

STOKESLEY PROBUS CLUB

Minutes of Members Meetings 2022-2023

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Minutes of Members Meeting held on 21/03/2023

Introduction

The Chairman and Members welcomed Peter Southeran as guest speaker to present his illustrated talk, "The piers of Coatham and Redcar"

Peter's family ran a printing business and in 1970 they produced an illustrated book recording the history of Redcar's two piers which he thought would make an ideal subject for a talk.

During the 19th century Coatham and Redcar were governed by separate administrations - Health Boards (so called to prioritise dealing with the cholera epidemics rife at that time) – which were permanently at loggerheads. Coatham was considered the "posh" district, and Redcar, the "poor" end of town. West Dyke Road formed the boundary.

There were several attempts to unify the two districts and heated campaigns ensued with feelings running high in both camps. The population was very split on the issue. At that time trips to coastal resorts were very fashionable, and Redcar proved a very popular destination. Consequently, in 1866 Redcar hatched plans to build a pier, however, these remained dormant until Coatham decided to go ahead with a pier of their own.

In 1771, Redcar commenced construction on a 1300ft pier with seating for 700, and a steamer jetty, which, when operational, ran services to Middlesbrough, Hartlepool and Whitby. After several years of smooth operation, a series of mishaps beset the pier.

- In 1880 the brig, "Luna", breached the pier and repairs were made.
- In 1885 the paddle steamer, "Cochrane", smashed into the steamer jetty, which was never rebuilt.
- In 1897 an abandoned Norwegian schooner, "Amarant", severed the pier. The 60ft breach was repaired.
- In 1898 a fire destroyed the end pavilion and bandstand. These were replaced by much smaller structures only providing sheltered seating.

A ballroom was added in 1907, which was enlarged several times, the last being in 1928 when a tearoom was added. After an uneventful few years, which saw declining use, a section was removed in 1940 in case of invasion during the war years. Storms and an exploding mine caused further damage, and in 1946, the remains were bought by Redcar Council. After further storms during the 1950's only 87ft of pier remained, but the ballroom continued in operation until finally closed, and all structures were demolished in 1981. All that remains at the site to record the pier's location is a blue plaque on the promenade wall.

If Redcar was to have a pier, then, not to be outdone, Coatham had to have one also. And a longer one, at 2000ft, a good 700ft longer. It was planned to have a shore end pavilion with kiosks, and a music pavilion at mid length. Construction started in 1870 and it was partially opened in 1872. However, before it was completed two ships were driven into it during a fierce storm causing two breaches breaking the pier into three sections. The ships were the schooners, "Griffin" and, "Corrymbus". Due to the high cost of repair, it was decided to reduce the length to 1800ft, and the eventual completion was achieved in 1875.

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After some years of uneventful operation, a violent storm in 1898 drove the barque, "Birger" through the pier isolating the music pavilion. The isolated section was further damaged by storms, and partially collapsed, at which point it was demolished and removed.

In 1899 the pier company became bankrupt and the pier was abandoned, and later removed leaving only the decaying roller skating pavilion. This was taken over by Coatham Council who replaced it in 1910 with a large glass pavilion, known as the "Glass House". This in turn was replaced by a new theatre in 1928, the "New Pavilion Theatre".

Larry Grayson performed there on numerous occasions, and it is believed that his catch phrase, "Shut that door!" originated in the theatre due to a back stage door often being left open allowing a blast of North Sea air to find its way onto the stage.

In the 1960's the theatre was converted to a cinema, "The Regent", operating until it was recently redeveloped into the modern purpose-built cinema seen today.

After both piers had gone neither Redcar or Coatham had a bandstand, an essential element of any self-respecting seaside town. The two councils agreed to share cost but could not agree where it should be located. They eventually agreed to build a structure on wheels, which could be shared by pushing it from one end of the promenade to the other in an early form of time share. Eventually, a permanent structure was built on the boundary, where a landscaped garden was also provided (at the end of Newcomen Terrace).

In the early 1900's a steam organ was positioned on the beach, and many complaints were made about the loud music being played until late in the evening. The foreshore was owned by Lord Zetland and leased to the two councils. After warnings were ignored, Lord Zetland, suspended the lease, and for one year (1907) no access was allowed onto the beach.

Redcar continued to thrive as a seaside resort throughout the 20th century. A dedicated platform at the station was used exclusively for excursion trains – for the beach and its attractions, and for Redcar Racecourse.

In recent years the beach has been the location for filming scenes of the war-torn seafront of Dunkirk in the film 'Atonement' and as a focal point for the TV Thriller 'The Boat' for which an abandoned fishing boat was placed on the sand.

Following several questions, and thanks from the Chairman for a fascinating and lively presentation, members expressed their thanks and appreciation to Peter in the customary manner with a hearty round of applause.

The Chairman then gave an eulogy for Peter Elsdon (1935 to 2023) with reflections on Peter's life and an In memoriam entry was made on the club website. A service for Peter was held on Friday 24th March at Middlesbrough Crematorium at 1.15pm

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Minutes of Members Meetings 2022-2023

Minutes

1. Apologies
Nine apologies received
2. Attendance
22 members attended along with three guests
3. Minutes of last meeting
Accepted

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4. Matters arising

None

5. Committee Reports

Treasurer - Annual accounts prepared. Finances just bordering on breaking even. Due to dwindling membership and rising costs it is likely that the annual subscription may need to rise to £30.

Insurance. The current policy provides much irrelevant cover - therefore, under review.

Secretary - No activity to report.

Website Manager - Website all up to date. Domain details confirmed and annual fee paid.

Speaker Finder - Programme for 2023/2024 completed. Prog. Cards to be distributed at AGM

6. Members' Lunches

Thursday 4th May 2023 - The Crown at Kirklevington 12.30 for 1.00pm. Please advise Peter Robinson if you wish to attend. If unsure of availability, just turn up on the day

Wednesday 2nd August 2023: The Cross Keys 6.00pm for 6.30pm meal

Tuesday 31st October 2023: Two venues under consideration – details to come.

7. Trips

The following trips are under review – and the estimated likely cost of each is indicated (calculated on minimum attendance of 20). Costs include transport and entry fees but exclude lunch and drinks.

- Raby Castle: £40.50pp
- Eskdale Inn and “Deals and Deceptions” at the Esk Valley Theatre: £39.00pp
- North Yorkshire Recycling Plant & Bluebell pub, Allerton: £28.50pp
- Lanchester Winery, Anfield Plain: £31.00pp
- Scarborough Castle: £37.50pp

Members are asked to consider these suggestions before the next meeting when a show of hands will decide on the final selection.

As the major cost is coach transport, Members will be asked to pay up front to ensure there is no risk of loss, which has happened in the past.

Ideas from Members included car-pooling and contacting “Oggies” transport of Great Ayton, specialising in minibuses. However, it was thought that “Oggie” had now retired. The Chairman will email details to Members for final commitments.

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8. Constitution

Numerous changes are proposed, mostly tidying up and for consistency. In addition, there are several minor tweaks regarding:

Recording of activities

Proposal of new members – requirement for seconder deleted, but Committee oversight.

Fun draws – improvement to spending accountability by the Treasurer.

Insurance provisions – necessity for insurance under review

Dissolution of Club – initial proposals from the Committee presented to Members for final decision.

A 21-day notice period is required for changes and the above will be formally proposed in time to be put to a vote at the AGM. The Chairman will email current and proposed Constitutions to Members

9. AOB

As this was the 400th meeting of the Club, the Chairman and the Treasurer had commissioned a supply of commemorative pens which were distributed to members.

As a point of interest, The Chairman was recently contacted by the Chairman of Stockton Probus Club; Mike Turner. It was mentioned that due to dwindling numbers they had opened up to women members. So far, four ladies have joined.

The Chairman informed members that The Stokesley Society had installed a blue plaque in town to acknowledge the work of the late member, Hugh Charman, in the establishment of the Conservation Area. In tribute, the Chairman outlined the achievements of Hugh in promoting and preserving the heritage of the town. The plaque is located on the wall of Chapter's Deli on the corner near the ziggurat.

10. Next Business Meeting

Tuesday 18th April 2023, when Jonathan Gilbey will present his talk:

“The Commonwealth War Graves”.

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Minutes of Members Meetings 2022-2023

Minutes of Members Meeting held on 21/02/2023

Introduction

The Chairman and Members welcomed Peter Southeran as guest speaker to present his illustrated talk, "Kirkleatham and its Almshouses". Peter was chairman of the Board of Trustees of the Kirkleatham Almshouses for many years and has a deep knowledge of its history and the extensive restoration that took place around 20 years ago.

The Almshouses and Chapel were built by local landowner Sir William Turner who was born in Guisborough in 1615 to a family of local landowners having extensive estates in the area. Starting as a trader in cloth, he moved to London where his business flourished and he became a wealthy merchant tailor. The Great Fire of London destroyed his house and business premises, but he soon recovered from this loss during the extensive rebuilding of large parts of the city.

Taking an interest in civic matters, Sir William became an alderman and a Member of Parliament and rose to become Mayor of London in 1668. He lived through eventful times seeing the fall of Charles I, and the Restoration with the coronation of Charles II. Selling fine fabrics and clothes to the wealthy and to the aristocracy he became very well connected - his circle of friends included such leading figures as Sir Christopher Wren and Samuel Pepys.

Having altruistic leanings, he built the almshouses at Kirkleatham in 1676. The initial buildings were quite plain, but a major rebuild in 1680 re-fashioned them in the elaborate style seen today. They provided what then was considered very civilised and comfortable accommodation for common people in need of assistance and would have been thought of as "little palaces" by the ten elderly women and ten elderly men fortunate enough to have been offered a home there. In addition, there was a school within the development providing a good education for 20 orphaned boys and girls.

In the late 1990's the building was in need of major refurbishment - the accommodation was uncomfortable, being poorly insulated, cramped, inadequately heated, and spartan with very basic amenities. To address this, the Board of Trustees embarked on an ambitious plan to carry out extensive renovations to meet modern requirements and expectations. Pairs of units were joined to form single dwellings with separate kitchens and bathrooms to provide more spacious comfortable accommodation. Being a Grade 1 listed building, the work needed to be carried out with great sympathy and under close scrutiny, in order not to compromise or lose any of its important historic characteristics. All these works were carried out between 2000 and 2002.

The centrepiece of the site is the chapel with its numerous fine features, which presented significant challenges during the renovations. In particular, some of the stained-glass windows by a renowned Italian maker, little of whose work survives, are of considerable importance. Originally, all the windows were set in mortar and, with movement of the stonework over the years, cracking had occurred in some of the glass panels. Repairs were carried out, and the windows were reset using flexible bedding to eliminate and further such problems.

Some of the fine stained glass depicts the Turner family. Interestingly, Sir William was not one for pomp and ceremony and this is reflected in one particular window which shows him

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in normal clothes, not in ceremonial dress, with his mayoral symbols of office being on the floor and only partially in view.

In addition to Lottery Fund financial assistance, the costs of the renovations were supplemented by the sale of relics and artefacts. As the ornate 18 carat gold encrusted chairs in the chapel, worth £55 when new (£26,000 today), were in poor shape, and the cost of repair was prohibitive, the Trustees took the decision to put them up for auction. They were accepted by Christie's for sale, and raised £850,000. Very prudently, the Turner family had bought them originally for two guineas each at a bankruptcy sale in Tottenham. Similarly, the splendid antique chandeliers, raised around £400,000. The money raised from these sales alone was sufficient to restore the courtyard and set up a £400,000 endowment fund that provides an income used to help pay the running costs.

The Grade 1 listed building status brought numerous challenges during the course of the work, and the removal of the chandeliers was a particular matter of contention. National Heritage considered these fixtures, and consequently, were under the protection of the listing requirements. However, after successfully appealing that they were, in fact, chattels, the Trustees were eventually permitted to remove them. Artefacts which were kept and are now on display include family paintings, numerous historic documentation relating to the building (Deeds, Covenants, Letters Patent, etc), family members' personal items, and Sir William Turner's death mask – wearing wig, original collar, and his ceremonial trimmings of office.

The Sir William Turner's School within the property continued until 1942 after having operated continuously since its establishment by Sir William and provided schooling for twenty disadvantaged children recommended by priests and other officials. After formal lessons the pupils were tasked with working in the kitchens, sweeping up and cleaning duties to help out with the everyday running of their school. Interestingly, many pupils have carved their initials and dates in the wooden pews, leaving a lasting legacy of their schooldays.

The property was held by the Turner family until the 1950's at which time it became an independent charity, which still operates under the stewardship of the Board of Trustees.

Following several questions, and thanks from the Chairman for a fascinating and lively presentation, Members expressed their thanks and appreciation to Peter in the customary manner with a hearty round of applause.

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Minutes

1. Apologies

Apologies were received from six members and two guests

2. Attendance

23 members and three guests were in attendance

3. Minutes of last Meeting

Accepted.

4. Matters arising

The Chairman brought name badges for Members who may not have one.

5. Committee Reports.

Treasurer – Chris Lee: No activity to report.

Secretary – John Edwards: No activity to report.

Website Manager – David Chalk (apols): Chairman reported:

Website Calendar, Minutes and Reports updated. New Front page and additional text on other items.

Speaker Finder: Programme for 2023/2024 completed ready for April AGM

6. Members' Lunches

The Mill: Wed. 8th Feb. 2023: 15 Members and two Guests attended. Enjoyed by all.

- Thursday 4th May 2023: The Crown at Kirklevington (suggestion of Jim Gannon) (Recently tried by the Chairman who considered it well worth a visit)
- Tuesday 31st October 2023: suggestions welcomed. Norrie Wilson – Fletchers Farm, Wilf Elliott - Treebridge

7. Trips

In order to gauge interest, the following suggestions for trips in 2023 were put to the vote to measure members' interest:

- Raby Castle (suggested by Paul Hayton) on 10th June 2023
- Arncliffe Arms and "Deals and Deceptions" at the Esk Valley Theatre on 24th August 2023
- North Yorkshire Recycling Plant & Bluebell pub, Allerton (suggested by Bob Scott)
- Lanchester Winery, Anfield Plain (suggested by Alwyn Boulby)
- Scarborough Castle (suggested by Alwyn Boulby)

Based on the level of interest shown the Chairman and Treasurer will prepare total costs on suggestions for further discussion at the next Meeting.

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8. AOB

The Chairman brought copies of Ted Parker's dvd's recording his trip along the course of the River Tees – available at £9 for a two-disc set.

The September 2023 meeting will be held on Tuesday 12th September to avoid clash with Stokesley Fair and Show week.

Fun Draw – This month the Chairman brought two DVD sets, each of four discs, celebrating 100 years since “The Flying Scotsman” took to the rails. The lucky winners were: Terry Radcliffe and Malcolm Britton

9. Next Business Meeting:

Tuesday 21st March 2023, when Christine Corbett will present William Gilleard Brown - Port Clarence's Most Famous Son.

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Minutes of Members Meeting held on 17/01/2023

Introduction

The Chairman opened the meeting, wishing all present a Happy New Year and thanking Keith Bell for the provision of the mince pies. As Keith couldn't source any mince pies, he baked them himself! The Chairman also thanked David Chalk for his Merry Christmas and Happy New Year Greetings to all Members which he posted on the website.

The Chairman then introduced Ted Parker who presented the second of his films on the River Tees. Ted described how he was asked to produce a film of the rainwater journey from its source to the mouth of the River Tees. In so doing he explained how the film took two years to complete and involved arial photography, several seasonal visits and boat rides on the lower river. This second film explores the upper reaches of the river, ending where that last film began, at Yarm.

Ted's film started at Crossfell, in the North Pennines, highlighting the catchment area of the fledgling river. Taking in the beautiful scenery and flora of the area around Cow Green reservoir, (built in the 1960s to cater for the burgeoning industry of Teesside), the film took us down Cauldron Snout and on to High Force. The narrator explained the geology of the falls and highlighted the seasonal difference in the flow of water. The Pennine Way crosses the Tees just south of the falls and the film briefly left the river to highlight the flora and fauna enjoyed by walkers in the area. Continuing downstream, the first sizeable habitation to be encountered was the market town Middleton in Teesdale.

The film deviated from the Tees to explore Grassholme Reservoir before continuing on to 12th century Romaldkirk and the gateway town to Teesdale, Barnard Castle. The narrator then gave a brief history of the town, including the 18th century Market Cross which still sports two bullet holes from 1803 when two local men argued about who was the best shot. Set on a high rock above the River Tees, Barnard Castle takes its name from its 12th century founder, Bernard de Balliol. It was later developed by the Beauchamp family and then passed into the hands of Richard III. It fell into disrepair in the next century and although owned by the Vane family, they rarely lived there. At this point the film took us to Raby castle, the 'new' ancestral home of the Vane family explaining the link between the present Lord Barnard and the castle that bears his name.

Not far from Barnard Castle is the stunning Bowes Museum. The film was able to show the famous 240 year old silver swan which gives a 'performance' once a day at 1pm. The next highlight was some arial views of the meandering river passing the confluence of the Tees with the River Greta and the 12th century Eggleston Abbey on its way to the Roman village of Piercebridge and the railway town of Darlington.

The culmination of this second film was the stunning views of the viaduct and ancient road bridge at Yarm. Ted had taken to the water to 'shoot' some tranquil views of the river before it reached the hustle and bustle of the lower Tees. The film also highlighted the vagaries of the river showing evidence of the great flood of Yarm in 1881.

The film was warmly received by Members who showed their appreciation in the usual manner.

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Minutes

1. Minutes

2. Apologies

There were 11 apologies

3. Guests:

The chairman welcomed six guests to the meeting

One with Peter Robinson, one with Chris Lee, three with the Chairman and one freelance (moved house into the area and found us on the club website)

4. Minutes of last Meeting:

Accepted.

5. Matters arising:

There were no matters arising.

6. Committee Reports:

Treasurer: The finances continue to be in good order.

Secretary: No activity to report.

Website Manager: Website up to date. Events will be added as and when information is available

Speaker Finder: Speaker programme in place for remainder of the Club year. 2023/24 programme progressing well

7. Members Lunches

Four dates proposed:

- Wed 8th Feb,
- Thurs 4th May,
- Wed 2nd Aug
- Tues 31st Oct.

Wednesday 8 February 2023 confirmed for The Mill in Stokesley. Members and guests can turn up on the day but advance booking along with meal choices would be preferred.

8. Christmas Lunch

Chris confirmed that 41 members and guests had attended. Member comments reported another very successful and enjoyable event. Photographs are on the website

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9. Trips

The Chairman asked for a show of hands relating to preferences for the trips that had been proposed by individual members. The Chairman & Treasurer will collate the preferences and report back at the next meeting.

10. AOB

None

There were three recipients of the fun draw; Colin Hinton, John Richardson, Paul Hayton

11. Next Business Meeting:

Tuesday 21st February 2023, when the speaker Peter Southeran will talk about 'Kirkleatham and its Almshouses'

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Minutes of Members Meeting held on 15/11/2022

Introduction

The Chairman introduced our guest speaker, Jean Spenceley who presented a talk on Scarborough Castle in the Civil War.

Following this fascinating and meticulously researched presentation and a short question and answer session, members expressed their appreciation and thanks to Jean with a hearty round of applause.

Minutes

The Chairman thanked Jean for a fascinating talk before opening the meeting.

The Chairman then paid tribute to Michael Watson, Chris Stirk and Tom Bailey who had recently passed away, followed by members observing a one-minute silence in memory of their lost colleagues.

The date of Michael's funeral is as yet unknown. However, Chris Stirk's funeral will be held at Stokesley Parish Church at 2.30pm on Tuesday 22nd November 2022.

1. Apologies:

Four apologies, 24 attendees.

2. Guests: None.

3. Minutes of last Meeting

Minutes of Meeting held on 18th October 2022 accepted by all. Thanks to Bob Scott for preparing minutes in the absence of John Edwards.

4. Matters arising: None.

5. Members' Lunches

The lunch held on 24th October 2022 at The Bay Horse Great Broughton was attended by 14 Members with three apologies for absence. Food good and company excellent.

The Treasurer raised an issue that arose at The Bay Horse lunch when the cost of drinks was put on a collective tab. The tip and fun draw money of £23 plus a contribution from a small number of members (who were still present) was used to pay this bill resulting in no tip for the venue.

In future, the venue will be advised to charge members individually for their respective drinks.

The following dates have been set for Members' lunches in 2023:

- Wednesday 8th February 2023
- Thursday 4th May 2023
- Wednesday 2nd August 2023
- Tuesday 31st October 2023

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No venues have been confirmed yet, and suggestions welcome.

One location under consideration is the Cross Keys (A171 Nunthorpe to Guisborough road), suggested by Graham Howard. Unfortunately, they have rigid noon starting time for parties. It was therefore suggested by the chairman that there could be a break from tradition and go for an early evening "Supper Club" meal. (Current cost is £16 for two courses and £18 for three courses.)

A show of hands demonstrated sufficient support for this proposal.

6. Christmas Lunch

The Christmas lunch is booked at the Wainstones Hotel, Great Broughton, on Tuesday 13th December 2022.

Currently, 32 have now booked. Guests welcomed.

Alwyn Boulby has invited Maria Humphrey (Mike's widow) as a matter of courtesy.

The Chairman informed members that Michael Watson had already booked places with meal selections. The chairman, following the example of Alwyn, asked if anyone knew Joan Watson (Michael's widow) well enough to invite her and keep the bookings.

7. Trips

The following ideas were put forward by the Chairman:

- Barbour outlet and Washington Old Hall – pub lunch (Julia Chuhan & Mike Lawrenson)
- Durham Cathedral (and City) – lunch at the Cathedral
- Ushaw College: Hidden tour - lunch at the College
- Raby Castle – lunch at the Castle (Paul Hayton)
- Esk Valley Theatre ("Deals and Deceptions") – lunch at the Arncliffe Arms
- NYCC Recycling Centre, Allerton – lunch at The Bell pub (Bob Scott)
- Lanchester Winery, Anfield Plain. (Wine merchant and Importer with the largest wine bottling plant in UK). (Alwyn Boulby)
- National Glass Centre together with a local fish and chip lunch (Wilf Elliott)
- Scarborough Castle (Alwyn's idea sparked by today's fascinating talk)

The Chairman will issue the list to members for consideration, with interest for each venue gauged by a show of hands at the February meeting to enable a final selection.

8. AOB

Stephan Barnes has printed updated badges and the remaining few were handed out.

The Chairman tabled a leaflet giving details of activities based in the Hub (Stokesley Library)

The Chairman collects second hand books, videos, etc, for charity and invited members to donate unwanted such items. Thanks went to Derek Whiting for bringing two two books to the meeting.

The Chairman offered two spare 2023 calendars were offered to Members (Marie Curie and World Research charities).

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Fun Draw – David Milner donated two copies of The Great Broughton, Kirkby and Ingleby Greenhow Local History Group publication documenting the history of The Wainstones at Great Broughton.

The lucky winners were: Norris Wilson and Maj Chuhan.

9. Next Business Meeting:

Tuesday 17th January 2023 when Ted Parker will present the second of his two films charting the course of the River Tees.

His presentation will cover the stretch from its source at Cross Fell in the Pennines downstream to Yarm and is entitled, "From a Raindrop to a Legend".

10. Meeting Close

The Chairman wished everyone a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year before bringing the meeting to a close.

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Minutes of Members Meeting held on 18/10/2022

Introduction

The Chairman welcomed back guest speaker, Alan Betteny, a keen industrial archaeologist, author of many publications on the subject and a past secretary of the Cleveland Industrial Archaeological Society. Alan spent over thirty years working for I.C.I at Wilton and has been involved in a number of restoration and research projects.

The title of Alans presentation 'From Railway Engines to Toilet Cubicles' detailed the history of a particular site adjacent to Norton Road Stockton. Alan started off by identifying the site, using old tithe maps to put it into context with the surrounding industry of the time, noting, in particular, the progress of the Clarence railway linking the North Eastern Railway to the Teesside docks. Originally an abandoned mill, the proximity of the Clarence railway, later the West Hartlepool railway, provided the Norton Road site with excellent transportation links for the engine sheds and coal depots, much of the coal being destined for the thriving port of Stockton. The coal was transported from the Durham coalfields by the Stockton & Darlington Railway Company and the sheds and adjacent area became workshops for the manufacture and maintenance of steam engines for the burgeoning railway industry.

The original engineers were George Fossick and Thomas Hackworth (brother of Timothy) and they produced some 120 locomotives in their working lifetime, starting in 1839. In 1853, the company began to supply simple marine engines, through the port of Stockton, to the rest of the world following the rapid expansion of the British Empire. They also supplied engines to the Confederate navy, who, at the time, were looking at ways to beat the blockade of their eastern ports. George Blair had joined the company as manager in the late 1850s, having worked in shipbuilding at the Govan yards in Glasgow. He had only limited experience with railway engines, so was employed mainly on the marine side of the business. Blair became a partner when Hackworth retired in 1864 and sole owner of the company in 1866 when Fossick retired. Naval conflicts throughout the world and burgeoning trade routes ensured that British shipbuilding thrived and George Blair went on to make a fortune as steam began to replace sail with marine engine builders Blair & Co. Ltd employing 2000 men at the Norton Road site.

George Blair died in 1894, leaving his son-in-law, Percy Sadler, to manage the company. Following Percy's death in 1906, a maternal cousin, Walter Borrie managed the firm, which continued to prosper until the depression of the late 1920's. At the end of the first world war, Norton Road marine engines were internationally famous, seeing service in some of the finest battleships the world had ever seen. However, a decline in shipbuilding spelt the end of the famous marine engine builder and in July 1932 Blair & Co went into liquidation, the factory finally shutting up shop in 1933.

The site on Norton Road took on a new lease of life when Hills and Sons of Yarm moved there, having outgrown their Yorkshire premises. Francis Hill founded his joinery company in 1849. He built up a successful business with the help of his two sons on the south bank of the Tees before moving to Norton Road. The company built its first aeroplane there in 1935, a timber framed bi-plane using wooden propellers. The company went public in 1936 and built the Hillson Praga monoplane based on a Czech E114 Praga in 1937 After 28 airframes were built, production came to a halt in 1939.

After the war the company concentrated on domestic timber products and celebrated its centenary in 1949. Its main product at this time was composite doors using a melamine

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outer sheet and subsequently, realignment of the company resulted in the production of the ubiquitous toilet cubicle we see in many commercial institutions today.

In 1992 the company was taken over by a Scandinavian group, which shortly afterwards, moved production to Barnsley with the Norton Road factory finally closing in 1997. The site was eventually cleared for housing and Alan concluded his talk by identifying that the names of occupiers of the site live on in the naming of several streets on the estate.

The speaker went on to answer a number of questions from members before the Chairman thanked Alan for such an entertaining and well researched talk.

The members responded with a hearty applause.

Minutes

The Chairman opened the meeting with a warm and heartfelt eulogy to Jack Candlin with additional tributes from Members.

1. Apologies:

27 members attended, five apologies

The Chairman 'welcomed back' Members who for a variety of reasons had not been able to attend in recent months.

2. Guests:

None

3. Minutes of last Meeting:

Accepted.

4. Matters arising

There were no matters arising.

5. Committee Reports

Treasurer: The finances continue to be in good order.

Secretary: Apologies. (The Chairman thanked Bob Scott for standing in)

Website Manager: Website up to date. Xmas menu now available on website.

Speaker Finder: Speaker programme in place for remainder of the Club year.
2023/24 programme progressing well

6. Members' Lunches – Peter Robinson

13 members and guests confirmed for Bay Horse, Gt. Broughton on Tuesday 25th October 2022. Members and Guests can turn up on the day but advance booking would be preferred.

7. Christmas Lunch – Chris Lee

Confirmed for Tuesday 13th December 2022 at the Wainstones Hotel, 12.30pm for 1.00pm meal. Chris Lee has paper copies of the menu available for those who don't have access to email.

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Bookings and preferences for Christmas lunch to be in by next meeting (15 Nov. 2022)

8. Wainstones Hotel – venue for Christmas Lunch

David Milner gave an excellent impromptu presentation on the history of the Wainstones Hotel. Built in 1725, the building was used as a domestic house, carpet 'showroom' and slaughterhouse before gaining a licence to sell food and wine and finally being converted into the hotel we see today. The presentation was well received by members

9. Trips

Final decision on 2023 Trips to be made at the January/February Meetings

10. AOB

The chairman distributed new name badges, produced by Stefan Barnes, to Members present.

There were two recipients of the fun draw of two jigsaws depicting railway scenes. The lucky winners were Chris Lee and Derek Whiting

11. Next Business Meeting:

Tuesday 15th November 2022, when the speaker, Jean Spencley, will be presenting an illustrated talk on 'Scarborough in the Civil War'

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Minutes of Members Meetings 2022-2023

Minutes of Members Meeting held on 20/09/2022

Introduction

As the guest speaker, Ian Pearce, was unwell and unable to attend, the Chairman stood in at short notice. (Ian's talk will be rescheduled for 2023).

The main feature of the Chairman's entertaining presentation was a recounting of the widely forgotten "Battle of Stockton", which took place in 1933. The idea for the subject arose during a recent encounter with an old colleague who was a member of a Stockton choir who were preparing to put on a concert to commemorate the event.

The circumstances leading to the "battle" were long in the making. The US economic depression of the 1920's spread to Europe and industries were hit and many jobs lost, none more so than the NE of England. The once very active shipyards and all associated businesses began to close at an alarming rate: nineteen by 1930, six more in 1931 and in 1932 the last ship built in Jarrow was launched. Mass unemployment ensued and there was discontent with the current political parties who offered no answers.

Radical parties sprang up around Europe – e.g., Hitler's National Socialist Party and Mussolini's National Fascist Party – and tapped into dispirited populations unhappy with the lack of solutions provided by the mainstream political parties.

Similarly in the UK radical groups such as the British Union of Fascists (the BUF led by Oswald Moseley and his "black shirts") gained ground. They saw the deprived areas with high unemployment as fertile recruiting grounds and organised marches around hard-hit areas.

On 10th September 1933 they came to Stockton led by Capt. Vincent Collier assembling at Victoria Bridge, Thornaby. Numbering around 200 to 300 and well organised, they lined up in formation and marched to Market Cross where they were met by a throng of around 2,000 to 3,000 anti-fascist groups comprising members of the Communist Party and the National Unemployed Workers Movement who were holding a rally of their own.

The BUF faced heckling and spitting and their speaker had difficulty in being heard. This escalated until violence broke out between the factions with staves, razor blades and bricks being used. Only seven policemen were on duty in the vicinity to restore peace and ordered the BUF back to their buses, however, some were trapped in the street and the police ushered them back to the main group.

Remarkably, given the potential for serious consequences, no knives or guns were used, and no deaths or significant injuries occurred except that one BUF member was hit in the face and lost an eye as a consequence. A sensational version of events was reported in local newspapers and dubbed "The Battle of Stockton" but was generally ignored by the national press. The incident was a precursor to a similar occurrence in Curzon Street, London, in 1936, which was covered widely in the press.

Following sustained opposition by the local Communist Party led by George Short, the BUF lost its foothold in the Teesside area and closed its local branch.

A plaque recording the event was installed on the Market Cross building in Stockton High Street in 2018.

The Chairman then entertained Members by explaining the often obscure and surprising origins of numerous well-known phrases.

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Members appreciated the work put in by the Chairman to provide such an interesting talk programme, especially at short notice. Members expressed their thanks with a hearty round of applause.

Minutes

1. Apologies:

15 apologies, 14 attendees

2. Guests:

None

3. Minutes of last Meeting:

Accepted.

4. Matters arising:

The Chairman acknowledged the professional, efficient and valued work of the Secretary producing Notes from the Speaker Talk and Minutes from the Business Meeting.

The Chairman brought along a shower timer as a follow up to water saving devices presented at previous meeting.

5. Committee Reports:

Treasurer: The finances are in good order.

Secretary: No activity to report.

Website Manager: Website up to date. The memorials for Fred Logie and Geoff Phillips have been taken down in line with the policy to remove them after about a year.

Speaker Finder: Unable to attend meeting. Speaker programme in place for remainder of the Club year.

6. Members' Lunches

Peter Robinson and the Chairman are looking hard for the next venue and will make a decision in the next 10 days. Of the places visited so far, both were ruled out -

- the Cross Keys due to poor menu choice and rigid timing,
- the Blackwell Ox due to one theme menu (Thai).

7. Christmas Lunch

The Christmas lunch is booked at the Wainstones, Gt. Broughton for Tuesday 13th Dec. 2022. No menu or pricing details announced yet. The Treasurer will ask Members to book their attendance early. When asked for an indication of interest there was a good show of hands from Members present.

8. Trips

The visit to the Arncliffe Arms and "All Lies" at Esk Valley Theatre on 25th August 2022 was attended by 11 Members and 13 Guests. It was thoroughly enjoyed by all.

STOKESLEY PROBUS CLUB

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It was therefore decided to consider another visit next year as a show was planned for a possible date of 23rd August 2023. As some Members & friends may book with other groups the Chairman raised the possibility of sharing transport to reduce the cost per head.

Other Trip suggestions for 2023:

- Raby Castle (previously visited on 10th June 1998)
- Barbour outlet & Washington Old Hall (NT)
- Durham Cathedral
- Ushaw College (Hidden Tour)
- North Yorkshire Recycling Plant & Bluebell pub (Allerton)

Selection will be finalised around January/February 2023.

One Member enquired about a trip to see South Pacific, which had been previously declined by Members. (Note: show is a complete sell-out).

9. AOB

The Chairman informed Members that updated name badges were available – Club official name “Stokesley Probus Club” and no longer “Stokesley and District Probus Club”. This was changed to eliminate confusion arising from possible overlap with neighbouring club areas. However, the Club's bank account name will remain unchanged as it would be too problematic to change.

10. Fun Draw

This month the Chairman brought two book prizes each comprising Andrew Marr's “The History of Modern Britain” and “The Making of Modern Britain”. The lucky winners were David Bryson and Keith Bell.

11. Next Business Meeting:

Tuesday 18th October 2022, when the speaker Alan Bettenev will be presenting “From Railway Engines to Toilet Cubicles”.

STOKESLEY PROBUS CLUB

Minutes of Members Meetings 2022-2023

Minutes of Members Meeting held on 14/08/2022

Introduction

The Chairman introduced the guest Speaker, Air Vice Marshal Phil Roser (retired), to present his talk entitled, "Life in a Fighter Pilot Cockpit".

He is a member of Northallerton Rotary Club who are very active organising events to commemorate the club's 75th anniversary. He conveyed greetings from its members to our Club.

Phil spent 37 years in the RAF including being Station Commander at RAF Leeming from 1992 to 1994. He was on active service in Germany and Bosnia before retiring in 2003. He is President of 111 Fighter Pilot Association and lives in Northallerton.

His interest in flying was sparked by his school careers officer showing him photographs of the Lightning jet fighter. Following this, the first step towards a career in the RAF started at the age of 16 applying for a pre-assessment at Croydon. Clearly impressed, the RAF offered him a one month all expenses paid intensive flying instruction resulting in the award of private pilot's licence. This involved training in a Tiger Moth, an aeroplane for which he has much affection.

There was no obligation to join the RAF, but this was the career path he wished to follow. He entered service as a cadet at RAF Cranwell where he trained in the Jet Provost. Following graduation, Phil flew the Gnat at Anglesey later progressing to the Hawk and the Hawker Hunter at various bases.

The first operational jet fighter he flew was the English Electric Lightning when he was based in Goodeslau in Germany (the nearest base to East Germany) during the Cold War period.

This single seater aircraft was hugely powerful being able to accelerate vertically, was highly manoeuvrable and armed with Firestreak guided missiles. It was a fine aircraft to fly despite the cockpit being very confined.

During this period the base was on constant alert requiring loaded and armed aircraft to be airborne within 5 minutes of alert. Phil's best time was 2 minutes 10 seconds.

Examples of scrambling his aircraft included guiding a light aircraft in distress (no radio contact) which required low speed achieved by steep nose up flying and an order to shoot down a defecting Russian Mig fighter. The pilot ejected prior to interception.

Together with operational standby, there were regular exercises with firing practice (missiles and guns) and air-to-air refuelling requiring much skill to engage probe on nose of aircraft with a basket surrounding a cone on a rubber hose bobbing about at 300 knots (500 mph).

Phil then became Commander of 111 Squadron flying the two-man Phantom. This is a full war machine armed with 4 Skyflash radar guided missiles, Sidewinder heat seeking missiles, and an 8-barrel cannon capable of firing short bursts of 100 rounds a second (6,000 rounds per minute). It has two Rolls Royce Spey engines and large fuel tanks. A US built aircraft requiring pilot and navigator. Due to the tail configuration and swept angle of the wings, it was notably difficult to control at low speeds.

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Live firing exercises with this aircraft took place near Cyprus and much time was spent flying in battle formation. This also helps greatly to navigate as a group when penetrating cloud.

Phil then became Commander of three operational squadrons of Tornado F3 aircraft at RAF Leeming. This aircraft is swing wing giving high manoeuvrability at both high and low speeds, requires a two-man crew and carries similar weaponry to the Phantom. Notably, it was the first jet fighter operating with the RAF which had reverse thrust. During this time Phil flew with one of the squadrons on operations in Bosnia with the aircraft being based in southern Italy.

Highlights of Phil's career was the privilege of leading Tornado fly pasts over Buckingham Palace on several Royal commemorations. The usual close formation diamond 16 was considered risky over London, therefore a four-diamond box pattern was followed.

Phil paid tribute to the ground staff and maintenance crews who are equally important members of the team that enable the RAF to operate their aircraft.

In conclusion, Phil declared that it had been a great privilege to serve in the RAF and a wonderful career.

Phil also explained that he had given his talk to Northallerton Rotary Club and as a result of several requests had agreed to be guest speaker for several other groups. However, he did not wish to become a regular speaker and kindly asked members not to invite or recommend him to present his talk.

Numerous questions followed – a testament to the great interest in the subject held by Members. The Chairman thanked Phil for his absorbing presentation and Members showed their appreciation and thanks in the usual way with an enthusiastic round of applause.

Eulogies

The Chairman delivered a eulogy for Mike Humphrey

The Club then observed a one-minute silence.

Minutes

1. Attendees & Apologies:
23 Members in attendance and 8 apologies
2. Guests:
Two guests welcomed with the Speaker.
3. Membership:
The current Membership is 38.
4. Minutes of last meeting:
Accepted.
5. Matters arising:
None.

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Minutes of Members Meetings 2022-2023

6. Committee Reports

Treasurer: Nothing of significance to report.

Secretary: No activity to report.

Website Manager: Website up to date apart from Minutes of AGM of 19th April 2022.

Speaker Finder: Programme of speakers confirmed for current year 2022/2023.

7. Trips

25th August 2022 – Arncliffe Arms and “All Lies” at Esk Valley Theatre. Nine booked but four spare tickets still available. For those still interested the trip is £35 plus lunch choice at the Arncliffe Arms (two courses: £13). Contact the Chairman or the Treasurer to book.

A glowing review published in the Daily Telegraph was brought by Colin Hinton. Chris Taylor who recently saw the play similarly highly recommended it.

The Treasurer reported that the financing of trips was sometimes problematic. The Ushaw College visit, for instance, showed a potential loss of £120 until the Chairman negotiated a refund.

It is proposed that in future a meaningful deposit will be required and any dropouts may forfeit this depending on the overall financial position of the trip.

Members were invited to propose ideas regarding the costing of trips – please advise the Treasurer or the Chairman.

Suggestions for 2023:

- Barbour Outlet (free entry)
- Washington Old Hall (National Trust)
- Durham Cathedral (Cathedral tour, lunch)
- Ushaw College – Secret Tour
- Raby Castle

8. Members' Lunches

A successful lunch was held at the Fox Covert which was attended by 14 Members with three apologies.

The next lunch will be held on 25th October 2022 – venue yet to be decided.

9. AOB

Stephan Barnes sent a link from the NWA to the Chairman with advice on how to save water.

The Chairman placed an order and highlighted the items encouraging members to use the Link.

10. Fun Draw

This month the Chairman brought two copies of a book about the Spitfire aircraft. The lucky winners were: Michael Watson and Peter Robinson.

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11. Next Business Meeting:

Tuesday 20th September when the speaker, Ian Pearce, will be presenting "The Man who Could Have Built the Forth Bridge".

Minutes of Members Meeting held on 19/07/2022

Introduction

The Chairman introduced the guest Speaker, our very own Speaker Finder, Keith Burton, to present his talk entitled, "Yorkshire's last Mediaeval Abbey", which detailed the history of Mount Grace Priory.

Keith firstly explained the title of his talk – there are dozens of abbeys in North Yorkshire, some dating from the 6th century, but mostly from the 12th century when many Carthusian religious settlements were established. It was not until well after this surge and in 1398 that a Foundation Charter for Mount Grace was created giving rise to its claim to be the last abbey in the area.

The Carthusian monks followed a strict regime of simple food, much study and prayer, and mostly in the solitude of individual cells (adjoining houses with several rooms and private gardens, arranged in the form of cloisters). They were supported by lay brothers who carried out the day-to-day functions of running the abbey estate.

Mount Grace demonstrates a typical Carthusian abbey layout except that it has an unusually small central church. The northern of two cloisters was formed by the monk's cells, and the southern cloisters were occupied by the lay brothers.

Keith explained in detail the monks' rigorous daily routine of prayer, study, writing, gardening (food production), all in solitude apart from attending three church services. Centrally cooked meals were prepared and delivered by lay brothers.

The long road to becoming a monk took many years and progressed through numerous arduous stages.

Monastic orders declined after the Black Death but the Carthusian abbeys survived well due to their relative isolation and solitary living conditions.

Mount Grace was partly destroyed in 1400 when rector Holland was arrested and put to death for supporting an attempt to assassinate Henry IV. The abbey was re-established and survived the following violent and tumultuous 100 years.

In 1534 Henry VIII's Act of Succession was imposed and the Carthusians were asked for their support with refusal resulting in some Priors being martyred. The introduction of The Act of Supremacy in 1535 brought about the dissolution of smaller monasteries in 1536. There was much dissent, and although Henry initially issued pardons but commenced a savage repression when the Abbots of Jervaulx and Bridlington were executed and the larger monasteries began to be dissolved resulting in huge profits for the King.

Mount Grace survived until 1539, after a brief recovery in 1533 under Queen Mary. It was finally closed in 1559 by Elizabeth I.

Over the next centuries it changed hands several times. Owners included John Cheney, Thomas Lascelles (who converted it to a Manor house), William Brown, and in 1898, Sir Isaac Lothian Bell, the well-known local industrialist. He transformed the interiors in Arts and

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Crafts style. Sir Hugh Bell succeeded his father in 1904 and used the house as a weekend retreat when it became well known for holding pageants and arts events often involving the local population.

The property was transferred to the National Trust in 1953 and leased to tenants. It is currently managed by English Heritage.

The final tenancy ended in 1974 when the elderly lady tenant died while attempting to swim around Saltburn Pier to raise money for local churches.

The Chairman then thanked Keith for a fascinating, deeply researched, and excellently presented talk. Members showed their appreciation in the customary manner with loud applause.

Minutes

1. Apologies:

9 apologies, 20 attendees plus 1 guest

2. Guests:

Maj Chuhan's Guest, Geoff Bolland, was warmly welcomed.

3. Membership:

The current Membership is 38.

4. Minutes of last meeting:

Accepted.

5. Matters arising:

None.

6. Committee Reports

Treasurer: The dispute with Ushaw College over charges has been resolved following emails sent by the Chairman. The College subsequently processed a refund and the trip is now showing a small profit.

Secretary: No activity to report. Thanks to the Chairman for preparing minutes for last month's meeting.

Website Manager: Website up to date. David presented a useful demonstration of the Club's website on the large screen showing members how to navigate their way through the various sections. This was appreciated.

Speaker Finder: Next year's programme in place. Handover to Bob Scott in process.

7. Trips

Further to the discussion at the previous meeting about costing of trips, any ideas are welcomed – please advise Chris Lee or Keith Waller.

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One Member wished to join proposed Club trips to see South Pacific and Singing in the Rain. However, both visits had been cancelled due to lack of support. South Pacific at the Theatre Royal, Newcastle was a complete sell out.

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Suggestions:

- Washington Old Hall (National Trust) and Barbour Factory Outlet
- Durham Cathedral (several different tours)

Keith Waller gave a preliminary report on these venues. An agenda item for early in 2023.

25th August 2022: Trip to Eskdale Inn & and "All Lies" at Esk Valley Theatre confirmed and transport and venues booked. A small number of spare tickets still available. Please advise Keith Waller if you wish to attend.

8. Members' Lunches

Peter Robinson, lunch organiser, gave a rundown on the problems that have arisen after the pandemic shutdowns; prices have risen, staff shortages, limited menus, less flexibility in timings, often a requirement for pre-ordering and website menus that are out of date. The Crathorne Arms is a case in point – a suitable booking was made but had to be cancelled due to the first lockdown. Recently expecting to re-book under nearly similar terms, PR was disappointed to find that things are very different and the changes imposed made it unsuitable for our requirements.

Peter and Keith visited several venues. The Cross Keys (on Nunthorpe to Guisborough road) was considered. However, this still required pre-ordering, a £10 per head deposit and 12.00noon meal.

Cross Keys was not booked.

A Booking was confirmed at the Fox Covert for Thursday 28th July. Members interested are requested to put their name forward early. The Club will advance deposits, but anyone dropping out will unfortunately still have to reimburse £10 to the Club.

9. AOB

The Chairman encouraged members to invite more guests

10. Fun Draw

This month the Chairman brought two King James Presentation Bibles together with books of Famous Phrases from the Bible describing the biblical origins of many common expressions.

The lucky winners were John Edwards and John Rhind

11. Next Business Meeting

Tuesday 16th August, when the speaker Philip Roser who will be presenting "Life in a Fighter Pilot's Cockpit".

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Minutes of Members Meetings 2022-2023

Minutes of Members Meeting held on 21/06/2022

Introduction

The Chairman introduced the guest Speaker, Peter Morgan who gave a talk on the restoration of Tockett's Mill.

Mills have been in the area since the 1200s encouraged by Guisborough Abbey. Parish boundaries followed mill races rather than local becks proving the antiquity of the mill despite the lack of written evidence before the 1600s.

The first reference for Tockett's Mill dates from the 1600s. The name 'Tocketts' has featured strongly since mediaeval times and is prevalent in the area. Great areas of land in the region were bought and sold by wealthy families such as Lord Zetland, the Pennymans, the Lowthers, the Douglas' and the Seatons.

Tockett's Mill. was closed between the wars and then used for domestic purposes before finally closing in 1960 because of a rotten wheel. The Seaton family, owners, left in 1972.

The Tockett's Mill. site was purchased and changed into a Restaurant and Caravan Park with a developing museum feature for the mill. A great deal of repair, maintenance and improvement work was completed by students from South Park Sixth Form College. through the 1970s and 1980s led by John Harrison and Peter Morgan. A great deal of labour was involved with students learning many skills. The wheel was repaired in 1976 but with a lifetime of 50 years maintenance is a high priority. Numerous pieces of equipment were salvaged from local farms and industrial sites and local industry including Monsanto, Dorman Long and ICI supported requests for machinery and equipment and grants were also received from Education Departments.

Flooding in the 1970s ruined the mill race diverting the water so the mill could not be operated. An electrically driven pump was installed to pump water from a sump to the top of the wheel to make the wheel rotate so the mill could be operated for demonstration purposes only being too expensive for a commercial operation. Walls were removed or repaired and millstones were restored. Many wood beams and structures were also replaced and the site was ready to open to the Public in 1980.

Manpower Services supported developments and the management of Tockett's Mill.by attaching staff to one-year specific skills programmes for engineers, lecturers and bankers.

The site was re-opened on 8th May 2022 - National Mills Day.

Peter concluded his talk with some discussion and answered questions from members before final appreciation was extended.

Eulogies

The Chairman delivered Eulogies for:

- Mervyn Davies with a personal comment from Dick Hawkins;
- John Foster with personal additions from Dick Hawkins and Wilf Elliott;
- John Upton.

The Club one-minute silence was then observed.

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Minutes of Members Meetings 2022-2023

Minutes

1. Apologies:
12 Members submitted apologies
23 Members attended
The Chairman 'welcomed back' several Members returning following a 'medical time out'.
2. Guests:
No guests attended but several 'friends' have expressed interest.
3. Membership:
The Chairman welcomed Malcolm Britton to his first Meeting as a new member.
Membership currently stands at 39.
The Chairman encouraged members to invite more guests
4. Minutes of last meeting:
Minutes of the meeting held on 17 May 2022 were accepted as a true record
5. Matters Arising
None
6. Committee Reports:
Secretary: John Edwards - apologies
Website Manager: David Chalk – apologies (Note sent: website is up-to-date and demonstration to be given at next meeting (19.7.22)
Speaker Finder: Keith Burton/Bob Scott – 'All up-to-date'
Treasurer: Chris Lee – Focus on Trip costs under next item
7. Trips:
Ushaw Report (CL & KW)
Nine Members and seven Guests attended with eight apologies
The venue and day were deemed to be a great success and enjoyed by everyone.
A costing issue arose due to the demand for payments to be made in advance and the withdrawal of several Members. This resulted in a loss to the club on the trip.
A number of members agreed to compensate the 'Trip budget' which reduced the net loss to £26.00. Ushaw College agreed to provide only a credit note for £70.00 should the club decide to make another visit. The Chairman highlighted the ongoing communication difficulties experienced.

CL & KW led a discussion with Members on general issues:
Previous numbers attending trips were higher so it was easier to allow for withdrawals.

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The impact of requesting Deposits when booking places on trips.

The impact of members making late withdrawals or being late additions to trips.

The relevance/importance of timing for any withdrawal and the reasons.

The current climate of increased venue and transport costs.

Options available to cover costs of withdrawals.

Two comments from members:

- Once a commitment is made then it should be honoured.
- A hard-line should be taken on charges to, and payments from, members.

No decisions were taken at this time.

The Chairman asked members to think about the issues and offer their views; and that it would also be a committee agenda Item for meeting on 16.8.22

All Lies Update (Trip on 25 August 2022)

Currently 10 Members and 13 Guests Booked with four apologies

There are still three spare tickets available for members or guests. (Contact Keith if interested)

All 23 participants have paid their £25.00 deposit.

A further £10.00 per person is now requested to complete two cost elements.

A separate arrangement is being considered with the Eskdale Inn for the lunch payment.

8. Future Trips

Suggestions from Mike Lawrenson and Julia Chuhan:

- The Barbour Outlet Factory
- The Washington Old Hall
- Durham Cathedral

The Chairman detailed some preliminary enquiries, research, timings, costs and dates. (This will be an agenda Item in 2023)

Members thanked Chris Lee and the Chairman for all of the effort they committed.

9. Member Lunch

The next lunch is booked at the Crathorne Arms on Thursday 28th July. Organisation and additional information pending with Peter Robinson.

10. AOB

None

11. Fun Draw

Village Buildings of Britain: Michael Watson and Mike Lawrenson

12. Next Meeting:

Tuesday 19th July 2022: Speaker is Keith Burton - Yorkshire's Last Mediaeval Abbey

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Minutes of Members Meetings 2022-2023

Minutes of Members Meeting held on 17/05/2022

Introduction

The Chairman introduced the guest Speaker, Mark Braithwaite to present his talk, "The Hartlepool Canoe Man". Mark is a retired Detective Chief Superintendent, Head of Crime, with Cleveland Police who led the inquiries into numerous major cases, none more infamous than that of John Darwin (and his wife Anne) known as "canoe man".

John Darwin, born in Sunderland in 1950, had initially been a teacher, but was unable to settle in jobs and subsequently became a bank teller, then a prison officer.

He and his wife had dreams of building a property empire and enjoying a glamorous life, and set about this by starting to buy properties. They acquired adjoining houses on Seaton Carew waterfront, in one of which they lived.

They got into debt so hatched a plan to pull off an insurance fraud. This involved John dragging his canoe from the house to the beach and paddling off into the distance on a calm still day. He turned north and came to shore at a quiet location near Blackhall Rocks where Anne had driven to meet him. He smashed canoe and pushed it into the sea, and was then driven by Anne to a quiet rural area near Carlisle where he camped out and kept a low profile.

Anne returned home and reported him missing, which initiated a very extensive and expensive air and sea search operation.

The police knew that a body lost at sea off Hartlepool would be swept by currents to the beach at Redcar or Marske. As no body was found a coroner's inquest recorded a verdict of "death by misadventure".

On receipt of the Death Certificate Anne claimed around half a million pounds from insurance policies.

In the meantime, John had tired of his uncomfortable existence and had returned home secretly in hairy and bearded state. He adopted a stoop, used a stick and pretended to be much older than he was, but mostly stayed indoors. When any visitors came to the house John would go upstairs to a bedroom where a wardrobe was backed against the party wall. The wardrobe concealed a door to an opening broken through to their adjoining house. Incredibly, this deception was even carried out when either of their two sons visited. The police believe the sons genuinely understood that their father was dead.

John and Anne then planned to leave the country with the money, but to do this John needed a passport. John searched records online and found the birth certificate of a child who was born on 1950 and died at 5 months. He ordered and paid for an official copy, and assumed the identity of John Jones. As his photograph needed to be signed he frequented the local library and befriended the librarian. After some time the librarian was willing to sign his photograph when asked.

They chose to travel to Panama where they initially rented a flat and planned to start a property rental business. For business reasons and because he wished to be reacquainted with his sons, John decided to regain his true identity and travelled back to the UK. He pretended to have amnesia and ended up in the care of the police in London who he told he

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Minutes of Members Meetings 2022-2023

could only remember his name and where he came from. When Anne was contacted she expressed surprise and elation that John had re-appeared.

At this time the Daily Mirror had uncovered a photograph that had appeared in a Panama newspaper showing John and Anne with an estate agent taken during an apartment purchase transaction.

This of course destroyed their deception and they were both subsequently arrested. John, while staying with one of his sons, and Anne on her return to the UK accompanied by the Daily Mirror reporters after they gained an exclusive on the story.

They were both charged and tried at the High Court where John pleaded guilty but Anne pleaded not guilty claiming "marital coercion". Both were found guilty and each sentenced to six years in prison.

They were released early, and later divorced. John married a Filipina and is now living in the Philippines, and Anne lives in a village in North Yorkshire.

Almost all the money has now been retrieved and returned to the relevant insurance and finance companies.

Mark recalled two notable amusing events during the affair ; the Daily Mirror front page headline, "The Thief, the wife and the wardrobe", and the Welcome to Seaton Carew " signs being altered to read "Welcome to Seaton Canoe, twinned with Panama".

The Chairman led the thanks to Mark for a fascinating, gripping and excellently presented talk, and the Members showed their appreciation in the customary manner with loud applause.

Business Meeting

1. Apologies

19 attendees and 14 apologies

2. Guests

Three guests were warmly welcomed:

- Peter Howe, guest of Chris Lee
- Brian Corfield, guest of Maj Chuhan
- Gordon Wood, guest of Keith Waller

3. Membership

Since the last meeting the Club has sadly lost two of its members:

- Mervyn Davies 91 on 29th April
- John Forster 87 on 12th May

The Chairman gave an update on the situation of the Membership:

- Mike Humphrey, Dan Humphry and Chris Turk are all too frail to continue as Members and have sadly resigned.

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- Peter Elsdon has moved into Nunthorpe Care home and is unlikely to return.
- Brian Aston 93 is deaf and housebound and is unlikely to return
- Jack Candlin 86 is too frail and will not be renewing membership
- Walter Gregory 88 also too frail and unlikely to return

Consequently, during the last year the Membership has reduced from 53 to 38.

4. Minutes of last meeting

Accepted.

5. Committee Reports

Treasurer: The treasurer thanked Members for (mostly) prompt payment of subscriptions.

Ushaw College trip cost now due: £30.

Secretary : No activity to report since last meeting.

Website Manager: The website up to date

Speaker Finder: Next year's programme in place. Handover to Mike Scott in process.

6. Committee Update

Officers:

Keith Waller, Chairman

Chris Lee, Treasurer

Maj Chuhan, Auditor

Bob Scott, Speaker Finder

David Chalk, Website Manager

John Edwards, Secretary

General Members:

Keith Bell

Kevin Clifford

Graham Howard

Derek Whiting

7. Trips

The following trips were dropped due to lack of interest

- Bradford – Singing in the Rain
- Leeds – South Pacific

Confirmed Trips:

- 9th June 2022 - Ushaw College. 21 booked so far. Payment of £30 now due.

STOKESLEY PROBUS CLUB

Minutes of Members Meetings 2022-2023

- 25th August 2022 – Eskdale Inn & Esk Valley Theatre. ?? booked, but 3 spare tickets still available.

8. Members' Lunches

There are now four lunches per year.

On 27th April 14 Members and one guest attended lunch at the Jet Miners, Great Broughton. Enjoyed by all but a little crowded.

Next lunch on 28th July 2022 at the Crathorne Arms. No booking necessary, just turn up.

9. AOB

Promotion of Club in media – Derek Whiting reported that there had been no response yet to this publicity.

Fun Draw – This month the Chairman brought a box full of the book, “Laidlaw” by William McIlvanney, a crime novel set in Glasgow, and offered copies to all present. Any remaining copies were given to charity shop.

10. Next Meeting:

Next business meeting is on 21st June.

The speaker is Peter Morgan who will be presenting “The Restoration of Tockett's Mill”.

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Minutes of Members Meeting held on 19/04/2022

By agreement with all present, a members Meeting was not held this month