



VISIT TO THE LUDLOW FOOD FESTIVAL, SEPTEMBER 13TH

Not a Probus outing, this one, but related, because if it hadn't been for Brian Spencer's new group at the U3A ('Travel, Food & Wine') we wouldn't have gone on this trip. As it was, Eileen and I joined Jim & Sylvia Bailey on a coach of 40 or so, driven by a slightly mad driver, for a most enjoyable day at this long-established festival in the grounds of Ludlow Castle.

You can see the size of the main marquee, which was stuffed with traders offering tasty bits of sausage, cheese, pate, and so on. I'm a sucker for an impulse buy and we quickly filled a bag with potted game, black olive tapenade and a nut cutlet, something I've always wanted to try (delicious!), while I thoughtfully sampled the various beers on offer, though no free samples here, alas. There was a lot else to see—cooking demonstrations in other pavilions (where I had a refreshing doze), and many vendors offering tempting lunchtime snacks from a dozen cuisines.

We managed with just a big slice of chocolate cake and various nibbles, while Sylvia & Jim patronised the stall run by some army lads who were cooking a nourishing stew in what looked like an old oil drum; earlier, I'd jokingly asked if they'd put their old boots in the bottom to give it a bite of 'bite', and they said yes, but they'd scraped the mud off first!

It was a great day out. Ludlow is a lovely old spot anyway, and this was an excellent first trip with the new group, who all seem a friendly lot.

- Peter Weston

MAKING YOUR APOLOGIES

If you are unable to attend a General Meeting please advise **Mike Terry** by the **Sunday** before that General Meeting.

If you are unable to carry out your duties on the Kitchen Rota please try and 'swap' with someone from the following month, and for the time being advise **Mike Terry** of the change.

If you are unable to carry out the Vote of Thanks or write the Newsletter Report please get in touch with me, **Peter Weston**, **well before** that General Meeting. I'll welcome your comments on any item in the Newsletter—but please let me have it early rather than late!

E-mail address; pr.weston@btinternet.com (don't miss that 'dot'!)



«First Name» «Last Name»

Sutton Park Probus Club

(Founded 1998)

President: Rod Crowley

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Left; Dianne in action!

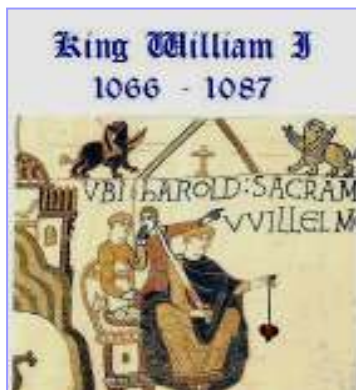
Above; One of the many pieces of her artwork with which Dianne illustrated her talk.

'BORN TO RULE', A TALK BY DIANNE MANNERING Report by Bryan Nicholas

How do you deliver a talk in less than an hour on a subject that has been evolving for nearly 1000 years? Dianne Mannering, our speaker at the September meeting, solved the problem by using simple, but effective overheads incorporating a descending timeline and score card to support her address. The resulting fast-moving, unscripted and light-hearted romp through the succession of the 42 English and British monarchs since the reign of William the Conqueror, proved to be a scholarly master class. During her talk Dianne took the opportunity to dismiss some popular historical myths and elaborate on the particular issues of the day affecting individual accessions.

From the outset the rule of succession was based on male order preference, (known as 'primogeniture' for our Scrabble and crossword enthusiasts!). In this, providing he survives, the eldest son is the Heir Apparent and first in line of succession, regardless of future births. Unfortunately our royal predecessors produced relatively few surviving male heirs, but plenty of daughters with a claim to the throne. However in their capacity of 'Heirs Presumptive' these could be bumped down the order of succession by the birth of a male son or someone perhaps more closely related to the monarch.

Cont/d



Dianne's clever little sketches show 'William was good at conkers' and how 'John lost his jewels in the wash'!

As a result only a quarter of our 42 monarchs were actually “born to rule”. Of the others, many contentious successions were brought about by the enlightened self-interest of powerful factions at court using devious means such as religious persecution, conspiracy, murder, marriages of convenience and treachery. As Kenneth Williams so aptly put it in the ‘Carry On Caesar’ film, “Infamy, Infamy, they’ve all got it in for me!”

Surprisingly, as it caused so much angst, instability and disruption over the ages, male primogeniture was only abandoned in 2013.

Summarising her talk, Dianne concluded that of the 42 monarchs since William the Conqueror, twelve had died in unnatural circumstances. Few of them were actually “born to rule” and of those, one abdicated and another had his reign, and neck, cut short by the executioner’s axe! In the light of these statistics perhaps ‘Dying to Rule’ might have been a more apt title to this fascinating talk!

After skilfully answering various questions, Dianne was generously thanked on behalf of the Club by Mike Gospel.

- Bryan Nicholas

Report on ‘The Other Club’ (our quiz team title)

On Thursday 5th, Tony, Eileen and I went along to ‘the other club’ - Sutton Probus - for their quiz night at Mere Green library. It was a jolly evening and one of their lady members joined us to make up our team of four. Yes, that’s right, their club is nearly 50% female! They meet at the library at 7.30pm on the first Monday of every month and have a monthly lunch on a Wednesday at Aston Wood golf club. Truly, every Probus club sets its own agenda - but I prefer the way we do things at Sutton Park!

Anyway, back at the quiz, question-master Kelvin Armistead put up a barrage of fourteen rounds of quick-fire questions suitable for persons of a sensible age (that is, not just Football & Pop Music as in most pub quizzes). We put up a respectable show, holding third place just two points behind the leaders for most of the evening, only to fall very flat on our faces with the single ‘Sports’ round (we scored one out of eight and that was a lucky guess) and to come further unstuck with the 20-question ‘Faces’ round, where we failed to identify several famous people who we really should have recognised.

Afterwards followed the usual recriminations; “I *told* you it was Mohammed Ali and not Kenny Lynch!” I complained, and Eileen countered with “Why did you put Jeremy Hunt instead of Philip Hammond as Minister of Defence?” Good fun, anyway, and maybe this is something our club could put on some evening.

- Peter Weston

EXPLORING SANDWELL VALLEY , Thursday 10th October

Leader; Brian Spencer. Report by Richard Humphrey

It was cold and wet on Wednesday and even colder and wetter on Friday, but on Thursday morning the sun shone brightly. Why was that, do you think?

Sandwell Valley was quite a surprise, a completely rural area surrounded on all sides by the West Midlands conurbation. But the River Tame was running clear, and there were some attractive views around Forge Mill Lake. It was all quite heavily wooded, and of particular interest Brian pointed out a spindle-tree, so-called because its tough, hard wood was once extensively used for making spindles when home spinning was common. It’s most usually found in hedgerows, where its fruits stand out as they turn to pale crimson in October.

Brian had arranged for a special opening of the RSPB Nature Centre for us, and among the fauna were ducks, geese and wading birds, while we also saw a Great Crested Grebe carrying out a 20-second dive. We also learned, among other things, that an average beehive has a population of around 60,000 bees; that all worker bees are female, and that the Queen bee never leaves the hive.

We had a pleasant lunch at the Malt Shovel, a reasonably-priced carvery, and our thanks go to Brian for arranging an enjoyable and well-organised pub amble.

- Richard Humphrey



Photo by Brian Spencer

Christmas Cards

Some members may prefer to donate to their favoured charities rather than give Christmas cards to friends within Probus, so if they will advise me I will make sure their names are published in the November Newsletter. The ‘postal service’ will still be provided to distribute cards at the Christmas lunch. [pw]

My apologies to Roy Galloway & John Cheal for not running this item long since; it was intended for the June Newsletter but was crowded-out then and this is the first opportunity I've had to use Roy's excellent report. [pw]



**‘WE WILL REMEMBER THEM’
A Visit to the National Memorial Arboretum, 9th May**

It was a dry day but very windy when forty or so members and partners visited the National Memorial Arboretum at Alrewas, just off the A38 on the outskirts of Lichfield. The Arboretum is extensive, with over two hundred significant memorials spread over 150 acres of wooded parkland, representing military, civil services, local and overseas organizations, each memorial having unique design and symbolism.

Our party assembled in the Chapel for Peace and Forgiveness and to observe the 11.00am morning service and two minutes Silence, which takes place every day of the year except Christmas Day, when the Arboretum is closed. An introduction was narrated by the BBC Newsreader, Peter Donaldson and a recording was played of the Last Post and Reveille by the Royal Marines, while a light shone on the Alter from the bearing and elevation of the sun at 11 am on the 11th November, Armistice Day.

All those in the Chapel or outside in the Amphitheatre at that time were invited to stop in silence and recall those who had lost their lives in conflict. The service was quite an emotional one, preparing us for subsequent visits to the other memorials on the site.

Following this we had refreshments at an outside coffee bar adjacent to the Chapel. By this time the wind had so strong that the froth was being whipped off the coffee and hot chocolate and deposited onto our clothing! We then joined the Land Train for a one hour tour with a narrated commentary of the Arboretum and most of the major Memorials. It is such a vast place that it would take many hours to walk around, so the train is an excellent means of getting an overall impression of the Arboretum and identifying areas of particular personal interest.

After lunch we were free to visit areas of our choice, and many visited the Armed Forces Memorial with its magnificent views, structure and content. It holds the names, date and Service order of the 16,000 men and women of our forces who have died since the end of the Second World War, along with symbolic sculptures. It was an excellent visit, despite the weather, and many thanks to the organiser, John Cheal.

- Roy Galloway

**Long Walk, Thursday 3rd October— Derby Dales (Osmaston Shirley and Wyaston)
Report by Geoff Silvester**

The Met office issued a Yellow storm warning of heavy rain, but did we take any notice? No, and in response a group of hardy Probusians gathered at the small village of Osmaston, just south of Ashbourne, for a long walk.

No rain, but our little group of thirteen (including four of our ladies) followed our leader Barry into heavy mist. The walk took us over many varied terrains and it was a great shame that some of the views were restricted by poor visibility, but this did not detract from an enjoyable walk. Lunch was taken by the church in the village of Shirley, and then on towards the finish which took us through Shirley Park and across the end of a lake which had one of the most picturesque views ever of an old water mill. This in itself made the whole walk worthwhile.

From here we continued through picturesque Osmaston Park to the finish, arriving just as the rain started, so our optimism had been rewarded with a great walk in the dry. Many thanks to Barry and Carol for their efforts in producing a memorable walk.

- Geoff Silvester



Left; A perfect picture-postcard view of an old water-mill.

Right: Sticks much in evidence, this determined body of men & women defy the elements!

**Photos by Rita—
more on our website.**



Diary of events and activities to February 2014

Thursday 24th October

‘Mountain Rescue in the UK’

- Mr Vince Williams

Vote of Thanks: Roy Willson

Newsletter Report: David Wallis

Kitchen Rota: Tony Ferneyhough,

Ray Clark, Alf Dineen,

Brian Spencer, Ernest Williams

Thursday 24th October

ENCORE! - 80 years of musical theatre,

7.30pm, Sutton Town Hall

Brian Mallet, co-ordinator

Thursday 31st October

Chinese Feast at the Lee Garden,

Sutton Coldfield,

Harry Medcalf, co-ordinator

Thursday 7th November

Long Walk led by David Rooke

Thursday 14th November

Visit to Chatsworth &

Christmas Market

Mike Gospel, co-ordinator

Thursday 21st November

Short Walk led by Roy Willson

Thursday 28th November

‘Fairground Tales’ - Mr Ned Williams

Vote of Thanks: Ken Shaw

Newsletter Report: Alfred Wallwork

Kitchen Rota:

Jim Bailey, John Buckland,

Roy Galloway, Brian Senior,

Ivor Wesley

Monday 2nd December

Long Walk led by Dennis Rose

Friday 6th December

Christmas Lunch at Moor Hall

12.00 for 12.45pm

David Rooke, co-ordinator

NO GENERAL MEETING IN DECEMBER

Thursday 9th January 2014

Long Walk (to be advised)

Thursday 16th January

Lunch at Birmingham College of Food,

Summer Row, City Centre

Brian Mallet, co-ordinator

Thursday 23rd January

‘How I Became a Vicar’ -

The Reverend B. Whitmore

St Bartholomew’s Vicarage,

Wolverhampton

Vote of Thanks: Jim Bailey

Newsletter Report: Philip Troman

Kitchen Rota: Selby Betts,

John Booth, Terry Booth,

Alfred Wallwork, Roy Willson

Monday 3rd February

Long Walk (to be advised)

Thursday 13th February

Visit to Avery Museum & Titanic

Exhibition

David Rooke, co-ordinator

Thursday 20th February

Short Walk

‘Bucks Fizz’ with Brian Spencer

Thursday 27th February

‘Global Warming—Myth or Fact?’

Mr David Muntzer

Vote of Thanks: Mike Terry

Newsletter Report: Tim Daly

Kitchen Rota:

John Cheal, Keith Keeley,

Barry Parsonage, Roger Phillips,

Philip Troman

Friday 28th February

Skittles Evening

Thursday 7th November— Tanworth in Arden, Long Walk led by David Rooke

This one is based from The Bell Restaurant/Pub in Tanworth in Arden. Meet at 09.45am to leave at 10.00am. Park at the rear of The Bell. Allow 50/60 minutes travelling time. Meet at Roy’s to leave at 08.45am.

The walk is just over 6 miles – primarily flat with good footpaths, open fields and concrete roads. There are two steady inclines and 4 stiles.

Directions:

Exit M42 at Junction 3 and take A435 signposted Redditch and Evesham. Travel 1.7 miles and exit left onto B4101 signed Tanworth in Arden. Travel 1 mile and turn right to Tanworth Village also signed for ‘Children’s Farm’. Travel approximately $\frac{3}{4}$ mile to village green – church will be in front of you and The Bell to the left.

Food and Drink:

We have booked a section of The Bell Restaurant/Pub for lunch at 1.30pm – they serve a wonderful selection from Light Bites to the Full Monty. **- David Rooke**

Thursday 21st November, Pub amble led by Roy Willson

We start from The Dilke Arms, Aldridge Road, Walsall, WS4 2JL, for a walk of around 3 miles along pavements, footpaths, across a golf course and along a canal towpath. There are no stiles, but wear suitable footwear.

Directions: Take the B4151 from Sutton towards Walsall. After about six miles take Longwood Road to the right, and after a further mile turn left into Aldridge Road. The Dilke Arms is on the left. It is about 8 miles from Sutton.

Assemble 10.15 for start at 10.30am. Lunch is at 12.30pm, 2-courses costs £11.

[Editor’s note; Roy became completely lost while reccing this walk, so it will be interesting to see whether he does any better on the day! Sunshine can not be guaranteed. - pw]

Thursday 17th April 2014— Visit to the Garrick Theatre

‘The Mousetrap’ is famous around the world for being the longest running show of any kind in the history of British theatre. To celebrate 60 years on stage it’s now on tour for the first time, with a star cast, and will be coming to the Lichfield Garrick Theatre in April. We have arranged a special discounted price for our party at £23.50 per person, and bookings will need to be made at the October meeting at the latest **- Harry Medcalf**

Proposed visit to The State Rooms & Garden Highlights Tour, Buckingham Palace 14th or 21st August 2014, £40

The easy part of this booking has been completed in that a coach has been reserved for either of the above dates. The tickets for entry are available from November and at that time I will be informed by the Royal Collection of the date available. Due to demand, I need the two-date flexibility to hopefully ensure the purchase of our tickets. The board will be out for the final time at the October meeting. **- Brian Mallett**