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Treasurer: Carol Courtney
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**Aviva
Fellowship**



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NEWSLETTER – Summer 2015

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EDITORIAL

I was thinking, 'It's summer. Where has the time gone?' I then noted how many activities that Croydon AVIVA Fellowship have organised during the last six months, and realised that we needed more than just one leap second of more time (One second was added to our clocks at the end of June – you did adjust your watches, didn't you?). But the pace is not slackening as you can see from the items below. Next year we are even going overseas – to Rouen and Honfleur!

In the last Newsletter, I included a late item that Chris House has now become our Regional Chairman. This entitles him to attend national meetings, so do fly the Croydon flag very high, Chris. It does mean that at Croydon Committee meetings Brian has to keep Chris in order. At regional meetings it's the other way round!

Chris is very keen to encourage interaction with other fellowships, so, if you have access to the Internet, do go to their websites and to the national one to see *their* Newsletters and what they are doing. There are links from our own one.

A warm welcome to our latest committee member, John Whitley, appointed at the AGM, and I am pleased to

say the members whose three year terms had ended, agreed to be re-elected, although Alan Emmins, our Membership Secretary, intimated that he only wishes to continue for one more year, to enable him to help a successor to take over the reins. You have been doing a grand job, Alan, even if it has made you tear your hair out on occasions.

Your editor isn't one to boast (well not often!) but you may have noticed from the latest '*In Touch*' that one Dave Newland won the prize for the best photograph (the one taken on the BBC visit – copy at end of the Newsletter) - so Christenings, Bar Mitzvahs, Weddings, Graduations etc., my rates are very reasonable! Only kidding! With all the great work undertaken by your committee, they all deserve a prize.

Have a good summer and as the next Newsletter will not be out till January, after the New Year lunch, perhaps I can be the first to wish you a happy Christmas and a great 2016.

Dave Newland

MESSAGE FROM YOUR CHAIRMAN

I hope you are all enjoying the summer weather. We have had many hot sunny days and many of us have been able to spend lots of time outdoors benefiting from the fresh air.

The downside of course is that our gardens are in desperate need of rain. We often hear in the forecast that rain is on its way but we have had very little in the south east.

Our events programme has been very busy - a tour of the BBC Centre, a "Magna Carta" lunch, a Murder Mystery Treasure Trail, a South Coast walk, a visit to Chiswick House and a Spring Stroll. Events continue into the summer and this means that you can all keep very active.

I would like to express my sincere thanks to the members who organise our events as this is often very time consuming but we all express our full appreciation.

Brian Welch July 2015

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

VISITS

Steam & Musical Museums; BBC second visit; Windsor & River Trip; Apsley House, London ; Long weekend - Rouen & Honfleur



Sat. 29th Aug. Two museums in Kew at a specially discounted price, and, unusually, on a Saturday giving a chance for our members who are still working to attend one of our events. Easy access via Clapham Junction.



It is only on a last Saturday of a month that the **Steam Museum** get 'all fired up', and if you are a competent musician, you may be allowed to play the Wurlitzer at the **Musical Museum**.



Thu. 10th Sep. As the visit to the **BBC** earlier this year (see Judy's report) was significantly over-subscribed, Carol Courtney has arranged a second visit for those who were disappointed last time – at the time of printing a very few further places were available, the previous applicants having precedence.

Mon. 28th Sep. The **Thames and Windsor**, a lovely town to visit, with a tour of the castle in the morning and a trip on the river (which is beautiful there) in the afternoon. The editor is particularly looking forward to this as the last time he visited Windsor was on his fortieth birthday, a couple of years ago (and the rest!).



Thu. Oct 22nd Judy is organising another of her very popular conducted tours in London. This time, subject to confirmation, we shall be visiting **Apsley House** (No. 1 London), the home of the Duke of Wellington by Hyde Park Corner, appropriate as this year is the 200th anniversary of the Battle of Waterloo. Further details in due course.

Thu. Feb. 25th to Mon 29th 2016 Rouen and Honfleur Coach Trip. This is a regional visit being organised by Chris House in his capacity as Regional Chairman, so why not contact some of your old AVIVA colleagues who may be in a different Fellowship, and make up a group. Full details can be found from our web site or from Chris (020 8763 0890). Includes overnight accommodation at the Aerodrome Hotel, Croydon, at start and finish if required, at a very competitive rate, and a journey via the Channel Tunnel. Hopefully by then illegal immigrant problems will have been solved! Places are still available.



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Please note that bookings for the visit to Titsey Place (**Tue 4th Aug.**) are now closed.

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EATING and DRINKING

3 lunches: A Buffet Lunch; Fish 'n' Chips Lunch; and our New Year Lunch



Two visits are lined up for lunch at the Croydon Park Hotel (a very short walk from East Croydon Station).

Mon. 14th Sep. The buffet offers a large range of options from which you can help yourself.

Fri. 8th Jan. 2016: The New Year Lunch will be our way of getting 2016 to a fine start.

Wed. 4th Nov. In between there is the Fish'n'Chips lunch at McDermott's in Forestdale, so just prepare to tuck in and enjoy all three.

And don't forget the various coffee mornings, including the subsidised breakfasts in September and December at the Clocktower.



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EXERCISING MIND and BODY

Quiz Night & Supper; Autumn Stroll in London

Date to be Confirmed. Last year's first Quiz Night was very popular, proving what a massive source of knowledge Croydon Fellowship is. Sadly, our quiz master, Ken Morcombe, has suffered a very serious heart attack, and we wish him a full recovery, but it means he cannot do the job this year. We are looking into a possible replacement, or it may be postponed to next year, so we will advise the date in due course.

Meantime, here is a question for you to get the grey cells warmed up! Who is the odd-one-out amongst the former Labour Prime Ministers: Ramsay MacDonald, Harold Wilson, James Callaghan and Gordon Brown? (And it has nothing whatever to do with politics) – answer at the end.

Thu 19th Nov. You can enjoy a stroll in south London (having done north and east over the last two years) to show that it's just not brain that you have. Some years ago I held a walk along the River Wandle from Hackbridge to Merton. For our Autumn stroll I am proposing to cover the last couple of miles or so of the Wandle between the northern Wimbledon/Southfields area to where the river flows into the Thames at Wandsworth.



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REPORTS ON RECENT EVENTS

Visit to BBC (Monday 15th March)

What a talented lot our members are! Hidden talents galore!

On our tour of the BBC in Portland Place we saw backstage and into the workings of our Television and Radio broadcasts.

We peered into the News Room, seeing that tantalising spiral staircase so often on our screens. Plus, of course multiple cameras lights and other paraphernalia.

Then we were allowed to try our hand at news reading and weather forecasting. Dave Newland and Chris House appeared on the monitor, reading the news and looking quite professional, although, as Dave said afterwards, they were rather more casually dressed than Huw Edwards et al.

(Continued over page)

The weather girl, Carole, showed us tips on presenting the weather. The screen that she points at behind her, is actually off to one side, so rather confusing, but a very good effort was made by Dave Francis!



BBC's original logo



What are they looking at?



Lord Reith



Sir Henry Wood



Our Thespians*

We were taken into the original building, and shown some of the beautiful Art Deco windows and artefacts.

Then into another studio, to try our hand at acting out a rather spooky play. The sound effects were fun, with coconut halves for horses' hoof beats (really) and a pop gun for Champagne corks.

Lastly, we went into the studio that transmits The One Show, and sat on the rather vile green bench. When I got home, I watched the show that night, (for about five minutes) just so I could say. I've been there!

Judy Dumbrill

* Hilary Kearney, Menai Jones, Pat Slater, Peter Lewis and Peter Paige

Thank you, Judy, for organising this visit. Hope the article hasn't given too many secrets away for those going in September!

Chiswick House and Gardens (Wednesday 8th April)

*This report is extracted from a much fuller report produced by James O'Neil, which can be read on our web site.
Sorry, no pictures from in the house – photography was not allowed.*



The house from the lake



The AVIVA party



Bridge over the lake



The Conservatory

The first Earl of Burlington had been a supporter of Charles I and had been rewarded with lands in Yorkshire and Ireland. Besides Chiswick House, he also owned a town house in London, naturally named Burlington House, which is now the home of the Royal Academy in Piccadilly. The 3rd Earl aged 20, in 1714, embarked on a 'grand tour' of Europe, and had returned with a total of 878 crates of collectables!

Moving from room to room looking at the paintings and sculptures Margaret, [our guide], explained the 'hidden' Catholic support messages some contained. Many original items are now in the Chatsworth collection as the property passed in 1753 by marriage to their estates and from 1984 owned by English Heritage.

After lunch we then met Rosemarie, our guide for the tour of the Gardens. We learnt it is generally accepted Chiswick House Gardens are the birthplace of English Landscape Movement. The gardens are now a public park and managed by a Trust with volunteer gardeners assisting several mornings a week.

Apart from the 'natural' garden design, they feature a lake, many notable sculptures, architectural delights and include an Ionic Temple. We ended the tour in the Conservatory, which now houses an impressive collection of Camellias, the oldest such collection under glass in the Western world.

Our thanks to Chris House for organising this, and to Patricia Pegg for handling the bookings

Italian Lunch Gi Trattoria, West Wickham (Wednesday, 15th July)



Maggie checking cheques



Here's my order



Not a Committee Meeting!



Brilliant Meal

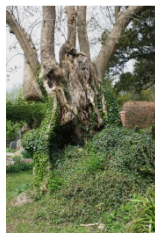
A really lovely meal, even if some of the names on the menu are rather difficult to pronounce! As usual the staff and the service provided was top rate. The last picture above says it all. A well-deserved round of applause. We can't wait for next year's meal.

Well done, Brian and Delia, in finding this Trattoria, and for organising the lunch.

Spring Stroll - Woldingham (Friday 8th May)



Outside St. Agatha's Church



Old tree in Church Yard



Entrance to Great Church Wood



Party admiring the bluebells

From Knight's Garden Centre 18 of us, including a couple of new-comers, ascended Church Road to St. Agatha's Church, the highest in altitude in Surrey. After a brief look around, we moved on to Great Church Wood, where we caught the bluebells – millions of them - just right this year. Cameras were out trying to catch the subtlety of their colour – not easy. We then descended via Marden Park Farm, with its goats, to tea and cake back at Knight's.

I am thinking of Banstead Woods for next year's bluebell walk

As a footnote to this, a number of people asked why the church is dedicated to St. Agatha (and there is another one in the Limpsfield area). I haven't managed to find the reason, but whilst on holiday in Sicily, in June, we discovered it was very obvious who is the island's patron saint. St. Agatha came from and was martyred in the city of Catania. Everywhere it is either Bellini (also a native of Catania) or Sant' Agata. I even had a Sant' Agata pizza! You can find the gory details of Agatha's life and martyrdom from Wikipedia, but be warned, it is not for the faint-hearted. DN

Treasure Hunt – Reigate (Tuesday 2nd June)



Old Town Hall



Priory



Musician Statue



Lunch at 'Market Stores'

It is amazing how many suspect murderers there are in Reigate (!), but our walking around the town managed to eliminate most of them in our search for a murderer. Meeting at the Old Town Hall, the various teams were sent to different parts of the town to start their investigations. I wonder how many residents who come into the town most days are aware of the existence of some of the facts we had to locate – such as when the tunnel was built, or indeed why it was built, or the number of entrances to Reigate Priory Park. Also, it is when one does a hunt like this that you find how easy it is to miss the obvious! So, despite the rather miserable weather, it was a very enjoyable, if a sometimes puzzling, morning. Apparently no team actually bothered to cross the road to see the Statue of Dame Margot Fonteyn, but immediately crossed off Margot Bathurst as a suspect, and went straight into the tunnel, with the 'Market Stores' pub at the end, where we all gathered for some lunch and compared findings.

Well done, Carol, in arranging this, and sorry that you had to sit around in the cold and damp whilst we were searching.

South Coast Walk – Brighton outskirts to Rottingdean (Monday 29th June),



Maggie & Roger lead the way



Rottingdean Windmill



Roger in Roger's Nook



In the Kipling Garden

We met Roger at Brighton Station, where he informed us that the bus was slightly re-timed and the stop had changed, but only a short walk away! Alighting near the Brighton Marina and progressing along the path above the cliff, we passed both Roedean and St. Dunstan's Schools and met a lady counting plants in a 5 metre square, before descending near the windmill into Rottingdean. There we found a lovely café for afternoon tea – most ordered the cream variety. Afterwards we made the short walk to the Kipling Garden, formerly owned by the author, rescued by locals from developers and re-constructed, including a croquet lawn. (We didn't play). As part of the garden is called 'Roger's Nook', we had to photograph him there. We returned to the centre of the village, where we left Roger to go for his swim, and the rest of us rode back to Brighton.

Thank you, Roger, for a lovely day out, and pleased that the weather was fine. Hope you had a good swim.

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Theatre Visits

Morven Rae has kindly volunteered to trial some theatre visits. These opportunities have been at short notice to members with email. The first were '*Blood Brothers*' starring Maureen Nolan and Marti Pellow at the Ashcroft and joining a coach trip to '*Les Miserables*' in the West End.

In May we saw two local productions – '*Jekyll and Hyde*' at Carshalton and '*Sister Act*' at Croydon featuring Morven herself as Mother Superior. We have enjoyed all the productions and Morven welcomes suggestions for seeing more local shows.

Carol Courtney

We are very grateful to Morven for organising these. Do look out for further visits.

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Country Walk – Buckland and Betchworth (Monday 20th July)

This walk was due at the time of going to print, and a report will appear in the next edition.

* * * * *



The winning photo!

Answer to the question: It is James Callaghan, who, surprisingly, is the only one whose first name was *not* James! They were/are James Ramsay MacDonald, James Harold Wilson, James Gordon Brown BUT *Leonard* James Callaghan.

All photographs - The editor except:

Windsor Castle and R. Thames (Windsor & Maidenhead Borough web site), McDermott's (Their own web site), Duke of Wellington (Apsley House web site), Rouen Cathedral (Rouen City web site)