



Where has the time gone?

2015 was an extremely busy year with the visit to Blenheim Palace on 27 May 2015 when 37 Fellows from the South West Association joined hundreds of others at which was a very memorable day with Bill Nicholson presenting a Plymouth pear tree (*Pyrus cordata*) on behalf of the Association to Lady Henrietta Spencer Churchill for planting in the Palace gardens. A brass plaque has been mounted by Roger Motte on a section of wood from one of the Seven Oaks blown down in fierce gales many years ago. The wood was given to Roger by Alan Yates who has since sadly died. He was a stalwart supporter albeit not a Fellow. The tree is now flourishing in the private walled garden at the Palace but access can be gained through contact with the Head Gardener.

Later in the year we visited the village of Churchill in Somerset for a Fellows Day and the planting of an oak tree as part of the 50 Oaks Project being the brain child of Graham Burgess of the South Association. We are indeed fortunate that Terry and Janet Wilson, who live locally, have taken an interest in the wellbeing of the tree and it too is showing all the signs that it will grow into a stout oak and be a reminder of the good work done by the Winston Churchill Memorial Trust and the South West Association of Churchill Fellows. It can be seen on the large open space on the right hand side as one enters Rowan Way from Broad Oak Road. Thanks also to the lady who monitors the condition of trees in the village.

No functions were held in the South West during 2016 as this Association took on the huge responsibility of arranging a dinner at the House of Lords on 9 December 2016 with bookings open to all Fellows from across the United Kingdom. Bookings were taken on a 'first come first served' basis and within days we were oversubscribed with Fellows and guests from as far afield as the United States and Switzerland. I was told that renovation work at the House of Lords is likely to preclude further such dinners for a few years to come but there is clearly a need for such events and I suggest other Associations consider this option albeit the 'first come first served' option is not to the liking of all Fellows.

On Saturday 21 October 2017 we met at the White Hart Hotel in St Austell, Cornwall for a welcome coffee and biscuits. Julia Weston the Chief Executive Officer of the Trust was present together with fourteen Fellows and seven other guests. The room set aside for us was quite superb with all of the IT equipment requested in place. A short Annual General Meeting took place followed by three excellent talks as follows:-

1. Polly Baynes F/2016 who spoke on her work supporting birth family contact in fostering and kinship care and life story involvement.
2. Anne Embury F/2014 gave an enthralling talk developing psychoeducational bereavement by suicide groups. This was particularly pertinent in view of the increase in the numbers of people committing suicide.
3. Josephine Spring F/2014 provoked much thought by the group in her talk entitled 'optimizing the therapeutic effect of gardens for neuro-disability patients'.

I recommend that everyone read the reports of these Fellows by accessing the website www.wcmt.org.uk and using the drop down menu beneath FELLOWS to access the DIRECTORY

OF FELLOWS. Then just type in the name of the Fellow in the KEYWORDS section and this will take you to the Fellow and the downloadable report concerned.

Julia Weston then gave an informative update on the work and aims of the Trust together with some information on personnel changes. There was plenty of time for the many and varied questions that were put to Julia and it was obvious that her attendance had been of great benefit to both the Association and the Trust.



(l-r): Anne, Polly, Josephine and Julia

An excellent buffet was then served with quite superb mini-desserts, coffee, tea and fruit juice. It was agreed by all that this was the best buffet we had ever had at an Association function. I feel that special mention must be made of the staff named Alice and Richard who were so helpful in serving the buffet lunch and at the two evening meals some of us enjoyed.



See what you missed and all for free!

The arrangement for the afternoon was that we would travel the short distance to the Lost Gardens of Heligan but storm force winds led to the gardens being shut, quite properly, on the grounds of health and safety.

Andy Reynolds F/2013 came to the rescue by arranging a tour of the St Austell Community Fire Station which was opened in 2003 and has full access for disabled persons thereby ensuring that all members of the community can enter the station to receive fire safety advice. The station has improved facilities such as a training tower, two fire engines, fire safety offices and a meeting room and these facilities will encourage more women to join the Fire Service.

We were shown various videos of how fires can start and the problems encountered by our firefighters. The protective clothing that they need to wear is very heavy and one can only imagine the heat generated within the suits when they enter a burning building. The kit carried on the fire engines is a sight to behold with every imaginable tool on hand to not only fight fires but extricate people from vehicles.



The Peace Window, Halligan Tool and the two crosses on the right

In one of the attached photographs part of The World Peace Garden Stained Glass Window can be seen. This was donated to the St Austell Fire Station by the people of Cornwall. It is in memory of the 343 firefighters who gave their lives so valiantly at the World Trade Centre, New York on 11 September 2001 and is dedicated to World Peace. A twin window was donated to the New York Fire Department as a way of connecting the NYFD with their colleagues in Cornwall. Beneath on the left is what is known as a 'Halligan Tool' which was designed by a First Deputy Fire Chief of that name in the New York Fire Department in 1948. The New York Fire Department decided not to buy it for their use as it was perceived that a conflict of interest might arise and so the City of Boston Fire Department were the first to buy it and so successful has it been with its many uses that it is now considered a 'must' for any firefighter. For obvious reasons it is sometimes referred to as a 'hooligan tool'. On the wall to the right are two crosses fashioned from a steel beam found in the ruins of No 1 Tower of the World Trade Centre. They were presented to Mick Howell the Chief Fire Officer of the Cornwall County Fire Brigade in acknowledging the presentation to the NYFD of the twin stained glass window as previously mentioned. All in all a excellent afternoon.

We had a good crop of new Fellows in the South West this year and hope for more in 2018. Do please spread the word among friends and colleagues about the Trust and how to apply for a Fellowship. If you have not yet given a talk to our Association and would like to do so please contact me so that I can put you on the list for future events. The same goes for talking to groups in your local area many of whom pay a fee or give a donation that can be passed onto the Trust.



Some of the very happy Fellows and guests

Thanks to all of you who have been able to support our events and we look forward to welcoming everyone in the future. Hopefully you will see from this report, and others before it, that our events are extremely interesting. If you have a suggestion for a visit then please communicate it to Bill Nicholson on email SouthWest@wcmt.org.uk

Best wishes

Bill Nicholson

Secretary South West Association - 29 October 2017