

NEWSLETTER 77 : JULY - OCTOBER 2015

UNISON RETIRED MEMBERS ASSOCIATION COMMITTEE MEMBERS 2015/2016

Chair: Janet Norton
Vice Chair: Carole Rhodes
Secretary: Barbara Bowery
8805-2667
Treasurer: Olive Parsons
8366-5840
Outings Orgs: Anne Best, Janet Norton
Speaker Org: Doreen Denton
Newsletter: Allan Thow
Members: Malcolm Carter,
Marion Rowsell
Met. Dist. Reps: Mary Stone, Kay Price
Auditor: Chris McClean

UNISON OFFICE: 020 8379 4084

Message from the Chairman.

CHRISTMAS LUNCH 2015 Monday 7th December. £20.00p

Christmas Lunch this year will be on Monday 7th December at Enfield Conservative Club, Baker Street where we have been for the last few years. The meal will be a full three course lunch with a buffet starter and ending with a buffet Sweet. In between there will be a hot Christmas main course served at the table. We will be entertained by Peter James singing some popular Christmas songs and other songs from his collection. .

Please note the Club will open for us at 12 noon (not before) for a 12.30 start.

Please book through the Treasurer at 38 Halifax Road, Enfield EN2 0PP.

Look forward to seeing you all there
Best wishes

Janet.

Nightingale Pennies Collection

£25.50p was sent from the pennies collection box in July 2015

DIARY DATES 2015 Members Monthly Meetings Tuesday 2.30 - 4.30 pm

13th October – Margaret Carr – On the Treadle.

10th November – Geoff. Bowden – Funny Girls.

Committee Meetings 2015

9th November

SPEAKERS WE HAVE ENJOYED

**Tuesday 14th July
David Wass–Humorous Policing.**

David was born in Derbyshire. He wasn't offered a lot of work when it was time to leave school; it was either farming or the coal face. Then he was called up to the Royal Air Force to do his National Service. After his final discharge he came to London and joined the Metropolitan Police Force.

Training took 16 weeks and involved a lot of memorising legal descriptions of the types of crime he would encounter on the streets as a Police Constable. Most of his fellow trainees were ex-forces personnel as they were used to the discipline, knew how to polish a pair of boots and keep a uniform clean and generally had a degree of intelligence developed during their years of service to King or Queen and Country. On successfully completing his training he was told to report to Holloway Police Station where he discovered that the majority of his new Police Force colleagues were also ex-services.

On the "beat" you were not allowed to talk to other officers. You had a book, a pencil and a whistle. When you made an arrest, usually drunks arrested for their own safety, they made an

appearance in Court the next morning and the standard punishment was a 10/- fine and dismissed. In Holloway at that time there was nowhere to get anything to eat or drink. No cafes and only one chip shop. Not like today with fast food outlets everywhere.

A WPC's job was totally different. They did 22 weeks training, six weeks more than the men. Each WPC was individually measured for the uniform, unlike the men who were handed uniforms off-the peg based on the "eye" of a senior sergeant. A WPC could not enter service before the age of 21, the men entered from 16 years and upwards. A WPC had greater powers than a PC, for instance, being able to remove children from their home and placing them into care. There were also many fewer WPC's, just 3 in Holloway working alongside 400 male officers but generally they were better educated and more mature.

Police officers of whatever sex had to ask permission to get married and this was not readily granted.

David was transferred to North Mimms and spent most of his time behind a desk. There was virtually no crime but close proximity to the M25 meant many traffic accidents and many deaths. A whole section at North Mimms was formed from the entire crew of a single Lancaster Bomber who had survived the war together. They were regarded as entirely mad, perhaps as a result of their wartime experiences, and were always playing practical jokes on each other.

Eventually David was posted to Hornsey which he loved as this was a most interesting section to work in, throwing up new problems every day. One time he was temporarily transferred to Enfield because of manpower problems arising from the

need to conduct three separate murder enquiries.

David was an entertaining speaker and told us many amusing stories.

Tuesday 11th August 2015.
Sheila Parker – From Tiller Girl to Vernon Girl.

She started the meeting by making us all remember “6 5 Special” and singing its opening music. Sheila also reminded us of Dickie Valentine.

From seven years old Sheila just wanted to become one of the dancers, The Tiller Girls, but living in a poor part of Liverpool it was very difficult to find dance classes but she was eventually successful and began lessons. Having joined the Church Youth Club, one year she was cast in a play as the Angel Gabriel and the man who directed the show suggested she should have her singing voice trained.

Finding a voice tutor was just as hard as finding a dance class and when she did the teacher said he would teach her to sing, to read music and to play the piano for 10/- per week which was more than her parents could afford. She told her dance teacher this had happened and although she never found out why, this teacher paid for her lessons from then on. At 15 she was auditioned by the Windmill Theatre and was offered a four and a half month contract in a Pantomime at Oxford. They danced two shows every day except Sunday and three times on Saturday and Wednesday. They had a head dancer who looked after them.

As Tiller Girls they all had to wear a uniform. They needed an equity card and couldn't work in London or Blackpool until they had done two years in the provinces.

Sheila showed us a video of the Tiller Girls which brought back many fond memories of the early days of television. Sheila returned to the Oxford Theatre after 40 years and was not surprised that nothing had changed. The dancers, who had the most

costume changes during every show, still had the changing room at the very top of the building. No wonder they were all thin.

Suddenly everything changed with the launch of 6 5 Special on TV. Kids of the day used to dip their skirts in melted sugar to make them stiff, then there was a slip with hoops attached to hold their multi layered skirts out.

Vernon Girls had to be from Liverpool as they were sponsored by Vernon Pools a Liverpool based company. Sheila went for an audition and got the job so she became a Vernon Girl. They had a chaperone who ruled them with a rod of iron. They had to report to her every day for inspection. All the shows were live, no backing tracks or recordings so the Girls had to know and sing every song.

Sheila stayed with them for 5 years. There was no reason to leave unless you got married. The list of stars she danced with was very impressive and included Johnny Cash, Craig Douglas, Marty Wilde, Cliff Richard, Eddie Cochran, Gene Vincent and Billy Fury. In 1960 she danced on the Royal Variety Performance which was the first one to be televised and was compared by Bruce Forsyth a local Edmonton boy. The big stars were Sammy Davies Junior, Liberace, the Crazy Gang and Vera Lynn.

Paul McCartney lived a little way up the road from where she grew up so she knew him well. One day she went to the Cavern Club for lunch with some friends and met Paul and George playing in a band and she said to him “Paul with all your education what are you doing playing in a dive like this”. This was well before the Beatles took off. Many years later she was standing by the side of a stage when she heard a quiet voice in her ear saying “Is this a better dive for me to be playing” It was Paul who still remembered her conversation with him.

Tuesday 8th September 2015.
Julia Pearce – Antartica.

Julia first spoke to us about the start of her journey in Buenos Aires and showed us a slide of the building where Eva Peron made her famous speech. She went to a Tango show which she regarded as the worst evening's entertainment they had ever had.

The boat that took her and her friend to Antartica was very small and very Russian so they were rather worried but there was no need, they were safe and they were well looked after. The boat took only 45 people and the first port of call was the Falkland Islands. They spent 18 days at sea and during that time only saw only one other boat. They stopped at Blakes Island which they were told was the only place to see rock floccker penguins. These penguins nest in very awkward. They later moved on to Port Stanley but they actually had to refuel at sea from a Russian tanker as this was very much cheaper than landing in Port Stanley and refuelling there. They picked up the Governor of the Falklands as he needed to go to a meeting at another of the Islands.

They saw breeding penguins, estimated to number in excess of 100,000 as they went as far as the eye could see. The pictures she showed us were amazing. They showed us Elephant Seals the largest of which weighed about 4 tonnes. We saw the grave of Sir Ernest Shackleton on the Island of South Georgia. On another Island was the nesting place of the Albatross. These birds with a wing span between 8 and 12 feet weigh about 40 pounds and mate for life. They can live for over 100 years. Once they leave their nest and the island they stay at sea for 7 years never landing on land until they return to the Island, find a mate and start to breed.

Winter was already starting during their trip and some places they were due to visit were iced up and they had to make detours to avoid these areas. They saw macaroni penguins. Sailed through violent storm force 11 winds

with wind speeds up to 73 mile per hour and waves up to 52 feet when there are large amounts of airborne spray severely reducing visibility. On land you would expect widespread tree damage and the likelihood of structural damage to property. Saw Leopard Seals which are very dangerous and will attack divers. She even showed us slides of Leopard Seals attacking the inflatable boats they were using to go ashore. They saw chinstrap penguins so called because they always look as though they are smiling. She showed us a photograph of a big iceberg.

They obviously had a very eventful trip and we really enjoyed looking at the photographs and hearing her stories.

We have many good speakers and anyone wishing to join us on these afternoons would be most welcome. They are the second Tuesday in the month at 2.30 pm at the Civic Centre.

OUTINGS AND OTHER REPORTS

Thursday 25th June 2015 Beautiful Cambridge and River Cam Cruise

We arrived in Cambridge at about 10.45am, within walking distance of Kings College where a large number of students were waiting to go inside for their graduation ceremony. The city was also very busy with tourists who, like us, were obviously enjoying the unusual surroundings and activity.

We had refreshments and then spent the rest of the morning sightseeing before joining the coach at 1.30pm for a short ride to the River Cam. Here we boarded the Riverboat Georgina for a leisurely two hour cruise during which an excellent lunch was served followed by tea or coffee.

There was an interesting commentary on the boat and we passed several narrow-boats which are apparently used as permanent homes. There was a field where, until 1932, Food Fairs

were held on a regular basis. Several streets in Cambridge are named after the food that was once sold there. We cruised past beautiful houses and cottages and even a Palace once lived in by the Bishop of Ely.

Rejoining the coach at 4.30pm we had been fortunate in having perfect weather for the entire time, a most enjoyable day out.

Tuesday 28th July 2015 Colchester Gems, Jams and Bouncing Bombs.

In Colchester, the capital of the Roman Province of Britannia, once stood a great temple dedicated to the Emperor Claudius, it was attacked and destroyed by Queen Boudicca in AD60. Today on the same spot stands a castle built by William the Conqueror, set in pleasant gardens stretching to the River Colne. Our visit began here at the old pub adjacent to the castle where we had lunch and afterwards a short walking tour with our guide who showed us the gardens and the nearby houses of the old Dutch Quarter where Flemish refugees settled centuries ago. A tiny chapel built inside the City Walls is in use today as a Greek Orthodox church full of beautiful icons and we were made welcome here by the priest in charge.

We also visited something very up to date, a gallery of modern art known as First Site. A building of unusual shape and colour it is known locally as the Golden Banana. As well as the modern art on display it contains the Berryfield Mosaic that once graced the floor of a Roman Townhouse on the site.

We took a coach tour of the surrounding countryside and passed the Abberton Reservoir where the Dam Busters made practice runs with their bouncing bombs, the area being similar to the targets in Germany.

We paused briefly at Tollesbury to see the tall Sail Lofts and then proceeded to Wilkins Jam Factory at Tiptree. Here there is a most interesting museum of bygones and curios

together with the history of the Wilkins family and their jam making tradition. There is also an excellent tearoom on site and we took the chance to enjoy a cream tea before heading home. Excellent!

Monday 24th August 2015 Man Made Wonders in the Heart of Essex.

Our day began with a one hour coach ride into Essex to the village of Chappel, here we visited the 14th century Swan Inn for morning refreshments. The River Colne runs through the garden of the pub while easily visible is our first man made wonder, the Chappel Railway Viaduct, built in the 1840's. It has 32 arches, is 75 feet in height and still carries the railway over the Colne Valley. Built from 6 million bricks it was constructed by navies from the canal system assisted by local agricultural workers attracted by the wages and the prospect of a period of settled employment.

Returning to the coach we enjoyed a guided tour of the Colne Valley passing through quaint villages with pastel-coloured thatched cottages and large mediaeval Wool Churches. Earls Colne hosted the famous ten-man Flying Fortresses and later on Marauder medium bombers. Lancastrian Kenneth Wolstenholme, a pilot, flew out of this airfield during the second world war. Transferred to no 8 squadron Pathfinder Group he was awarded the DFC in 1944 after completing over 100 bombing mission. Over a year later, still leading missions, he was awarded a Bar to his DFC. Later he was to become a well known BBC football commentator most famous for his commentary on the 1966 FIFA World Cup Final which included the unforgettable phrase "...some people are on the pitch...they think it's all over...it is now..." as Geoff Hurst scored England's final winning goal.

At the end of the morning we stopped in Finchingfield for an excellent lunch in Bosworth's Tea Rooms. Time afterwards to view the village which

has all the ingredients for a perfect place, a village green and pond with ducks, a 15th Century Guildhall, an ancient Church and a Windmill. A thriving community, it has a school, a Post Office, a grocers and a doctor's surgery as well as the tearooms and pubs.

In the afternoon we drove the few miles to Cressing temples, two massive "cathedrals of wood" – barns built over 800 years ago for the storage and preparation of grain. Very impressive and complex wooden structures laced with heavy beams and supporting pillars, truly works of art and a testament to the skills of those who built them. Antique farm equipment and blacksmiths' tools can be seen also a walled garden which once served a Manor House now long gone. There is a pleasant tearoom here which we made use of before boarding a coach to return to Enfield.

MEMBERS NEWS.

NEW MEMBERS

We extend a warm welcome to:-
None to report

CHANGE OF ADDRESS:-

None to report

LOST CONTACT.

One returned following last Newsletter.
Martin Webb, Enfield

DEATHS:-

Mr. Reginal Hemington, Faversham
Mr. Harold Lee, Polegate.
Mrs. Dorothy McClughen

OBITUARY:-

None to report

FUTURE EVENTS

See Christmas Lunch announcement above

BOOKING ARRANGEMENTS.

Coach outings can be booked in advance by completing the forms provided and sending them to the Treasurer Mrs. O. Parsons, 38 Halifax Road, Enfield EN2 0PP.

Please make cheques for all events payable to Enfield Unison RMA. You need not send all of the money immediately as long as you pay for each outing at least four weeks in advance. Please be aware no refunds will be given for unused tickets.

Please enclose a stamped addressed envelope with your enquiry to enable us to confirm your booking. Members will be contacted by the Treasurer if the coach is full and they have been put on the waiting list.

If you are unable to attend after paying for tickets, please contact our Treasurer - Olive Parsons on 020-8366-5840 as soon as possible.

We maintain a waiting list for over subscribed events and a member on the waiting list may then buy your ticket(s). If there is not a waiting list, you may then sell your tickets to relatives or friends.

All coaches pick up in Churchbury Lane (at the side of Civic Centre). Tickets for events are given to members at the time of boarding the coach.

Help Us On The Day One!

Please keep a note of our mobile phone number which will be used exclusively for outing in your diary and phone. On the day, if you are unable to come or are stuck in traffic you can phone in. This will help us leave on time, particularly important when there is a guide to meet on the way. The number is:

07956580823.

Please keep this number with you on the day in case of difficulties. Thank you all very much for your co-operation and support. We look forward to seeing you on the outings.

Help Us On The Day Two! Trips with Lunch included.

Once you have made your choice from

the menu provided on the booking form it cannot be altered.

When it is a long time between booking and the actual day it is easy to forget so write your choice down on the copy booking form provided and bring it with you on the day.

COACH TRAVEL REGS.

We have been asked by the coach operator to make all passengers aware that they must remain in their seats and not move about in the coach whilst it is moving, and that seat belts must be worn at all times. These are requirements by law and could carry a substantial fine for the coach operator if broken.

SEATING - If because of a medical condition you have difficulty when walking and would like a seat at the front of the coach, please ask for this at the time of booking.

EVENING & WEEKEND PARKING FOR COACH OUTINGS/MEETINGS

It is now possible to park at the Civic Centre for evening and weekend coach outings or meetings free of charge. It might be an idea, if you so wish, just to put a note on the dashboard - UNISON RMA so that security are aware. For daytime outings the £2 fee is still applicable, and should be paid for at the time of booking your outing.

THEATRE TICKETS. Please note a £10.00 per ticket holding fee will now be required when you book theatre tickets, this is because we have to pay for all tickets in full at the time of our making the booking.

DISCLAIMER

Enfield Unison Retired Members Association its officers and members are not liable to any member person guest or company whomsoever for any loss accident injury or damage which may occur during or arising from any activity, meeting or outing arranged by for or on behalf of them at any time.