

THE Traditional T^oring C^lub

NEWSLETTER

LOCKDOWN MARCH / APRIL ISSUE 2021

Hello everyone. Welcome to yet another TTC Newsletter.

Firstly, due to the ongoing restrictions it is not possible to have an AGM again this April, however it may be possible to have a TTC meeting / AGM in July, this obviously depends on prevailing circumstances. No subscriptions will be collected until the committee is able to meet and set the fee.

Secondly, Thank you to all who have shared your stories, pictures and written articles for all the newsletters, they are much appreciated and I really hope you have enjoyed reading them. These newsletters would not be possible without the skills, efforts, hard work and long hours from Sue, a huge thank you to her for her professional production of all the newsletters. This will be our last newsletter, however our walks and cycles will be starting at the end of the month, therefore, as we are unable to have our monthly meetings, if leaders provide a write up with photos we can publish these. Thirdly, the Vaccination program is in full flow and most, if not all, of you have had your first vaccine, and that your second vaccine is imminent; which means that we, hopefully feel safer when out and about in groups.

The rules for organised outdoor sports is, from 29th March, people can meet in unlimited numbers, with precautions. Which means we can start a program of walks and cycles, therefore we are in the process of putting together a Trip Sheet for April and May. However, we need you as members to come forward to lead walks or cycles. Please consider putting on a walk or cycle any time in the future, if you need help to recce then let me or a committee member know.

“DOING NOTHING OFTEN LEADS TO THE VERY BEST OF SOMETHING.” – POOH



A year has gone by with us all isolating, shielding and taking precautions. You have to think about where you're going, is it local? Have you got your mask and hand gel, wash your hands when you get home. Keep your distance, no hugging no handshakes, no kissing; will things actually go back to normal?

We have certainly had a year of doing nothing, it's easy to forget the importance of doing absolutely nothing. However, I feel there's a magic that happens when doing nothing. The body refreshes, the mind can relax and some of the greatest creation can unfold while doing nothing.

Over the last year we have been able to reflect, try new hobbies, and consider what is important in our lives. There is so much to do and see you just have to look for it, often it's on your doorstep.

We all have noticed that more and more people have been outdoors and walking since the pandemic began and both the government and medics have said outdoors is the safest place to be. Outdoors is where social distancing is easiest and where you can improve your health and well-being.

My walks are always with Holly, my dog, she has been my saviour during this last lockdown and most definitely kept me sane. I am, fortunately, within walking distance of the seafront and two parks, so this is where I walk most days. Southchurch East Park is the first park where I stop to look at the resident swans and mallards. It is by this pond that I

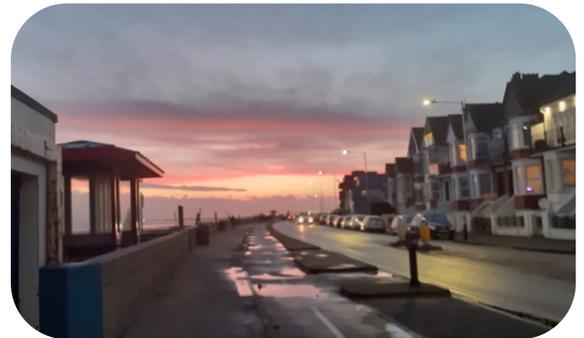
look for the water rats (and there are lots of them) they are fascinating, running around and as soon as they see you they stop and freeze. Strange because if I see a mouse indoors I freak out.



Then on to Southchurch West Park this park is more popular with the cafe and recreation grounds, but it has lovely flower beds and during the summer a rose garden. However, during the last month it was so wet and muddy, it was under water in places, even the ducks got confused and were swimming on the huge puddles.

The highlight over the past months is watching the signets grow and grow to become fully grown swans and then fly off to pastures new. Now it's nesting time, the coots are building their nests in the middle of the pond, often I see them dragging twigs and debris, their nests are very unstable so they are constantly rebuilding. Looks like hard work to me.

Then on to the seafront, I love it when the tide is in and I can hear the water splashing onto the sand. The rubbish is a big problem so I have been picking up as much as I can, every little bit helps, however from May dogs aren't allowed on the beach so I can no longer do this chore. The best time to walk on the beach is in the evening at sunset, the sky is stunning with the most beautiful colours of orange and red. It's really surprising how quick the sun disappears on the horizon, timing is important.



I have walked through Thorpe Bay Golf Club more time during this

lockdown than ever before, always in different weather conditions.

Snow, frost, flooding and now with the trees in blossom.

With the added bonus of no flying golf balls as they have been shut

for the duration of lockdown. Still for the duration of lockdown. Still

it is a lovely end to my walk as the exit is at the

bottom of my road with the trees in full bloom.

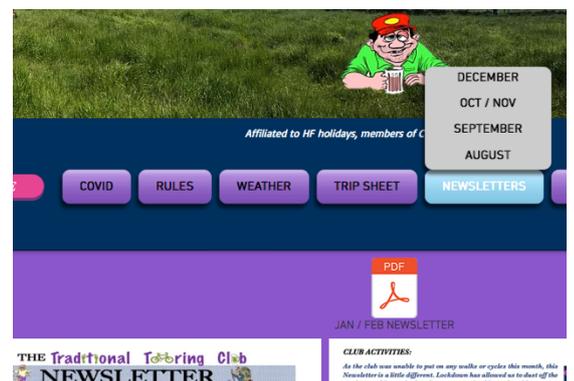
I never get bored with this walk which takes me about 90 mins and it's on my doorstep, spring is nearly here, all the gardens I pass are bursting in colour, magical that these bulbs survive after all the weather conditions.

Keep looking, and listening.

Sally Meredith (President)

CLUB ACTIVITIES:

As the club has not been able to put on any walks or cycles, this Newsletter has, once again, relied on contributions from you, the members, about past experiences and Lockdown adventures. As Sally mentioned above, this will be the last newsletter, I hope you have enjoyed them. Thank you to all those who have sent me articles, recipe's etc. without you this would not have been possible. And a special thank you to Sally for all her hard work and help in keeping the club united. Remember you can find all the newsletters on our website, in Word and easy, printable PDF versions. <https://www.traditionaltouringclub.com>



MEMBERS LOCKDOWN ADVENTURES

Elaine's pictorial walks

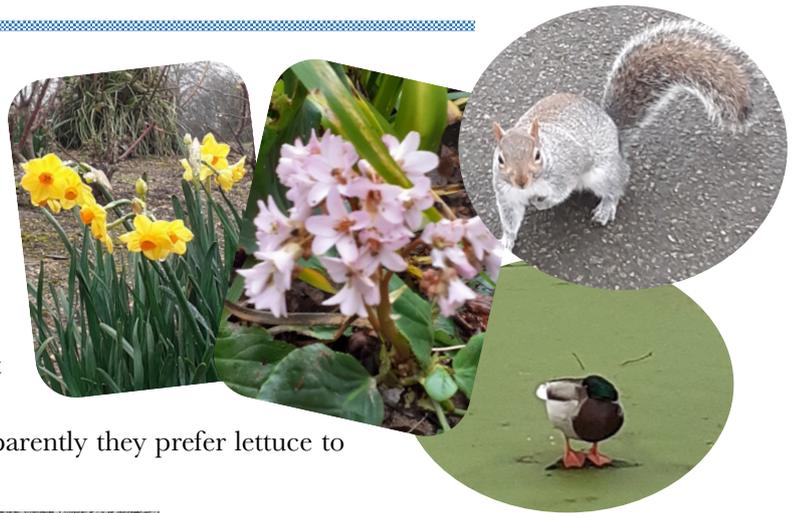
My walk out on 1st February around Southchurch Hall Park (Previously on Franks Walk)

It was a dreary day, but early signs of spring appearing with the daffodils.

The Squirrels came running out all around my feet and entertained me. They are so sweet and very tame probably hungry.

I must go again and take them some fruit or veg I don't think they are too picky.

The ducks were there too yet I had no food for them, apparently they prefer lettuce to Bread I've been told. A must visit.



I thought these pictures I took on my paper round last week are beautiful.

The first picture is a view looking over towards Hockley Woods. The rest were taken along Green Lane in Eastwood.

Elaine Ventura

I-Spy Southend

In the early 1960s I took part in I-Spy Southend, a local history competition

House in the High Street, the Pier entrance, the Golden Hind).The

weather station on Clifftown Parade has gone, and the two benchmarks, recording height above sea level, on the wall near the former Esplanade pub have also disappeared. I'm sure many of you have walked along Western Esplanade during lockdown and have seen the 5-

storey apartment and restaurant block now being built on the site of the former Esplanade pub. Although it was not an historic building there had been a "reading and refreshment room" there since 1872. Nineteenth century Ordnance Survey maps and engravings show a small, single-storey building, and this was extended by Charles Champ and Bertram Thomas Pudney who ran the refreshment rooms up until the First

run by I-Spy Books. The competition encouraged children to explore their local area. Perhaps some of you also took part? During lockdown I decided to follow the same trail on several of my walks. Sadly, but not surprisingly I could only answer 6 out of 19 questions in the centre of Southend, as many of the buildings have been demolished (Royal Stores in Grove Terrace, the Ritz Cinema, Barclays Bank and London



World War. The Esplanade had a chequered history, partly due to the unstable cliffs behind it. The pub closed in 2016, and was destroyed by fire in December 2018. Yet more history of Southend has been lost.

Jenny Butler

What the lockdown has meant to Chris

Well it all started at Christmas. Shopping done in advance. Butterfly turkey (like a very large turkey breast) large gammon joint crackers etc etc. all ready and waiting. My daughter and sister with family were joining us.

Then came lockdown so half the turkey along with the gammon are now in the freezer awaiting our release. Disappointing but to be honest I enjoyed the relaxed day we had. Even the Christmas Eve manic trip to the shops to get last minute bits that are mostly thrown away in January wasn't important what I didn't have didn't matter.

We started lockdown going on endless walks most people we passed looking like masked crusaders and everyone avoiding getting close and the glares we gave and received if they did. We had done the same last year but for some reason this was worse. The weather was colder everywhere that involved tracks and grass were out of bounds far too muddy darker evenings all of this meant BORING. When we are confined the smallest of happening become great events and we become envious of anybody having anything that we perceived as a much more exciting life. Even in our own households there's an underlying bitterness. For example John had a hospital follow up appointment early January. I offered to go along but he said no I'm not allowed in. Well I'll wait outside in the cold but he was insistent. So I was alone wallowing in my misery. Tables turned at the end of January when I had a podiatrist and two dental appointments. I could tell by his look that he was wishing he had been more lenient because there was no way I was going to allow him to come along with me. Silly when I think about it because there's no way I want to be at

his appointments or him at or mine in normal times. Lockdown has that effect.

We came together in February when we were vaccinated an appointment we could share. That came with its problems. John had put clean pants on as he does

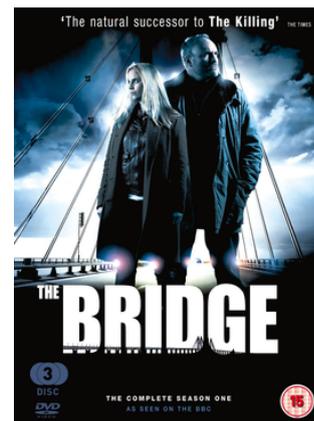
when anything important happens. The appointment was at 11.45. So there we were ready and waiting at ten when we got a phone call telling us it was postponed there had been a power cut. Up he went to change back into his other pants. 10.45 we had another call saying all was well come along at six. He was totally thrown and ended up putting his clean pants on his head with two knitting needles up his nose.

Then there are the parcels what joy that brought. I wasn't expecting any but I received a text from my neighbour asking if I could take one in for her as she was going out. I now had a purpose in my day. I went on my static bike showered then waited for the delivery man. The van pulled up I went to the door ready to open it but he knocked next door they were back home so I was surplus to requirements I was so disappointed. Then another man knocked with a parcel for them had a quick chat to delivery man. Just need to go upstairs then I will deliver the parcel and have quick chat to neighbours. I was furious when I heard the front door open and realised John had delivered it. The day was saved when I noticed a ball had been kicked into our garden. I was once again needed so went into the garden in the rain threw it back and that was my upper body exercise for the day.



I've since ordered so much on line just to be sure the delivery driver knocks here.

Another let down was when I thought my tumble dryer was broken the excitement that we were going to have a visitor. I turned it off then on again and it worked that is so hard to take. The normal television apart from a few programmes has been diabolical so we have turned to Netflix and BBC iPlayer. I've travelled the world with David Attenborough. I've been backpacking in Thailand. Bought property across Europe travelled around cooking with the Hairy bikers. I've been to Australia to watch the tennis. John has travelled the country watching football. Then there are the murders we have helped solve. Never been a fan of sub titled programmes but they have kept us going. The Bridge about investigations involving Danish and Swedish police. DNA child trafficking in Denmark. The



Investigation a true story from Denmark all very gripping. I am now in France for Spiral. It's set in the back streets of Paris. It's like a drug watch one then end up sitting up watching till 1 in the morning. It's

has eight series and 12 episodes in each series. So exhausting. I'm hoping I get through them all by the end of lockdown. We need the holiday in Minehead as therapy to get over all the other side of life we have been exposed to.

So that's how our lockdown has panned out.

Chris Blowers

FURTHER RAMBLINGS of a NORFOLK LAD

I begin with four pictures. One is a pack of bacon followed by a bottle of whisky, a pint of beer and lastly grapes. To find the connection read on.

In my last article I included reference to two significant changes affecting London during the last twenty years. One was the saving of St Pancras station and its transformation into a hub for International and the other the building of the Olympic Park from the warren of railway buildings at Stratford. I also have to report that one TTC member (who shall remain anonymous) wrote to me confessing that he once recorded the numbers of London Underground trains. That was really really anorak!



travel lines and decrepit

In this article, my last, I will cover one further major change I witnessed affecting London but before I do so its back to Norfolk in the sixties. During the school holidays I undertook a lot of different jobs to earn some pocket money as times were hard. These included fruit picking on various farms (black currants/strawberries/gooseberries), a temporary postman for Royal Mail at Christmas and in later years during the summer, assisting the driver delivering Walls bacon, ham and sausages across a large area of North Norfolk including many holiday camps. It would be fair to say this particular driver had a range of unofficial work practices that weren't in the Walls handbook. Each day we always seemed to have a surplus of stock which came in handy on different occasions. For example swapping sausages and bacon for ice creams from a passing Walls refrigerated van. We always seemed to be rushing from one delivery to the next and on one occasion we were running late and belting along the winding coast road between Holt and Blakeney. It was a hot day and I had the sliding passenger door of the van fully open. On one particular twisting bend three metal trays (each holding 60 packs) of best back bacon shot past me and onto the road scattering in all directions. We screeched to a stop only to find several cars containing holiday makers had also stopped and were collecting the packs and putting them back into the trays. Their efforts were rewarded with several packs of Best Back.

In 1965, shortly after joining Customs and Excise in Norwich, I was summoned to the UK training centre based in Carby House on Victoria Avenue. It was my first visit to Southend. Little did I think I would end



up spending (and probably ending) a large part of my life here. Our six month training covered a wide range of topics and combined classroom theory with practical application which included spells at Hull docks, Norwich Excise and finally a distillery. I can confirm that Hull and the Humber Estuary were not great locations for weather in Winter. However for my final spell of practical training I was sent for a



week to the Royal Lochnagar distillery which was located next to the Queen's Estate at Balmoral. As far as I know this is the only UK distillery entitled to have the word "Royal" as part of its name. It produced a very fine malt whisky and was set in a wonderfully scenic position. Because of its remote situation the distillery had to provide a home for the Excise officer and his family who were permanently based there. Deer would come down from the hills for snacks and the officer was entitled to play on the Balmoral estate golf course and bowling green except during August when the Queen and her entourage arrived. You can imagine these type of postings were well sought after. Today a bottle of their Special Reserve Single Malt sells for £170.

Back in the 20th century HM Customs and Excise undertook very tight controls on the brewing and distilling industry. Every brewery and distillery had to inform the Excise office when they would be making beer or whisky and an officer would attend to oversee the operation. When I started in Norwich there were 4 independent breweries (including Bullards and Steward and Patteson) operating but within a short time Watneys had swept into East Anglia and taken over and closed most of these. Many will remember that East Anglia in the sixties/seventies became synonymous with the much maligned "Red Barrel". At that time Greene King and Adnams were still minor breweries. Thankfully for real ale drinkers the



climate has changed and nowadays there are a plethora of small brewers across the country whilst Adnams and Greene King have thrived.

I finish with my last London transformation and that concerns Docklands. After completing my training I was posted to London Port and more specifically Regents Canal Dock in Limehouse. Ships would come from abroad and pass through the lock gates and into the dock area. Cargo was still transferred between these ships and the narrow boats that had arrived via the UK Canal system. We also covered the large number of warehouses and docks that stretched along the north bank of the river down to the Isle of Dogs. Much of this area hadn't changed for years and resembled a set from "Call the Midwife". A favourite pub



was The Grapes situated on Narrow Street (most appropriate as it was a very narrow hostelry) as well as the more well-known Prospect of Whitby and Waterman's Arms. The Thames was literally awash with all kinds of river traffic although quite polluted compared to today. Vast numbers of dockers and stevedores were employed as there was little mechanisation and not a container in sight. Coming from my somewhat sheltered upbringing in Norwich this was a whole new world for me. I remember that one of the ladies who cleaned our offices at Regents Canal had a connection with the Kray brothers. I had never heard of them but they soon became notorious. Living in Blackheath my daily commute often entailed walking across the Heath then Greenwich Park before descending into the foot tunnel by the Cutty Sark and thence onto the Isle of Dogs. Later on I was transferred to West India Dock and then Millwall Dock where

much bigger ships came and went. Never in a million years would I have predicted that this area would be transformed by huge skyscraper office buildings, the Docklands light railway, the Jubilee underground, upmarket marinas as well as City Airport. Moreover the dockside warehouses that smelt of exotic spices and other various goods would now be transformed into very expensive waterside apartments. At one time the East End was the poor and somewhat neglected neighbourhood area of London but it has truly been transformed within my lifetime. It's character has also been transformed. Whether for the better or worse is open to debate!

Furthermore I would never have predicted that having retired, I would return to the area in my very own sixties and seventies. This was because I had joined the Lower Thames Rowing Club and the highlight of each year was to participate in the Great River Race from Limehouse to Richmond, a distance of approximately 22 miles. I rowed in this race on five occasions and the last time we entered a crew of six all over 70. I believe our combined total age was nearly 450. ! Just after the start we passed all the warehouses, wharves, docks and pubs on our starboard side that I knew from my youth. Moreover we used the very nice facilities of the Poplar Rowing Club to change and launch. This club is located very close to the foot tunnel and overlooks the Cutty Sark.

Life has a habit of going full circle on occasions.

Stuart Budds

Roberts Wise words

I haven't really been doing a great deal in lockdown which I suppose is what lockdown is largely about. I don't have any recipes given that I presume most people know how to make omelettes, spaghetti Bolognese, seafood linguine and chicken curry.

I can however offer a couple of anecdotes one of which does have a slightly serious theme given that we want to come forward to lead walks and cycles etc.

A few years ago now I led a London walk which started at Tottenham Hale railway station and followed the River Lea/Lea navigation system and Limehouse cut through to Limehouse. I did a recce on Saturday and the walk on Sunday. The recce was more eventful

than I had anticipated. One should always recce a walk or cycle (except perhaps the Leigh to Benfleet weekly Monday walk). The most important part of the recce of any walk (or cycle) is the start because it could well be that the start point is somewhere that is unfamiliar to you and could be part of a confusing urban sprawl (eg Tottenham Hale station) or an unfamiliar rural / woodland location. It is very easy to start walking/cycling in the wrong direction (as I was about to do!)

If you do a walk/cycle where the route has been taken from a reliable source then follow the instructions accordingly!) I am a member of the Ramblers who produce a quarterly magazine called (unsurprisingly) 'Walk'.

They include about a dozen walks submitted by local Ramblers association for various areas (given that it is a nationwide magazine) so Scotland /Wales/North East/North West/South East/South West/ Midlands etc. My reliable source was from that quarter's Walk magazine South East walk submitted by a local (let's say Chingford) Ramblers section. Therefore if the instructions said (as they did) exit Tottenham Hale station and turn right that is what I should have done. I turned left. This was because turning right seemed to be the precise opposite of where the River Lea was situated so smart a**e moi turned left through a subway tunnel and emerged into an unpromising urban landscape

dominated by a large roundabout where I could have forsaken the walk and eaten for England given that there was a Subway eatery (rather than the tunnel I had just walked through), a KFC, a Burger King and I think a McDonald's as well. Various roads led off from this roundabout none of which seemed very promising in relation to my intended onward travel.

Now here is a vital point to make in relation to any recce of a walk or cycle. If you come to a spot where you are not sure of where you are or where you need to go then don't just take a route and hope for the best. Return to the last point that you knew where you were. In my case this was Tottenham Hale

railway station – and I duly retraced my steps there. I then turned right out of the subway per the Walk contributor's instruction and after about fifty yards of seemingly going in the 'wrong direction' the path did an abrupt u-turn back past the station and down to the river Lea. It had taken me about 40 minutes to recce the first one hundred yards but the rest of the recce went without a hitch as did the TTC walk itself the following day.

I have been lucky over the years to have done quite a lot of hiking/walking in Switzerland - a great place (if a bit expensive now) for walking, fantastic scenery. Quite good food, quite nice people etc.

I was on a hotel to hotel trek once with a group of other English people and we having a drink/bite to eat in a local bar restaurant one evening. Towards the end of the evening one of the bar staff came over to our table and said "You are English I think?". We affirmed this whereupon he said "I have a football result that may interest you: Germany 1 England 5" One of our number said "You are joking aren't you" to which the young man replied "No, in Switzerland we do not make jokes." I had a great holiday (and I'm not joking!)

Robert Wright

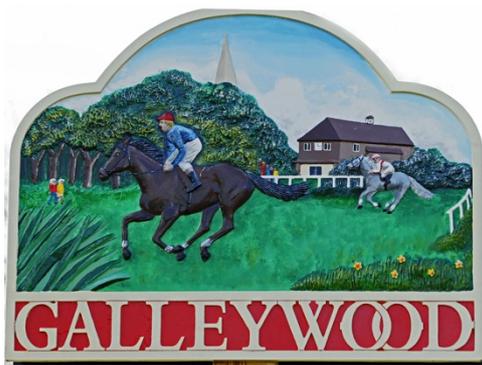
Eddie's reminisce of the Gallop in Galleywood 29/11/15

Who were the runners and riders for this (not a race)!

The jockeys and horses meet in the Elms paddock ring before the running of the TTC handicapped 4 and a ½ mile race over the old course at Galley wood. The horseboxes were allocated and we made our way to the course. I pointed out to a regular Irish race course visitor that this must be the only time he would not lose any money while visiting today's trip to a race course. We parked near the St Michael Parish Church which is the only church built inside a race course in the country and also used the pub car park where we met others. As we arrived at the Galleywood stables which was a pub called the Horse and Groom coffee was waiting to be served by our friendly stable lad Dave the pub landlord. There were eventually 16 riders for this meeting run by the sponsors John Wite Brewery and Norman's Outer garments. The lunch menus were offered and we chose meals for after the walk. The old racecourse was 250 feet above sea level and was in a district with quite a few ups and downs. It has been a racecourse for 176 years and on since

1759. Even Charles 11 was known to breed and watch horses here. It was a right hand 2-mile hilly racecourse and was used for flat racing until 1887 when it went over to Nation Hunt jumping. The last two furlongs were uphill to the winning post and needed strong horses with stamina to finish first.

Two of our riders did not race as one had a fetlock injury and was on the mend for Christmas after deciding not to get her put down. She was out taking the air for her convalescing which was a very strong east wind but not too cold but stayed dry. Her trainer Maureen who helped her to get to the race accompanied her. Some came prepared for rain with an array of umbrellas and waterproofs and a large see through Mac over a fake fur coat. Talking of Christmas time a few of the rider's thought they were carrying over weight for the race and thought to take a couple of pounds off before putting them back on over the month. We came under starter orders with some wearing the silks of Norman's outer garments old and new TTC colours. Off we went from the starting line down towards the Galleywood common alongside the B1007 noting the colours of autumn leaves on the ground and how they helped to soak up the overnight rain. The going was good to soft and most had the correct footwear on. John was out in front and led a good to steady pace across the downhill flat race course. Our leaders were course and distance winners as they have previously recce the gallop. We crossed the noisy busy A12 and skirted the Lady Grove wood and came across some concrete bunkers which as yet unknown why they were there. A pair of secateurs



would have made the pathway easier here. An excellent Christmas gift for a walker. At the edge of the wood there was a double water jump ditch at right angles not unlike the canal turn in the Grand National. A few of the riders refused at first at this fence and had assistance getting over the obstacle. Travailing east we rounded another field and went through a small wood to come out into Oldbarn farm where we smelt the fresh piled high manure in the air. The blustery east wind took away the smell from us as we passed the large pile as we went through the farm. We followed a downhill single width concrete track laid out in 1987 and had some great views across the countryside and went through the buildings of Crondon Hall farm. The runners and riders were getting spread out due to my handicap of carrying too much weight and even the strong east wind did not help me up another long incline to the A12. A steward enquiry was held and I was let loose to slowly go up the last hill via the Maldon road and London hill to the finish line. I was surprised that when I finally crossed the finish line and got to the pub I found I came in second after our leader who was enjoying a well-deserved pint. All the other non-runners and riders were pulled up at the heritage centre and craft fair where some raffle prizes were being won and were consumed at the pub later. We tucked into our nosebags, which were much appreciated and professionally served. Dave the landlord was very attentive and we all left the pub after some more desserts just before it got dark.



Thanks John and Norman for a lovely gallop.

Eddie Bailey

Roberts further input to the earlier anecdotes

I have come across some famous insults and some witticisms a few of which might be considered insulting enough or witty enough for inclusion in the newsletter viz:

“I have never killed anyone but I have read some obituary notices with great satisfaction” (Clarence Darrow)

“I didn’t attend the funeral but I sent a nice letter saying I approved of it,” (Mark Twain)

“He has all the virtues I dislike and none of the vices I admire” (Winston Churchill)

“Thank you for sending me a copy of your book; I’ll waste no time reading it” (Moses Hadas)

“I’ve had a perfectly wonderful evening but this wasn’t it” (Groucho Marx)

“Only two things are infinite: the universe and human stupidity; and I am not sure about the former” (Albert Einstein)

“I am enclosing 2 tickets for the first night of my new play; bring a friend.....if you have one” (George Bernard Shaw to Winston Churchill)

“Cannot possibly attend first night, will attend second...if there is one” (Winston Churchill in response)

There is also of course the famous ‘take poison’ dialogue between Churchill and Lady Astor

Some witticisms:

Evening news is where they begin with “Good Evening” and then proceed to tell you why it isn’t

Where there’s a will, I want to be in it

To steal ideas from one person is plagiarism. To steal from many is research.

Whenever I fill out an application, in the part that says “In case of emergency, notify” I put “DOCTOR”.

Money can’t buy happiness but it sure makes misery easier to live with.

You’re never too old to learn something stupid

Change is inevitable, except from a vending machine

If I agreed with you, we’d both be wrong

Stay safe etc (that’s not a witticism)

Robert Wright



[The Shadow King by Maaza Mengiste](#) – Average Score: 6 points (5.9)

Comments and scores during lockdown March 2021

Not quite sure what to say about the book other than I'm sorry I inflicted it on everyone! I still haven't finished it, a real slog, and wonder what the criteria for being on the Booker prize list can possibly be? Misery, resentment, frustration nothing uplifting in this tale very little hope in an alien culture. I haven't enjoyed reading it, at this time particularly, and will be surprised if anyone has. **My score is 5 points**

I have a keen interest in history/military history and as such have enjoyed books we have read in the book club by authors such as Sebastian Faulks and Victoria Hislop that are works of fiction woven round actual historical events such as World Wars, Spanish Civil War etc. On that basis I suspect I may be more kindly disposed than most to a book set against the background of Mussolini's invasion of Ethiopia in the 1930's. I quite liked Book 1 Invasion and Book 2 Resistance with some quite dramatic prose - if somewhat overbearing at times – although I suppose it was that that propelled it to Booker Prize nomination (with probably a hint of political correctness in choosing a book by an African author dealing with a somewhat quirky situation of armed women fighting alongside the menfolk in war). I thought the book did fall away however after 'Books 1 and 2') – I found the prison camp exchanges/standoffs between Hirut/Ettore/Fucelli a bit dull and the fuss over the letter a bit irritating. It also lacked any real suspense because one knew that Hirut and Ettore were going to survive any battles and meet up again in 1974 (and it was not really a surprise that Kidane and Fucelli didn't survive). The book suggested that for many native Ethiopians the world did not extend beyond the limit of their horizon and the mountains, valleys and scattered villages contained therein. I suspect that is true for many people in Ethiopia today and the country is still marred by armed conflict as evidenced by the recent fighting in the Tigray province. **My score is 6 points**

I'm afraid overall, I didn't like this book. The writing went into realms of fantasy and I was half way through before I started enjoying it. The fighting in the mountains was believable and I could sympathise with some of the characters. But almost as I thought this isn't bad, wham, it was back into long passages that didn't explain anything. Good subject matter and could have been a lot better. **My score is 6.5 points.**

After waving the white flag at my first attempt at reading the book I took a running jump at it and reread it. On second reading I understood it but can't say I would recommend it as a riveting read. It was well written about an awful war and a dusty dry country - very violent. I will speak more on Zoom. **My score is 4 points.**

This was a difficult read. An interesting story was weighed down by a lot of extra text. **My score is 6 points.**

I'm glad to have finished this book - the second half was easier and more interesting to read. It was mostly well written, but confusing at times (names changing, images etc). Not an easy book to score. **My score is 6 points.**

Here is yet another book that I definitely wouldn't have persevered with if it hadn't been for book club! However, by the second half I was into the story and had learnt how to let this style of prose wash over me and tell its dramatic story. I thought the ending was particularly good – when Hirut only salutes at Ettore in the railway station and then sees the real Haile Selassie dressed as a peasant!! That theme of peasant and Emperor was a strong one, I thought, as Minim himself had to get accustomed to being a peasant again in the reverse situation. I thought that the writing was powerful on the whole, although I found some sections unnecessarily long – especially when describing the opera Aida (with which I'm not familiar). I do feel much more educated now about Ethiopia and Mussolini and Haile Selassie – so I'm grateful for that. I was also interested to see how liberating it can be to lose the punctuation 'rules' – though I'm not sure that I could do that myself! **My score is 7.5 points.**

I found the book written in a style that I found uncomfortable/difficult to read.

The author is a literary professor but the style is very different to that which I am used to. Book 1 set the scene and I had a bit of trouble following the story/characters. Books 2 and 3 were easier to follow and the narrative seemed to me to flow better. I started to read book 1 again and it made more sense and was a better read. I would rate this book a 6 as it had some interesting information on the invasion of which I had no knowledge and I will investigate further. However the style and speed of plot was hard work. **My score is 6 points.**

I'm sorry but this book was not for me. I did read the first book but skipped the second and read the last half of the third. I did think it was well written and would be enjoyed by someone more interested in Ethiopian history. I would not recommend it as I found it too brutal in places and too long. **My score is 5 points.**

It was interesting to find out a bit about Ethiopia in 1935, but the story got very involved and I lost interest. It could not hold my attention. I read the last chapters. PS. It shows women are the bravest, of course! **My score is 4 points.**

This book was quite difficult to get into and I found that I was reading and not being able to grasp the story. I then decided to read it over a couple of hours and really concentrate, it is not a book you can just pick up and read. The names were difficult to remember and the writing was very descriptive and poetic. However, once I got used to this style of writing and got half way through the book and had an idea who the main characters were, I quite enjoyed it. It was brutal at times, but also you had to admire the bravery of the women: Hirut, the main character at the start 'the little one' was only a child, recently orphaned and taken in by Kidane, and it is her journey that takes you through the book and also the often forgotten efforts of women in war, their strength and passion for their country. This book is well written, not for everyone, but it certainly educated me on Italy's invasion of Ethiopia in 1935. **My score is 6 points.**

Club Corner

This Months Recipe – Kens sought after 'Allotment' Pineapple Cake

It's Tasty, Tasty, very very Tasty!

Ingredients

6 oz Soft Brown Sugar
1 Tin Crushed Pineapple – (Drain most of the juice)
12 oz Mixed Dried Fruit
4 oz Glace Cherries
4 oz Butter

2 Eggs (lightly Beaten)
8 oz self Raising flour

Method

Heat oven to 160c/140 fan /Gas mark 3
Line a 6" Cake Tin

Put the first 5 items in a saucepan. Heat on low until melted then bring to the boil. Simmer for 5 minutes stirring occasionally. Remove from the heat and leave to cool for about 10 minutes.

Add the eggs and flour, mix well.

Place the mixture into the lined cake tin. Bake in the oven for approximately 1 hour 40 minutes. (Cover the top with foil if browning too quickly).

Ken Paice



Bob's Bird Houses



Bob's been busy making bird boxes to raise money for Marie Curie. Due to Covid restriction, we cannot do the Morrisons

daffodil appeal this year. Suggested minimum donation **£8.50**. 100% proceeds to Marie Curie. 10 available. Please text Jan Sutton to reserve one if interested. 07512 736023



A Blast from The Past – A story from the TTC magazine, Nov 1999

TALES of the TRAILS

It was a typical TTC Friday night. The trailer had been loaded, the start delayed in the customary manner. There was the hanging around for the non-arrivals who had failed to inform the trip leader. But soon we were trundling Northwards on the M.1. heading for the Tissington Trail.

The Peak District may not sound a promising location for a cycling weekend but thanks to the Victorian navigators who, modified nature with their valley crossing by building embankments and blasting cuttings through the limestone hills, created reasonable gradients for the early steam trains. A steam locomotive liked hills about as much as a TTC cyclist does. It follows that where a steam train can go, so too can a cyclist.

We had the good fortune to enjoy the driving services of Harry Hickey a popular former member of the Club. Harry's natural empathy with Martin, inevitably seasoned the whole trip with frequent hilarious interludes. Harry battled through the traffic delivering us to the magnificent Hartington Hall just before mid-night. Happily avoiding our transformation into a pumpkin and twelve white mice.

Saturday morning and the TTC walkers and cyclists, their stomachs already groaning from the assault of YHA meusli, porridge and full english breakfasts ; reinforced by limitless toast, butter, marmalade, tea and coffee, were ready for the off. Eddie cut a fine figure . Joe had presented him with a map heavily inscribed with pink highlighter and had muttered something about him being the walkers leader. He did his best to look like a rambler, though stopping short at the bobble hat. Slung across his chest on a completely inadequate cord was his waterproof and by the time he had stretched the map case strap from the other shoulder across his more than adequate form, he looked like a Hot Cross bun on legs.

The cyclists boldly rode through the gate and turned left straight on to a gradient one in eight (upwards of course) Eventually arriving at Hartington station with its beautifully preserved and fully equipped signal box , they set off towards all points of the compass. Eventually all agreed that Terry was right and trundled down the track to the next station charmingly titled Parsley Hay. Here was a small visitor centre and a lively cycle hire and repair shop. Martin had his bike fixed (We'd only come round the corner) and most of the gang were feeling so deprived by this time that they had to indulge in more tea, coffee, confectionery etc.

We pressed on. For today we were to conquer not only the Tissington Trail but the High Peak Trail as well. As the day progressed we encountered more parties of cyclists, mostly smartly attired in the appropriate dress. From shiny helmet through reflective jacket to skin fitting Lycra drawers that displayed every embarrassing contour and protuberance . As usual the TTC group were in that wide variety of dress that sets them apart from other cyclists. After all, they have to be ready at the drop of the Admiral's hat, to walk, climb, cave, swim , scuba dive, hang glide, wheel a barrow, push a truck, not to mention vigorously propping up any bar they happen to come across.

Is it surprising they appear to suffer a permanent clothing crisis?

From the elevation of our saddles, we were able to appreciate the striking views. Sometimes field enclosed by dry stone walls criss crossing away in to the distance, with stands and clumps of attractive trees spaced between. The whole scene back dropped by the loom of the brooding tors. At other times riding through leafy cuttings, the trees over hanging, very atmospheric and with high limestone mini cliffs rising up on either side of the cleft. All very pleasant and contrasting.

We came to Middleton Top, here we viewed the winding house where, in former times, a static steam engine assisted the trains up a steep incline by attaching them to a steel cable and hoisting them over the brow. After lunch at near by Brassington the ride continued. Light relief was provided by Harry who whilst bravely leading the way over a swift flowing river ford, did a magnificent somersault to land spread-eagled in mid stream. Promptly Terry dashed forward to assist, only to find that Harry was not drowning, but laughing his head off. He was unable to rise until Terry freed him from his pedal clip.

The day ended with our leisurely return to Hartington and din din in the local.

Hartingtons Sunday mornings,peace and quiet was shattered as the assembled TTC bawled and shouted, shoved and pushed as cycles were loaded into the minibus or was it baggage, or baggage in to the trailer? Or was it the bus, or was it both? Strongmen heaved and strained whilst ladies stood and gazed admiringly. Soon enough we were off on an easy going jaunt along the Manifold Trail.

The Leake and Manifold Light Railway opened in 1902 and was closed in 1934 having never made a profit. Because it failed to attract tourist or much other passenger traffic it was mainly devoted to the carriage of cheese ,milk and cream for onward shipping to London, 600,000 tons of dairy product being carried annually. Coal, animal feed, mine spoil and beers from Burton on Trent were also conveyed. We set off from Hulme End the original line terminus and followed the winding river along the Manifold Valley. At one point, near Wetton we met up with the walkers, a great deal of energy was expended when,cyclists having dismounted, we all climbed a steep near-cliff to reach Thors cave. However it proved worthwhile because of the superb

view of the valley and the distant Tors. It was here that Martin became so excited at meeting some gentleman from Leigh on Sea that we thought he was about to have an orgasm.

It was a less demanding day and we ambled along taking in Wettonmill, Weag's Bridge and Ilam. Lunchstop was enlivened by the appearance of a grand old Steam Roller in full steam , trundling along with its trailer to a great clatter , puffing hissing and rattling as the driver blasted merrily on the steam whistle.

There was a definite hint of early Autumn as we made our way back to Hartington through banks of fading wild flowers and with a misty hint to the atmosphere. Both walkers and cyclists agreed that we had enjoyed a smashing weekend.

Thank you Dennis Hill

A Message From Eddie

I have just read our latest edition of our magazine. Many thanks to all involved with the "twins" very much in the editor's position and the contributors with their thoughts on nostalgia and the wonderful times to be had later this year. As I look out of my window at the snow and grown up people throwing snowballs at each other. I felt a surge of "something" maybe it's the pills or just my age. Nurse I think I am having a turn!!

I feel a smile on my now bearded face and start to reminisce on some of the trips mentioned which is delightful as I have to consult my diary on what I did yesterday.

WILL see you all soon. Keep well. *Eddie Bailey*

And a Hug From Jeni

