

May 2010

861st Meeting of the Paddock Party Committee

Held at the Fuller Residence 2pm, Monday 3rd May 2010

Present:

Graeme (Chairman), Maggie, Adrian, Steve, SarahD, Kathie, Amy, Richard, Penny, Sue, Andrew

Apologies:

SarahB, apparently either swimming in a curious fashion or making a model of a monster, Adrian informing the Committee that she was doing a Nessie and couldn't, therefore, be with us.

Minutes of the previous meeting

Running to over 50 odd, very odd, pages it was suggested that these were taken as read which, indeed, they were and had been, often to the bewilderment of various family friends over Christmas and New Year.

Date

It was confirmed that the 7th event would take place on 7 August, hopefully a Saturday.

Time

Discussion the time for the event to start was distracted when Penny and Richard realised that they hadn't adjusted their watches since returning to the village from its antipodean twin in Woollybumma and were 9 hours ahead of themselves, possibly explaining why they were still in pyjamas. Stationmaster Steve took an early opportunity to mention that some members of the Committee may not have been aware that the National Library of Australia had on display an extract from a 1771 bill for dividing and inclosing the open and common fields, common meadows, common pastures, and other commonable lands and grounds within the parish and liberties of Pattishall with the hamlets of Eastcote, Astcote, and Darlescote, in the county of Northampton.

Once Penny and Richard had corrected themselves, apart from their hats, it was agreed that a 6:30pm start would be appropriate.

Format of event

After the success of the previous six parties it was not exactly something that needed a great deal of discussion. However, some members did feel inclined to mention some possible additions for the amusement of guests, mostly including sheep. Richard announced that sheep were a lot for some reason. This prompted Sue to recall playing Poohsticks and Penny to remark that she had had great trouble with Richard's because it kept blowing off.

The Chairman muttered something to the effect that the effects of age upon the Committee members was being to become apparent and urged that we move on before dementia requires that the Minutes Secretary reads the minutes of the current meeting so far lest some forget that we're merely on item 3.

Food

The pig was already ordered which prevented suggestions that we have a ewe roast instead. The usual queries about vegetarians were raised and the Committee reassured each other that there would be plenty of vegetables provided on the day. Sue remembered that we used to provide an alternative dish for those who didn't like pork but agreed that everyone seemed more than happy with the food and, with all the other bits and pieces available in the tent, there would be plenty for everyone without needing any additional main course.

Drink

It was agreed that an abundant supply of *Frog island* would be supplied, this having been well appreciated last year. Adrian reminded members of Party 7s which set off fond memories amongst many of turning up at parties with the once ubiquitous yellow and red cans containing seven pints of beer. The Party 7 theme may be something worth thinking about for the PP7 tickets and promotional material. The Minutes Secretary said he

might see if we could get some sponsorship or even free samples from Watneys. The Chairman said something about his being damn lucky as Watneys closed in 1979. He did, though, still have a Watneys red barrel keyring.

Stationmaster Steve decided to announce that he had had a Teacher of The Year Medal which momentarily stunned the members and discussion of drink and sheep halted. Even the corks on Richard's hat seemed to be less animated than usual. "Congratulations" said someone and "Jolly good show" another. "You got an award?" boomed the Chairman, "who voted for you?!" Unfortunately, the Chairman was struck by wind towards the end of the phrase, resulting in some emphasis of the last word lending his genuine enquiry a somewhat different shade of meaning. Glasses were, though, duly raised in recognition of Stationmaster's achievement and the Minutes Secretary reassured him that he wouldn't forget to include this in the minutes.

Weather

"Something the Committee does need to consider . . ." started Stationmaster Steve.

". . . INCLEMENT WEATHER!!!" sang everyone else except Amy who was too young to remember it ever raining at a Paddock Party.

"They'll get wet." boomed the Chairman.

Seating and tables

PP6 had seen a slightly expanded square formation of the tents in comparison to the close arrangement of PP5. Earlier events had seen tents thrown up in pretty random places and it was clear that the erection team were getting ever more organised but not to the point of getting their set squares and theodolites out. Sue and Kathie were quite interested in the men getting their theodolites out but accepted that erections were essentially in the hands of the men who turned up on the day.

Music

The Chairman was particularly keen to get his organ out. Adrian and the Minutes Secretary groaned, not at the old joke but at the memory of PP4 when they happened to be in the right place at the wrong time and were obliged to assist in heaving Graeme's massive organ through gaps a mere few millimetres wider than it was and then across what seemed to be the ¼ mile trek from conservatory to paddock on a steamy August afternoon. Their expressions changed to delight akin to those of schoolboys who discover that there isn't going to be a History test in period 2 after all and they were on the verge of dancing together had Archie not given them one of those looks that said he wouldn't be having any of that queer stuff here.

In fact, it was a distinctly portable keyboard to which the Chairman was referring and Amy was enthusiastic about adding some performance with that to the evening.

She went on to agree that she could provide some music which could be playing as people arrive, something we haven't had before, and agreed to be a nice new idea. Contact would be made with all who had performed previously, notably the Jazz Quartet, Gracie and her man, Matt and someone else who played guitar and is apparently called Rocky. Amy also reckoned that a covers band from the Towcester Rock School might be persuaded to join in.

Tickets

Adrian and the Minutes Secretary would produce the tickets again this year. Adrian had collected some sample designs from telephone kiosks around St Pancras Station in London on a recent visit which the two men decided to take a long hard look at one evening. The other information to be displayed would be largely the same as for last year which would save a lot of time checking how to spell the words. Largely was also an apt word for the way the price would increase this year, from £8 to £10 which was agreed on the basis that (a) 10 was a round number and (b) there would be no need to mess around with tins of coins for change at the gate. It was also the case that every year guests had been accosting members of the Committee demanding to know how on earth we managed to lay on such a great evening at the price. It was hoped that a 25% increase at a time of economic hardship might finally put a stop to such behaviour.

All profits from the event would go to WNAA, with the Rugby Cement Group kindly offering to match the profit, effectively doubling the dosh that could be contributed to the Air Ambulance cause.

Any other business

Penny informed the Committee that, despite having been on the other side of the planet, she had noticed that gazebos were on special offer at Homebase. There was some discussion about the condition of one of the large gazebos following it being blown half-way to Tiffield by winds prior to PP5. It had been repaired with yards of gaffer tape for PP6 and might just make it through PP7 but there was also a missing pole in the set for the other large one so perhaps, if Penny spots a suitable bargain, an addition to stock may be a good idea.

Other activities were considered, some clearly having been mused over for some time as little encouragement was needed for their airing.

The Minutes Secretary suggested bell-ringing which slightly worried most other members as it later did the Minutes Secretary himself who completely failed to understand why on earth he had suggested it.

Sarah D suggested the far more sensible *Know Your Parish* which would involve a number of pictures of local things being stuck up around the tents and gazebos. Adrian said that we had tried that with last year's rasterbated images of Committee members which had proved fascinating and caused several guests to bump into each other when walking backwards to attempt to figure out who was who which in turn resulted in several new relationships developing. Sarah D advised that by 'local things' she hadn't actually meant Committee members. The idea, though, was approved and Adrian and the Minutes Secretary instructed to go forth with their cameras and snap odd things before the next meeting so that the Committee could have a look at what they'd got. Adrian made another attempt to get out his telephone box cards on the grounds that the Minutes Secretary might need something to remind him when he was recollecting the discussion.

Whilst Sarah B wasn't there in person there was a distinct sense of her being nevertheless *being* in the room and Adrian hurriedly stuffed the errant items back in his pocket, looking around nervously and occasionally up and the ceiling which wasn't what Committee members did very often, the only memorable other occasion being Stationmaster Steve's struggling ladybird impression from the very early years of Paddock Party business.

Displaying the images would require yet another erection of some sort for which young Peter Fuller's wonderful carpentry expertise would be called upon by Maggie when she next sees him and remembers (the two not necessarily being coincident).

Date of next meeting

13 June 2010 at Steve & Sarah D's 2pm