

NEWSLETTER

Annual Report

Thanks to your continued support the Branch continues to thrive despite a constant battle to be prudent with income received.

Hopefully, if you are reading this Newsletter then you have already re-joined or about to do so; therefore, a warm welcome to you and new members, with a chance to reflect on the past year's events.

Finance

As illustrated in the charts below the financial situation continues to be stable.

Income streams although few have helped in the generation of a surplus this year (subject to Audit confirmation)

Book sales of just over £100 have been attributable to the tireless efforts of David & Kay. They are unable to continue for the foreseeable future BUT from the meeting held in March it would appear that there is a "volunteer group" from the membership, who are willing to display, return to store and cull unwanted books at the beginning and end of each meeting.

Two prize draws were held during the year which raised substantial sums due primarily to the efforts of Bob (Bradley)

The branch was awarded £300 via Waitrose "Community Matters" in April 2019.

We would of course be in a much healthier position if our Trust was in a position to offer financial support. However, the membership fee will be held again this year at £25 single and £40 joint.

All events ideally should be cost neutral, but this year a small profit of £115.69 was made.



Events

A couple of changes were made to the programme which was put together from suggestions from the membership.

Two trips were cancelled. July trip to Tredegar House due to lack of support and August trip to Cliveden House & gardens due to the house not open to visitors on the day we had booked. There was insufficient time to arrange alternative venues (We will be trying again to visit Cliveden this year, hopefully they will be more “accommodating” this time!?)

The Christmas Festive Lunch at the Marriott Hotel, first added to the programme in 2012, was once again extremely well supported, so no surprise that it features again in next years’ programme.

East Devon Weekend (see Newsletter no.15) 3 days, Friday to Sunday in October with perhaps, not surprising, not the best of weather but still a successful annual event. The next weekend is planned for Oxford later this year, details to follow.

Speakers

Variety is the key, so that hopefully there is something of interest in the talks that will appeal to most members. Some come with a “track record” so you have a good idea of how the presentation will go, others can be hit and miss but something that always personally disappoints is the lack of visual aids with some talks.

Hilary, with again suggestions from you, continues to provide an interesting programme.

Special Interest Groups

Ornithology: Events this last year have not been so frequent but with the help of Helen and Sian the group has maintained its interest and will continue to offer outings in the coming year.

Walking: The “Bay City Strollers” continue to meet on the Tuesday (10:30am at Mount Stuart Restaurant) following the Wednesday branch meeting irrespective of the weather forecast. Additional Tuesdays are used to repeat the walk or by arrangement extend the walks to other areas. If there is a particular walk that the group might be interested in please contact Bob (Holbrook).

Others? Of course if you have a special interest which perhaps other members might like to share, let us know and we will attempt to put a group together.

Welfare

Expenditure has been low – keep taking the tablets! – But it is of course dependent on our need to know if a member would benefit from support. If required, please contact (in confidence) our Welfare Officer - Marion

St. Brigid’s

Inadequacies highlighted last year have been added to this year with the withdrawal (through no fault on our part) of the use of the dishwasher which speeds up the process of cup & saucer cleaning. It would appear that the “teams” that provide our refreshment on a monthly basis are to date prepared to roll up their sleeves and carry on. We continue to keep an eye on the potential alternative sites BUT a necessity is size, sufficient tables & chairs, storage & “adequate” kitchen facility and car parking. (The majority of these requirements our current accommodation provides).

Photography

Continued success throughout the year in national competitions for Jill Evans, Maureen Salmon & Peter Elkington

Coronavirus

Who would have thought that this would have been a topic for the annual report!?

However, at the time of writing (mid March), our members are considered to be in the “at risk” category.

Meetings are an important part of many of our members’ lives and that there could be a detrimental impact on members’ wellbeing if their social life is curtailed unnecessarily.

This is a dynamic situation and by the time these comments are read the current position may well require a different approach, but for the time being meetings / events are on hold.

Norman

Forthcoming Events

Black Country Museum, Dudley

Monday, 27th April. £30.
Whit 08.45, 3-Arches 09.00

Black Country Living Museum is an award-winning open air experience that tells the story of one of the very first

industrialised landscapes in Britain. Set across 26 acres, you'll explore over forty carefully reconstructed shops, houses and industrial areas that represent the Black Country's story. You'll learn how steam power, human ingenuity and an increasingly interconnected world transformed this region into a manufacturing powerhouse. You'll meet our historic characters who'll tell you stories of what it was really like to live and work during this revolutionary period of history. Most importantly, you'll see history brought to life before your eyes - you'll hear the clang of hammers, smell the smoke billowing from red brick chimneys, and maybe even taste the best fish and chips in the world.



Powis Castle and Garden Tuesday 19th May.

£29 non-NT members, £16.50 NT members.

Whit 08.45, 3-Arches 09.00

Continuously occupied since the 13th century, Powis Castle, near Welshpool, is one of the most elegant residential castles in Britain, and equally renowned for its magnificent terraced garden. The interior contains an outstanding art collection, from Greek vases to paintings by Gainsborough and Reynolds. The Clive of India Museum contains perhaps the most extensive private collection of antique Indian art in Britain.

Dean Forest Railway & Puzzlewood Wednesday 24th June.

£Tbc. (includes cream tea on train)

Whit 08.45, 3-Arches 09.00

The 4 1/2 mile line runs through beautiful woodland and countryside offering visitors a chance to experience the relaxing pace of a typical country branch line. With our five stations along the way you'll have time to explore the local area, taking in woodland walks and country pubs or venturing



down to the Severn estuary to explore Lydney Harbour with its fantastic views across the Severn.



Puzzlewood is a unique and magical forest with a mile of meandering pathways and over 200 steps set in 14 acres of ancient woodland. The paths take you through a wonderland of deep ravines of moss covered rocks, over wooden bridges and through fantastic tree and rock formations.

Skittles afternoon

Church Inn, Llanishen, February 19th 2020



Rolling a wooden spherical object at some milk bottle shaped pieces of timber in a room with several other people hardly sounds like the most productive use of an afternoon. Nor is skittles ever likely to become an Olympic event but, all that considered, it is terrific fun and a chance to show how totally inept most of us are at this conceptually simple, but infuriatingly, difficult game. There was little discussion of any tactics amongst our group of intrepid skittlers, but I could not help wonder whether the rolling of a hard wooden ball in the direction



of the other pieces of wood in order to knock as many down as possible in one go was best achieved by delivering the ball as fast as possible, or whether a more considered and slower propulsion was likely to be of greater effect. I tried both. I felt that the advantage of the first approach was that if you were successful in actually hitting the most proximal skittle first then this would produce an impressive clattering and knock several skittles down in one go. What could possibly go wrong I thought? Sending down the first I managed to miss all 9 pins. No mean feat since I hadn't realised that this was actually possible.

All things considered we had a fine afternoon and whilst it could hardly be described as productive it was nonetheless enjoyable. We should give special thanks to Sam (Norman's grandson) who did a fine job of being 'sticker up' of the skittles (please note; no children were hurt or exploited during the course of the afternoon in question).

Andy Mardell

Your Committee & Others

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Speaker Sec. Hilary Fairney

Refreshments Sharon Roth

Newsletter David Manning

Meeting Registration

Christine Lewis

Raffle Organiser

Norman Bishop

Special Interest Groups

Walking Bob Holbrook

Ornithology Various Leaders

Theatre Vacant

What is your Special Interest? Let's expand our horizons!



Skittles Report!

Early lunch for some did not inhibit their ability to "frighten" the skittles in the alley located at the Church Inn Pub in the afternoon of Wednesday 19th February.

A closely fought team game was concluded by a game of "killer". The last person and skittle still standing and therefore the winner was on this occasion Caryl Kelly who won the prize of a bottle of wine.

Sam, (Grandson) who worked tirelessly to set up the skittles was rewarded with a well earned £10 from the bank of Norman (no pocket money this week!!!)

Norman

Forthcoming Speakers

April 1st AGM and Quiz

May 6th Emma Yhnell: *Brain Training*

June 3rd Mansel Thomas: *The Astor Family*

July 1st Aisling Judge: *Mixing Flowers and Food in the Garden*