 and 2.

Each complete with canvas carriers.

Please contact Tim Daly.

Christmas Cards..

It has now become normal practice within the club to chose between sending friends in Probus Christmas cards or making a donation to a preferred charity. To be remembered to your friends at Christmas time please let me have written notification if you wish your names to be included in the November Newsletter.

Short Walk

Date: Thurs November 17th



Venue: The Redmore Inn Hayfield Hill Gentleshaw WS 15 4RU

Lunch: £11 pp for starter and main (+ tea/coffee).. Book in advance as per usual please.

Times: Amble 10.30.. Lunch 12.30

Amble: The walk is about 3miles. A slight incline to start the walk.. Then along flat footpaths and then downhill all the way !! There are two stiles.

Directions: The Pub is close by to the Windmill and The Rag.. As there are several routes I suggest checking your A-Z for the details.

Please wear suitable clothing and footwear

Kitchen Rota Thurs 27 Oct

Terry Booth
John Buckland
Roger Phillips
John Purnell
Mike Terry
Graham Jones -Venue Secretary



Kitchen Rota Thurs 22nd Sept

Bill Arnott
Peter Prime
Ian Scholes
Brian Mallett
Derek Smith
Graham Jones -Venue Secretary

Date	Event	Speaker\ Coordinator	Vote Of Thanks	Newsletter Report
Thur 27th Oct	Talk on Pub Signs	David Cole	Jim Bailey	Selby Betts
Mon 7th Nov	Long Walk Droitwich	Brian Spencer	Depart from Roy’s by 9.30am	
Sat 12th Nov	Fine Dining	Brian Mallett	Sutton Coldfield Golf Club	
Thur 17th Nov	Short Walk	Roy Willson		
Wed 23rd Nov	NEC—behind the scenes	David Rooke	More details later	
Thur 24th Nov	Birmingham Trams	Derek Hayward	Ray Clark	Neil Crabb
Thus 1st Dec	Long Walk Mickleton	Barry Gill	Depart from Roy’s by 9.15am	
Fri 9th Dec	Christmas Lunch at Moor Hall	John Purnell David Rooke		
There is NO General Meeting or Short Walk in December				
Mon 9th Jan	Long Walk			
Thur 19th Jan	Lunch College of Food	Brian Mallett		
Thur 26th Jan	Creation of Corporation Street	Jim Whorwood	John Cheal	Ray Clarke
Thur 2nd Feb	Long Walk			
Thur 9th Feb	Marston Brewery	David Rooke		
Please inform Ron Ryman if you are unable to attend a General Meeting by the Sunday before that General Meeting.				
If you are unable to carry out the Vote of Thanks or the Newsletter Report please get in touch with Tony Ferneyhough , well before that General Meeting.				
Graham Jones should be informed - in plenty of time - if you are unable to carry out any of the Kitchen Rota duties				