



A Night at the Opera

Dramatic performance of Rigoletto



Credit Alistair Muir and the Telegraph

In November, Peter Fells organised his 30th opera outing for our Club's members and friends.

This time, it was to see Verdi's *Rigoletto* performed by the Glyndebourne Touring Company in Milton Keynes. This was a modern interpretation set in a film studio. While not to everyone's taste, the style of production was more than off-set by the performances.

This intensely dramatic plot with music of rare power and beauty led to one critic describing it as worth four-and-a-half stars for the performance but only one-and-a-half for production.

Peter's next venture is to see *The Marriage of Figaro* – also at Milton Keynes – on the 2nd of April (see page 3). If you have never been to an opera, this is a good one to start with.

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 February 27th, March 26th and April 30th 2020, meeting from 12-00 onwards for lunch at 1-00pm.

Coffee mornings. In addition, we have our increasingly popular coffee mornings. These will be on Thursdays 13th February, March 12th and April 9th from 10.30 until 12.00 noon.

All at the Verulam Golf Club.

Next publication date will be mid-May 2020.

As we say farewell to one decade ...

Our final event in 2019 was the Christmas lunch held at Ardmore House Hotel on the 12th December. Eighty members, including their ladies and guests were welcomed by Chairman Steve Gildersleve. Here are a few of those who attended.



Father Christmas made a timely appearance to help draw the raffle prizes and present each of the ladies with a flower.

... we bid a hearty welcome to 2020

We started the new year's programme with first a coffee morning, and then our monthly lunch at Verulam Golf Club on the 30th January. Our speaker on this occasion was Terry Cox.



Terry is a retired police officer. He gave us an amusing account of life as a policeman during the 1st world war. Among his stories was an account of the sacking of the Chief Constable of St Albans.

The Events Committee, under the chairmanship of Peter Fletcher, has already developed a healthy programme to welcome in the new decade.

In February, our lunch-time speaker is Anne Luder, and her topic is '*Gardening in the Third Age – gadgets and gizmos*'. She will be followed in March by Adam Smith who will be telling us about '*Georgian Food*'.

Details of the proposed coach trip to the Thames Barrier have been circulated. This visit is planned for the 25th March and is being organised by Ken Hatter and Mike Western. The visit includes tea or coffee on arrival and sandwiches and cake at the conclusion. The cost is £35 per person, payable to Mike by the 27th February (the date of the next lunch).



Then in April, Peter Fells has seats at Milton Keynes for a performance of *The Marriage of Figaro*. This performance of *Le Nozze di Figaro* by the Welsh National Opera is sung in Italian; it is considered by many to be the most perfect opera ever written. In a highly entertaining plot, both the story and the music reveal the count's arrogance, the countess's melancholy, Figaro's fury and Susanna's mischief all mixed up with good humour and confusion. The cost, to include transport, is £58 per person. Peter would like to receive payment no later than 27th February.

Get Well Wishes

We send our thoughts and best wishes to Leslie Jones and John Rolfe, and to Margaret Parkes, and Jill Priseman.

And finally, the May Holiday; now fully booked with, already, a waiting list.

2019 Round Up

Quicksilver Project

The Bluebird dynasty is scheduled for a re-floatation (sic) as this imaginative project sets its sights of recapturing the world water-speed record. The present record has stood for over 40 years, and Britain has not held the record since Donald Campbell's Bluebird.

Nigel Macknight, our speaker in November, gave us an insight into the plans to win back for Britain this coveted record. Team Quicksilver has spent nearly 30 years designing, developing and building the vessel. "It is a new boat for a new generation," said Nigel.

In the summer of 1967, the world water-speed record left Britain for the USA before moving on to Australia. The new super boat is 40 feet long and powered by a 10,000bhp turbofan engine. The vessel is more than 85% complete, and the team hope to be in a position to make the attempt on the record before the end of 2020.



"I am confident we can break the record. Technology has improved a lot over the past 40 years and Quicksilver is capable of doing 350 – 400 mph," said a buoyant Nigel.

DP World – London Gateway

London Gateway is the UK's newest deep-sea container port and Europe's largest logistics park. Situated on the north bank of the Thames at Stanford-le-Hope in Essex the port uses world-leading technology to increase productivity and reduce costs.



In November, a group of Probus members and friends visited this advanced logistics hub. On arrival, a presentation about the port and all it offers was followed by a coach tour of the dockside, including driving under one of the quay-side cranes,

which tower 453 feet above the quay, before a sandwich lunch.

Probus Magazine

Congratulations to Tony Woodhouse who, after many attempts, finally managed to get an article included in the *Probus Magazine* – Winter 2019 issue. It featured (just in case you missed it) the visit to the Hindu Temple in Neasden.