

**THE UNIVERSITY OF
WARWICK**

RETIRED STAFF ASSOCIATION

NEWSLETTER

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Issue 21

Committee Members 2007-2008

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Introduction

Greetings and a somewhat belated Happy New Year to all our readers. The activities reported show that WRSA is very active with good numbers attending the various organised events. The events I have attended with my wife have been enjoyed by both of us and my only personal regret is that my knees no longer allow me to enjoy walking over rough uneven ground. This means that I am no longer able to make most of the countryside walks although I still enjoy the urban townie ones with relatively smooth pavements. The Christmas lunch, again, was the most successful event of the year in terms of attendance, achieving maximum numbers. With the Committee deciding that the price was held at the 2004 price of £15, the lunch was a bargain and well up to the standards expected of Scarman House.

Ed.

Musical Scholars Soiree, Tuesday 26th June 2007

About 70 RSA members accepted an invitation from the Music Centre to a reception and buffet followed by a delightful series of performances in the Ensemble Room by students who are recipients of music bursaries and scholarships (N.B. unlike in some previous years, this year none of the applicants for RSA bursaries were for musical activities). There was a mixture of violin, piano, cello and French horn solos, soprano with accompaniment and a string trio. Our thanks go to Paul McGrath (Music Centre Director) and Robin Leonard (Development and Alumni Relations Office), for having involved us in this happy and inspiring event.

Margaret Wallis

Autumn Lunch and Annual General Meeting, Thursday 27th September

The AGM meeting and luncheon was held in the Sports Pavilion starting at 12 noon, with over sixty members in attendance. As usual it began with lunch and the chance to meet old friends and former colleagues. The after lunch speaker, Paul McGrath, Director of the Music Centre, gave a witty and entertaining series of anecdotes relating to his early professional career in music. He recounted an amusing incident when he was coaching Spanish opera

singers who were in a production of Britten's 'Peter Grimes.' The account involved the difficulty one female singer had in pronouncing the words, 'it is fact'. The word she kept inadvertently using meant that 'it was irredeemably ruined', or something like that. He also said that the vibrant and diverse musical scene found in the Warwick students was to a large extent due to the fact that the University did not have a Department of Music which often tends to bias and restrict student interest.

The main issue discussed and voted upon at the AGM concerned the proposed changes to the Constitution which was approved by an overwhelming majority of the members at the meeting. I would like to be able to report that this issue is now settled but unfortunately this is not the case and it has been held over until the next Committee Meeting in February. It is important to point out that as far as the Committee is concerned this will not affect any area of activity within the WRSA. **Ed.**

Manchester Museum of Science & Industry (M.O.S.I) Visit, 20th November 2007

We arrived at Manchester at the estimated time in our luxury Harry Shaw coach after an excellent journey. Using the M6 toll road certainly bypassed the early morning congestion. Our guide was there to greet us and after a much needed coffee etc our tour began.

Firstly, we visited the Power Hall housing a fine display of Beam and Steam engines, many of them still working. Technicians were on hand to explain what these were used for in early industry. The old station building gave an insight into Manchester's industrial heritage. A walk through the Victorian Sewer system complete with sound and smells was certainly a highlight for the ladies. With the station being the hub of industrial activity it soon became apparent that a warehouse was required. So a visit to this area clearly showed that this was a base for early logistics.

Next was the main building where demonstrations of weaving and textile manufacture proved very interesting. It was obvious from the noise and working conditions that health and safety played no part of this kind of employment. At this point our guide departed and we split up to get lunch and explore in greater detail further exhibits. The Air and Space Hall was extremely popular, with historic aircraft and transport on view. Finally, a visit to the Science Centre with hands on experiments and special effects rounded off a most enjoyable day.

Please forward any ideas or suggestions about possible future visits to the Committee Visits Coordinator, Alan Foster. email address: joan_and_alan@yahoo.com **A.N.J. Foster**

WRSA Bursary awards 2007

There were ten applications submitted to the WRSA this year and the Committee decided to award two bursaries. Both of the winning applicants were given £400 each to help further their proposals. Daniel Border and David Metcalfe, 2nd year MBChB medical students, submitted a proposal to form a charity big band. As mentioned at the AGM lunch, Warwick's lack of a formal Department of Music has given rise to a very active and vibrant musical scene on the Campus. A strong point in this application was that the medical student teaching schedules do not allow them to go to the normal musical practices. The other successful proposal was submitted by C.K. Jung and F.Y. Chuang, from the Centre for English Language Teacher Education (CELTE), who are developing an innovative interactive online Chinese speaking course. Clearly, Chinese is an important language of the future. Therefore, any opportunity, that a course such as this will afford, to gain some understanding of this language, is invaluable. These two recipients are hoping to give a demonstration of their programme in either February or March and are keeping the Committee fully informed, having already set up many of their computer requirements in order to proceed with this online course.



The awards were presented on Thursday 22nd November in the National Grid Room of the Arts Centre by The Treasurer, Colin Brummitt, with other members of the RSA Committee in attendance.

From left to right, Daniel Border, C K Jung and F Y Chuang, holding their presentation certificates



Colin Brummit, after presentation of cheques and certificates, with three of the recipients

Reports of Autumn walks in 2007

Leek Wootton, Tuesday 18th September 2007

On 18th September at 10:15am 16 mostly regular walkers set out from the Anchor Inn, Leek Wootton, under cloudless skies for a gentle stroll in the Warwickshire countryside. This was a pleasant walk around the perimeter of the Leek Wootton golf course along well trodden paths through a typical Warwickshire landscape of arable farmland and small coppices.

The group showed some interest in a 'breached dam' which created fishponds for the Earl of Warwick's hunting lodge in Elizabethan times. The quarry also interested some who saw the

sheer rock face as a possible climbing wall. All were interested in the pretty, Balwen rare, Welsh sheep which are kept in a field adjacent to the golf course. Following the 'stroll' we all took lunch at the Anchor Inn.

Terry Bunce

Ryton Pools, Wednesday 17th October 2007

Nine walkers came, which was good because notice advertising the walk was late in being produced. It was very wet in the days before the walk. However, luckily on the day it was bright and dry and the paths around the Ryton Pools drain quickly and the trees in the woods had kept the woodland paths fairly dry. Overall it was a pleasant walk enjoyed by all. After the walk eight members went to the Rugby Tavern for lunch.

Dictated by Ted Clack

Balsall Common to Fen End (and back!), Tuesday 13th November 2007

Despite a rather dreary day twelve hardy walkers accompanied the walk leader for a stroll into the mysterious empty area lying to the South and West of Balsall Common. The area is surprisingly rich in both footpaths and quiet country lanes. As expected the ground was fairly damp underfoot but had not yet reached the skating rink quality that Warwickshire clay can easily achieve.

We headed South at ten thirty from close by the Old Saracen's Head over pastureland and set-aside (or weed patches to the urban eye) to reach the narrow Fernhill Lane. The ford was still passable on foot so the overnight rain had not been too heavy. Crossing the Fen End Road, from the Tipperary to Temple Balsall, we entered livestock country at Fen End. Fortunately the rather pushy horses often to be found here were in a neighbouring field, and the cows in calf were clearly off to market.

After a few more pasture fields and the odd innovative stile we turned by the demolished Oakley Cottage just as the weather took a turn for the worse. This was spectacular bad timing as this was the half-way point and had been intended as a rest point!

Now reaching arable land we pushed on over spring wheat planting to join the drive from Balsall Lodge Farm back over the Fen End Road and through a very welcome sheltered pathway by Gate farm progressed up to the ridge-way path that runs from Temple Balsall to Magpie Farm (very much black and white!). This path took us in two stages back to our hostelry shortly after twelve.

All but one of the party stopped for lunch. Fortunately we had our own table and an even number (the pub has a two for one offer). The lunch and concomitant conversation kept us at our table until half one, always a good sign!

M. H. E. Larcombe

Outside the Old Saracen's Head



Corley Moor Walk, 12th December 2007

We were blessed with a perfect walking day – no wind, hard frost under foot and sun that was very welcome as the temperature rose above minus 1 degree. Ten hardy souls set off from the Bull & Butcher, Corley Moor.

Our route consisted of an interesting varied terrain – a windmill (minus sails), icy farm tracks, frozen ponds, wooded areas and narrow winding lanes leading to a high plateau. From this high point, and with clear air, the panoramic views extended north to Nuneaton, and to the west towards Birmingham and its surrounding areas.



Descending from the plateau, we passed a quaint old cottage set among trees, reminding us of a jig saw puzzle scene. Further on, we went through 'Close Wood', where the sun's rays shone through the tall pine trees creating a dappled effect on the ground. The many frozen ponds were sadly bereft of any wildlife. On the

final stretch and close to a house which was occupied at one time by Sir Frank Whittle (a pioneer of the jet engine), we admired a large (unfrozen) pond with a rustic bridge over it, in the garden of a cottage, well stocked with koi carp and black tench. A happy band of walkers ended the morning with a hearty meal at the Bull & Butcher.

Janet Dale

Forthcoming 2008 Spring Walking Programme

16 th January 2008	Meer End	Bill Errington
6 th February 2008	Fillongley	Chris Hall
18 th March 2008	Browns lane	June Clark
23 rd April 2008	Wellesbourne Villages	Dick Hoskins

Final Comments

The Committee is looking to improve the lunches at the Spring and Autumn members' lunchtime meetings.

Thank you to all who gave me contributions for this issue and, in particular, to those who sent in photographs, which improve the look and interest of the Newsletter. I now look forward to receiving items for Newsletter 22, due out at the end of July. As I now combine the Chairmanship with Editorship of the Newsletter, the Committee is looking for a new editor. If you have any interest in this important area of the WRSA activity, please contact any member of the Committee.

Ed.