

THE Traditional T^oring Club

NEWSLETTER



December Issue 2020



Welcome to our **4th** Newsletter, our Christmas Special *and its compulsory to laugh at the jokes*. A huge thank you to Sue for producing these popular newsletters and a thank you to all who have contributed to the content.

I do hope you are all coping with the lockdowns and rules, I, for one, certainly found it much easier in the Spring and Summer when the weather was warm and sunny; the cold and dark evening are not so easy to cope with.

This is what I have been doing to keep occupied, (shown above) it has certainly helped.



A joke: (For you Stuart as Southend has just won their last 2 matches).

How do you keep cool at a football match? You stand next to a fan. HaHa!!

Looking back on the last year, despite the restrictions we were able to put on some walks and cycles. On the 2nd March we managed to get away to Warner's Cricket St Thomas for 4 nights, 2 weeks following this was the lockdown, when everything stopped. Who would believe it was to continue for the whole of the year.

Stuart put on a cycle on Saturday 1st August and the first walk was my Waking walk on Wednesday 5th August. Since then we have been able to organise a number of activities, between restrictions. All walks and cycles have been well supported with some walks up to 20 people, which is fantastic; certainly it has been so good to see so many out together enjoying each other's company, which I feel is the purpose of the club. Thank you to all leaders for their time and efforts.

Joke: What do you call a bunch of chess players bragging about their games in a hotel lobby?

Chess nuts boasting in an open foyer. HaHa!!

Looking forward to next year, some trips are already being planned for next year, Paris, Minehead, Austria and Jersey. Keep an eye on trip sheet for walks and cycles and with the vaccine being rolled out we could all be COVID free by the Spring, hopefully by then we can organise theatre, museum and cinema trips. It will eventually happen, there is light at the end of the tunnel, we will then appreciate what we have missed over this last year.

Christmas will be different for us all, small groups and keep safe, we don't want to take risks at this time. Thankfully we can keep in touch with relatives on Zoom etc social media has definitely helped many of us cope with the isolation.

We can party when it's safe to do so, perhaps in the summertime.

Have a lovely Christmas and next year has got to be better than this last year. See you all in the New Year, albeit there may be another lockdown in January. Most importantly stay safe and healthy.

Joke: When I'm out and wearing a mask my glasses steam up making it difficult to see and concentrate.

When this restriction is over am I entitled to 'condensation' Ha Ha!!

Sally Meredith (President)

CLUB ACTIVITIES:

The club was able to put on a few walks and a cycle this month, many thanks go to the leaders. We always need volunteers to lead activities, please let any committee member know if you are willing to help. If you have anything that you would like to contribute in next month's issue please let Sally or Susan know. Many thanks go to those who have taken the time to write about activities and shared their creative skills so that this newsletter can keep you entertained during these solace and difficult times. Special thank you to Sally, she is always in the forefront and donates her time selflessly to ensure the club is still functioning throughout these difficult times.



Sally's Walk

My Seven Woods walk was supposed to be on Sunday 8th November when it was dry, warm and the leaves were turning a beautiful red, orange colour. However lockdown put a stop to this. Not to be put off I rescheduled the walk for Sunday 6th December, as this is one of my favourite local walks. On this day

it was cold and very muddy conditions, on the other hand it didn't rain so that in its self was a bonus as it had rained most of the previous week. When I got home my boots were so muddy I couldn't see what colour they were, the only thing to do was to put them in a bucket of water to clean them.

I started out with 9 brave walkers with substantial footwear on, one dressed in Christmas attire for the occasion but then Gabrielle is used to dressing up on stage and probably missing the pantomime this year. Then there was 11 as Jackie and Ron caught us up at



Pound Wood as they missed us at the start, apparently there was a slight

mishap with times.

The Seven Woods Walk is a circular walk that takes in ancient woodland that covers, Belfairs Park Wood, Belfairs Nature Reserve, West Wood, Valerie Wells Wood, Starvelarks Wood, Tile Wood and Pound Wood. It's about 7-8 miles; we started at John Burrows car park then on to West Wood finishing at Belfairs Nature Reserve. This gave us an opportunity to stop at the woodland centre for a welcome picnic and hot drink break 3/4 of the way through. Apparently we need to support the Woodland centre, due to the lockdown etc it has suffered and they are wondering if they should stay open as custom have declined in recent months. As I said this was a very muddy walk,



nevertheless it was so enjoyable and in fact I didn't mind the mud, we all just got on with it, I think we walked for about 3-4 hours. Stuart pointed out a building by Valerie Wells Wood which was the church of the Peculiar People; a Christian movement that was originally an offshoot of the Wesleyan denomination, founded in 1838 in Rochford.

I did recce this walk just so I was familiar with the route, I didn't want to get anyone lost in the woods. Would you believe it, they decided to do some tree felling on my route (think this was in Tile or Wyburns Wood), we then, with the

help of a Stuart, had to take a different path which was so very muddy to get back on track. Best laid plans and all that !!



All in all it was a lovely walk with lovely people so thank you for coming and I hope you all got your boots cleaned.

Bit of information

(not a joke) Tile Wood was owned by Westminster Abbey in 1315.

From 1695 into the 19th C the Dean & Chapter of St Paul's leased Woods for coppicing. These Woods included Barnes Woods (now Hadleigh Great Wood), and neighbouring Horsley & Bramble Woods (now destroyed), and West Wood. The rent of £25 per year was payable at the Great West Door of St Pauls Cathedral.

There are four key species that this landscape aims to protect. They are:



The Hazel Dormouse, Heath Fritillary Butterfly, Wild Service Tree and the Song Thrush.

Keep walking and enjoy our free landscape.

Sally Meredith (trip leader)



Frank's Walkathon



A walk with 4 parks and a golf course. Initially 16 members indicated their intention to join in this 6-7 mile walk. At the predetermined starting time at Southchurch Hall Park, 20 members gathered with great enthusiasm, seeing old friends and some new members. After greeting each other while socially distancing, we made our way through Southchurch Hall Park where the leader informed the members of some local history about Southchurch Hall: a listed Grade I, built in 1321-1364 and had a Tudor and a 1930

extensions. The Great Hall is still in its 14th century form. The Hall probably stands on the site of a much earlier Saxon hall. The land was given to the monks of Canterbury in 823 AD and the tenants of the hall subsequently inherited the name "de Southchurch". The custom survived until the death of Peter de Southchurch in 1309. Moving on, the expected rain did not materialise and the conditions for walking were excellent. Splitting into three groups. The next park was Southchurch Park West. Over the pond bridge past the swans, signets and ducks. And the toilet stop. From here to Southchurch Park East. Next was Thorpe Hall Golf Course, where we were assisted by a Club member of our party who helped us negotiate the crossing, avoiding the flying golf balls of the enthusiastic players. All safely through we proceeded to the seafront and along to Uncle Tom's Cabin for coffee, refreshments (many brought their own) and conveniences. Everyone suitably refreshed and more comfortable we were of again. Past the beach huts and on to the Garrison and past the gun emplacements of WWII and before.

When we reached the Old Guard Room, in front of an old canon it was a good opportunity for a photo. This was the conclusion of the walkathon, so thanks to all who came along. Some took public transport while others meandered back to their cars. Thanks also to everyone who brought treats and shared.

Frank (trip leader)

Pauline's Walk

Pauline's mince pie walk was on Sunday 13th December. She kindly puts this on for the club every



year; usually this walk starts from her house and we have mulled wine with our mince pie etc. Unfortunately with the restrictions we were unable to do this. Thank you Pauline for managing to continue to do this walk and not to be put off by the rules. I remember one year it was thick snow and a small group of us actually managed to get to Pauline's to eat and drink, but we didn't walk anywhere, Joyce Pat and myself talked about our working days in the community for a couple of hours, such



funny stories of what we all did, we did laugh, Pauline laughed the most I remember. Good old days. What we do for a free mince pie in the TTC; on this day it was windy, wet and

miserable. Pauline was thrilled that about 12 of us turned up at the Chalkwell Shelter, for some reason she thought none of us would turn up, she doesn't know us too well. Some were dressed for the occasion with Christmas hats, looking very festive, everyone was happy and looking forward to walking despite the weather. We duly ate our mince pies and got walking.



It was an easy walk but we had an easterly wind against us all the way, however it didn't rain and it wasn't that



cold. Most walkers on the seafront are fair weather walkers, not like us hardy lot, therefore the seafront was so quiet making it easier for us to distance and avoid other people. The walk was really pleasant talking and catching up with friends, some of whom I haven't seen for months. It was so nice to see everyone and when I got home I felt happy and contented; this is what it's

about fresh air, friends and exercise 'to help ones mental well-being'.

Holly (my dog) made friends with Martin, she walked with him all the way along the seafront, at one point I thought she was going home with him, but she didn't. We got to the pier and surprisingly no one walked on to the end of it, we all said our goodbyes, Merry Christmas's and went our separate ways. Some walked back as their cars were at the start, some went to town for a coffee and got the bus and I walked home.

Thank you again Pauline for



organising this lovely walk and for the mince pies; look forward to next years walk hopefully we can have the mulled wine with our mince pies.



Sally Meredith

Martin's Jingle Bell Cycle Rock

Arthur and I arrived at the pre-arranged car park in Rochford, greeted by two masked gentlemen (was this a hold up we thought), no just people carrying out vaccination jabs in the corner of the car park. "Are you here for the vaccination" they asked. No said we, being only 58 years old !!, So then Arthur enquired does this mean coffee, cake and a JAB!!!, silly Arthur, as he was dressed as an elf after all. After meeting the rest of the group, all highly colourful in Christmas garb, departed Rochford car park in two groups, socially distancing of course. We were greeted by a sparkling morning, cold dry and crisp. Both groups led by Arthur and I, destination being Paglesham. After



riding through traffic free lanes we



arrived at the Plough & Sail pub (Closed of course) and had our refreshments. After much banter and laughing and Ken Plowman doing a backward flip into a muddy field, an old party trick of his and looked slightly less immaculate than when he arrived. Then following the photo



shoot we climbed back on our bikes following Arthur to Canewdon

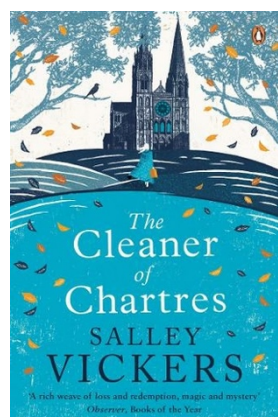
Church. Arriving at Canewdon Church Arthur's group tried to push their bikes through the gates into the



Churchyard coming to a halt much to Arthur's joy, as he then undertook to describe witchcraft and what had happened to him and the family when he lived in Canewdon in the 1970s, which explains his rather disturbed character. Then back on our bikes through glorious lanes to Rochford. Thanking everyone for attending this unusual Jingle Bells Ride, one to remember in this difficult year. I would just like to wish everyone a Happy Christmas and hopefully a better 2021. *Martin (trip leader)*



Book Club



The Cleaner of Chartres by Salley Vickers - Average = 7 points (7.4)

Some of the comments given via the on-line meeting:

Knowing that my book club turn would be around Christmas again I tried to choose a book somewhat akin to Hotel du Lac last year that is not too long, fairly easy to read and with a few quirky characters. I think The Cleaner of Chartres, whilst not of particularly great literary merit, probably fits the Hotel du Lac end of year criteria. If I had known that Covid 19 was still going to have such an impact at this time of year and that we might thus have more time on our hands than otherwise anticipated, I could have done War and Peace but I still think that Cleaner of Chartres was not a bad choice. I did have a concern that there were too many characters but the author did a commendable job in giving good depth to the various people who Agnes Morel came across in what was effectively a journey of redemption played out in the

cathedral town of Chartres. I particularly liked the portrayal of the particularly dislikeable Madame Beck who is the archetypal gossip and rumour spreader of every small urban (or rural) community. **My score is 7 points.**

I found this book an easy and quite pleasurable read. However reflecting on it afterwards I found that there were some areas that I found unsatisfactory. For example I wasn't really happy that the Abbe Paul heard Agnes' confession of attempted murder but then decided to do nothing about it because he felt that she had suffered enough. I'm not convinced that he would have acted that way. I also didn't feel that the issue of Agnes' mother, the waitress, was properly explored, and how she came across the earring and then why she left it with her baby. I also feel that it would have been good to explore Madame Beck's reaction to her late husband being Agnes' father. I also think that the baby in the chateau might actually have been Agnes' baby (that she called Gabriel)- after all it was only expedient for Agnes to convince herself that the baby wasn't her's – but that didn't make it true. On the plus side, I thought that the Madame Beck / Madame Picot relationship was amusing. I also thought that Alain developed into an interesting character – and I thought that Agnes herself was quite sympathetically and believably portrayed. I also felt that I learnt a bit about Chartres cathedral. On the whole, though, I was disappointed, so **my score is 7.5 points.**

An interesting book about a young girl who has her baby taken away from her and the distress it causes through her life. I was enjoying this book, when I realised with the subject matter, it shouldn't be easy reading. It did get darker when eventually it went back to the events and how it affected her, but until that moment it was very fluffy and light. I couldn't get an image of Agnes - I was quite shocked when she was nearly 40 years old. The exchanges between Madame Beck and Madame Picot were probably the best bits. I'm glad Madame Beck never found out she was Agnes's mother. That would have been too cruel, but then again it may have softened her? *(Jacqui has since realised that this is not the case!!)*. I did enjoy it though. **My score is a disappointed 7 points** (it could have been higher).

Looking at the book again I remember it and that I really enjoyed it. Slowly it brings out some interesting and different people that we follow over many years and adventures. I may look for her other books now that the library is open again! **My score is 7.5 points.**

I enjoyed this book. It was an easy read with good descriptions, particularly of the cathedral and town. The characters were interesting and (mostly) well developed. Agnes came across as a somewhat naive and resourceful character (sometimes too good to be true!). The book portrays human nature at its best and worse. **My score is 7.5 points.**

The book was ok. I could tell though that it was by a British writer. It was a reasonable story. The cathedral sounds interesting. **My score is 6 points**

I am sorry but I have not finished the book yet – but I have enjoyed it so far - and I will finish it. **My score is 7 points.**

I shouldn't have read the back cover first, the favourable comparison with Miss Garnet's Angel put me off as I didn't enjoy that. I felt with this book that there were too many characters introduced too quickly and I was confused by the sequence of events (perhaps that says more about me) and I thought Madame's Beck, Picot and Mother Veronique a bit like pantomime characters and not very believable. Maybe half way through I wanted to know what happened so did finish it I liked the descriptions of the cathedral and the restorer character and was glad it had a happy ending. **My score is 6 points.**

The book was one of those that when I finished I felt bereft as though I'd lost a companion I loved the description of the cathedral reminiscent of many I've visited in France. I was transported back to schooldays with the demonic Mother Veronique - I had a Sister Therese - face like an angel, tongue like a viper, especially as I hated maths! I was transported to France with the bowls of steaming coffee and warm baguettes. Professor Jones was a great character with his memories of a Welsh childhood. Isabelle Beck was an awful woman - I bet she was an informer during the occupation. I loved the proprietary interest Dr Deman took in Agnes. It was a compelling read so I have no hesitation in recommending this to friends. **My score is 9.5 points.**

Following Agnes's story from birth to her partnership with Alain, was so touching and sad at times. I loved all the characters and could relate to them throughout. Agnes reminded me of The Marsh Girl in 'Where the Crawdads Sing' – a very difficult upbringing but so aware and intelligent even though they were both illiterate. Anyway I loved the book. **My score is 9 points**

Club Corner

Sally's infamous CHEESE STRAW Recipe – Moreishly delicious!

INGREDIENTS

4oz SR Flour sifted
3ozs Salted Butter
2oz Grated Mature Dry Cheese
1 Egg Yoke
A little milk may be needed
Set oven to about 180c or mark 5



METHOD:

Rub in butter with the flour until mixture resembles fine breadcrumbs.
Add grated cheese.
Add egg yoke and maybe a little milk to form a dough.
Put the dough in a bag and chill in fridge for a couple of hours.
Roll out to about 1/4 inch thick and cut into strips about 1/4 inch wide and 4 inch long.
Bake in oven on greased trays for about 10-15min until golden.

PS the left over egg white can be frozen. Also I usually double the recipe, you can keep them in a sealed container but they are much better eaten on the day of baking.

Amazing crafts by Jeni Mattocks



Jeni has been busy during the lockdown making these amazing Christmas crafts. The knitted Christmas Puddings (left) will contain a Ferraro Roche, what a novel idea! These masks (below right) are very festive, just what is needed to get into the spirit of Christmas, they are fully lined making them ideal & fit for purpose. I love the 'Elf' bottle bags, (below left) Jeni made these from wrapping paper just the thing for Mulled wine! The cards (below middle) are also made from wrapping paper and the stripy straws work really well for the legs.



A CHRISTMAS MESSAGE FROM JANET AND BOB SUTTON

Jan and Bob Sutton would like to wish all the TTC members a very Happy, Healthy Christmas. We won't be sending / giving out Christmas cards but have made a donation to HARP (homeless shelter). Hopefully we can look forward to a more sociable 2021 once the vaccine becomes available!! Best wishes to you all. Keep safe.

Christmas dinner 2020

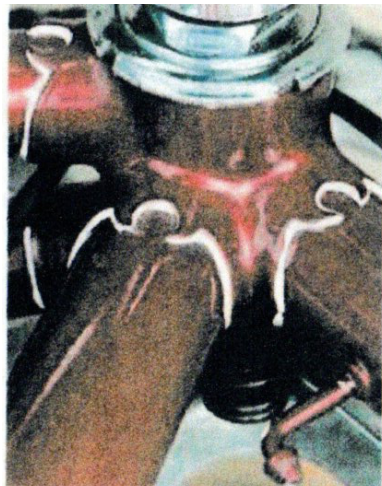


And now what you have all been waiting for - PART TWO of :

THE ADVENTURES of a LITTLE RIVETTS BIKE - A Story by Ken Plowman



From Austria we rode into Italy through the grandeur of the Dolomites, to have cheese roll lunches in lush green fields, to Cortina where we rested in the shadow of the crystal mountain under an azure Italian sky, on to Venice where from the 'Bridge of Sighs' the little 'Rivetts' would gaze down on the elegant gondolas passing below.



Only too soon, the tour seemed to end, from Venice we caught a local train back to Austria to board the 'Ariberg Express' for the journey home. On arrival at Victoria, disaster, when I went to collect her from the luggage van there was no sign of her. A porter informed me she would be arriving on a later train, the thought of her stranded all alone was appalling. She did arrive at Victoria the following morning none the worse for her little escapade.

Together we were to go on many more tours, the West Highlnds of Scotland, Devon and Cornwall and regular tours over the Easter holidays to Wales, where the little Rivetts travelled over some of the toughest forest tracks that she has ever had to negotiate. Eventually my little Rivetts was showing signs of wear and tear, so I took her to that kindly gentleman and suburb frame builder Dick Morris (H.R.Morris) at his shop in Walthamstow. He filled in some minor bumps and had her re-sprayed to her original gun metal grey, Dick, who is now in his nineties and well retired, is still a member of my club, the Lea Valley C.C. With this new lease of life she was ready for a few more years of taking

me on some more very enjoyable rides.

So we come to 1983, 23rd October, some thirty one years on from the day when I first set eyes on this lovely little frame and has been with me through thick and thin. It is the day of the Gordon Atwell map-reading competition over a distance of thirty miles. A fitting event for what was to happen later in the day.

On a beautiful sunny morning at 9am we signed on, and after checking our clues, a small group of us set off with one of the club's long distance exponents leading. He set such a scorching pace down the road, he must have thought he was riding a 24-hour- the screams of protest coming from the little Rivetts seemed to be in unison with the screams of pain coming from my knees. Eventually the pace settled down to a speed more benefitting an event of this nature. I am sure I heard signs of relief coming from her now feeble joints.

Then came the cross country section where a public footpath which ran through overgrown shrubbery had to be negotiated, I dismounted and gently urged my little Rivetts through the densely overgrown brambles, but the branches seemed to part as if they knew she was now fighting for her very life. We soon came to the end of the path where the track widened and led down to Duck End Farm, a beautiful restored farm house. After a brief rest the little Rivetts seemed to recover and we pressed on to Dovehouse Farm the next check. This was where our downfall started. In our enthusiasm over our excellent progress so far, we misinterpreted the instructions. We set off the first few yards correctly but missed the turn we should have taken and were now heading into oblivion. After some miles we decided we were completely off course, so we about-turned to head back for Dunmow. For us the competition was over.

At this point my beloved little Rivetts must have realised that she had lost her final race, for she just stopped dead in her tracks and with a final lurch heaved me over the handle bars as if to say "farewell old friend, I'm afraid this is the end of the road for me" even her Nervex lugs could not stop her frail tubes from folding up. It was as though she was punishing me for all the rough treatment she'd had over the years, but in her death throes she must have felt kindness for me as she made sure I was surrounded by club mates who would be on hand to help me if I hit the ground with a bang. She finally succumbed travelling over the roads she knew and loved so well. This little Rivetts frame which had served me so well over the years will not be thrown on the scrap heap with a lot of other twisted metal. She will once again be laid to rest in the cellar where she so often had to wait for my return.

The frame was recovered from the cellar some years later and once again taken into the care of Dick Morris, who fitted new 531 tubing for the top tube and down tube and used the existing Nervex lugs and we had it sprayed a lovely maroon. As you can see from the photos, still more years on, it is now back to its former glory, and at the age of 72 I am still riding it on special occasions. My regular bike is a Brian Wilkins which I bought from Brian after he had taken over the running of Frank Lipscome's shop in Markhouse Road, Walthamstow. My father Knew Frank very well. While I was still at school dad bought a second hand 19" Selbach from Frank for me, a lovely little bike but I just cannot remember what happened to it.



Frame	Rivetts road. No. 25512 20"
Wheels	Mavic 700's on campag small flange hubs
Chainset	Stronglight
Gears	Rear Campag, 5 speed
	Front Sachs Huret
Pedals	No name, made in France
Toe clips	Christophe Brevete
Brakes	Weinmann
Saddle	Brooks B17

THE END

Thank you Ken for this very entertaining story

MESSAGES

From Stuart - Those of you who come on my cycles know that many of my rides start and finish at the Compasses pub at Littley Green. The reasons for this are that I like the nostalgic ambience of the interior, the real ales, the food, the delightful rural location plus the variety of interesting routes that can be rode from there. Another favourite for several years, sharing many of the virtues of the Compasses, was the Viper at Mill Green. This pub has fallen from grace in recent months and has been closed and looking very forlorn. However on a recent cycle with Gabrielle we stopped opposite the Viper and noticed two blue notices on its windows. These were notifications of an application for a drinks license etc with any objections/comments by 20th November. This is a positive sign and hopefully the Viper will be up and running during 2021.



Jim Skinner received a Christmas Card from Sainsbury's, saying "Thank you for supporting us during this very difficult year! & also informing me that I was their joint **2nd top purchaser of Double Gloucester Cheese!** They however failed to tell me whether I was joint 2nd in the UK or Essex or in the Southend-on-Sea area? □

Robert says - Interesting that Jim has been eating Double Gloucester cheese. A few years ago now Jim, Sally, Maureen, Frank and I walked the Cotswold Way. On the (late) May Bank Holiday Monday we happened to be slogging up the side of a steep hill called Cooper's Hill (a few miles from Stroud) which just happened to be the very day that the annual cheese rolling challenge took place. There were lots of spectators about (and stalls etc including mulled wine) at the bottom of the hill and would be contestants at the top of the hill that we had hiked up to (albeit we were very careful not to be harangued into taking part in chasing after out of control cheeses). The hill was extremely steep – much easier to walk slowly up it than run fast down it! Might be worth a mention in the next newsletter!

(ps I did record a programme on the annual cheese rolling contest (and the young guy fronting the programme was duly persuaded to take part – albeit he didn't exactly hare down the hill). If anyone wants to pop round sometime (once lockdown or tier 2 restrictions are over) and see the programme (washed down with a glass of beer or wine) they are welcome to.



FINALLY



**MERRY
CHRISTMAS**