

Aviva
Fellowship



Croydon
Area

Aviva Fellowship Croydon

NEWSLETTER - Summer 2009

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This is my first edition as editor of your Newsletter. I would like to thank Philip Talmage for producing previous editions, a very difficult act to follow, but I will do my best!

I would also like to record my thanks to the committee members who retired at the AGM and to welcome the new committee – details at the back. The last Newsletter pleaded for help, and fortunately it was forthcoming, so we have both a new Chairman and a new Vice-Chairman – summaries about them both are on page 3. In future editions I will give résumés of other committee members (if they will let me or dare tell their story!)

However, there are about 750 members of the Croydon Fellowship, but in a year, I doubt if we see much more than 100 of you, and organising events is left to a very few people indeed. Where are the rest of you? If we are not doing 'your thing', let us know, although you do run the risk of being 'persuaded' to organise it!

So, here are reports on the events which have taken place since the last Newsletter, with my thanks to the various organisers, and information about forthcoming events. Hope to see you at some of them.

The next edition will be produced about the end of the year.

Dave Newland

Regent's Canal Guided Walk – April 22nd.

On a beautiful sunny day in April, 22 of us met at The Angel, Islington, tube station for a walk along part of the Regents Canal. Within a few minutes of leaving the busy street, we were walking through the quiet byways to the Canal. Our guide, Roger Wilkinson, was from the Inland Waterways Association, & he was full of information on the history of canals, as well as the area we were walking through.

We were heading for Mile End, a distance of about 3 miles. Our route passed 4 locks, & in one, we were lucky enough to watch a narrow boat come into the lock, & see how the gates were opened to allow the water level to rise, so the far gates could be opened, & the boat pass through. One of the unusual features to this canal, are the occasional narrow ramps, tucked tightly to the edge. These were escape routes for any unwary horse, that fell into the water, while pulling its barge of coal or other goods.

Nowadays, the dog walkers find they are useful to persuade their dogs to come out of the water. Many of the warehouses have now been converted into Canal Side Apartments

Sadly, the very cold winter of 1963/4 destroyed the commercial side of the canals, because the barges were frozen into the water & all traffic was stopped for weeks. It never really recovered, but privately owned narrow boats still add colour to the area.

Shortly before reaching the end of our walk, we passed Victoria Park, which is London's oldest municipal park. Then it was goodbye to the swans & cormorants & back to the busy streets of Mile End. A very enjoyable outing.

Judy Dumbrill

[We also had unscheduled entertainment, when two teenage girls jumped into the canal, fully clothed, to retrieve one of their shoes, which had somehow fallen in! – Ed.]



A lock on the canal

Aspects of Old Croydon – 16th March

This was a slide-show given by local historian and author Raymond Wheeler about Croydon's history. Most of the slides were from old photographs and postcards, and long-time residents in the audience of the Croydon area were very nostalgic about what used to be there. But it was also surprising to find out what is still exists, if you care to look up, down or around!

London Wetland Centre, 13th May

22 of our members joined us on our visit to the London Wetland Centre. Fortunately the weather was reasonably kind and we were able to enjoy the visit in dry and not too cold conditions.

The site is well located and is easily accessible by public transport so our members did not find any difficulty in travelling to the Centre which is acclaimed as the best urban site to watch wildlife in Europe.

Fortunately we had an excellent guide who was not only able to talk to us about the variety of wildlife but also with the aid of her binoculars enabled us to view at close up, some of the birds we would only have seen in the distance.

While it was not warm enough to picnic the Centre has a cafeteria and restaurant and is very easy to access with extremely pleasant walks. However should anybody wish to visit in the future a guide really adds to the enjoyment of the visit explaining the variety of birds and the best places are to see the wildlife. In addition I would suggest binoculars and a camera are essential accessories.

The general feeling of both those who were knowledgeable about the subject and others, who, like me have a very limited knowledge, was that it was a very enjoyable visit.

John Ward



A Wetland Centre Heron

Eating & Drinking

There have been two pub lunches, one in March at the Good Companions, Hamsey Green, which should have been held in February, but the snow caused a postponement! The other, in May, back to our old haunt of the Horseshoe, Warlingham. About 50 people attended each.

A fish-and-chip supper was held in April, with 44 attending, and by all accounts the food was excellent.

Theatre etc. Visits

The Producers - May 21

21 attended this production by the West Wickham Operatic Society at the Churchill Theatre, Bromley.

Philip Talmage

Cherkley Court Gardens, 4th June

After an introductory talk on the history of Cherkley Court, the former home of the late Lord Beaverbrook, we were able to enjoy the colourful gardens in the sunshine. A welcome cuppa and homemade cake taken on the terrace overlooking the Mole Valley, made a relaxing interlude before returning home

Joan Price

River Trip, 17th June

We joined the Guildford Fellowship for the boat trip from Kingston to Richmond for lunch and then returned, passing through Teddington Lock, past Eel Pie Island, Ham House and the Petersham Water Meadows.

On the return journey, we all sang 'Happy Birthday' to Celia Nicholas, one of the Guildford members, who was 99 that day, and we shared in her cake.



Entering Teddington Lock



Happy 99th birthday

Brian Welch, our new Chairman

Brian Welch joined CU in 1962 at Leeds branch. In 1967 he started his 20 years in Europe - Belgium, Germany and Holland - all still with subsidiaries of CU. His responsibilities were varied and included Engineering insurance, International Risks, IT, Planning, and Personal Lines. Whilst in Germany an IT link was set up with Whyteleafe and this was when Brian met Peter Monk.

In 1987 Brian returned to the UK and became Personal Lines Manager in Europe Division. Although he was based at HO in St Helens he spent a lot of time travelling to many CU businesses around Europe, retiring in 2000.

Brian and his wife Delia enjoy travelling and they have visited Australia and New Zealand (5 times), South Africa (3 times) and Canada (7 times). His offspring appear to have also inherited the travel bug. He has one daughter (and 2 granddaughters) living in France, near Geneva and another daughter and granddaughter living near The Hague in Holland. So Brian and Delia continue to make regular visits to Europe. Their 4th granddaughter lives in London and they often collect her from school and look after her during school holidays.

Brian's other main time commitment is as a governor at Royal Russell School in Croydon, where he has been involved since 1991. He is currently Deputy Chairman of Governors and he also chairs one of the sub-committees, with responsibility for senior staff appointments, remuneration and strategy.

Brian and Delia attend Emmanuel Church in South Croydon where Delia is a Deputy Warden.

There isn't much time for hobbies but Brian has quite a large garden which takes a lot of looking after. On the 'cultural' side he and Delia attend music concerts at Fairfield Hall, although Brian has no specific musical talent. Although Brian's playing days are long past he still enjoys rugby and cricket (but NOT football) and follows all England matches on TV or radio. Brian and Delia live in South Croydon.

[Brian has 4 granddaughters, I have 5 grandchildren (4 of them girls), my brother has 4 grandchildren (3 girls) and longstanding friends have 10 (!) grandchildren (9 girls). Is some bra manufacturer trying to boost future trade by genetically engineering potential fathers to produce daughters? – Ed]

Peter Monk, our new Vice Chairman

Peter joined CU in 1963, at HO Life - 66 Cheapside. He moved from Cheapside to join the DP department in 1967, initially in Exeter. The computer centre moved to Whyteleafe in 1968. Peter had various roles, both technical and management. Coincidentally he spent a short while visiting our German subsidiary, Deutsche Elementar, in Hamburg where he met Brian Welch! Many people around the country became aware of Peter when he was a significant player in the introduction of HOST. For quite a while Peter took regular advantage of the football facilities at Eltham, Lee Green and Beckenham. After the merger with GA Peter moved to a corporate role in Group IT, with a role embracing global IT Procurement, until it was handed over to a Norwich based responsibility in 2002. CU, CGU, CGNU and AVIVA!

Peter and his wife Paddy live in Limpsfield. Peter has many interests and involvements. As well as hobby activities such as soccer and cricket (those were the days) he sings with choral societies and church choirs, plays the piano and organ and writes musical arrangements. He was daft enough a few years back to take on a part-time role behind the post office counter in the local shop, when it was bought out as a cooperative by the Limpsfield villagers, to be kept running by volunteer effort.

Peter put time and effort into bringing together a group of 30 ex-Whyteleafe staff to assess if/how they could obtain redress for shortfalls in with-profit endowment mortgage arrangements - a subject which continues to vex many!

Until recently Peter chaired the Oxted & District LINK Association, a substantial local charity which dispenses financial assistance and, through 140+ volunteers, provides a transport service for people in the area. Due to this involvement Peter chairs the Patient Involvement Forum for Oxted Health Centre and was asked to join the recently formed East Surrey Local Involvement Network (a statutory body to incorporate all "patient" and user forums) to head up a review into transport for health patients and social care users. His story of getting to/from East Surrey hospital by bus, taking 2 1/4 hours each way, was written up by the accompanying reporter and made gripping reading in The Surrey Mirror.

Occasionally, he manages to look at the stars through his telescope."

Peter



Brian

Forthcoming Events

July 21st (See * below)	Country Walk	Hogsmill River, Ewell
Sept. 10th	Pub Lunch	Good Companions
Sept 18th (See * below)	Canal Walk	Little Venice
Oct 14th (See ** below)	Oklahoma	Ashcroft Theatre
Oct. 20th	Fish & Chip Lunch	McDermott's
Nov. 19th (See ** below)	Wizard of Oz	Churchill Theatre
Dec. 2nd	Christmas Lunch	Aerodrome Hotel

In addition, there are coffee mornings at 10.30 a.m. as follows – just turn up:

July 14th.	White Hart, Brasted
July 30th	Chartwell
Aug. 11th	White Hart, Brasted
Aug 26th	Knights, Woldingham
Sept. 8th.	White Hart, Brasted
Oct. 13th.	White Hart, Brasted
Nov. 10th.	White Hart, Brasted
Nov. 25th.	Knights, Woldingham
Dec. 8th.	White Hart, Brasted

Plans are underway for 2010

Details will be published in the next edition of the Newsletter, but, if you have any requests for new activities please advise any committee member.

* Country Walk / Canal Walk

Members who have expressed an interest in walks should have received details of the Country Walk and the Canal Walk. If you have not received these but would like to come, please phone or e-mail me and I will send you a copy.

Dave Newland.

** Oklahoma to Emerald City via the Yellow Brick Road

Oklahoma! - the very first musical from the famous partnership between composer Rodgers and writer Hammerstein - tells the story of a romance set in Oklahoma territory in 1906. A year later it became the 46th state of the Union, and in due course the title song, the climax of the show, became the state song.

It'll be oh, what a beautiful morning (well, afternoon) on **Wednesday 14th October** when you drive your surrey (you know, the one with the fringe on top) to Croydon's Ashcroft theatre to see CODA's production.

And on **Thursday 19th November**, we're off to see the wizard, the wonderful **Wizard of Oz** – at the Churchill theatre in Bromley. This is the RSC version, based on the 1939 MGM film classic. West Wickham Operatic Society is running its very own "idol" competition to find the perfect Dorothy, and we can be sure they will stage the show with their usual professionalism.

Once we have full details, we shall notify everyone who has registered an interest and /or has participated in the last few years. If you would like to be included in our mailing list for theatre trips, but are not sure whether you are on it, please advise me or Maggie.

Philip Talmage

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