

A WALK IN THE PARK,

Pub Amble, 15th August—Report by Peter Weston

"I earned £17 per week at my first job in 1959" said John Fellows.

"That was a lot of money, then!" marvelled Pat Sitch.

"It was only £3 per week at my first job, but I watched girls all day," Tony Ferneyhough remarked.

"That was all he could afford to pay them," I joked.

"Yes," John said, "I went along to the *Post & Mail* when I was 20 and the boss said he'd take me on providing I started that Thursday. The very next day they gave me a wage packet with a full week's pay. So I stayed there for the next forty years."

"What would that £17 be worth today?" I wondered.

"Some economist reckons you can use Mars Bars to measure inflation," Tony said wisely, "they've kept the same value relative to everything else since the 1930s."

Just then we walked past a herd of cows. "What does it mean when they're all sitting down?" John asked.

"It's going to rain," said Pat.

"They're tired," said Tony.

And so we continued on our merry way, talking about Arthur C. Clarke and communications satellites, my compost heap, Pat's early start next morning for a holiday in Spain, and the amazing co-incidence that Tony and I share a common birthday – October 19th – "it must be fate," I said, which started us off on horoscopes.

This is just a poor attempt to record a few minutes of chatter in one little party of the Sutton Park walkers last Thursday, and I'm sure every other group could recount a similar tale. It was that sort of day for it, a gentle stroll through pleasant scenery in good company, ably organised by Derek Smith and led unerringly by Roy Willson.

We assembled at the Toby Carvery, heavily bedecked with rainwear but Roy did his stuff and the Sun came out, so most of us decided to leave it behind as we headed for first Blackroot, then Bracebridge Pool, to be met by Derek (who must have sprinted past when we weren't looking) with refreshments. Then back through bits of the Park I haven't visited for years to emerge by Keepers Pool. A sudden shower five minutes before the end let those of us with umbrellas smirk in temporary triumph, and then we were back, with good appetites for lunch. A great outing!

- pw

All uncredited pictures in this Newsletter were taken by Tony Ferneyhough, who has put a lot more on our website, at: <http://suttonparkprobus.wordpress.com> Take a look now!

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 then please try and 'swap' with someone from the following month, advising **Graham Jones** 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. My absolute deadline for reports & news is the **Saturday before** the next monthly meeting.

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



Sutton Park Probus Club

(Founded 1998)

President: Rod Crowley

Newsletter

No.178

August 2013

A NIGHTINGALE SANG IN FELLOWSHIP LANE....



*Val gives us a song,
while Roy and June
say 'if the cap fits,
wear it' (or even if it
doesn't)!*

*Man-of-the-Hour
John Buckland tries
to tempt with those
extra bottles of rose!*



*Shades of Carmen Miranda!
John in fruity headgear,
photo by Brian Spencer.*

*The Welcoming Team, right,
smiling despite the weather!*



'New Orleans comes to Middleton'- Summer Barbecue on 4th August

Report by Fred Nightingale

Eighty-six members, their wives and partners assembled on the Sunday afternoon in John and Marlene's beautiful and spacious garden for what is becoming one of SPPC's major events. The tables were laid with union jack covers and candles and the garden was adorned with a beautiful display of lilies, fuchsias and other flowers of all kinds in tubs and hanging baskets. It was further enhanced by a couple of Neil's superbly preserved classic cars - an Austin Healey 3000 in green and cream and a bright red Jaguar XK140 coupé, which obviously attracted the attention of numerous members (and some of our ladies too).

The marquees were decorated with red, white and blue bunting, union-jacks, and stars and stripes flags, and even some Confederate ones which emphasised the 'New Orleans' theme of the event. This was further emphasised by the many colourful outfits worn including bowler and boater hats, waistcoats, fancy shirts and jackets and in one case what appeared to be clown's trousers (well done, John)! Not to be outdone, the ladies were colourful and fashionable so to reflect the theme of the day.

As usual, the hog roast was beautifully cooked with loads of crackling, stuffing and fresh salad followed by scrumptious puds. Drinks were plentiful, though to obtain them from the other tent across the lawn meant dodging the rain!

The inclement weather meant that Richard Leach and his Clubhouse Four had to move into the main marquee. This was no problem as space had already been allocated in John Buckland's meticulous plan but it did somewhat restrict the ladies' brolly parade, although it was an advantage to those of us with poor hearing. The weather certainly did not dampen our enjoyment of the music and Val, our very own nightingale and jazz vocalist had enthusiastic backing to her rendition of "Bye Bye, Blackbird". The band followed this with "Bring me Sunshine" and other well known tunes which encouraged audience participation.

What a wonderful afternoon we all enjoyed! Thanks to Marlene and John for inviting us to their beautiful home and making us so welcome. John Buckland, aided by Pat, Marlene, John and an eager team of helpers worked tirelessly to ensure everything worked so well. On behalf of everyone who attended, sincere thanks to you all!

Richard Leach's band playing away—until the heavens opened! Photo by Fred Ditchfield.



'AND EVERYTHING WAS MADE OUT OF WOOD'

A walk around Carsington Water, 1st August - Report by David Rooke, photos by Rita.



Although the distance was eight miles, paths were well made, making walking easy on the knees. On a warm, sunny day the track was full of "undulations" which afforded some majestic views across the reservoir and surrounding countryside. Herons and cormorants were to be seen but it was the Mums and Dads encouraging happy kids to cycle and use the numerous water sports that left a lasting, positive impression.

We took lunch in an amazing "folly" filled with piano, TV, phone, lampstand, table, chairs, etc., and everything had been made out of wood by local enthusiasts. The permanent incumbents – House Martins, bats and owls—put up with our intrusion without stirring.

A wonderful walk, superbly organised by Don Cooper.
- David Rooke



***Above; The 'piano';
Left; A full living room,
with table, chairs, grand-
father clock, all in wood.***

HOW TO HANDLE A LOBSTER....

Lunchtime Rendezvous on 31st July—Report by Ron Ryman

*Tucking in!
photo, right, by
Fred Ditchfield.*

*Also tucking in –
photo below by my
daughter Susan in
Cala D'Or.*



*Your Editor was on a family holiday in
Majorca and missed the lunch, but I had
my very own lobster on that very same day,
daughter Lucy & baby Tom watching!*

Thirty-two of us arrived at OPUS restaurant in Birmingham to savour the delights of a lobster lunch. Unfortunately, those who had taken Harry's advice to travel in by train had faced the elements and arrived wet but not dispirited.

As is the norm there were animated conversations, particularly since it appeared that those who had eaten lobster previously had almost always had it served 'dressed'. After enjoying our starters, the challenge now was how to remove the edible parts from the shells. Armed with brightly-coloured shell crackers and a two-pronged small fork we started to dissect the poor lobsters, and amongst much hilarity we enjoyed the spoils of our efforts. This was followed by very tasty deserts and the white chocolate mousse with poached raspberries was a clear favourite.

We all thought it was a good way to spend a wet Wednesday lunchtime and agreed it would be an experience we would not forget! Our thanks go to Harry Medcalf for arranging this outing.

- Ron Ryman

'Land Army Tales' by Margaret Madeley – Report by Bob Badham

Our speaker, Margaret, told us she was 87, but quite clearly her memory was still as sharp as a razor, as she showed in her talk about how she came to become a member of the Land Army.

Margaret grew up in a military family and on her 18th birthday received the dreaded brown envelope 'calling her up'. She was working at FW Woolworth at the time and at the interview she was adamant that she would do anything but join the Army. It was agreed that she would join the Wrens (because she liked the tri-cornered hat) but her employers obtained a deferment of six months for training her replacement.

Learning in 1945 that she would be unable to join the Wrens, Margaret instead opted for the Land Army. She had a vision of the English countryside... the cottages, the peace and quiet... A few weeks later her call up papers arrived. She was to report to a Mr Ridley in Bridgnorth on the 12th May, four days after the end of the war. She received a travel warrant for the train and was expected to take her bicycle with her.

She caught the train in Walsall and went via Wolverhampton, then Shrewsbury to Bridgnorth – a journey that took five hours. Eventually arriving at the hostel, her illusions were shattered. She was shown the ablution block consisting of 3 baths and 6 hand basins, where all their washing, including their clothes, was to be done. A dormitory with two-tier bunk beds, six on either side, was where she would sleep. Margaret drew the short straw and was assigned a top bunk. It took two women to help her into it. Lights-out was at 10pm and during the first night she woke up, frightened by a strange rustling noise. She jumped out of bed, forgetting where she was, and landed on the floor waking the rest of the dorm. It turned out to be the rustling of the straw in her mattress!

Next day Margaret was shown the breeding farm, (she said knew little about the 'birds and bees' but she grew up fast). When not involved with the stock, which consisted of cows, sheep, horses, pigs and chickens, her work included planting, growing and harvesting the crops that fed the livestock. Work started at 8am and continued until 6pm daily. She had one hour for lunch and had to work every other weekend. The farmer paid her £2.2s per week. During harvest time she was required to work until 10pm at night, for which she received an additional 10s. Unsurprisingly, she cycled home on her weekends off.

Each morning Margaret would feed the stock and then milk the cows. She disliked this job as the cows did not take to her, they kicked out at her and even knocked her off the milking stool. It turned out that actually, it was her long fingernails that they didn't like! Life, especially for the cows, improved after that, in spite of her being attacked by an angry mother pig. Margaret required some first aid to her nether regions after that, and still bears the scars to this day!

Her last reminiscence was about the time that she got 'drunk as a skunk' on home-brewed cider one lunchtime whilst working in the fields, and to this day she cannot remember how she got back to the hostel, which caused several members to recall similar occurrences!

It was a fascinating account of a vanished time, brought to life by the many photographs Margaret had kept from her time on the farm. Clearly, those four years in the Land Army had been what one might call a formative experience, and we had no doubt that she could easily have kept us entertained for many more hours.

- Bob Badham



*Margaret shows Dennis a picture of
life on the farm. Photo; PW*

Events and Activities to December 2013

Thursday 22 August

'My visit to Afghanistan'
- Mrs E. Perkins

Vote of Thanks: Richard Humphrey
Newsletter Report; Barry Parsonage

Kitchen Rota: Brian Mallett,
Tim Daly, Mike Gospel,
Dennis Rose, Ian Scholes

Thursday 5th September

Long Walk led by Graham Jones
Meet at Roy's 9.30 a.m. to car share

Saturday 7—Monday 9th September
Autumn Break—'Downton Abbey'
(Highclere Castle)

Jim Bailey, coordinator

Thursday 19th September
Short Walk led by Roy Willson

Tuesday 24th September
Ladies Bowls Day
Organiser; Geoff Silvester

Thursday 26th September
'Born to Rule' - Diane Mannering
Vote of Thanks: Mike Gospel
Newsletter Report: Bryan Nicholas

Kitchen Rota: David Rooke,
Fred Nightingale, Barry Gill,
Denis Perkins, Neil Crabb,

Thursday 3rd October
Long Walk led by Barry Gill

Thursday 10th October
Short Walk & pub lunch
(details to be advised)

Thursday 24th October
80 years of musical theatre,
7.30pm Sutton Town Hall
Brian Mallet, co-ordinator

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

Friday 1st November

Chinese Feast at the Lee Garden,
Sutton Coldfield
Harry Medcalf, co-ordinator

Thursday 7th November
Long Walk led by David Rooke

Thursday 14th November
Chatsworth & Christmas market
Coach leaves 8.30, return 6.00pm
Mike Gospel, co-ordinator

Thursday 21st November
Short Walk (to be advised)

Thursday 28th November
'Fairground Tales' - Mr Ned Wil-
liams

Vote of Thanks: Alfred Wallwork
Newsletter Report: Ken Shaw

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
Harry Medcalf, co-ordinator

NO GENERAL MEETING IN
DECEMBER

A letter from Diana Purnell

"I would like to thank all members for their kind messages of condolence on the death of my dear husband. In particular, thanks to John Fellows who gave so much practical support, including moving furniture - with the help of his grandson—to make way for a hospital bed at home, where John died."

Thursday 5th September—Long Walk organised by Graham Jones

And now for something completely different! This will be a 'city' walk, and we meet at 10.30am at the Starbucks Restaurant situated in Symphony Hall. From there we will follow the Birmingham-Wolverhampton canal to Ladywood and on to Edgbaston Reservoir. Then we take to the old Birmingham-Harborne railway line, now converted into a lovely walkway. We will stop for a picnic lunch on 'the Green' at Harborne, and then on through Harborne down to the Worcester and Birmingham canal en route back to Symphony Hall.

This is a most interesting walk with several historical landmarks, and John Carrington will provide a running commentary along the route. There are no hills and no stiles, and the full distance is seven miles if you complete the full walk or five miles if you chose to catch the train at the University station and return to the City Centre. It will be a good idea to bring your cameras with you!

- Graham Jones

PS. My new mobile number is 07806 605503.

Thursday 19th September—Pub Amble, organised by Roy Willson

This is a repeat of the 'Strawberry Walk' of fond memory, starting from Whittington Village, about 8 miles north of Sutton. It will be about three miles, along street pavements, a canal towpath, and across some strawberry fields (it's late in the year but we may still be lucky!). No stiles, but have suitable footwear in case of occasional mud or puddles.

Meet at 10.30 am at the Dog Inn, at crossroads of Main Street & Fisherwick Road, Whittington, post code WS14 9SU. Lunch at 12.30pm, cost £12.00. You need to book your menu choices at the August meeting in the usual way.

- Roy Willson

Report from the Bowls Section;

"Tuesday the 13th, not Friday the 13th proved unlucky for eight of our bowlers who travelled to Aldridge for our annual away match against Aldridge Probus Club. We played in between the showers but after a very enjoyable afternoon we came away losing by 21 points. Thanks to all who turned up, and I hope we will have more players next year."

- Barry Parsonage

24th October 2013— ENCORE! - A visit to the Theatre

Brian Mallet reminds us that the board will be out for a final time next week for our visit to see ENCORE, 80 years of musical theatre at the Town Hall. Cost is £13 and Brian will need cheques at the meeting since tickets have to be purchased by end of August.

Factoid: Did you know that according to the *Guardian* on Tuesday (13th), "only people called Malet, Mallet or Mallett have an undisputed right to claim their ancestors came over with William the Conqueror in 1066". So it's Monsignor Mallet from now on! -pw