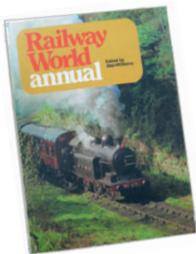


My Quest for Journalistic Fame **Michael Farr**

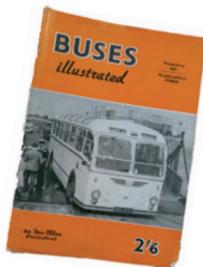
Thinking that we must be bored with hearing about railways, Michael told us about his life as a journalist. In fact, railways did keep popping up but he is wrong and we do like to hear about them, so it didn't matter!

Whilst school for Michael had been an annoyance between railway trips, he was very fond of his English studies and wanted to write. His father was a writer and editor but was keen on shipping. He went to war when Michael was small and



by three and a half it seems Michael had become dedicated to trains, which he feels was something of a disappointment for his father. He started on model railways in the mid 50's and had his first article published in the Railway Modeller when he

was 16. This early writing was not lucrative. An article in 'Buses Illustrated' paid him 5 shillings for world copyright; and he had to be patient, waiting 15 years for an article



he wrote on Southend's pier railway to be published in 'Railway World Manual'.

He joined the publicity department of SWEB, where he checked the correct adverts were in the correct papers, thus realising the wide range of newsprint available. He had a copy of 'Condensed History of the Railways' and had the idea of making lists of when particular lines were due an anniversary. He would write something and send it to the relevant paper. He got lots printed but none paid for.

He carried on writing for newspapers and

magazines. In 1960, for publicity purposes, Westward TV hired a train pulled by City of Truro and Michael went to look. Here he was interviewed by Jack Train and commissioned to make a model. It was displayed in the studio and he was interviewed on the mid-day programme. He enjoyed seeing his name come up on the screen in the closing credits.

The BBC had a programme for railway enthusiasts and he submitted a script and had a voice test. They wanted actuality, so he went out with a tape recorder interviewing people. Then he heard that Blue Peter was going to have a railway spot, so he wrote to them too. They were interested in a destination blind he had from the dismantled Swansea to Mumbles train. They showed it on the programme and Michael had brought it along to show us. When Radio Bristol started up, Michael interviewed some big names for them: Gerald Nabarro; David Sheppard; Bishop of Bath and Wales, and Ronnie Corbett. He also went to some unusual places, including the Hot Dog Stall on the A38 interviewing overnight travellers, a submarine for a children's programme and a trip on the sleeper from Bristol to Glasgow, interviewing passengers.

He then left Bristol to join the AA where he set up radio traffic forecasts over a large area covering Exeter, Plymouth and parts of Wales.

During the Winter of Discontent he was back on local radio, gathering information from Western Power and letting people know which areas and what times they were likely to have power switched off.

He was asked if he would run the newsroom one evening, as all the staff had been invited to a celebration. He agreed and found he did at least have one newsroom secretary to help – Jenni Murray! Others he worked with then were Kate

Adie and Michael Buerk.

Free lance work had been a strain on family life and Michael thanked Pauline for the times she had been left alone coping with home and family whilst he was away with his tape recorder. He had always wanted to write for the national newspapers but never managed. Michael told us how Pauline was once cross about something she had read in the Daily Telegraph and he encouraged her to write to them about it. She did – it was published and she was paid a fee!

Penny Beach

Group Reports

■ Allotments

Two allotments are being cultivated.

Contact Ann Martin

■ Art

The Art group meeting schedule will change in March to the first & third Thursday of the month...very occasionally this may have to change due to non-availability of the room; see Art group web-page for details

Contact Tony Walpole 833082

■ Baking

Another successful meeting with Les' Japanese AnPan rolls deserving special mention. Thank you to Ellen and David for hosting. Our next meeting is on March 4th, 3pm at the Wheelies' when we shall be using all sorts of spices in our bakes.

Next Meeting: **April 1st, 3.00pm at the Warwick's (unless someone else offers) with Easter bakes.**

Contact Jenny Wheeley 351662

■ Birding Group

SLAPTON LEYS 10th February 2015

“COOTS EVERYWHERE”

A day of two halves starting with a morning when the sky was overcast and the wind bitter. We began watching the birds in a hide which was open to the elements! We saw a lot of coots and half a dozen great crested grebes (see below) practising their courting routine. We moved on quickly to the southern edge of the leys where we saw coots and more grebes and lots of duck, gulls and some moorhens. After lunch, in the warmth of the car, we moved to the northern side of the leys where we were sheltered from the vicious wind. A very pleasant walk along the water's edge was rewarded by the sighting of more water birds, including COOTS of course, and a good number of song birds. The star was a reed warbler in its winter plumage which showed a brilliant white collar right around its neck. In all we saw 29 species of birds.

“In 1860 it was estimated that there were only 40 pairs of great crested grebes in the whole land.”

One of the main reasons for the above terrible state of affairs was that there was no heating in railway coaches and no lady would be seen without a muff. The muffs were made from the dense, warm and waterproof body skin of a great crested grebe. The grebes white down was incredibly smooth. Once the railway coaches were heated there was no need for muffs. WWII required the building of many new aerodromes and this combined with the housing boom of the 1950s created a great demand for aggregates. This led to the widespread appearance of gravel pits that provided the ideal habitat for grebes and their numbers increased rapidly. Today the great crested grebe is classified as ‘common’ and is a delight to watch.

Contact Keith Lane 370713

■ Bookworms

Jasmine Nights by Julie Gregson

At last a book we all agreed on, not however because we all liked it, in fact to a ‘man’ or should I say ‘woman’ we were all equally disappointed. A cross between a ‘Mills and Boon’ and a ‘Chick Lit’ it tells the story of a working class girl from ‘Tiger Bay’ who joins ENSA in the 2nd World War, her romance with a fighter pilot who seems to escape several serious crashes unblemished. The plot was weak and unbelievable

and for the most part historically inaccurate, not an author whose books we will be seeking out in the future.

The next meeting will be on Friday March 20th at 2.00p.m.

Please note that Hilary will be taking over the reins from Carol:

The meeting will be at:

12 Inney Close, Callington. PL17 7QQ

Contact Hilary Howarth 382172

hilary.howarth@btinternet.com

■ Bridge

The Bridge Group is now meeting every Tuesday evening at 7.30 pm, in the Methodist Church. Please use the side entrance in Valentine Place. Parking is available at the rear of the church.

Contact Roy Burridge 389018

■ Computer Group

The computer group operates as a self help group. If you've a problem come along and see if we can help. We don't have a set agenda it all depends who turns up. Please bring your laptop or tablet if you have one and we can explore the computing world together.

This month topics the group explored included;

1. Deleting unwanted files and programmes.
2. Viewing separate web sites simultaneously.
3. Using Google drive and One drive.

We also discussed cloud storage.

We meet in members houses so please ask me where to meet. This normally takes place on the third Thursday morning of the month.

Contact : Peter Watson 384509

■ Cornish Art & Literature

Our meeting on the 9th February took place in the Callington Scout Hut which was very clean and bright but a bit cool.

We spent some time talking about when to visit the Plymouth Art Gallery and Museum and decided on Tuesday 10th March as the Gallery is not open on Mondays. This meant that we did not get through all our prepared topics, some to be held over until the 20th April meeting.

We started with a re-cap of Daphne du Maurier's book: ‘Myself When Young’, followed by Howard Spring, who moved to Mylor in 1939 and subsequently lived in Falmouth, one of his less famous books ‘All The Day Long’. Afterwards Ann Fowler's book set in Looe; ‘Nothing Ever Happens Here’. Maire is in the process of making a list (rather a long one) of Cornish architects, artists, etc we have never heard of! Tony then returned to the book ‘Tamar In The Tamar Valley’, written by Diane Cook and Dorothy Kirk who live in Gunnislake.

Peter introduced a postcard found in an antique shop in Havana remarkably of Falmouth. The postcard was connected with Howard Fox from a family of Quakers who were instrumental in the development of Falmouth. He and his family led to the development of Trebah Gardens near Falmouth and also included an extensive mineral collection. He finished with music which was mainly singing unaccompanied, sometimes accompanied music took place in galleries in Churches, some of which survive. The term ‘face the music’ comes from these times. We then turned to Ruth and Jack Pender whose paintings were reminiscent of Alfred Wallis. He was part of the Newlyn School in the 50s and had a one man show in Bristol in the 60s. He had a retrospective exhibition in 2008 at St. Ives. He was born in Mousehole, his Grandfather was a fisherman. He taught Art in Plymouth but in 1956 returned to Mousehole teaching at Treswithick. He set up a disaster fund after the Penlee Lifeboat was sunk on a rescue mission in a violent storm. There is a seat on the Harbour named for Jack Pender.

Our next meeting will be at the Plymouth Museum and Art Gallery on the 10th March, our April Meeting on the 20th at a venue to be arranged.

**Contact Anita & Tony Bowden
Joint Co-ordinators 350668**

■ Crime Fiction Appreciation

February's Crime Fiction meeting was planned for Thursday 26th February, too late for this newsletter. Details next month. March's meeting will be on Thursday 26th March at 2pm at Lucy's house. If you are interested in joining us to discuss or learn more about crime fiction, contact:

David Seward 384631

■ Family History

Family History 23rd March 2.30pm at Eileen's. Using the Internet for research and recording the information.

Contact: Eileen Sturt 350639

■ Flower Arranging

Wednesday 25th March 10am at Eileen's. Theme:- Masquerade

Contact: Eileen Sturt 350639

■ Food & Wine

Contact Maire Warwick 350711

(maire.warwick@btinternet.com)

■ Game On

Our next 2 meetings are on **March 8th** and **March 29th**, 2.30 pm at Lucy's. We will then have a break until the Autumn as hopefully Spring will have sprung and we will all be busy in our gardens on Sunday afternoons. Many, many thanks to Lucy for the use of her home and to all members who provided the delicious cakes for each meeting.

Contact Jenny Wheeley 351662

■ Handbells

Contact Maire Warwick 350711

■ History

For details,

Contact Josephine King 350890

■ Humour

Talk about a laugh a minute. Jenny and John were focusing on the development of Double Acts beginning with Laurel and Hardy. In the early days there was usually a comedian and his foil making up the duo. Through the century the difference between the partners was eroded so that today we would consider Morecambe and Wise and the two Ronnies as two pairs of equal partners. Most of the famous names that Jenny mentioned brought back memories of both radio and television entertainment. We then watched L & H in a silent movie constructing a wooden house, M & W putting Andre Prevue through agony and finally finished with RB trying to buy 4candles from RC. We just couldn't stop laughing.

The next meeting will be on Monday 16th March 2015. David will be focusing on "Graffiti". It will begin at 10.15am.

Contact Keith Lane 370713

■ Italian

The current members will be meeting in our homes while the cricket club is out of action.

Anyone interested in joining will need to wait until the cricket club is open again.

Sally Thomas 01822 832017

■ Jazz Appreciation

At February's meeting, 11 of us gathered at Christine's house (thank you again Christine) for a members' choice session. In a very varied selection we heard the piano music of Scot Joplin, Bill Evans, Teddy Wilson, Dave Brubeck and Errol Garner, big bands of Woody Herman, Count Basie and Glen Miller and the saxes of Wayne Shorter and Gerry Mulligan. And some new names – Sammy Rimmington and Barney Rachabane. Overall, an interesting, information afternoon. Next month's meeting, at 2pm on Wed 11th March at Christine's house, will feature a DVD of a Buddy Rich concert, followed by a short selection from members. If you are interested in joining us for an afternoon of jazz, contact : **David Seward 384631**

■ Music Appreciation

From Amadeus to William Walton we try to listen, learn and enjoy music performed by soloists and orchestras, choral or masses both ancient and modern. Spend two hours of bliss and relaxation with us on 2nd Tuesday of the month.

*Next meeting February 10th at my house
2 Trelawney Heights at 2pm*

Contact: Pat Ferguson 384402

■ Needlework

Normally meet on the second Thursday of the month.

Details from Ann Martin

■ Opera

We watched the final three acts of a very dramatic production of Verdi's Don Carlo from the Saltsburg Festival, - a moving and beautiful production with stunning scenery and performers.

Next Opera on at 2pm on March 17th at 28 Trelawney Road.

Contact Carol Dowell 382158

■ Philosophy

Our meeting this month looked at women

philosophers who so far had been unrepresented in our history of philosophy. The chapter we discussed was 'Where did the Universe Come From' Other points of discussion were Angie Hobbs and the relevance of philosophy today and can any good ever come from revenge. Some interesting points of view were raised. Next meeting: Thursday 26th March in the Council Chamber in the Town Hall.

Contact: Doreen Johnson 343152

doreen.johnson@onetel.com

■ Play Reading

After enjoying a short stint as thespians the Play Readers reverted to doing what it says on the cover - reading plays. Owing to sickness however, our numbers were reduced at our last meeting so we didn't get very far with Noel Coward's 'Present Laughter'. With two more Acts to go it is hoped to have the full complement at our March meeting when everyone can appreciate the author's wit, and go home with a smile on their face (as we usually do!).

Contact Jean Rose 350029

■ Poetry

1st Friday of the month. We are still waiting to tackle Beowulf. We would welcome new members. There must be some people out there who appreciate English verse at its best. Don't be shy come and join us.

Next Meeting: March 6th at 12 Trelawney Heights

Contact Pat Ferguson 384402

■ Scrabble

The group, led by Lesley Cheetham at her home, meets in the evening on the third Wednesday of each month.

Contact Lesley Cheetham

■ Scribblers

Scribblers will not be meeting in March and the next date will be Thursday April 9th.

At our February meeting we had a long standing date with writing for children. Having taken on this challenge with some trepidation, we were all pleased with our results and a selection of our stories is on the website.

New members would be welcomed. All enquiries to

Anne Cooper 382267

■ Singing for Pleasure

Contact: Rosalind Bunkum 383171

■ Strollers

This month, on a beautiful morning, we visited Cotehele to see the snowdrops and other Spring flowers before making our way to the Quay for coffee. The following Monday we were not so lucky with the weather but nineteen hardy souls crossed

the Tamar to Tavistock for a rather damp stroll through The Meadows where we fed the ducks! We then descended on The Wharf for refreshments. Our last outing for February will be a short stroll in Stoke Climsland with lunch at The Old School.

Contact: Pauline Husband 350379

■ Table Tennis

We meet once every 4 weeks for a couple of hours of good fun and exercise. All equipment

is provided and you don't need to be an expert, just enthusiastic. You can check the website or ask for details.

Contact Ray Geatches 350638

■ Walking Group 1

Swingers from the sixties show they have still got it!

High moors, river valleys, Coastal paths, - does nothing deter these stalwarts out to enjoy the stunning scenery, flora and fauna. Add to this the wonderful company and scintillating conversation... who could ask for more.?

Contact : Ann Martin

■ Walking Group 2

Contact: Lucy Thomas 350018



Speakers at Future Meetings:

The May Speaker is Peter Lavis

- talking about the 'Lost Gardeners of Heligan'

Officer Contact Numbers

Chairman: David Seward t: 384631
Vice Chair: Jenny Wheeley t: 351662
Secretary: Ann Henderson t: 351289
Treasurer: Maggie Wood t: 384634
Editor: Colin Mills t: 208529
Email: colin-mills@talktalk.net

Group Leaders and other contributors - Please Note: All Copy to the editor by 25th of the preceding month please.

(N.B. I cannot guarantee inclusion of copy submitted after this date - but exceptions will be made wherever possible for groups meeting in the fourth week of the month)

The Newsletter is published at the start of each month.

Have you checked out the website?: www.callingtonu3a.org.uk

Copies of these Newsletters can be found on the above website

N.B. Phone numbers without dialling codes are for the 01579 area.

National U3A Events

- March 6th The Achievements and Legacy of Dr Edward Jenner. Berkeley. Glos.
- March 23rd Science at the Royal Institution, London.
- March 25th First World War in the Air. RAF museum. London

For further details see the Secretary or visit the National website

Local U3A Events

- AGM in The Town Hall **13th April 2015...** make a note in your diaries!

Its all a question of etiquette...

It would be appreciated by the group leaders if members of each group could inform the leader of their intention to attend (or not) *prior* to a group meeting. This would assist in the organising of refreshments and any other arrangements that the group leaders have to make (including the charges incurred for hiring venues, organising seating etc.)

...thank you.

This month's puzzle:

| | | | |
|------------------------------------|--|--|-------------------------|
| 1 > | | | BiWord March |
| | | | |
| | | | 1 Down: Contained |
| 1 Across: Pretty bright if high | | | |

Answer to last month's puzzle:

| | | | |
|--|---|---|----------------------------|
| 1 > | t | a | BiWord Feb |
| | | | |
| | o | | 1 Down: Short direction |
| 1 Across: I want to thank you quickly | | | |

Email your answer to me: colin-mills@talktalk.net

The first correct answer received will be immortalised in print in next month's issue.

Last month's triumphant winner: Mr A N Onymous