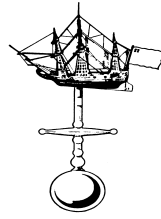


QUEENHITHE WARD CLUB



Queenhithe Ward Club Newsletter Issue 2 - January 2014

Inter-ward Quiz

11th September 2013

An Inter-ward Club quiz is run annually in September and for the first time last year we participated. The evening was enjoyed by the team and it was agreed to enter a team annually while the enthusiasm continues.



The winners any year are designated to run the event the following year, hence I gave our team strict instructions not to win, but the top six is great! The team were compliant and came a very creditable 4th out of 16 teams, being only 2 points behind the 2nd, the winners (Vintry & Dowgate) being quite a long way in front. The evening was organised by Bishopsgate Ward Club, and I'm sure was a hugely time consuming job, so many thanks to them.

I have to apologise for being unable to get all our team clearly in the team photo, the table layout was against me! As you see we were represented by Gordon, Ann, Jonathan, Janet, Adrian & Ros. We were very grateful to Ros for standing in at very short notice, and of course good to see the "law" ensuring fair play! The evening was divided into 2 halves of 4 rounds each on specific subjects, with a break for light refreshments half way through.

Kew Gardens Tour

18th September 2013

Our next event was a visit to Kew Gardens, we obviously picked a "bad date" as only 14 people were able to attend while I received 22 apologies!



We started the day having enough time to enjoy a cup of coffee in the Victoria Gate Café where most people had time to relax and chat after long journeys.

At 11.30 am we started a tour of the gardens, Valerie, a volunteer tour guide from Kew leading us around. The gardens cover an area of about 300 acres (121 hectares), hence it is impossible to cover anywhere near the complete area. Valerie was extremely interesting,

giving us a considerable overview of the history of the gardens which date back to 1759 when Princess Augusta founded the Royal Botanic Gardens, initially only 9 acres, but with the amalgamation of other local lands has grown to its current size which is enjoyed by thousands of visitors every year, to say nothing of all the research undertaken in the Jodrell Laboratories, the conservation & archiving of around 8,000,000 plants in the Herbarium and the Millennium Seed Bank at Wakehurst Place, West Sussex.

We had lunch in the "Orangery" after which we went off to make the most of our trip to the gardens, some visiting Kew Palace, the Shirley Sherwood Gallery and more, some deciding to use the Kew Explorer (a bus travelling around the whole Gardens with 7 'stopping off points' allowing visitors to alight, roam the area & join the next bus). The driver also gave an interesting running commentary en route.

Tower Bridge 24th October 2013 / 31st October and 6th November

This proved to be an extremely popular event, and as we were limited to a strict maximum on 26th October, it was decided to run 2 further tours each of which were limited to a maximum of 12 on each.



The tours began with a short film as an introduction to its use with it opening in 1894. In the 1876 the City of London recognised the urgency to build a new crossing of the Thames east of London Bridge due to the increased commercial development on the east side of London. It took 8 years to build as there was the major challenge of not preventing tall ships access west of the area. It was the largest and most sophisticated bascule bridge ever built

(bascule is the French for 'see-saw'). The bascules were operated by hydraulics using steam to power the enormous pumping engines, storing the energy in 6 massive accumulators having it ready to lift the bridge as soon as it was required. It was a hugely complex operation, but the bascules only took 1 minute to raise. Hydraulic power is still used, but is driven by oil & electricity rather than steam. The design includes 2 high level walkways which can be used when the bridge is raised. Today these walkways house an exhibition of its history. We had the history supplemented by excellent guides on each occasion and a visit to the depths of the workings which was absolutely fascinating.

The tours on 24th October were followed by an excellent dinner at Brown's Restaurant on the Embankment on the SE side of the Bridge which was thoroughly enjoyed by all.

David Shepherd CBE, FRSA, FRGS, OBE 12th November 2013

We were extremely fortunate to be able to join with the Painter Stainers' Company to make a visit to David Shepherd's studio in East Grinstead and to be able to meet with him and his wife, Avril, prior to a guided tour by the great man himself demonstrating his passion for particularly wildlife but also steam power.



A small coach was organised from Painters' Hall, although several members chose to drive directly and we made a stop relatively near the studio for lunch.

On arrival at the house in which he has lived for 13 years, but dated back to probably 1490, David met us and took us into one of his rooms to give us a brief introduction to his life. The house was amazing with ancient beams and even a well many metres deep within the room, although not in present day use. He enjoys making everything in the house absolutely personal, even to the extent of having had a tunnel dug between the main house and his studio!

He talked a considerable amount about his life and how his real ambition was to become a game warden in Africa, but on getting there was told he was not wanted and returned home with his dream in tatters. This seemed to leave him 2 options, one to drive buses or second to paint. The first of these could never appeal, so he went to the Slade School of Art & "never looked back" despite huge criticism from his tutor. He is now, at the age of 83 years, probably the world's leading wildlife artist. His passion for wildlife led him to start the "David Shepherd Wildlife Foundation" to fund the vital enforcement of community projects to try to ensure the survival of wildlife in its natural habitat. He is also a huge railway enthusiast and has painted many of the country's historic steam engines including Black Prince, which he owns, a model of which we saw running on his excellent model railway. To date he has probably painted around 6,000 paintings, all having being painted in oil.

We ended with a wonderful "English tea" in his gallery surrounded by his wonderful paintings.