



Pro-Biz



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LONDON

"*You see, Watson, but you do not observe*" - one of Sherlock Holmes's trenchant observations. And this theme was strongly evident in our first Luncheon Meeting talk of 2017. After extending New Year good wishes to members, Chairman Hywel Thomas introduced our guest speaker **Sally Botwright**, paying us her third visit. A full member of the prestigious Institute of Tourist Guiding and recently awarded the Freedom of the City of London, Sally took as the topic of her colourful PowerPoint presentation **Curiosities and Oddities of London - Part 2** spotlighting landmarks and places of interest that Londoners were prone to pass by without taking an illuminating second look. Just a few glimpses of the 'hidden' London revealed by Sally: prototype of our famous red telephone boxes at the Royal Academy; the Holy Trinity Church in Marylebone Road, built by renowned architect Sir John Soane, with the addition of an outside pulpit; memorials to the famous partnership of Gilbert & Sullivan (and why the Sullivan memorial was thought a bit too racy for Victorian tastes!). At Waterloo Place can be found both the Duke of Wellington's mounting blocks, as well as his Club, the Athenaeum, with its copy of the Elgin Marbles frieze adorning the exterior; and - quirkiest of all - Quasimodo perched high on a building near Baker Street - and not a bell to be heard!



After Sally had fielded a number of questions, Bob Parslow's moving of the vote of thanks paid tribute both to the revelations we had enjoyed and to the wit and style of the speaker's delivery. Members' enthusiastic response bore testimony to their appreciation of an enlivening - and highly enlightening - tour de force.

(Jim Woodford)

THE 'HUMBLE' SWEDE

Member John Holliday has asked for this article to be included in Pro-Biz for the information of members:-

John Reynolds (1703-1779) and the introduction of the swede into Britain

Following the talk to Members by Susan Bennett of the Royal Society of Art on its origins and work, member John Holliday, whilst researching his family history, discovered that his five times great grandfather **John Reynolds** had been the pioneering farmer who had been awarded by the [Royal] Society of Arts in 1768, 'for his introduction of the turnep rooted cabbage not heretofore made use of in this Country'. Reynolds responded to a premium offered the previous year for the cultivation of kohlrabi as fodder for livestock during the harsh winter months. As this was a novel crop, Reynolds had problems acquiring seed for his experiments and he wrote to the Society, 'no seed could be had in England, neither from seedsmen, nor gardeners... Recourse was then made to a noted seedsman in Holland... He was able to procure only one Dutch pound and said it was the growth of Russia, and that both the Swedes and the Russians gave assurances of its standing the frost.' Determined to make the most of the little seed he received, Reynolds chose a field that had a variety of soils and had already borne three different crops. After he had manured half the field, Reynolds then ploughed in it strips of four different depths. Finally he set out what he thought was kohlrabi, at varying intervals and left one acre to be planted with cabbage, kale and broccoli as control crops. By this complex arrangement he hoped to find out a great deal from a single experiment. However, it turned out that he had planted swedes, a plant well known on the Continent but never before grown in England. Reynolds decided to test this strange crop on his cattle and sheep. 'Behold! What a noble production this is!', he wrote to the Society, 'too much cannot be said of its excellencies', and to prove his point Reynolds sent 'a bit of butter...made only from the herbage of my turnip-rooted cabbage, which I flatter myself will be acceptable, as a curiosity, being, as I dare say, the first ever made in England from this plant'. The Society distributed the seed supplied by Reynolds to its members and the virtues of this new plant soon became widely known and accepted. It would appear that Reynolds used the £50 awarded by the Society in recognition of the importance of his discovery to commission a silver cup and cover, which he had engraved with the Society's motto and device. The agricultural writer Arthur Young had already credited the introduction of the turnip into East Kent in the late 1720s to this 'very ingenious farmer', and Reynolds continued to experiment with farming methods and crops, which led to his success with the swede. He also wrote to the Society of Arts about a different way of raising melons to the more usual one by using 'stinking dunghills', brining and liming of wheat and the nature and cure of smut in corn, trials of herbs and roots, madder as a field crop, the culture of land cropped with carrots, potatoes, Scotch cabbages, Siberian borecole (kale), Anjou cabbage and Jerusalem turnips.

WALK FROM THE KINGFISHER, CHERTSEY, 7TH FEBRUARY (by Finn, the Dog)

As you all know it's a dogs life, or it is in my case. There I am quite happily lounging in front of the fire, the next minute on goes my lead and I am dragged off by Eileen, round to Denzil's house, so I know it's going to be yet another one of those long walks, invariably in the wet and the mud. Off we go to meet up with all the other two legged creatures who seem to have rather tender paws as they are forever changing from shoes to boots, God knows why, they would be far better off with four legs and paws like mine. The one they call Graham Beresford was on time, that makes a change, always blames it on his sat-nav, can't understand why he doesn't sniff his way round like I do. Freddie, my other companion, was not with us this time so luckily I am the star of the show and get all the attention, quite good really because there were 16 of the two-legged creatures to pat and fuss round me. Off we went over Chertsey Bridge, doing a sharp left on the far side and into something they call Chertsey Meads, just one great big doggie toilet really, full of water and mud - lovely stuff. Unfortunately, there were rather a lot of my own kind in this area, but I paid no heed as I was now out in front of our chattering 'two legs'. I must say I was a bit surprised and had my snout put out of joint when some spaniel decided to crash into me at speed. I shrugged him off and chuckled a little as he was admonished by his owner. Soon after Denzil decided that half an hours walk was enough for him, as he was recovering from pneumonia, so Eileen escorted him back towards the pub. I was then left in the very capable hands of Mike Fraser, who seemed to know something about dogs and managed me very well. Half way through the next field, after sniffing practice with a few of my other four legged friends, I found myself a large puddle and had a long drink while Mike and the others all chorused together 'COME ON FINN'. Well, as usual, I took no notice of that, continued supping until I was full, as this Mike didn't have any titbits for me I wasn't going to be too obedient. Once we cleared this field we came through into the Wey Navigation, then it was up over the lock, pass the Crown pub and along the towpath to the Shepperton ferry. Next thing they dragged me down the steps and onto the ferry to cross the river, I could have swum across but they seemed rather keen that I go with them in the boat. I sensed we were now on the home run back to the pub as the pace quickened a little, and the thought of sausages began to enter my head. Just to keep the two legs busy I managed one or two squiggies on the journey, it's quite good really, the two legs seem quite keen on clearing up my mess, as they always have little plastic bags to hand. In no time at all I had led them safely across the road, missing all the traffic, returning to the pub where I was returned in one piece to Eileen, so it was back in the car for me as it appears that dogs were not allowed inside. Hey ho, as I said at the beginning, it's a dogs life, woof woof.

Human footnote: Sorry to hear Finn's trials, but he would have been insanely jealous to see us meet up with the rest of the group munching through our sausages, so the total for the day of the two legged folks was 37.



Dinner at Imber Court – 31 March 2017

Flyers went out last month for the Dinner on Friday 31 March with speaker Brian Greenan - Past President of the Society of London Toastmasters. The evening promises to be very entertaining, as Brian has for several years been a guest speaker on many cruise liners as well as officiating at many distinguished and celebrity events. Please see Chris Oprey for details.

FUTURE EVENTS:

Tue 7 Mar: Pub Lunch/Walk – The George, Wraysbury. Organiser Keith McArthur

Tue 21 Mar: Club Luncheon - Speaker – Mrs S Bates, Chairman Kingston Hospital Foundation Trust

Fri 31 Mar: Dinner – Imber Court, East Molesey. Speaker – Mr Brian Greenan