



Visit from the Vice Lord Lieutenant of Hertfordshire

Richard Beazley, who took up office as Vice-Lord Lieutenant of Hertfordshire in 2010 will be our lunch-time speaker in November. He will be talking about the role of the Lord Lieutenancy and how it represents Her Majesty the Queen in the County.

Richard qualified as a solicitor and worked for many years as a lawyer in the international oil industry before becoming chief executive of Mobil Oil.



As a result he has travelled extensively and has lived in Oslo, Jakarta, Calgary, Toronto, New York, Washington and London. He now lives in Standon.

He was Chairman of the East and North Herts NHS Trust for 10 years until 2002, and is currently Chairman of the Board of Governors of the University of Hertfordshire, a position he has held since 2013.

Remember

Absence from lunch. If you are unable to attend a lunch, you must notify Peter Fletcher not later than midday on the Monday preceding the lunch (tel no 854848).

Payment for lunch. If you do not pay by direct debit, please pay by cheque and send your cheque to Mike Western **three days before the lunch.**

Next lunch meetings. The next lunches will be on 29 November with our special Christmas Lunch on December 13th (details circulated at October meeting) January 31st 2019 and February 28th.

Coffee mornings. In addition, we have our popular coffee mornings. These will be on Thursdays 15th November and 17th January 2019; from 10.30 until 12.00 noon.

Next publication date will be mid-February 2019.

Railways of the World

The narrow gauge railway of Leighton Buzzard was the destination of a group from Probus on the 15th August.

Originating as a line to serve local sand quarries it is now operated by volunteers. When it was built, the line extended some three and a half miles but presently only just under 3 miles have been restored. The party was treated to a 90-minute round-trip from Page's Park to Stonehenge Works. But restoration work continues on the remaining half mile with completion expected in late 2019.



The party of 37 was treated to an excellent buffet lunch in the Buzz Rail Café before a visit to the engine sheds to see the fine collection of narrow gauge engines. This was followed by – for those who could manage it – by a delicious cream tea.

The visit resulted in an invitation to Nick Hall from the heritage railway to come and speak to members about the railway at our meeting in August (*see page 4*).

And then, by complete contrast, at our September meeting, Peter Cullens, took us to the other side of the world. In his talk, he journeyed through Peru, but concentrated on the railway journey to Machu Picchu.



The adventure started in Lima and his journey took us to places such as Pisco (which gives its name to the local drink Pisco Sour), the mysterious Nazca Lines, Arequipa and Saksaywaman (often referred to as sexy woman) before the final leg, by train from Cusco to the world heritage site of Machu Picchu. It is a 3- hour journey along the narrow gauge railway as it winds its way along the sacred valley of the Incas, through a patchwork of fields and whitewashed adobe villages and breath-taking landscapes

along the valley of the river Urubaba to Aguas Calientes some 400 metres below the 15th century Inca citadel. It's then a bus or a hike up to the site.

Membership

The question of membership has been a matter of concern now for a few months. Various means of publicity have been used over the course of this year, but so far without producing any results. At the start of the year, the then Chairman recorded a programme with Radio Verulam; a letter was published in Hertfordshire Life magazine; articles appeared in two local parish magazines (Marshalswick Magazine and Neighbourhood News); posters have been on display in numerous venues; we participated in the scarecrow display at Ayletts Nurseries and more recently the Club took part in the

Old People's Day in the Alban Arena.



The Arena was full of exhibition stands, and there was a steady flow of visitors. It remains to be seen if it results in attracting any new members. (Our picture shows Ken Hatter *left* with Chairman John Hart on the Probus stand.)

It seems clear, however, that the only really effective way of attracting new members is by personal contact and invitation.

So act NOW before it is too late.

Forthcoming events

November brings the exciting promise of two exceptional outings.

On the 22nd, Mike Western has arranged a trip to Waddesdon Manor to visit not only the house, which will be decorated with its customary Christmas theme, but also the Christmas Market and the traditional light show in the gardens. Forty people have signed up for this Christmas bumper excursion.

And then on the 28th, Peter Fells has organised a visit to Milton Keynes for the Glyndebourne Touring Opera's performance of Massenet's *Cendrillon*.

Reflecting on this visit, Peter adds, "Support for this visit is the lowest of any of the opera trips I have run for the Club. Were it not those 'friends of the Club' who are not associated with us, the trip would not have been viable. Even so, it was only just feasible from an economic standpoint.

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“The ‘hard core’ of opera lovers, who had made trips in the past successful, has shrunk, and our new membership has not produced enough replacements. So, I am faced with the question, ‘should I try once more in March?’.

Will anyone who has thoughts on the matter please email Peter.

Visiting speakers

The Leighton Buzzard Light Railway

Before the 1st World War, the heavy industries of the Midlands and the North relied on a special silicate sand from Belgium for use in foundries. But since Belgium was a neutral country during the war, the importation of this sand, necessary for producing armaments, was prohibited. A suitable alternative source was to be found near Leighton Buzzard. And so, the building of the light railway began. Running on a 2-foot wide track, the railway was completed in 1919 and remained in operation until 1960, with its peak traffic in the 1940s and early -50s.

Our speaker Nick Hall told us how, in 1968, thanks to the initiative of a group of enthusiasts, the line began operating with passengers. Now work is underway to restore the final stretch of the line, with the full length coming into operation late in 2019.

You couldn't make it up

This was the intriguing title of the talk by our guest speaker Sarah Harrison at our October meeting. After graduating from London University with a degree in English, Sarah started out as a journalist working as a feature writer for *Woman's Own* before turning to writing novels as a full-time vocation. Her first two books were initially rejected, but then followed *Flowers of the Field* which went on to become a best seller.



She regaled us with anecdotes of her childhood, life at school and her parents, all delivered with humour. Although writing a novel had been a childhood dream, Sarah had always fancied the life of an actor- a career her mother had enjoyed. Indeed she still enjoys amateur dramatics, and this came through clearly in her manor of presentation. The secret for writing a novel is to be able to

write interestingly, not necessarily about interesting subjects – but there is such a thing as inspiration. And divinity, aristocracy, sex and mystery are the traditional foundations for a successful novel.

Newsletter

The newsletter *The Record e* will be distributed by email and available on our website but a hard copy will be published for those who do not have access to the internet. We are aiming to have four issues each year; in May, August, November and February.

If you have any comments, articles or photographs please send them to Mike Foers by post or by email to mikefoers@yahoo.co.uk

St Albans Museum

Colin Smart arranged a private tour of the new St Albans Museum on the 19th September. The guides were Catherine Newley, of the Museum's team, and Mike Gray, Chairman of the St Albans Museum and Galleries Trust. As well as showing the party of 21 around, they explained the background to the redevelopment.

Geoff Young said, "It was a most enjoyable and interesting visit. The guides explained the rationale behind the decision to have small displays which will change at intervals – this will encourage people to make return visits."

The event proved so popular that a further tour was arranged for the 29th October when a group of 22 enjoyed a similar visit with the same two guides. The two new enclosed walkways give extraordinary views into the old courthouse and also across the rooftops of the old buildings in the market place and High Street.

The Museum does not normally offer conducted tours, and we were therefore most fortunate to have these opportunities. Following each visit Colin presented a cheque to Mike Gray on behalf of the Probus Club of St Albans.

Two things to Remember

1 On Thursday 13th December we are returning to Ardmore House for our Christmas lunch. If you have not already received your invitation, please contact Tony Woodhouse (telephone number 01727 853087).

2. If you pay for your lunch by standing order you must tell your bank to increase, **with effect from January 1st 2019**, the amount you pay from £15.83 to £18.33. The increased amount covers not only the increase in the cost of our lunches but will now include your annual membership subscription.