

# Community

## Club Reports

### Two O'clock Club

AT the latest club meeting in March, Stan Vickerstaff spoke of his survival as a Japanese prisoner of war. He had joined the Royal Corps of Signals in May, 1940 and, after training as a wireless operator, was drafted to India where he joined the 9th Indian Signals.

In February 1942, he was posted to Singapore and then to Kuala Lumpur, where he was captured when the Japanese invaded Malaya. White prisoners were separated and sent to Changi, where they were set to work in the Singapore docks. As they refused to sign an agreement not to escape, they were housed in barrack blocks under guard. This was followed by shipment to Formosa (Thailand) on a tramp steamer due for scrapping, the POWs accommodated in overcrowded conditions in one of the holds.

As Japan had not signed the Geneva Convention, the prisoners were employed as slave labour in copper mines when they got to

Formosa. They lived in buildings housing 80, with the rations issued based on the number who were fit to work being shared equally. For the Emperor's birthday in 1943, an old water buffalo was killed and stewed, the POWs issued with knives and forks to eat it with.

Each night, the POWs slept on boards in their huts after handing over their shoes as a measure to prevent escape. If rain prevented work, their rations would be reduced.

Stan Vickerstaff remained in the camp for two years. The prisoners were chosen to work in the mines by dint of size and fitness, so when the selections were made Stan always tried to stand between two men bigger than him.

This evasion tactic didn't always work and he was to find out for himself that there were 1180 steps down to the mine. The miners were issued with a cardboard hat and a flame

lamp, but they did receive extra rations. The tunnels were unlit and unventilated and those who failed to meet targets were beaten.

The mines eventually closed when the Americans sank all the ships used to transport the copper ore. The Japanese had planned to kill the POWs if the Americans invaded the island, but they invaded Okinawa instead. After the Armistice, American planes dropped food supplies and, eventually, the POWs were repatriated.

Club members listened to Mr Vickerstaff's talk with interest, sympathising with him over the treatment he received.

Sales from a charity stall at the meeting raised £37 towards the club's charity collection.

Before the April meeting, Liz Martin of the Police Aid Convoy charity arrived with a van to collect members' donations of clothing and furniture for distribution in Albania and Zimbabwe. The contributions filled the van.

### Beeston Probus Club

THE sun always seems to shine brightly when one visits scenic Derbyshire – or so we are told.

Walkers in the county will tell of different tales but nevertheless the slides presented by Ray Gillet to the club were of excellent quality.

To exercise the viewer's minds, he devised a talk whereby the viewers are asked to identify the location of each picture. This mystery tour resulted in many a whisper from

the audience, "I know that place..." or "I was there in..."

Some members, still active in walking groups, were much better at identifying the sites than others who perhaps had not experienced the joy of visiting the Peak District and so were at a disadvantage in recognising the various locations.

The usual calendar-type images were shown but, in addition, Ray showed the more unusual aspects.

Strange rock formations, village ponds, public houses and cafes, river valleys and hills; all were included.

Ray concentrated more on the northern part of the county and sites from the southern part were absent, which was a pity, as this part is just as attractive as the rest of the county.

Still, it was a good show and the members responded by showing their appreciation at the end in the usual manner.

### Toton Methodist Church Women's Meeting

THE Toton Special Care Baby Knitting Circle held its 27th birthday 'Open House' on March 22, where the 953 newly-knitted garments and cot covers made by the group's volunteers during the past year were on display, these bringing the total made over the 27 years that the group has been in existence to no less than 18,401!

All have been donated to

the Neonatal Unit at Queens Medical Centre, Nottingham.

Also at this year's Open House event, £390.37 was raised from stalls and donations. Of this, £200 has been donated to the University of Nottingham Heartlight Sensor Appeal for a monitor that will help prevent brain damage, or even death, to tiny newborn babies.

The knitting circle members also knit 'Angel Pockets' for the QMC's labour and gynaecology wards (for babies that don't make it) as and when required. To date, 198 have been knitted and handed over.

The winner of the Spring Clean competition was Mrs Janice Hutchinson of Toton.

**Don't forget to send in your Club reports to be included in the next edition.**

## Beeston Snooker Hall

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### Rotary Club of Beeston

THE speaker at the Club's latest meeting in April was David Herbert, who had travelled from Hinckley to speak to club members about the 'Life of Lord Byron'.

George Gordon Byron, the sixth baron (1788-1824), inherited his title at the age of 10 in 1798, when he moved to live at Newstead in buildings adjoining the Abbey that had been destroyed during the Reformation. Following his time at Cambridge University, he returned home to take up his seat in the House of Lords in 1808. Although a prolific author, Byron was always in debt and led a life of debauchery, and yet was able to travel to many parts of southern Europe. He finally left England in 1816 to live in Geneva.

### Broxtowe Action Fund and Partnership Awards evening

FAMILIES and friends joined nominators of the people who had been lined up to receive awards at the Broxtowe Action Fund and Broxtowe Borough Partnership Awards evening at the Town Hall recently.

The Mayor of Broxtowe, Cllr John Longdon, presented the awards in both categories, first to the recipients of the Broxtowe Borough Partnership Award.

Beeston resident Dick Knight, who has tended the premises and grounds of the Volunteer Bureau on Devonshire Avenue for many years, keeping the grounds of the traditional Victorian house tidy and the leaves swept, received the 'Happy Borough' award.

Nominated by his colleagues at the Broxtowe Volunteer Centre, Dick Knight had looked after the building as a volunteer

for 12 years whilst also acting as carer for his wife Christine, who is confined to a mobility scooter. Dick then became ill himself last year, and now lives at the Silverwood Nursing Home on Imperial Road, Beeston.

Dick was able to attend the presentation evening after his colleagues from the Volunteer Centre made arrangements to collect him from Silverwood: he was delighted to receive the award from the Mayor.

Other awards in the Partnership Awards category went to Broxtowe Women's Project for A Safe Borough; the Stapleford Dig In volunteers for A Clean and Green Borough; and the award for A Healthy Borough going to the Walk & Talk volunteers, who have led around 700 walks in the seven years of the scheme's existence.

Broxtowe Action Funds Grants went to 2nd Beeston Sea Scouts – £800 to fix the soffits and guttering at their Lilac Grove HQ; £600 towards running the NG9 Credit Union, set up in May 2008 and now with 50 members; £1650 to the Framework Housing Association which helps people live independent lives; and £680 so that the Nottingham Wildlife Trust can equip its Attenborough volunteers with health and safety kit.

Finance for the Action Fund grants comes from Broxtowe Borough Council, Nottingham County Council, Nottinghamshire County NHS and the Cooperative.

Grants in excess of £179,000 have been made to around 200 groups since the scheme began.