



Pen & Palette Club Papers

Spring 2017

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Edited by The Recorder in Ordinary

Committee

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J. Bell J.Millard Alan Sidney-Wilmot

Wednesday 11th January 2017 The Battle of Mons

With our President enjoying the USA and Trumpland, John Anderson took over the helm to steer us through the treacherous waters of running the first meeting of this Spring season. He greeted everyone with a hearty 'Happy New Year' before Grace and then introduced the guests Charles Lineker and Brian Lamb and also our speakers John and Charlie Wesencraft. A first for the Club with a joint presentation by Father and Son!

Peter Wallace was in charge of the 2d End and immediately toasted the acting President and noted he is one of the few members still working and asked for advice on what we should hang onto in our attics? Military is always fetching good prices especially medals - recently a VC sold for £1.5M but this was exceptional as it was awarded to a Medical Orderly who won it twice during WW1. However don't take the advice of an Auctioneer as they are the death knell to items put up for sale!

Charlie Wesencraft was asked who if any were his favourite Generals? He remembers meeting Monty in the distance at a dinner in 1947 but not his favourite - who was?.

Our new member Donald Eccleston was then toasted and asked to confirm the recent advice to the over 50's - 'A good night's sleep, no coffee after 2.00pm and don't argue with the wife'. Exercise and sleep are important so you need a hard day's work so as you are tired out by the evening. This to be followed by a suitable drink not less than 12.5% alcohol before retiring to bed! George Hutchinson had a quote from Cicero thrown at him - "If you have a garden and a library that's all you need". "Clearly the 2d end has gone to great lengths to find out what I don't know anything about!" He then went on to quote some facts about the worth of the McDonalds against the Campbells'but your recorder refrains from quoting it for fear of being physically assaulted by one or the other—

The Loyal Toast was then sung in the traditional manner followed by the open toast given by Frank Evans.

Open Toast, 11 Jan. 2017

Frank Evans

Rummaging through some bedroom cupboards the other day I came upon a box containing some war medals. Although I had not seen them for a very long time I knew very well what they were. They were medals belonging to my family, carefully preserved in envelopes. There were my father's medals, the 1914 to 1915 Star, showing that he had joined up quite early in the conflict, together with his War Medal and his Victory Medal. These three medals were familiarly known to soldiers as Pip, Squeak and Wilfred after the

cartoon characters in the Daily Mirror. Also there were my mother's medals, her War Medal and her Victory Medal. She had joined the Women's Army Auxiliary Corps, or WAACs, in 1917 when it was first formed and had served as a clerk in northern France until, in 1919, unknown to her, her mother had bought her out and she had been unwillingly discharged and sent home. Such a thing could not happen today to a woman of twenty five. But she had been mentioned in dispatches and wore her oak leaf on her War Medal ribbon.

Women did not engage in combat in twentieth century wars, although we had a friend who in the 1939-45 war had served in an anti-aircraft battery as a member of the ATS or Auxiliary Territorial Service, the successor to the WAACs. I once asked her if she had ever fired the anti-aircraft gun she served and she replied: "What do you think? Of course."

And then there were my own medals from the Second World War (are we still counting our wars?). They were the 1939-45 medal, yet another Victory Medal and the only medal of mine I care about, the Atlantic Star, from my time on North Atlantic convoys.

As I turned the medals over I saw again that those for the First World War had the owners' names and rank engraved on the edge while those of the Second World War did not. I was never sure why this economy should have happened. But thinking about it, it came to me that none of my descendants had any war medals at all, neither my children nor my grandchildren now grown up. And I thought what a blessing this was. So far I am the very last in our family among the parents, uncles and cousins who served, to fire a gun in earnest.

And the day that I came across the family medals was the day when I read that the year 2016 was the first year for fifty years when no British service personnel had been killed on operations. It has unfortunately not continued into 2017, but with that thought in mind and thinking of my own family my toast, in hope, is to that year 2017 will be unblemished by British killed in action.

The Battle of Mons - a duo from Charlie Wesencraft and his son John.

Charlie started this unique talk off by setting the scene describing it as a battle of organised chaos. He started with Waterloo where the Cavalry charged around whilst the infantry stood shoulder to shoulder and opened fire when told to do so when the enemy was about 100 yards away. Now in 1914 the cavalry charge was taken over by the rifle which had a range of 700 yards and artillery fired big guns hurtling large missiles which exploded on impact. In addition, machine guns spouted out death to all in their path. Bicycles

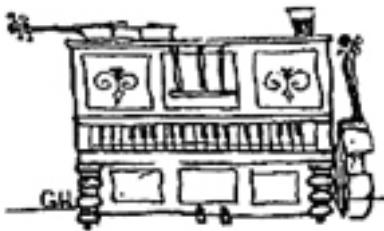
were used for communications as well as the field telephone system (providing the wires remained intact).

On the 22 August 1914 the British troops were at Mons and here the scene was set for John to take over the talk. John's maternal grandfather Robert (or Bob as he was known) had been sacked from his apprenticeship and promptly joined up and did his basic training in the 18 Huzzars and became part of the BEF, sent across the Channel to become part of the "Old Contemptibles, (a name made up by the British rather than Kaiser Bill). Here he witnessed the one and only cavalry charge. He lost contact with his regiment and joined a well organised group the 1st Cheshire who held the line but not a very good one. He found shelter behind a farmhouse for a short time. He then went right into a sunken road surrounded by Germans (24th August). He was taken into captivity and taken to Germany by rail to Hanover. The German Army had no spare rations for prisoners and they had to rely on food parcels. Officers were not given work but as he was only a private he was forced to work digging drains.

In April 1915 he was moved to Zoltan and became sick and was hospitalised due to inflammation of the inner ear. He was assessed and selected for internment to the neutral county of Switzerland where he was billeted in an Hotel in Alperoam. He was eventually repatriated on the basis that he could not fight any more, and this was in June 1917. Typically he was recalled to the Army and reenlisted as a non combatant as an instructor on Salisbury Plain and was eventually invalided out. And that is how he saw the battle of Mons!. He subsequently married and had a successful career. During this time he wrote down his experiences as a POW and his subsequent repatriation. He died in 1983 and his exploits are set down in a booklet based on his notes which John has now published.

This talk was greeted with acclaim and the lunch concluded by the acting President.

Pat Cooper - Recorder in Ordinary



Music Night 1st February 2017 **Prince Bishop Consort**

Our President, having arrived back from over the pond, greeted members and guests and wished everyone well for 2017. The principal players having come from almost the four corners of the realm and for some held up by the vagaries of the many road works which seem to plague Newcastle were welcomed once more to the P & P Music Night - Derek Ruffle- Trumpet, Chris Lewis- Trumpet, Chris Senior- French Horn, Stuart Gray- Trombone and Stuart Boyd- Tuba.

The 2d End under the Chairmanship of Kelsey Thornton toasted our President and asked about his ability as a musicologist? The President himself was not a musician but he did bask in the shadow of the late Jake Thakray who he counted as a friend. He began writing music for concerts in schools which took him to the heights of musicology. He was a great man and also good with words. - May his music live on—.

David Kilner was asked what music might calm his savage breast - surely the telephone music which smooths you after being told your call is important to us! A piece which really worked with him was Ravels Pavane for a dead child.

Michael Borthwick has memories of auditions and in particular the tale of the horn player coming up to the North East and played so well that he thought he had the job in the bag. The Chairman then showed off his musical knowledge by saying that he knew Mozart so well he had dinner with him last week and also Brahms who was a walking companion. On hearing this the Horn Player said he had a train to catch to London at 1.30pm. After he had left the Chairman said he thought this applicant had a problem as he was sure there was not a train to London at that time!

Noel Burton-Roberts was the final toastee for which he gave thanks. During his time at university he showed no bent for music but he has now joined the choir his wife is in. He then told this allegedly true story of a conductor with bad sight who noticed someone at the back of the orchestra rehearsing for a concert, who was not doing anything. At the end of the piece he shouted "Hey you there at the back, your doing nothing at all". It turned out he was speaking to the fire extinguisher!

The Loyal Toast was sung by John Havis accompanied by Anne.

The Open Toast

Birds and migrants - Pat Cooper

Last weekend was the great garden watch for birds which we do every year. It's a chance to watch what's going on in the garden which is surprisingly quite a lot. It's not all dead and dying but a time of rekindling. Bulbs are pushing through, snowdrops are now in bloom and also the bright yellow aconites bursting to life. But returning to the birds I marvel at the how they survive the winter gloom and the lack of food. The cold spell all over Europe has meant that there has been an influx of birds into our comparatively mild climate in search for food. No walls or dictats keep them out! Blackbirds abound and the odd thrush scavenged in the hedgerow. Robins (or rather our Robin) finds the dried meal worms which he or she devours with relish. Blue and great tits flick around and are actively looking at the two nest boxes just in case they might pair up and raise a family when spring really comes. Dunnocks like to pick up tiny seeds or insects around the wood shelter which also houses mice who tease our terrier. The blackbirds love an old apple which has to be halved so they can get an easy peck at the sweet juice inside. They have a strict pecking order and while the leader is having his fill the others stay at arms' length away waiting their turn! If we are lucky we hear the drumming of a greater spotted woodpecker who is somewhere up in the sycamore branches hiding on the wrong side. And today I was startled to see a little egret rising from the edge of the Pont as I walked the dog along the bank.

All this got me thinking and how not only birds move around. The great migrations that occur around the world of buffalo, zebras, elk and elephants which we see so graphically reported by David Attenborough, all in search of water and food are other examples. From what we gather humans also migrated in a similar fashion on annual marches taking up their goods and chattels to follow the herd and to go where the food is. Are we much different today? Maybe for different reasons such as war and also jobs. However there are immense benefits from having a diverse population. It brings with it a new gene pool and more ingenuity all of which thrive in the new environment. So tonight's toast is to migrants and migration around the world and may it continue to thrive!!

The main event then took the floor - The Prince Bishops Brass!



The artist were -

Derek Ruffel and Chris Lewis
Chris Senior
Stuart Gray
Stephen Boyd

Trumpets
French Horn
Trombone
Tuba



The programme -

Gallop from William Tell arranged by Frackenpohl played with vigour!

Suit in D for Seven Proverbs by Derek Bourgeois.

Many a Mickle, Red sky at Night, A stitch in time saves nine, All that glitters is not gold, Too many cooks, A bird in the bush, Many hands make light work!

A demanding piece which had the audience laughing and smiling with each movement!

Jig for 2 Trumpets by Handel

A Selection from Porgy and Bess. - Gershwin arranged by Heinz Czadek

Jive for Five by Paul Nagel

An encore - the Count Basie Stomp

A very good programme enjoyed by all.

The Ensemble was thanked by the President to much applause from members and guests.

Pat Cooper - Recorder in Ordinary

The Luncheon 14th March 2017

Thomas Moran (1837-1926) The Turner of the American West by Roger Mitchell, NADFAS Lecturer.

After much jiggling with the table plan and eliminating table 2 the members were assembled and welcomed by the acting President for the day Peter

Wallace. This was due to our illustrious President and Mavis being incarcerated in Madiera by storms! Our speaker Roger Mitchell and Marion Anderson were welcomed and also two new members Janet Cooper and Vivienne Molyneux.

The 2d End under Kelsey Thornton's leadership quickly toasted the Acting President on the subject of Dress Codes - his only story concerned his father who always wore a Homburg and a publican in Chester Le Street who he played darts with and this involved quite a lot of beer. He also noted that today the Muirfield Golf Club had passed a motion to let women into the club and so they are now at one with the P & P!

Dennis Robson was asked to give sartorial advice on hats and motor cars - Yes, but not in a wind and certainly not in any sports car!. However an Africa Corps hat does look good. He is looking for a hard hat to wear for sports cars. Dennis hoped he had talked enough on the topic as he only hears what he wants to these days!

Our Master of the Pictures was next up being asked what Lifeboatmen wore. Kelsey was quickly corrected as Paul is a member of the Tynemouth Volunteer Life Brigade formed in 1864 and based in The Watch House at Tynemouth. No 1 Uniform has all the panoply of an august body with brass buttons and braid. No 2 Uniform has all the protective gear including wellies and a stick, or to use the technical term, a pole. This is to show the volunteer how deep the water is before it goes over the wellies. He is now a country member as by the time he would get to the club the rescue would be over and all he would do is the clearing up!

Even though Jeremy Bell was on the 2d End he was nevertheless toasted and quizzed about protocol in the Foreign Service. He was sad at the demise of the Bowler as this added a bit of decorum to the corps. In Nairobi it was white suit and Ellis Island, a grass skirt. At the P & P it is de rigueur now to have on one of the new club ties - now on offer at buy one get one free!

The Loyal Toast was sung by John Havis with Anne the accompanist.

Alan Kerr then introduced Roger Mitchell and his topic **Thomas Moran - the Turner of the West!** Roger commenced by saying that we had no reason to feel guilty or shame about knowing nothing about Thomas Moran. He was born about 5 miles from Bolton in 1827 and was the fifth child of ten. His father was an Irish weaver. Due to work declining his father emigrated to the USA with the whole family following in 1844. He was always drawing and sketching and was apprenticed to a wood engraver but quickly realised this was not his metier and gave it up in favour of painting and drawing. He lived in Philadelphia for 14 years but travelled around finding commissions where he could. He was a great admirer of Turner who he called "The greatest of Painters". Like Turner he visited Venice and learnt the art of how to borrow or



steal methods from his fellow artists. In 1864 he sailed with his brother to England where he studied Turner's works for 4 months. He returned to the USA with renewed vigour and set up a studio in Long Island with his wife Molly. Sadly she died young. In 1871 his life changed yet again when he set out west to Yellowstone where he joined an expedition to the Park. Here he painted to his hearts content 'à plain air'. Pictures of his works were shown to the assembly. His next expedition was to the Grand Canyon where he remarked that "I've not done a lot of painting but a lot of looking".

From 1876 until his death in 1926 he was a commercial artist painting for money. He peaked perhaps in the 1870's but lived another 50 years. He

worked in oils, watercolours and chrome lithographs. He is remembered as the Turner of the west for his skies and reddish sandstone of the Grand Canyon and Wyoming. One of his paintings is in the White House.

The meeting was brought to a close with our guest speaker being regally applauded!

Pat Cooper - Recorder in Ordinary



P & P Supper 11th April

Bede's Bones

Once more assembling in the Dining Room our President unharmed from his ordeal in Madiera welcomed all especially our guest speaker Prof. Richard Bailey. He explained that Richard had been Pro Vice Chancellor at Newcastle University but was not quite sure what that was as he was familiar with Vice but not Pro - perhaps it's like a Bidet not sure what it's for but we feel we must have one! Tonight we are also honoured to have as guests James and Jenny Wright, Nigel Ward, Edward Robson and Margaret Wilkinson.

One highlight over the past month was the launching of the book "War Circus" which Arthur Fenwick (a past member of the P & P) played an important part in the circus during the First World War. Arthur Fenwick is an important historical figure to the circus community in the North East. He travelled with the circus and fairground communities as a young man, before returning to take up his position with the Fenwick's firm. The Fenwick Collections, which are deposited with the Tyne & Wear Archives, have a record of a lecture Arthur Fenwick had given to the Pen & Palette Club in 1916. In it he shared his passion for circus and travelling shows and shared his interest in the stories of show people and what they had done for their country during the war. It was one of many lectures Arthur Fenwick gave on the subject. This book was launched on 15th March in the Mansion House and was attended by members of the Club.

The 2d End was chaired by Peter Wallace and opened the attack by toasting the President by pointing out that they are perplexed by the title of the talk tonight and hoped that our all knowing President could elucidate. The President was fortunate that some 60 years ago he had shared digs with Bede. He had also been taught by none other than the august Rosemary Cramp. All that however is lost in the distant memory and so the 2d End will remain in splendid ignorance.

Professor Bailey as a National Treasure was then asked if we would be better off today had the pesky Normans not invaded these sceptre Isles? He thanked the 2d End for interrupting his meal and thought that in 1066 we would be in Scotland which might not be such a bad thing today!

David Walker was questioned about the removal of the Top Hat from the latest Monopoly sets. He had played but never to a conclusion as it always ended with no one winning or losing. Place names of London are however indelibly etched into his brain - Park Lane, Mayfair, the services of water, electricity, etc etc.

Frank Evans that stalwart of the Club, was queried over his modelling ability of tanks, spitfires and the like. Modelling is a new one to him and nowadays it seems to be done on a keyboard. Yes he would like to do the odd

crustacean. On another tack he reminisced about a member of the Tynemouth Rowing Club who in 18 something or other won the Diamond Sculls at Henley! Not a bad achievement. Frank knows these things as he is a vice president of the club along with others— — .

Finally it was the turn of Charlie Wesencraft - what engaged you in War Games - Strategy of Modelling? It's really Strategy as modelling of very small soldiers is considered to be both difficult and time wasting! However it is for all and can be absorbing in what might have been in any battle!

The Loyal Toast was then sung by John Havis accompanied by Anne,

The Open Toast was then delivered by Frank Evans

'I often think the eighth wonder of the ancient world was ocean navigation. This skill, born in the Spanish peninsula in the fifteenth century and culminating in the circumnavigation of the globe, led in time to the domination of the world by the west. Western ships sailed into Chinese ports but Chinese junks never sailed up the Thames.

The navigational instruments the early navigators used included the compass, the mariner's astrolabe and the cross-staff and they also included an often overlooked instrument first fully described in the fourteenth century, the hour glass, or as it is more correctly called, the sand-glass or running glass. This timing device, a much more recent invention than sundials, candle clocks or water clocks could, unlike these, be used regularly at sea, where it performed two main functions. The first was to divide the day into watches of equal length so that every seaman worked just twelve hours. For this, a half hour sand glass was suspended in gimbals beside the helmsman. At the end of each half hour he would turn the sand-glass over and strike a bell a successive number of times from one to eight. At eight bells the watch would change.

The second function of a sand-glass was to record the speed of the ship. This was done in conjunction with the log. The log was a triangular piece of timber, ballasted to sit upright in the water to resist drag. The log line was attached to it. Along the log line at fifty foot intervals were knots. As a unit of speed a knot is a hundred feet a minute, or fifty feet in thirty seconds and the sand-glass ran for thirty seconds. The log was cast over the stern and the log line ran out until the first or zero knot appeared, when a watching seaman called "Turn" and the sand-glass was turned. At the end of the thirty seconds the seaman with the sand-glass called "Stop" and the number of knots run out was counted. This gave the ship's speed in knots, or nautical miles an hour, and enabled a reckoning of her position. This position would then be entered into

a book ("the log-book"). Without the log and sand-glass, keeping track of the ship's position would have presented difficulties.

At first sand glasses consisted of two pear-shaped glass bulbs with small openings and the openings were secured together into the well-known hour-glass shape with string and sealing wax, in fact with a bit of twine and a coat of wax. A small metal washer with a measured hole was slipped between the two halves. It was only later that the skill was attained of blowing the whole thing entirely in one glass piece.

It was not only at sea that sand-glasses were used. Ashore they timed speeches, especially sermons, and they were commonly used by the cooks in grander kitchens. Sand-glasses of many sorts were common enough in later centuries and are sought nowadays by collectors.

So familiar were they that they became symbolic and their outline was recognized in old churchyards as indicating the passage of time. There they may be seen represented on gravestones together with skulls and bones. Men say that pirate flags also wore these devices, no doubt to indicate the likely fate of their human prey. Nowadays we are familiar with the sand-glass symbol as it replaces the mouse cursor on our computers. It is saying: "Please wait", while we pause for the computer to complete some task, again an indication of time passing.

The only place that I am aware of where real sand-glasses today perform a real function is as it has long been, in the kitchen and my toast tonight is to **that last, great sand-glass survivor, the egg-timer.'**



Bede's Bones - Richard N. Bailey

It could be said that Bede's bones are spread worldwide from Durham to Genoa, Wilton House, York, California, France, Germany and even Australia! The Vatican was also not to be left out and Bede was buried in the old Vatican. It seems that everyone wanted and still wants a share of him and for these bits to be put into reliquaries. Perhaps for bragging rights? More likely to raise funds. Were they all from the body of Bede who died on 26th May 735? Certainly not and it's all because there was a monk in Genoa called Bede who was made a saint and got confused with the real one.

So who was Bede? He is the author of 'The Ecclesiastical History of the English People'. We are indebted to him for defining BC and AD. He was a great scholar and lived at St Peter's monastery at Jarrow. He did translations of many documents allowing people access to writings. He was a traveler visiting many places both in England and Europe. His body was interred at St Peters Jarrow.

In the 11th century his bones were smuggled out of the church between 1040 and 1060 by Alfred Weston and this bag of bones was later put into St Cuthbert's tomb perhaps after various bits had been removed and possibly distributed to friends and churches around England and elsewhere.

They were found in 1140 when Cuthbert's tomb was opened and they were still in their linen bag. They were reinterred in a tomb specially built in the Galilee chapel in the cathedral. It was excavated in 1832 by Dr James Raine. We now come to Bede's Skull. Much to Raine's surprise the forehead was extremely flat and not highly domed as in all pictures of the Saint. He had three casts made from a mould of the skull which were until about 2007 all lost. Richard to his surprise received an email from a colleague in Leicester with a picture of a nice blue box which contained one of the missing casts! It was marked Ven Bede and despite all his massive works of scholarship it turns out he really was not a highbrow!!

This talk was received with acclaim and much thanks.

The President then thanked all present and wished everyone a safe journey home.

Patrick Cooper Recorder in Ordinary

The Annual Viewing of the Pictures 16th May 2017

This time we were treated to the full latin grace which our President had listened to six times per week whilst learning English at Durham University!

Benedicte Deus
Qui pascis nos a juventute nostra et
praebes cibum omni carne
Reple gaudio et laetitia corda nostra
Ut nos, quod satis et habentes,
Abundemus in omne opus bonum,
Per Jesum Christum, Dominum Nostrum,
Cui tecum et Spiritu Sancto
Sit omnis honor, laus in imperium
In saecula saeculorum

Amen

This was written in Greek in the 4th century AD by St John Chrysostom, Archbishop of Constantinople. It was later translated by Erasmus into Latin and the President heard it six times per week before dinner at his college in



Durham. As Miss piggy used to say:"Pretentious? Moi?" If you want it in English after these 17centuries it means:

Blessed Go who feeds us from our youth,
and provides food for all flesh.
Fill our hearts with joy and gladness,
that we, having enough to satisfy us,
may abound in every good work,
through Jesus Christ our lord,
to whom. with you and the Holy Spirit,
be all honour and praise and power
for ever and ever. Amen

The guests were all welcomed - Helen Sill and Anne Cater from the People's Theatre. Welcome to Ian Brown who was celebrating his 50 years membership of the P & P!

John Anderson stepped into the shoes of the missing Kelsey as the 2d End Chairman by first toasting the President and asking him that as 'art' is long and life is short have you any ambitions you may still have being long in the tooth so to speak? 'Yes' was the quick reply - 'sell my works of art in the Biscuit Factory' He then went on to say that he had had a call from his agent with good and bad news. First the good news from his agent that he had had an enquiry about art and that it increases in value after the artist has died. He said he liked Malcolm's works and after a bit of haggling decided to buy the lot. 'Thats great news' said Malcolm 'but who is the purchaser'? 'Ah that's the bad news - its your Doctor!'

The Master of the Pictures was asked if he was left on a Desert Island what work of Art would he choose to have with him? 'Oh yes something from the Biscuit Factory would do nicely!' He then went on to remind the Company of the illustrious Leonard Evetts a Past Master of the Pictures who would comment on members offerings at this event and say 'This little bit is good and I like the frame'! We are much kinder these days!

Staying with the Hickey family Norma was asked the same question - 'Slippers and a paint box plus a self portrait she could watch while waiting to be rescued'!

Ian Brown then stood to commemorate his 50 years membership remembering the honoured guests the Club has entertained at the old club rooms in Hingham Place - Willie Whitelaw, Bernard Miles, Donald Sinden and Yehudi Menuin! At his meal it was not the usual hot pot but a fish pie to cater for his Jewish faith. However, he thought at the Hot Pot would have been much preferable!

Bob Young was not sure about his choice for a desert Island and then homed in on French 17c Art - perhaps!

The final toast was David Kilner of whom his art teacher had said many times that he had no art in him! He would choose the Tyne Bridge to take with him - bulky but long lasting.

The Loyal Toast was the sung by Pat C accompanied by David K.

We then retired to the smaller dining room to view the Pictures, photos and sculptures. Each artist was asked to talk about their works -









Chat and laughter ensued before the proceedings were brought to a close by the President!

Pat Cooper
Recorder in Ordinary

**14th June 2017
AGM and the Poetry and Prose Luncheon!**



Members assembled in the hall for drinks and chat before moving to the dining room for the AGM - Minutes of the 117th Annual General Meeting held at 12.15pm Wednesday 14th June 2017 at the Mansion House, Jesmond.

1. PRESENT. In the Chair President Malcolm Yorke plus 25 members.
2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE were received from John Anderson, Mary Baker, Michael Borthwick, Arnold Burman, Donald Ecclestone, Maureen Ecclestone, John Havis, Ian Lavelle, Norman Lees, Bill Meikle, Alan Share and Alan Sidney-Wilmot.
3. MINUTES of the 116th AGM held on 15th June 2016.
Adoption of the minutes was proposed by Pat Cooper, seconded by David Kilner and agreed unanimously.

4. PRESIDENT'S REPORT

I think I can confidently begin my Report by saying we have had a successful year.

I hope the year ahead will be just as good, but there are a few things which we need to note and act upon – mostly to do with offering help to hard pressed committee members.

Our programme of speakers has continued at a high level in keeping with the traditions of this Club, and for this we must thank the Komptroller of the Kalendar, Alan Kerr. So it is with regret that I must announce that Alan intends to lay down his burden with effect from June 2018 after 6 years in office. He will be difficult to replace so it is important that we begin the search for his

successor as soon as possible. He has offered to coach any volunteers until they are ready to take over. Please think seriously about this – without a programme the Club does not exist.

Another matter for your attention is the Christmas Meeting. For three years the Samling Academy singers gave us wonderful entertainment at our Christmas dinner. We no longer give them a grant and now they wish to charge us realistic professional fees. We have decided that the time has come to revert to our time honoured practice of entertaining ourselves on this occasion. Alan Kerr will be seeking someone to organise this on the lines of those memorable evenings arranged and led by Ann Havis, assisted by the mellifluous John of course. We are thinking along the lines of story-telling, songs, carols, jokes, acrobatics, sword-swallowing etc. All volunteers welcome.

Apart from the Samling it is getting ever more difficult to induce musicians to entertain us for the fees that we are able to offer. Nevertheless Michael Borthwick, our Master of the Musick, always manages to present good and varied programmes for the two musical evenings which we put on each year.

Our Master of the Pictures, Paul Hickey, has kept the artists busy with several outings during the year including visits to Northumberland Park, the Tynemouth Lifeboat Station, the Unison Pastel Factory, Kirkley Hall, Stepney Bank Stables and Shepherds' Dene. We would like more people to come with us, not just artists but photographers, bird-watchers or anyone who enjoys a convivial pub lunch or picnic.

Others who deserve all our thanks are Pat Cooper who keeps us informed of events and doubles, even triples, as Recorder, table arranger and emergency Loyal Toast singer. I'm sure he could do with some support.

Our Honorary Treasurer David Kilner keeps us all afloat, even affluent, and will be explaining how he does it in his Report later.

Jeremy Bell ensures we can all hear what's going on in the newly created role as Master of the Teknick.

Behind it all is the inestimable Peter Wallace, our Secretary, who keeps the whole thing running smoothly.

Thanks then to all the Committee members for their time and commitment to the Club.

We continue to be well served by the Mansion House where the facilities and ambience are so well suited to the Club. We have been notified of further increases in meal prices but I am pleased to say that there will be no increase in the charge of £20 to members for lunches and dinners, any deficit being covered by the Club. You will hear more of this from our Treasurer in his report.

Regarding the meals, the Committee has co-opted Mavis Yorke to look after the choice of menus and to conduct negotiations with the Civic Centre over matters of pricing. Mavis will be elected to the committee at this meeting and there is perhaps a case for re-instating the office of Master of the Household last occupied by the late, lamented John Charlewood.

Next a personal hobby-horse – the Little Red Book. The third issue of this very successful venture will be published in December and will again, I hope, reveal what interesting and strange people we have in the club. This year's title is 'Starting Work'. The word limit has risen to a strict 500 words and contributions should be sent to Pat Cooper no later than November 1st. We would encourage you to submit photographs too – I think they made the last edition much more interesting.

Our Website is a recurring topic at committee meetings. This is proving to be a disappointment due to our inability to find someone in the Club willing to keep the site up to date with the Club's activities. We are coming to the realisation that this is not the best means with which to recruit new members, the personal approach is the way.

Membership. The Club received a big boost when the admission of lady members came into effect on 1 January 2016. Since then we have enrolled 16 new members of whom 14 were women, furthermore our new members are proving in the main to be regular attenders at our meetings which is very pleasing. Perhaps they would like to get even more involved in some of the administration?

During the year we received word of 5 deaths and 2 resignations bringing our numbers up to 69 at the present time.

One of our Members, Ian Brown, has actively supported the Club for 50 years and it seemed only appropriate that we made him a Life Member.

Following the death of Lord Walton, the distinguished author and playwright, Michael Chaplin, has agreed to be an Honorary member of the Club, we look forward to a talk by him to be given next January and his attendance before then.

Finally, a thanks to all members, new and old, for their support and attendance, and for your help in maintaining our tradition of erudition, good humour and fellowship.

Malcolm Yorke

5. FINANCIAL REPORT (attached to the minutes)

In presenting the accounts Hon Treasurer, David Kilner, drew attention to the excess of expenditure over income of £5,943. Following the increases in meal charges and subscriptions agreed last year we can expect a reduction in the deficit for the coming year. However deficits will continue into the future, but we should bear in mind that we do have the use of the Wansbeck room

upstairs for the storage of our effects plus the use of the wonderful facilities of the Mansion House.

Our overall financial position is healthy. We had total funds at 31 December of £206,562 thanks to the sale of our property in Higham Place. Of this, £200,000 is invested in Lloyds Bank at a low rate of interest which nevertheless contributed £851 to our income for the year, the balance remains as working capital.

In response to a question from John Penn the Treasurer confirmed that our investment of £50,000 remains in the care of the Community Foundation, which with the matching funds from the Arts Council forms the Pen and Palette Fund which contributes around £4,000 to small arts groups in the area. The awards are overseen by an Advisory Group comprising three members of the Club.

Motion – To adopt the Financial Statement for the year ending 31 December 2015, proposed by Frank Evans, seconded John Crook and carried unanimously.

6. ELECTION OF PRESIDENT

The Secretary, proposing the re-election of Malcolm Yorke as President, referred to his positive leadership in his first year in office, this was seconded by the Assistant Secretary and carried unanimously.

7. ELECTION OF VICE-PRESIDENTS

The three incumbents have agreed to serve a further year, there being no other nominations John Anderson, John Crook and Paul Hickey were re-elected without dissent.

8. ELECTION OF OTHER OFFICERS

The following had all agreed to continue and were re-elected.

- a) Komproller of the Kalendar...Alan Kerr
- b) Master of the Music.....Michael Borthwick
- c) Master of the Pictures.....Paul Hickey
- d) Recorder in Ordinary.....Pat Cooper
- e) Hon. Treasurer.....David Kilner
- f) Hon. Secretary.....Peter Wallace
- g) Hon. Assistant Secretary..... Patrick Cooper

9. NEW OFFICES

Two new offices have been instituted and Jeremy Bell and Mavis Yorke were nominated by the committee as follows:

- a) Master of the Teknik.....Jeremy Bell
- b) Master of the Household.....Mavis Yorke

Both were elected unanimously.

10. COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP

Alan Sidney-Wilmot has one year to serve.

11. LIFE MEMBERSHIP

The Committee proposed that Ian Brown be made a Life Member in this the fiftieth year of his membership which was agreed with acclamation.

12. PEN AND PALETTE FUND ADVISORY GROUP.

John Millard has one year to serve and Pat Cooper two years. Bill Meikle retired this year and offered himself for re-election for a further three year term, agreed unanimously.

13. ANY OTHER BUSINESS.

David Kilner will be arranging a summer lunch at the Artisan Restaurant at the Biscuit Factory on 9 or 10 of August when there will also be an opportunity to view, and perhaps purchase Malcolm Yorke's sculptures. The date will be confirmed soon.

There being no further business the Chairman closed the meeting at 12.50pm.

The members and their guests then repaired to the lounge to partake of a complimentary buffet lunch, after which they were royally entertained by several of their number in the **Annual Poetry and Prose event**.

The first contributor was Alistair Sinton -

A new word - LIMM as detailed in the following poem by Hugh Chesterman

"London Calling Christopher Wren"

Clever men
Like Christopher Wren
Only occur just now and then.
No one expects
In perpetuity
Architects of his ingenuity;
No, never a cleverer dipped his pen

Than clever Sir Christopher - Christopher Wren,
With his chaste designs
On classical lines,
His elegant curves and neat inclines.
For all day long he'd measure and limm
Till the ink gave out or the light grew dim.
And if a Plan
Seemed rather baroque or too 'Queen Anne'
(As Plans well may),
He'd take a look
At his pattern book
And do it again in a different way.
Every day of the week was filled
With a church to mend or a church to build,
And never an hour went by but when
London needed Sir Christopher Wren.
'Bride's in Fleet Street lacks a spire.
Mary-le-Bow a nave and choir.'
'Please to send the plans complete
For a new Saint Stephen's, Coleman Street.'
'Pewterer's Hall is much too tall,
Kindly lower the N.W. wall.'
'Salisbury Square,
Decidedly bare
Can you put one of your churches there?'
Dome of St Paul's is not yet done,
Dean's been waiting since half-past one
London calling from ten till ten,
London calling Christopher Wren!

Kelsey Thornton was next -

OMAR KHAYYAM CONSIDERS TRUMP

Awake! For forces from the dark alt. Right
Have flung the gauntlet down to put to flight
Fair opposition, and their noose loops truth
Which struggles as they try to pull it tight.

The new incumbent, preening in the pomp,
Embarks on yet another wrecking romp,
And turns on Washington where his haste contrives

To fill with sewage what was once a swamp.

Truth was the first to go in his campaign,
Then Honesty went quickly down the drain.
What virtues are there left, as now we see
Sheer decency begin to feel the strain?

'Civilisation! Are you off your chump?
We don't concern ourselves with that old frump.
We are the new barbarians, and in power!
This is the White House now of Donald Trump.'

Behind the bullying, bluster, lust, and lies
Of Donald Trump, we find with no surprise
The inadequate and frightened boy who needs
Continuous reassurance about size.

We know that gold at times can be mere glitter
And things that first seemed sweet are really bitter,
But who expected that someday we'd find
The Trump of doom diminished to a Twitter.

Trump's Christianity is rather odd.
He'd like the power and the controlling rod
But wonders if the voting has been rigged
And really it was he who should be God.

I see Trump stand before the heavenly throne
Still picking at that irritating bone
And claiming that, if it were counted right,
God's audience isn't bigger than his own.

Cardboard Caligulas are never fun,
And in the White House now I think there's one.
It's hard to think what way this farce will end:
Palace revolt, impeachment, or the gun?

Which of Swift's fabled lands would Trump suit most?
In Brobdingnag, belittled by his host,
He'd be dismayed, but once in Lilliput
He'd be at last where he'd not have to boast.

But where the Houyhnhnms live he'd find no slot.
They'd recognise a Yahoo like a shot --
A base, uncivilised, disgusting type,
Who says 'the thing' (in their words) 'which is not'.

In a comparison of now and then,
Before Trump started working with his pen,
I can't help thinking that the USA
Was better before he made it great again.

The system in the U.S to elect
The president seems structured to select
A self-important, rich, bombastic liar,
And they get Trump. What else did they expect?

OMAR KHAYYAM CONSIDERS GROWING OLD

Awake! For suddenly the bowl of night
(The loo, that is) has put our sleep to flight.
And, as we know, once we get out of bed
The chance of getting back to sleep is slight.

My diary is a book that won't be said
To top the future lists of 'Must be read'.
Day after day the entry is the same:
'Got up, did nothing, dined, and went to bed'.

Watching the restless ocean, I can see
Worlds go to waste with no concern for me
And our staunch time is nibbled down to naught
By an inexhaustible indifferent sea.

My new computer promises to bring
The whole world's store to commoner and king --
If I could make it work, or, better still,
Locate some child to help explain the thing.

I don't think it has frequently been said
That nothing in the life that one has led
Can overtop the pleasure one derives
From warmth and comfort in a peaceful bed.

At times I am reminded with a jerk
That, though some serious reservations lurk
In being old, one compensation beams:
At least I do not have to go to work.

Though men may plot and scheme and fight their wars
As they perform their roles to seek applause,
Barnstorm as they may upon the stage,
For exit they don't have a choice of doors.

The simple pleasures are at last the best,
Good food, a pleasant spot, a comfy vest,
Good company with whom to spend the time;
With those, one can abandon all the rest.

HOW A A MILNE MIGHT HAVE WRITTEN 'ADLESTROP'

Here is a reminder of Edward Thomas's great poem:

Yes. I remember Adlestrop –
The name, because one afternoon
Of heat the express drew up there
Unwontedly. It was late June.

The steam hissed. Someone cleared his throat.
No one went and no one came
On the bare platform. What I saw
Was Adlestrop – only the name

And willows, willow-herb, and grass,
And meadowsweet, and haycocks dry,
No whit less still and lonely fair
Than the high cloudlets in the sky.

And for that minute a blackbird sang
Close by, and round him, mistier,
Farther and farther all the birds
Of Oxfordshire and Gloucestershire.

And here is how A. A. Milne might have done it:

I
Asked myself but
I couldn't
Really answer:
Was there any
Reason why
The engine had to stop?
I
Don't remember if
I gave myself an answer but
The notice
On the station
Said
Adlestrop.
There was
No-one on the platform and
No-one in the waiting-room,
No-one to be seen
Except I heard
Somebody cough;
Everywhere was empty
And the silence only broken
When the train decided
Suddenly to
Let
Steam
Off.
Willow trees and
Willow herb
Were growing there
With meadowsweet
And rows and rows of haycocks
In the sun
To
Dry
And up above
Another row
Of still and lonely cloudlets
That were white and still
And lovely in a
Bright
Blue Sky.

In that moment of suspension
(And it lasted just a minute)
A blackbird burst out singing
From a tree
Close by
And all the birds in Gloucestershire
Instantly and mistily
And all the birds in Oxfordshire
Mistily and distantly
Joyfully responded to
The blackbird's cry.

Kelsey Thornton

Norma Hickey gave us a splendid introduction to a poem by Fred Reed who came from Ashington.
She started by introducing herself with - I am not a 'Longfellow' so here is a short piece by me.

"I find myself at the P & P
Talking about prose and poetry,
All due to Pat's charming art
In persuading me to take part"!

Fred Reed was for many years a miner at Ashington. He was editor of the colliery magazine, an ardent reader, writer, student and debater. In his 84th year he was driving here and there to delight audiences with his verse and voice. I was lucky to see and hear him at North Shields Library. He died in 1985.

The Babby's Drum

Yam-a-mum, dooley - n - tuddley tum
Says wor little buggor. H'es getten a drum.
And aal day he's yarkin* it bum-bum-bum-bum,
An mekin' the neybors aal grummle 'n' fume,
An wor Rex'll bark' n his daddy'll bray;
An' neybors'll wish they war shiften ' away!
Me heid's all gyen duddy, me pleas are a farce,
And Aa've tuen the kittle*: Aa'll skepl his young arse.
But theor he jist sits croonin' mum - mum - mum,
An'craaain'n'gorglin 'n' suckin' his thumb.

The bit bairn's that canny! He' peace its aan sel'!
And Aa say the neybors can aal gan't— Well!
Yam - a - mum dooley -n- tuddley tum!
Gan on ' bonny lad, wi yor drum.

- * Yarkin - pulling, tugging, good hiding
- * Tuen the kettle - taken the huff

Wedded

Aa cudn't be apart frum ye
Me luv's deorluv, it cudn't be,
For lassie sweet 'n' flooer faor,
Aa close me eyes 'n' ye are theor!

An when aal's silent Aa can heor
Yer sunshine laughtor streamin' clear
Advorsities cum sweet t' prove
The mormored pity of yor luv
Like hummin' breezes frum the skies
Softly t' bid me spirits rise.
Me sleep's still t' yor haitbeat tuned
And endless dreams t' ye are booned.

But aw, each morn when Aa awake,
Once mair Aa think me hairt'll brike,
Me sowl writhes' neath a mem'ry's lash---
Yor tender body's only ash.
Then lassie sweet 'n' floor faor,
Aa close me eyes 'n' ye are theor.

When a Northumbrian Speaks t' ye, ye see

When a Northumbrian speaks t'ye, ye see,
He's taalkin' in the tungue o' history.
He disn't wave wi' wild gesticulations;
Ye'll knaa jist whaat he means by intonations.

Fred Reed

The Arnolds by Frank Evans

Our house is sometimes visited by another couple, the Arnolds. We first met them many years ago and we greeted them with a smile as they arrived, even though we knew they were not real people. I should explain that while they are not real people they are not imaginary people, either. What they are, are cartoon people from a national newspaper advertisement, or rather, they were. I say "were" advisedly and we will come to their unexplained disappearance later. What it was they were advertising we can no longer recall but it was certainly something that kept them fit and healthy in their energetic middle age. Perhaps it was a complex of multivitamins or some such nostrum. Let us just say "vitamins". Even now our memory of them remains crisp and clear.

They were always drawn in black and white, always pictured doing something useful, gardening, walking the dog, hurrying to the shops, always together and always happy. And the artist had them smiling through weather that was never really kind. There always seemed a brisk wind blowing, a wind that never appeared to affect them as massing clouds sailed above. There they were, cheerfully getting ahead with the task in hand. Their smiles were unforgettable, she looking fondly at him, he earnestly smiling back, their fingers ever busy with the job in hand. Their enthusiasm was infectious. It was intended to convey that: "You too can be on top of your life like us if only you take those vitamins". But it had an undercurrent, too. It said not only: "We are getting ahead", it said: "We are getting ahead of the Joneses".

I say we smiled at them but underneath there was always a murmur of self-criticism. Why could we not be more like the Arnolds? Why were we still sitting there with so much to be done? And as for them, were they never slothful like us. Did they never frown or shout? Were they never surrounded by a pile of newspapers as they slumped before the television, the washing-up or the ironing still undone? Why were they always so blasted joyous?

And then, as I have noted, they disappeared. Worse, they were replaced by an equally uncomfortable couple, the Collets. They could have been clones. We began to wonder what had happened to the Arnolds. Why had they so mysteriously disappeared from the advertisements in our newspaper? And then we started to be suspicious. Here were the Collets with exactly same message ("take your vitamins", or more particularly, "take our vitamins").

Even those parts of the Collets' life that were not portrayed in the advertisements were easily imagined. Of course they were never ill. They went regularly to the gym. They made their own wine from their own fruit. They knew an undiscovered pub in the Lakes that was both cheap and anciently romantic. Their children were in the school team, learnt Latin and

played the bassoon in the school orchestra. Disasters never struck the Collets.

They lived in a house that could be the Arnolds'. They went down the same road with the same zest to the same village shops. They gardened with the same smiles, he looking fondly at her, she at him. Everything for them was perfect.

Except that they had a dark secret. We watched them daily as they invaded our morning newspaper. And we knew. They had done away with the Arnolds! How? Probably poisoned them with an overdose of those vitamins.

Now they, too, have gone. But we are sure of one thing. We see their descendants. Regularly. Same smiles, same energetic middle age. Not in the paper but on the tele. Advertising healthy yoghurt.

David Kilner came across these songs from a box of music he had from the P & P, and thought that they must be preserved in the annals of the Papers. The Byker Wall and Bleedin Races penned by the immortal Stephen Dracup :-

THE BYKER WALL

Tune to "The Lambton Worm"

One Monday morning aall the City Cooncil did agree.
They said "We need a project so let's see what we can dee.
With luck there might be summat left we've not aalready ruined
Then one lad ups and says, "Hey - let's pull Byker to the groond".

Chorus:

Whisht lads, haad yor gobs,
Aa'll tell ye all anaafal story.
Whisht lads, haad yor gobs,
Aa'll t e l l ye 'boot the waall.

The Cooncillors aall jumped for joy at this exciting plan.
They pressed theor buttons quick as leet and passed it tiv a man.
Then spoke the Mayor, "Hey, head on lads; one thing we must decide.
When Byker Is doon, where's aall the lads and lasses to reside?"
Chorus

The Cooncill aall looked thunderstruck at this unwelcome snag.

They'd thowt they had the whole scheme nicely tied up in the bag.
Agyen they put theor brains in steep in answer to the caall,
Till a long~haired City planner said, "Way, what aboot a waall!"
Chorus

"A waall", said all the cooncil, "What eggactly d'ye mean?
For sich a thing save Hadrian's, we've never bloody seen."
"Ah mean a waall wi hooses in, aal in the modern mode -
The borrom end at Byker Bridge - the top at Welbeck Road"
Chorus

Such scenes within the Cooncil ye nivor did behold.
You'd have thought the Metro tunnellers had struck a vein o' gold.
They caalled the Clerk o' Works rest in and syed, "Quick myek a start. Spend
what ye like but mind, myek sure there's plenty muck and clart."
Chorus

The waall it growed, and growed, and growed, and growed an aaful size
with little painted huts on top, aall pointing to the skies,
And from the topmost hooses there's a real breathtaking view
of the boneyard doon at Byker Bank and the smell of boiling glue.
Chorus

So when the wall was nearly done - the Cooncil full of glee,
Then showed it on a tele show run by the B.B.C.
Then folk from aall the coontry roond, including Roal Duke,
Came tappy lappy to Byker fer te hev theirselves a leuk.
Chorus

The Doke says to the Cooncil, 'Laads ye've done a noble task
Ther's just one little question that I'd really like to ask.
This edifice ye've builded heor - it must hev cost a mint."
"Why aye, Duke", said the Mayor, "We aalways spend until we're skint!"
Chorus

so noo ye knaa hoo aall the folk of dear old Byker toon
Sit waalled up in theor fortress through theor windows gazing doon.
And when they want a pint o' broon to lubricate theor throat
They've got to drop the bloody drawbridge and come oot across the moat.
Chorus

© Stephen Dracup

Bleeding Races to tune of “The Blaydon Races”

Twas on a Monday morning, one sunny day in June,
Me and the wife we thowt we'd hev a day oot in the toon
We set off in wer little car, both with smilin faces
We little knew we'd end up running roond in Bleedin' Races.

Chorus

Oh lads you seen us gannin'
Roond an roond the city streets, it must hev took some plannin'!
Wheriver we wanted we niver cud gan
Ye taak aboot frustration.
And ended up gannin doon Grainger Street and roond the Central Station.

We cumback up thro' Percy Street an past the Civic Haal.
Then went doon John Dobson Street an Market street an aarl'.
We drove reet toond by Bainbridges' we fely full of elation
Till we found worsels back in Graiger street
Gannin' roond Central Station.

Chorus

This time I sez “A think we'll find the other way's best”
So away we went up Neville Street and round Clayton West.
We torned reet into Newgate Street without nae hesitation
And foond worsels back in Grainger Street
Gannin' roond Central Station.

Chorus

Noo when at last we'd parked the car, the wife says “Reet then Joe -
We'll gan into the ‘Precinct’ - it's the centre of the show”
So in we went all goggle eyed like ‘cinders’ to the Baal
But little did we know what troubles wa'd befaal
Chorus

The corridors went on for miles, the air was hot and clammy
And ower the loud speakers came Al Johnson singin’ “Mammy”.
At last we staggered thro' a door, Ar felt broken hearted,
Then we looked aroond and foond worsels reet back where we started.
Chorus

I sez to the wife “ A’m gannin’ hyem, a’ave had enough wor lass,
This time we’ll gan up Pilgrim Street and on the overpass.
But half way roond I missed me torn in bloody desparation,
And ended back in Grainger Street gannin’ roond Central Station

Final Chorus!

© Stephen Dracup

Malcolm Yorke rounded off the proceedings by telling us all about a well known poet and illustrator of childrens' books who he had only recently become aware of - Shel Silverstein. He is very well known over the pond with his books such as 'The Giving Tree', 'The Light in the Attic' and 'Where the Sidewalk Ends' He's great for presents to grand children.

All in all a very good lunch and entertainment!

Pat Cooper
Recorder in Ordinary



As an end piece, (having conveniently pages left over) the following is an epitaph to Frank Evans and his love of Ice Skating!

Were you once a skater and was your last time on the ice a score or two of years ago? Shame on you! Who, I ask, led us in the Battle of Britain if it was not Lord Dowding, that elderly Air Chief Marshall and ice skater? Skating probably helped him to keep cool in the face of so much danger.

OK, where are your skates now? The loft? Oxfam? You target? (A common failing of older people.) I am asking you to reconsider. Remember the fun it was all those years ago. What other past time offered such accidental physical contact with the opposite sex? Now at this very moment you may still have an unexercised skill that outdistances your grandchildren's talents. Not that i am suggesting that you should return to that Single Axel, (or even just a three-jump) that you nearly mastered solo long ago. On the contrary at your age gliding forward is all that is required. This will be seen by others as little short of miraculous.

There are hazards, of course. The two primary risks are falling over. The third, following closely behind, is tripping up. So stay upright. This is done by progressing forward slowly and in a consciously dignified manner, head well raised. If female you should think of duchesses, if male, of head waiters. The effect can be electrifying.

Let us now consider suitable clothing. On first venturing on to the ice your dress should suggest incompetence (which may well befit you at this stage). 30 you must look the part. For ladies a longish wool skirt is suitable while gentlemen might consider a City overcoat. If the rink permits it, a hat is desirable, perhaps something woolly or, a little more daring. a baseball cap with a National Trust logo. The secret is to look even worse skater than you really are. This is something that senior people understand well as Oneupmanship.

At my own Northern rink, in keeping with local tradition I of course always wear a cloth cap. But in Scotland, skating with my grandson I was once pulled up by a bustling marshal in a yellow jumper who skated up to announce that hats were not permitted on the ice in that rink. I explained to her that I always wore a hat when skating since (raising my cap) my head got very cold. She peered at my ageing baldpate."Oh, she said sternly, "A medical condition. Skate on."

On the rink you will be entirely surrounded by young people. It is appropriate to smile .at them occasionally. Do not be surprised if they smile back, wave and even call you "Granddad". After all, depending on your sex that is what you are. And recall or learn afresh the names of some of the skating figures so that you can murmur to a small child: That was a very nice spiral, drag, teapot etc. Spread a little happiness.

Ice rink music is attuned to the audience. Do not hope for "The Skater's Waltz". Listening to the awful cacophony of modern tunes can bring a feeling of senior superiority.

One final warning. Beware of little girls offender years skating backwards into you. This is far and away the greatest peril on the ice. It can happen suddenly so be sure the barrier is not too far away. On the other hand, advantages while skating include an atmosphere that is never too hot and a total freedom from dust so that there is no chance of it getting under your contact lenses.

Lord Dowding said about skating that when you got tired you could stop. We mark him as a profound thinker.

And now, go for it.



Ice Skating For The Elderly



