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Secretary: Maggie Mahoney

**Aviva
Fellowship**



Croydon Area

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NEWSLETTER – Summer 2016

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EDITORIAL

I was wondering how long I have been boring you with my Newsletters, so I searched through the archived files from my computer (actually from my previous one) to find that my first effort was in 2010. I then looked at some of the events that we have organised over this time. By far the most common activity has been to fill our stomachs with meals or coffee! But we have also had plenty of exercise with both conducted and more informal walks and visits to places of interest, including going overseas for the first time this year, with plans underway for another trip next year. And we are now keeping our brains active with quiz nights!

We are also gradually introducing region-wide events, where we can join with other former colleagues, who live away from the Croydon area. I hope, in future Newsletters, to highlight what places like Watford or Brighton are up to!

All this only takes place by the efforts of your Committee (whose membership was very much the same in 2010 as now – hint: anyone willing to join?) and a few other event organisers.

Remember that we are always happy to hear of other ideas from you. It's your Fellowship, and your feedback is always welcome.

Dave Newland

SUMMER MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIRMAN

This year we have had a prolonged period of wet and windy weather but now in July that has changed [Well it had when Brian wrote this! Ed.] and we can enjoy the sunshine. Even the second week of Wimbledon was almost rain free.

Your committee has again been busy and we have had some new events – a Bluebell Walk, a visit to St Pancras Renaissance Hotel, a visit to Bletchley Park Museum and a summer stroll around Polhill Garden Centre. In August there will be a visit to Nymans Gardens in West Sussex; in October there will be a London Walk and in November an Autumn Stroll.

These events are all in addition to our usual lunches, suppers and coffee mornings. So I recommend that you remain active and join us for these outdoor events which will keep us all healthy.

Brian Welch July 2016

SOME POINTS FROM OUR REGIONAL CHAIRMEN'S MEETING

The meeting repeated the need for more Members' emails to keep them informed and is **encouraging members to visit our websites more often**. [Do look at not only *our* website, but also the national one and those of other Fellowships. There are links from our own one. Ed]

The Meeting is hoping to persuade the National Executive Committee meeting that the National website should be amended and to start collecting / registering email details, Post Codes etc. [I might then find out when 'InTouch' has been published! Ed]

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

Here is a summary of events until early next year, some of which our Chairman has highlighted above. There should be something for everyone, so do come and enjoy both the events and the chance to have a chat/update with fellow members.

(Please note that some of these dates below may be subject to confirmation or change)

Visit to Nymans Gardens, Sussex – Tuesday 23rd August



Judy is now taking bookings for this visit to the beautiful National Trust gardens. Please return your booking form by 2nd August, and if you are a NT member, don't forget to bring your membership card!



Full details and booking forms are on the web-site or available from our Secretary, but hurry.

THREE LUNCHES



Croydon Park



McDermott's



Jurys Inn

Buffet Lunch, Croydon Park Hotel – Tuesday 20th September:

A return visit where we can help ourselves to a very wide range of options. Don't be tempted to over-do the first course though - leave room for your sweet!

Fish'n'Chip Lunch – McDermott's, Forestdale – Wednesday 2nd November:

The evening meal earlier this year was very popular, and our thanks are due to Maggie for organising this, as she is this time, but for lunch in November.

New Year Lunch – Jury's Inn, Wellesley Road, Croydon – Friday 6th January 2017:

A new venue for our big meal to get the New Year under way. Yes, I know it is now only July, but these things need to be booked well in advance!

And don't forget the various **Coffee Mornings**: At the **Clocktower** 2nd Tuesday of each month, including the subsidised breakfasts in September and December PLUS: **Knight's (Chelsham)** August 31st, **Polhill** September 29th, **Knight's (Woldingham)** November 30th.

St. Paul's Cathedral – Friday 28th October



We visited Westminster Abbey a couple of years ago. This time we'll be climbing the steps to the Cathedral. Full details will be available in due course.



Afterwards, if you have the energy(!), why not cross the 'wobbly bridge' and visit the newly extended Tate Modern on the South Bank.

FORTHCOMING EVENTS (Cont.)

Autumn London Stroll: Kew Bridge to Barnes – Thursday 17th November



Last year we visited the Music and Steam Museums near Kew Bridge, but, beforehand, several of us walked down to admire the River Thames, so this Autumn's stroll will return to Kew and walk back along the Thames Path to Barnes Bridge Station, where you will have the option of either stopping at that point or continuing through Barnes town and across Barnes Common to Barnes Station. We'll stop off at the 'Ship Inn' near Chiswick Bridge. More information nearer the time.

REIMS – 3rd to 6th March 2017



Reims Cathedral



Musée des Beaux-Arts



Palace of Tau



Porte Mars

We're off to France again next year, this time to Reims with its famous Cathedral. Full details can be obtained from Chris House, but if you are interested in joining this Regional activity, he would like to know very soon. We need 40 people for the trip to go ahead.

The exact itinerary is still to be confirmed, but *may* include going via Arras and visiting the adjoining London Regiments WW1 Cemetery on the Somme, and perhaps Lille.

[Having got stuck in Arras some years ago trying to find a way out of the City, we felt truly 'Arrassed' Ed.]

REPORTS ON RECENT EVENTS

VISITS

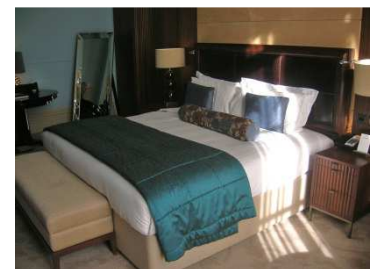
Three (!) visits to St. Pancras Renaissance Hotel Tuesday 16th February, Wednesday 16th March and Monday 16th May



St. Pancras Hotel



The famous staircase



Hotel bedroom

This visit was so popular that we needed to organise **three** visits. This must be unprecedented within the same year. Here is the report provided by Carol following the third tour:

(Cont. on next page.)

(Cont.) Our tours of St Pancras Renaissance Hotel in February and March were so popular we booked a third tour in May. We all enjoyed hearing the chequered history of the splendid Midland Grand Hotel envisaged by George Gilbert Scott and the Midland Railway. Chris, our informative guide explained the neo-Gothic decoration in the Grand Staircase and how the current sumptuous reception area had been built within a roadway while the original small area became a restaurant.

Two of the groups were allowed into a first floor suite where I was impressed how the bathroom had

been built within the bedroom preserving the Victorian cornice above. The original design had only one bathroom per floor, an arrangement that was already out of date by the early 1900s.

Twenty years ago the original upper floors were converted and sold as flats leaving just the first floor luxury suites to complement a modern wing of bedroom suites. Some of our February party extended their day in the British Library while the warmer weather in May encouraged a canalside walk for refreshments.

Carol Courtney

Weekend Abroad: Rouen and Honfleur – 26th to 29th February

A full report of this visit will appear in the next edition of 'In Touch', so just some pictures.



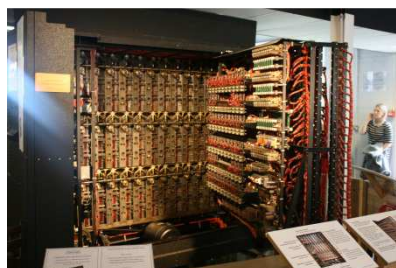
Bletchley Park, Milton Keynes – Saturday 11th June



One Group Outside Main Building



Tour Guide



'Bombe' Re-build



Alan Turing Statue

The place where Alan Turing et al., with the help of decoders from Poland, managed to break the code used by the Germans during WWII to transmit messages.

A little further afield than most of our day visits, so we held the event on a Saturday so Freedom Passes and Senior Rail Cards could be used earlier.

For much of the visit we were free to see the exhibits ourselves, but we split into two parties to have conducted tours. Ours was led by Mr Teng Chan who was very clear and spoke at just about

the right level. We weren't all ex-computer staff at Whyteleafe or avid crossword puzzlers! Yes, that was a qualification to be a member of the decoding team.

The grounds themselves were very attractive, and the various exhibit rooms were well displayed. Of course, with such a large area, it was impossible to see everything in one day, so the fact that our tickets are valid for a year could be very useful, and a number of people were planning to make a return visit.

N.B. With Southern Rail's problems, the direct service from East Croydon is currently suspended Go via Euston.

PUB QUIZ EVENING

Whyteleafe Football Club – 25th April 2016

?? This was the second Pub Quiz arranged by Croydon Aviva Fellowship and was held in the Bar at the Football Club. As well as Pensioners and their friends/family there was also the odd not-yet-retired Aviva contestant – catch them young and keep them coming!

There were about 40 people this year split into teams of 5 including, House Party, The Drama Queens, Kelly's Heroes, French Connection and It's a Family Affair. Being midweek the venue was fairly quiet allowing a good atmosphere for the quiz and easy access to the bar (essential for a Pub Quiz!).

The Quizmaster was again Ken Morcombe who did another excellent job. There was a good range of questions, including picture rounds – showing up some teams' knowledge (or otherwise!) of

European Flags. Ken also kept the quiz moving along so that there was plenty of time for the food in the mid-quiz break. This year it was a choice of Vegetable Curry and Rice or Sausage and Mash (for the Pub Food traditionalists).

There was time for a drink and a chat before the quiz as well as in the break and afterwards, and I think a good time was had by all and would encourage people to come along and join in when the next one is arranged. Christine Kelly

Thank you, Christine, Chris and, indeed, Ken from Maidstone Fellowship. Sorry, no pictures of this event.

WALKS

Royal Parks, London – Monday 22nd February

Like St. Pancras, this was also a third timer, but over a number of years on this occasion!



Horse Guards
On Parade



Bomber Command Memorial
Green Park



Group by Wellington Statue
Hyde Park

Roger Smith once again led us from Embankment Station to Kensington Gardens via Horse Guards Parade, St. James' Park, Green Park, and Hyde Park, with a stop for lunch on the way. It is amazing that, other than crossing some roads, one can walk continuously from one London Royal Park to another.

Through travel problems one couple missed the start, but did manage to track us down over lunch. They had obviously been on the walk before, and guessed which pub we would be stopping at!

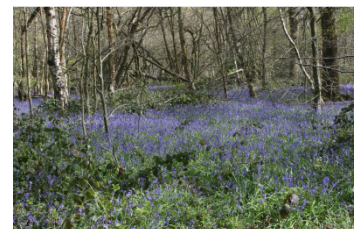
Bluebell Walk: Banstead Wood – Friday, 29th April



Party Near the Start



Walking through the Woods



The Bluebells

A short stroll in fine weather. We got the date just about right, despite my worries that everything was coming up very early after a very mild winter. The bluebells were in their full glory, and, as a bonus, at the start of the walk there were plenty of cowslips. We started at the 'Ramblers Rest' pub, where several of the party had a light lunch beforehand, and we all returned for liquid refreshment afterwards (mainly tea, although it was noticed that our Chairman had something stronger!). Dave Newland

Summer Walk: Knockholt and Halstead, Kent – Monday 18th July



Knockholt
Village Sign



The Party having a Break
Knockholt Pound



Halstead
Village Sign



‘The Cock’ Pub
Halsted

It had to be the hottest day of the year so far, didn't it? But it didn't deter 14 brave (?foolish) people setting out on a five mile walk from Polhill, via Knockholt Pound, Halstead and back to Polhill – well it should have been five miles, but we used a bit of common sense and cut it short, which, of course gave us more drinking time! I had not planned to stop at Knockholt Pound, but as it was so hot, we did have a break on the green. Brian's attempt at obtaining a drink at 'The Horseshoe' was thwarted – he discovered that they don't open on Mondays! (I must do more homework another time!). We continued along the lane to Halstead (instead of following the planned somewhat longer footpath route) where we did manage to refresh ourselves in 'The Cock', before returning to Polhill via a paddock housing Shetland ponies and a field of lambs who seemed a bit confused as to which bigger one was mum! Dave Newland

[As I cut out the bit striking towards Pratts Bottom, guess where I might be taking you next year.]

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EATING AND DRINKING

Pub Lunch, 'Horseshoe', Warlingham – Tuesday 31st May Italian Lunch, Gi Trattoria, West Wickham – Wednesday 6th July

Numbers were a bit down this time at the Horseshoe, but the food and service was as good as ever. Our thanks to Chris and Patricia for organising the event.

As usual, a first class meal in the very cosy atmosphere at the back of the Gi Trattoria. At the end of Brian's vote of thanks to the staff, he introduced Aser, from Gi, who had recently retired, but kindly returned just for us for the day. We wish Aser well in his retirement. Thanks are due to Brian for organising this meal once more.



Pre-lunch Drinks at 'The Horseshoe'



Diners at Gi Trattoria



Brian with Aser

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Photos: Nymans, Croydon Park Hotel, McDermott's, St. Paul's from their respective web-sites.
St. Pancras Hotel Bedroom: Carol Courtney, Rouen : Martin Green All other photographs by Editor.

At the AGM I displayed a lot more photographs taken during 2015 and I am already accumulating 2016 pictures for next year's AGM. I can only include a very limited number in the Newsletters, but if you would like a copy of any picture *that I have taken*, do let me know and I will be happy to print it for you
Dave Newland