



A weekend in Marazion, Cornwall

The sun shone on twenty-one Churchill Fellows and guests over the weekend of 20/21 September 2014 when we were based at the delightful and unspoilt town of Marazion, near Penzance. Many of us booked accommodation at the Godolphin Arms where the dining room has superb views across Mounts Bay towards St Michael's Mount and Penzance.

After a hearty Cornish breakfast, Ellie Hague, a member of staff, showed us to a private room where coffee and biscuits awaited. The room was set out so that all of us had a view of the 60 inch television to which our three speakers connected their lap tops for the now obligatory PowerPoint presentations. No overhead or slide projectors in this technological age!



Our speakers on this occasion were Pete Whitbread-Abrutat, Andy Reynolds and Melissa Hardie-Budden. The reports of Peter and Andy can be seen in their entirety on the WCMT website. Melissa was awarded a Fellowship in 1974 and so her report is not on the system. Once again we thank our intrepid travellers for giving up their time to entertain us.

L-R Andy Reynolds, Melissa Hardie-Budden and Pete Whitbread-Abrutat

The aims of Pete's Fellowship in 2011 were to:

1. Identify and understand the main challenges to delivering world class landscape restoration projects;
2. Identify and understand the elements of success required to deliver world class landscape projects; and
3. Develop a set of generic recommendations that should apply to almost any project anywhere.

When Pete applied for his Fellowship he was working as a Senior Scientist at Cornwall's Eden Project but later became an international mining-environmental consultant and that led to him setting up his own business Future Terrains. This will soon take him to Afghanistan where he will work on a project funded by the UK Government's Department for International Development. He continues to work with non-profit organisations running

courses, giving lectures and offering advice all over the country including around his home county of Cornwall.

His travels took him to the Appalachian mountains of Virginia and Kentucky, USA where he toured various projects. Then off to the Everglades to research the multi-billion work restoring the Everglades ecosystem thus ensuring water supplies for the future. Costa Rica was the next stop to study the work of Professor Dan Janzen and colleagues restoring dry tropical forests on degraded farmland. In the Galapagos Islands he viewed the battle against introduced species and poorly planned development.

Some time in Brazil saw Pete visiting the Amazon rainforest restoration at the Carajas iron mine and Trombetas and Juruti aluminium mines. He then drove 2000 miles through Patagonia visiting Chile's Pumalin Park and the future Patagonia National Park together with Argentina's Estancia Menelik. This all led to Pete writing many articles that were published in academic journals, industry media and he also gave presentations at various conferences.

Melissa Hardie-Budden completed her Fellowship in 1975 and resides in the local area but it was the kick-start to a varied and wonderful life of journalism, lecturing and research. Her subject was the recruitment, training and deployment of nursing and technical assistants and auxiliaries in the health and welfare services of the Netherlands, Denmark and Sweden. It included government offices administering care agencies and the regulatory offices of the professional bodies involved.

A heart-warming and enthusiastic reception was given to Melissa at every stage, and much admiration was expressed for the leadership given by Winston Churchill in his time, and the aims of the Winston Churchill Memorial Trust in supporting potential 'trailblazers'.

Since the Fellowship her work has included University and independent research in social and health organisation, the arts, journalism, publishing and book collecting. In 1976 she founded a private library of books, papers and ephemera related to the history of women in the arts and sciences, named the Jamieson Library of Women's History in honour of mentor-tutor Norma Jamieson of St Thomas' Hospital, London. This has been the source for the further foundation of the Hypatia Trust (www.hypatia-trust.org.uk) which continues to contribute substantially to the cultural life of the UK and women worldwide through lectures, books, study facilities and scholarships. The Winston Churchill Fellowship was the starter-pistol for all of this. Melissa then went on to discuss the maternal relations of the Brontë children. How fitting that we should be in Cornwall! Melissa remains very proud to be part of the Churchill Fellowship especially as she met Clementine Churchill many years ago.

Andy Reynolds is a fire-fighter from Cornwall and undertook his Fellowship in 2013 when he travelled to the USA and Canada to research the very topical subject of community planning in response to flood events with particular emphasis on current best practice and innovative ways communities come together to help themselves. One only has to think back to the Boscastle floods when a torrent swept through this Cornish village carrying all types of motor vehicles and debris before it. Bridges were swept away and many lives put at risk. Who will forget the skill of helicopter pilots and winchmen risking their own lives to save those trapped on top of buildings in danger of being washed out to sea.

We were shown several videos and photographs taken when Andy spent time with various fire and Sheriff's departments when it became all too apparent that great skill was needed to operate fast boats, jet-skis, safety lines and helicopters over all types of water. Some rescues involved yachts that were sinking and others where people had fallen into fast flowing water courses. It was clear that unless these rescues were coordinated and the rescuers highly trained and kitted out then disaster was likely to strike.

Most of us will have come across a flooded road in years gone by and whereas I may well have been tempted to drive through and hope my engine didn't flood I now realise that relatively shallow but fast flowing water is likely to cause a car to float and be taken downstream.

A few of the practices used abroad would not be sanctioned in the UK owing to safety reasons but there can be little doubt that all of our rescue services need to train together with a view to better providing water rescues.

Andy is clearly passionate about his subject and described the profound effect the people he met had on him as did the Fellowship.



As one can imagine time ran away with us somewhat and the buffet lunch booked for 1245 hours had to be put back until 1315 hours. The staff were not at all fazed by this and the chef produced a veritable feast that we ate at tables overlooking St Michael's Mount. A truly grand ending to a most entertaining morning.

The afternoon saw us heading off to the Penlee House Art Gallery and Museum in Penzance where one of our Fellows Louise Connell is a Director. Katie Herbert the Curator and Deputy Director welcomed us and gave a short

talk on the various paintings and other objects on display. Penlee House is an elegant Victorian property set in beautiful gardens and well worth a visit whatever the weather.

A particular painting of interest was entitled 'In a Cornish village - the departure of the fleet for the North' painted by Walter Langley who is accepted as the 'pioneer' of the Newlyn School of Artists, circa 1880 - 1940, that captured the lives of fishing and farming folk. Walter had spent time in Brittany but settled in Newlyn. Obviously a very sensible man.

We then had time to explore Penzance and Marazion albeit a few chose to visit the local Telegraph Museum before meeting again at the Godolphin Arms where we were served a superb meal by Abbi, a member of staff, who coped admirably with the various menu choices. Again we must congratulate the chef. Our Chairman Roger Motte then thanked those present and the staff after which Pete Whitbread-Abrutat got up to say he would finish his presentation! This certainly raised a laugh.

After a good night's rest many of us met in the sunshine for the walk across the cobbled causeway to the medieval castle of St Michaels Mount. Luckily the tide was out! Thanks to Alan Johns, one of our Fellows who deals with the clocks at the Mount we were met by Lord St Levan who kindly gave a talk on the history of St Michael's Mount and mentioned the hoard of artefacts found on the Island by a gardener called Darren Little in 2009.

The hoard has now been confirmed as from the Bronze Age by the British Museum and can be seen displayed in the castle. There are stunning views across the bay towards the picturesque town of Marazion from the gun batteries and fairytale turrets that surround the castle. Interestingly the castle lies on a prominent 'ley line'. Some of us were able to spend some time in the Priory Church where a service was being held.



At St Michael's Mount with Lord St Levan who is wearing a sports jacket

A party of Germans were also visiting the Mount; the reason being that much of the mini-series 'The Shell Seekers' (Die Muschelsucher) was filmed in the area and was a huge hit in Germany as of course it was elsewhere.

The weekend came to a conclusion with some having lunch on the Island or like me and my wife Margaret having an ice-cream as we watched a few rather foolhardy youngsters wading across the now partially submerged causeway rather than taking one of the many boats back to shore. What it is to be young and carefree!

Our only disappointment was not being able to contact via Skype one of our Fellows, Bruce Burman, who is sailing in the Mediterranean. Maybe next time!

Without exception everyone enjoyed the weekend and commented on the friendliness of all those we met including the very professional staff at the Godolphin Arms. To those who were unable to join us I hope this missive will whet your appetite for our next meeting in Plymouth on 9 May 2015 the details of which will be sent out early next year.

Compiled by Bill Nicholson - Secretary to the South West Association of Churchill Fellows