

RETIREMENT CLUB NEWSLETTER

November 2014 No 303

Manton Lane MK41 7PF

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OCTBER WALK - Bruce Price



After meeting at the Royal George Pub in Stagsden, 17 walkers set forth, most ready suited with their wet gear on for the heavy showers that were forecast. The walk chosen is one of three circular walks starting from Stagsden. Leaving the Pub, we turned left along the High Street to Oakcroft, where another left turn took us to the footpath that led to the underpass beneath the A422. Turning right after the underpass we followed the footpath to Firs Farm, where we then picked up the minor road that leads to Stagsden West End. Two thirds of a mile later we turned left off the road by Park Farm and took the path that gradually climbed to a ridge running SW to NE. On reaching the ridge highest point a group photo was taken before we turned left to walk along the ridge in a NE direction. The ridge offered us good views of the Bedfordshire country side, both to the North and South. Keeping to the path that runs along the ridge and crossing two lanes, we followed the footpath that led us onto Bedfordshire Golf Club. On meeting Hanger Wood we turned left and made our way to the Club entrance and picked up the path that took us onto the A422. On crossing the A422 the path took us to Bedford Road in Stagsden, where on turning left we eventually came back to the Pub. At this point light rain began to fall, but it was too late to get us wet.

NOVEMBER WALK

The walk will be led by Ron Stone and it will start from The White Horse, Tilbrook, near Kimbolton, PE28 0JP on Wednesday 12 November. Please meet at the usual time of 10:15am for a prompt 10:30 start

JOHN TAYLOR BELLFOUNDRY MUSEUM AND WORKS VISIT contributed by Chris Lock

Fourteen pensioners, partners and friends made their way north to Loughborough on the 23rd October for what turned out to be a fascinating tour of the bell foundry. There they were joined by Gerry Sims and wife Barbara who now live in that area. Gerry started in the very early days at ARA in 1955 and left in 1963 but still maintains a keen interest in the company.

Our tour started in the museum area with our tour guide George describing how the bell moulds were made. We then moved into another area where a range of old bells were hung and George demonstrated with a mallet the different tones and types of bell. He then gave us a potted history of the firm and the Taylor family who founded it starting with Robert Taylor who was born in Riseley, Bedfordshire in 1759.



Robert completed his apprenticeship with Edward Arnold, a bell founder of St Neots. The foundry has been on the current site since the 1850s. The largest ever cast bell in Britain, the 'Great Paul' was produced there in 1881 weighing over 16½ tons and is now hanging in St Pauls, London.

We then left the museum area and headed off onto the factory floor. This seemed like a step back in time, no pristine floors or benches here and plenty of 'Girle' calendars! Apart from casting new bells the foundry does a lot of restoration work and we saw many bells either waiting for or in the process of restoration. All the other parts associated with the installation of a church bell are also manufactured on site, the frame, slider and stay, all made of wood. The wheel is also made with wood but must be perfectly round, strong and reasonably light. George explained that the wheel was made of three different types of wood to achieve the desired end result.

We then headed off into the rope room where the bell ropes were made with great skill from Indian hemp. To create a sally 5,000 threads are individually threaded into the rope and trimmed. It takes 6 hours to complete a rope. Whilst we were in the rope room we were



summonsed to the furnace room where they were ready to cast, not a bell as these are not cast very often and when they are, the commissioning group usually have first chance to view. We witnessed some iron casting and an exciting and spectacular event it turned out to be. The sparks flew and several of us took some wonderful photos. It was too hot to go down and inspect the casting immediately so we went back to the factory and were told of the tuning of the bells. Each bell actually produces five notes to achieve the wonderful tones so several parts of the bell are fine tuned, formerly by tuning forks but now by

computers. The bell is gradually ground in exactly the right area until tuned.

There was a set of 4 identically cast bells in bell metal (bronze), brass, cast iron and an aluminium alloy, and George hit each one with a mallet so we could hear the difference in tones. Bells can be used for many different purposes other than church bells and there is a use for bells made from other metals, however the bell made from bell metal, an alloy of copper and tin in a 4:1 ratio, had a far superior sound to the other bells.



We then made our way back to the furnace room where everything was a bit cooler although still glowing red and then back to the museum where we were able to ring the various hung bells with mallets ourselves. The whole tour took about 2¼ hours so this is a very short précis of what we saw and heard.

Everyone declared the tour a great success and would recommend it to others in the future.

ONE HUNDRED YEARS OF AVIATION November 1914 contributed by John Cherry

2nd On returning from patrol today Harold Wyllie, an observer with No 4 Squadron stated that 'Archibald' is getting most accurate in his firing.

16th Harold Wyllie today gave an account of how much damage was done to a machine by combined 'Archie' and rifle fire, he said that "an Officer named Humphries has got about fifty shrapnel hits on his machine, including one on a longeron, skid, spar, wheels and two wires. Humphries has been shot, a glancing blow to the jaw and in the back of the head. The observer has a bullet through his air helmet, one through his sleeve and another through his coat-he found the bullet inside the coat lining. From the appearance of the machine, it seems a miracle that they could have got off so lightly. Humphries continued to fly for an hour after he was hit, but was still able to fly his tattered machine back to the landing ground at Poperinghe" Harold Wyllie said "That Officer has plenty of guts"

21st Today the German Zeppelin sheds at Friedrichshafen on Lake Constance became the target of the world's first strategic bombing raid by a formation of aeroplanes. Led by Squadron Commander E Featherstone Briggs of the RNAS three Avro 504s took off from Belfort in France at 9:50 am in sub-zero temperatures at the start of a 125 mile flight up the Rhine Valley.

At 11:55 am the Avros dived from 4000 feet to drop their loads- each aeroplane carried four 20lb Hales bombs. Several airships were damaged including the LZ32/L7 a hydrogen plant was also blown up. Featherstone Briggs was shot down and captured but the other pilots returned safely.

RAeS LECTURE - 12 NOVEMBER 2014

Gareth Padfield from the University of Liverpool will be talking on "Rotorcraft Handling Qualities Engineering: Managing the Tension between Safety and Performance" at ARA on Wednesday 12th November. Meet at 18:30 for 19:00.

FORTHCOMING EVENTS	
Wednesday 12th November 2014, 10:15am	November Walk, White Horse, Tilbrook
Wednesday 12th November 2014 18:30	RAeS Lecture, ARA

Please send any copy for publication to me by the 15th of the month, Keith Rose

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