

**July 2010**

**Issue 26**

Welcome to the Summer issue of the Newsletter - this one's turned into a bumper number. A glass of chilled wine or homemade lemonade is the recommended accompaniment at this time of year, so whether you are sitting comfortably on beach, boat or simply in the back garden, read and enjoy!

**LT (Ed)**

### **The Spring Lunch, Thursday 22 April 2010**

The event took place in the familiar venue of the Sports Pavilion, and was attended by around one hundred members. A variety of sandwiches and a wonderful selection of fresh fruit were duly demolished, and after some shufflings-around of tables and chairs, members settled down to listen to a talk by Andrew Bradley, President of the Students' Union.

Andrew treated us to a clear and humorous presentation, illustrated by an archive of photographs – many of which drew murmurs of recognition from the audience - tracing the progress of the SU from its beginnings in the '60s with Warwick's first intake of 450 students, its meetings held on the wide staircases of Rootes Hall, to its present newly-opened 2<sup>nd</sup> building ('Students' Union North'). Despite an early prediction by the higher powers that the SU 'would never have its own building', the Union's South and North premises now occupy a central position on campus. The current 21,598 full time students have access to a wide range of catering, leisure and artistic services. There are clubs and societies covering every kind of interest (270, - more than any other UK university and the advice is 'if there isn't one to suit you, make one'). The Union's 7 Sabbatical officers oversee its activities, which range through festivals, student media (printed and electronic) to student welfare and outreach work in the local community. Warwick Inspire visits and runs workshops in local schools to give them a foretaste, at an early stage in their school careers, of what a university can offer. A project operated by Student Community Reps in South Leamington looks at local problems and there are plans to extend this enterprise to other locales where there is a significant Warwick student presence.

The Warwick SU takes great pride in its democracy and espousal of causes – its Mission Statement declares 'This Union is directed by its members and aims to enhance the experience of students whilst at the University of Warwick'. At the end of his talk, Andrew issued an invitation to interested members to meet outside the new building for a guided tour. A WRSA member observed afterwards 'it was all very smart and new with most of the building being given over to pursuits to do with drinking/evening entertainment in one form or another - although there was a nice place for afternoon tea! The banks, travel agent, insurance company etc are still there although newly located'. So ... , still familiar, but with but with added 21<sup>st</sup> century gloss!

**LT**

### **Warwick town walk: 1<sup>st</sup> December 2009**

For this walk led by Molly Pickles, about 24 of us convened near the Warwick Information Centre on a very cold morning, with the December sun barely warming the air. There were new faces, as the walk evidently appealed to some who sensibly preferred pavements to muddy fields. When Molly made her introduction, we realised that we were in for a treat, and so it proved. During the subsequent leisurely tour, Molly brought history alive as we followed the course of the 1694 great fire which commenced near the Quakers Meeting House, and which followed a course presumably fanned by a south westerly wind, leaving Tudor buildings either side of its course largely untouched. Rapidly passing the 1960s 'redevelopments', we viewed the cell entrance in the court buildings. We were told that St Mary's church was initially unscathed, but was largely destroyed two days later, believed to be caused by smouldering furniture stored there by residents. We were told of the works conducted by the Greville family of Warwick Castle to move the road bridge to its current location and to excavate a new entrance to the castle to improve their outlook and convenience. We heard about Tudor buildings faced with more recent facades, and how the grading of the road from the bridge had left a number of old buildings 'above the ground'. A most fascinating insight into how a disaster, and the aristocracy, had influenced the structure and architecture of the town.



A very enjoyable lunch in the Warwick Arms followed for most of the party, during which we were able to warm up.

### **Lake at Barston walk: 7<sup>th</sup> January 2010**

It was a winter wonderland that we viewed through our bedroom window. Snow lay inches deep on the ground, glistening with a crisp layer of frost. As we drove to the meeting place in the golf club car park the car thermometer read minus 10 degrees. Needless to say, the car park was empty of golfers' cars.

Twelve hardy members assembled for the walk, and we set off along the side of the frozen lake, not a duck to be seen, but interesting formations of rime on the grasses and shrubs. We headed to the outskirts of Hampton in Arden. The sun was out and blue skies framed the fields in front. At Hook End, we headed south to Barston Village, and continued south through the picturesque churchyard. As we approached Wooton Green, many of us had discarded gloves and scarves, and the winter sun glistened on the snow. More gates and stiles followed as we headed through Bradnocks Marsh to the golf club, where we arrived on time for a 1:15 lunch where we were joined by two more members. Fourteen of us celebrated the New Year, and a new year of walks.

**Janet Dale**

### **Clifford Chambers & the Stour Valley walk: Tuesday 9<sup>th</sup> February 2010**

Thirteen walkers gathered in the car park of the New Inn at Clifford Chambers, confusingly outnumbered by another walking group arriving at the same time. Following the main street, we viewed the old Rectory where the incumbent at the time of William Shakespeare's birth was one John Shakespeare. Local rumour alleges that William was born there. Sadly, the building looked as though it needed a considerable amount of TLC. The Lutyens designed manor house was viewed through the gates, after which we

set off across the fields to Atherstone-on-Stour, where the church appeared to be in private ownership. Continuing on the fringe of a wood towards Preston-on-Stour, we were able to view Alscot Park house and parkland from afar. At the delightful village of Preston-on-Stour, we discovered that no-one had brought a camera, and considered the other benefits of ageing. The church, open on the previous walk in 2006, was sadly shut, and we continued uphill on tarmac to the ridge which gave excellent views of the lower Avon valley, and the distant Malvern hills. Leaving a farm track on the ridge, we crossed an extremely gluey arable field towards Cold Comfort Farm, and continued to a triangulation point with views of Stratford. Descending back to the road, we reached the Inn a few minutes before the other walkers, to be first in the queue for our drinks, and an excellent carvery lunch where we were joined by other non-walking members.

**Malcolm Wilding**

### **Walk from Stockton: 11<sup>th</sup> March 2010**

Twenty-five members and friends gathered in the car park of the Crown Inn, Stockton for the March walk of the RSA walking group. The weather was not untypical for the time



of year  
lunche:

We soon left the houses behind and had views mainly to the east over the village. We then descended gently, passing through fields and the edge of woodland until we reached a fishing lake, originally a quarry from which limestone had been excavated for making lime. It then became a holding pond for water for the Warwick and Napton Canal which had opened for trade in 1800. The resulting improved transport provided by this canal (it connected to the Oxford Canal at one end and the Warwick and Birmingham Canal at the other and is now part of the Grand Union Canal) greatly increased lime production in the area and Stockton grew substantially in this period. Shortly before the lake we passed over the trackbed of the single-line railway between Daventry and Leamington Spa, opened in 1895 to provide faster and more convenient transport in the area, the final section to the Long Itchington Cement works closing in 1958. We passed by the Blue Lias pub and joined the canal towpath to walk along it in an easterly direction, rising up past the Stockton flight of locks. Just before the Boat Inn we passed a marina in an old quarry, and further on we left the canal by a bridge to walk along a track southwards and then through fields to reach the Stockton-Napton road. We followed this towards Stockton for some distance before turning left on a track to Green

Farm and on the far side of the farm taking a private road which brought us back into Stockton past the church and primary school to the Crown where an excellent and inexpensive lunch awaited us. Towards the end of lunch a television film crew arrived for their lunch at the other table in our room, giving rise to some comment.

**Chris Hall**

### **Walk from Hellidon: April 13<sup>th</sup> 2010**

We were blessed with perfect walking weather for this expedition of a little over five miles, and a large group of twenty-seven walkers assembled eventually, and after finding several adventurous routes to get there, at the Red Lion Pub in Hellidon. It was very good to be able to welcome at least three members who were walking with the group for the first time and also to have a young teenager with us.

Near Hellidon are the sources of three rivers all taking their differing ways to the sea. There is the Nene which heads off to the Wash, the Cherwell which runs into the Thames and our very own Leam which eventually joins the Severn via the Avon. It is said that any raindrop which falls in Hellidon has a big decision to make!



Our walk took us initially across the very early and tiny River Leam over meadows to the aptly named Upper Catesby, home of the family associated with the Gunpowder plot. There is a stiff climb to the village but on the way there are wonderful views into Northamptonshire. We then took a little used road north of Arbury hill and returned on its southern side crossing the site of a disused railway line and seeing the ventilation towers of the Catesby Tunnel. We arrived back at the pub at 1 p.m., but before that the walk organizer was delightfully surprised by the presentation of a foaming pint in the middle of the village thanks to a generous member of the advance guard! As always at the Red Lion we had excellent meals and service and we thank them for their cooperation. A pleasing feature of the walk was the flock of dark brown, distinguished looking, Dutch Zwartbles sheep which watched us depart and return with some disdain.

**Godfrey Carr**

### **BLUEBELLS AT THEIR BEST: walk from Bubbenhall 25<sup>th</sup> May 2010**

As the days prior to the walk had been extremely hot we were pleasantly surprised that sixteen of our members came. We set off from the "Three Horseshoes" Bubbenhall onto the path taking us by the quarry towards Bubbenhall Wood and Glebe farm. Instead of walking directly through the wood, we made a detour round the wood as the bluebells were out in full bloom and they looked a stunning sight, giving us the opportunity to take some photographs. The trees were in full leaf and the undergrowth was getting very green after a long winter, and it was nice to see everything blooming. We heard a cuckoo - not a sound you hear very often. As we walked across fields onto higher ground the views were stunning as the sun shone down onto the yellow of the oilseed

rape. We made our way towards Wappenbury Woods where we entered the nature reserve again - very peaceful with the sound of birds in the trees. Following a long pathway back into Bubbenhall, it was a welcoming site seeing the pub in front of us, as we were ready for our lunch and a cold drink. It turned out to be a perfect day for walking, not too hot.

**Wendy Murray**

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### **VISIT TO RHS WISLEY GARDENS, 26 MAY 2010**

After a very comfortable journey in Harry Shaw's latest luxury coach we arrived at Wisley mid-morning. The coffee shop was the first port of call for most of our members. Fully refreshed we then entered these magnificent gardens covering 240 acres. Here we were able to enjoy the tranquility and beauty of the established settings.

Following several miles of footpaths we strolled through the various rock, walled and model gardens together with the wild and natural meadows. The glasshouse, opened in 2007, also proved popular with an array of tropical plants surrounding the main waterfall feature.

Judging by the amount of brown carrier bags loaded in the luggage compartment of the coach, the shop and plant centre had also been well-supported. All in all, another fabulous day with superb weather.

**Alan J. Foster**

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### **MUSIC SCHOLARS' SOIREE**

On Wednesday 30<sup>th</sup> June 2010, 63 WRSA members attended the fourth annual Music Scholars' Soiree, held in the new Creative Space at Warwick Arts Centre. Sponsorship this year by the WRSA contributed substantially to the event and the increased audience seating afforded by the new venue allowed for almost twice as many people as last year to attend this memorable occasion. This year's audience of 130 included, in addition to our 63 members, scholarship donors, staff representatives from university departments, concert series members, major donors to the Arts Centre Hall Project and University Chorus members, all of whom made for a really good mix of people interested in music and in supporting students.

The programme included solo vocal and instrumental classical performances, a Jazz Set, a String Quartet and excerpts from Mozart's 'The Magic Flute' and Bach's 'St John Passion.' These latter excerpts were accompanied by 'The Scholars' Ensemble' whose members comprised music scholars, two members of Warwick's resident Coull Quartet, plus Paul McGrath, Director of Music and Lucy Griffiths, Assistant Director of Music. The Scholars' String Quartet playing Dvorak was also augmented by a member of the Coull Quartet, whose overall involvement demonstrated the close working relationship

between the Coull Quartet and music scholars. Also playing for this year's Soiree audience were three young emerging artists, each having been a music scholar at Warwick and currently embarking on a career in music. Two of them played piano and saxophone in the jazz trio alongside a current multi-talented (we are told he plays many other musical instruments) trumpet and double bass music scholar. In this Jazz Set we were treated to four intricate, lively numbers and this departure from the classical seemed to be well-received by the audience. On an even lighter note an amusing pantomimic sketch, scripted by Paul McGrath and Lucy Griffiths, involving a 'golden box', was woven into the programme (you had to be there!). The programme ended with a fabulous piano recital by the third former scholar, now at the Royal Northern College of Music.

Following this wonderful array of musical talent, all performers were brought back to take a final bow by Paul McGrath, who briefly outlined scholar successes and described how Warwick University entices students who are keen to become music scholars. Colin Brummitt, WRSA Treasurer, then thanked performers and the WRSA for agreeing to support this event financially and concluded by urging anyone interested in funding a Music Scholarship to make contact with him, Robin Leonard, Development and Alumni Relations Office, or other staff members in the Music Centre for further information. The evening ended with a buffet reception, which enabled music scholars to circulate and audience members to get to know more about them.

We understand that following the event there was one donation on the night and that several people came forward to pledge support for further Warwick Music Scholarships. In addition to these, a member of the Chorus offered to go round Chorus members 'with a hat' to collect a sufficient total, hopefully, to fund a Music Scholarship.

**Sam Van Toller**

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#### **PARKING ON ROADS IN THE VICINITY OF THE UNIVERSITY**

After a considerable amount of pressure from local residents, this problem seems to have been alleviated. Living very close to the University is, I think, a great bonus. There is a wonderful Arts Centre, and the campus is extremely attractive. The Cannon Park area, which I am more familiar with, was also very pleasant until it became an extension of the University car parks. This was due to the fact that the University had increased its car parking fee and to park in surrounding roads was free! The Cannon Park Community Association, in particular, has worked extremely hard in pressing the Coventry City Council to address the problem. Without going into a lot of detail, the result is restricted parking between 10 and 11 am and 2 and 3 pm. Many residents however were hoping for restrictions between 8 am and 6 pm.

It is now a lot safer for cyclists and pedestrians. With a junior school in Bransford Avenue, traffic is quite heavy and with cars parked both sides of the access roads there was 'an accident waiting to happen'. Bransford Avenue and de Montfort Way is also a bus route. This is an Experimental Order so that the effect of the restrictions can be monitored. The restrictions will be enforced by the City Council's Civil Enforcement Officers who can issue penalty charge notices (PCN's) to drivers illegally parked during the times of operation. I understand that similar PCN's are in operation in other roads close to the University.

The situation was not created by local residents. Living in a car park isn't much fun!

**Pat Scott**

## ***Notes and Dates for Your Diary***

### **1. September Walk Correction**

***Please note that there is an incorrect date on the tear-off slip – the date of the Harbury walk is TUESDAY 7<sup>th</sup> September 2010***

**2.** The date for the **2010 Annual General Meeting** is **Wednesday 29 September**. Mary McGrath will be the guest speaker; her talk is entitled 'Warwick in Africa'.

**3.** Proposed visit to Waddesdon Manor National Trust property, **24 November 2010** – further details to follow shortly.

### **4. Floriade 2012 - are you interested?**

The question was raised at a recent Committee meeting about the possibility of organizing a trip for WRSA members to Floriade 2012. Floriade is a Dutch floral event held every ten years; the next Floriade is due during the Spring and Summer months of 2012. The event is held in the Keukenhof Gardens, Amsterdam and a visit would involve a trip lasting three or four days. Any member who is interested in going on such a trip as this please contact a member of the Committee or sign the form to be circulated at the AGM in September. If there is sufficient interest from our members the Committee will investigate travel and hotel costs for the whole trip and will then ask members to sign up for a visit to Floriade 2012.

**Steve Van Toller**

### **5. A music concert later in the year**

Some members may remember an earlier Director of Music, Dr Roy Wales, who left the University to go to Australia. On his return to this country he formed the English Concert Singers, Chorus and Orchestra who have since given concerts in many parts of the world. At 3.00pm on Sunday 24<sup>th</sup> October 2010, present and past members of the English Concert Singers, Chorus and Orchestra (200 performers) are giving a special performance, to celebrate Roy Wales' 70<sup>th</sup> birthday, of the Verdi Requiem in the beautifully refurbished Birmingham Town Hall. Tickets for this concert can be obtained from the box office of the Town Hall, tel. 0121 780 3333 or online at [www.thsh.co.uk](http://www.thsh.co.uk). Prices range from £10 - £25 with a reduction for those who are 60 plus of £2 on £10 - £20 tickets and £5 reduction on £25 tickets.

**Sam Van Toller**

### **COMMITTEE MEMBERS 2009-2010**

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If you would like to serve as a WRSA Committee member, new blood and new ideas are always welcome. Please contact a Committee member before the AGM.