Outings:
October 18th: “Museum of the Mind” /
November 4th: Visit to the Supreme Court

Lunches:
September: New Inn - Hayes
October: Wheat sheaf – West Wickham
November: Toby- Eden Park
December 7th: Christmas Lunch at “Coppers”
Beckenham Details later

Theatres:
13th October: “Chicago” Churchill
17th November: “Fiddler on the Roof” Churchill
5th January 2017 “Peter Pan” Churchill

Honorary Members
In recognition of long standing members who are finding it more difficult to come to meetings but who want to maintain their contact with the club the committee have introduced the Honorary Members Certificate.
The person to receive his certificate was Tom Joyce at the Strawberry Tea in June.

HRH Prince Leonard of Hutt
About 517k north of Perth and approx. 40k off the main highway, along at times is a very rough country road lies the “Principality of Hutt River” (the only independent territory in Australia) ruled over by the 90-year-old self-styled Prince Leonard and his four sons, Their Royal Highnesses Prince Ian, Grand Duke of Hutt, Prince Richard, Duke of Carmel: Prince Arthur (aka Wayne) Duke of Nain and Prince Graeme, Duke of Gilboa (whom we met working in the Hutt River Post Office). Sadly, HRH Princess Shirley died 2 years ago and is buried in front of the Unitarian Church.
Inside the church (which has by the way the very worst collection of religious art we have ever seen) are the carved wooden chairs of the Prince & Princess where one can sit and have a photo taken.
The Principality of Hutt ceded from Australia in 1969 following a dispute between the Governor of Western Australia and Leonard Casely over what he saw as draconian wheat production quotas. He lodged a protest with the Governor who would not change them, and as the Queen’s representative, made Her Majesty technically liable for applying an unlawful imposition as the quota had not yet been passed into law. Casely then lodged a claim $52 million believing the claim would force a revision of the quota. Two weeks later a bill was introduced into Parliament to “resume” compulsory purchase rural lands. After approaches to the government to reconsider the Bill failed, Casely resorted to a British law (the Treason Act 1495) which he felt allowed him to secede and declare independence from the Commonwealth of Australia. Casely states that he nonetheless remains loyal to Queen Elizabeth II.
The Western Australian government decided nothing could be done without the intervention of the Commonwealth. At one point Leonard Casely was named "Administrator of the Hutt River Province” by mistake. The Royal Prerogative, makes this recognition binding on all courts. After the government threatened him with prosecution, he styled himself His Royal Highness Prince Leonard I of Hutt to take advantage of a Commonwealth law that a monarch could not be charged, but that anyone who interfered with his duties could be charged with treason. Although the law in this matter has since changed, In 1976, Australia Post refused to handle Hutt River mail, forcing it to be redirected via Canada. Following repeated demands by the Australian Taxation Office for the payment of taxes, on 2 December 1977 the province officially declared war on Australia. Prince Leonard notified authorities of the cessation of hostilities after invoking The Geneva Convention. The residents of the Principality pay no taxes, receive no benefits including healthcare and must maintain their own roads.
Once you pass the post which marks the border the road became rougher, eventually entering through “grand” gates into the capital, Nain, a rather odd area a bit like a glorified farmyard. On the left is a small building giving the history and formed by a huge sculpture of the head of Prince Leonard. Next to that the Unitarian Church, beyond that the Government Offices and the Post Office. There you can change currency, 1AUS for 1HR$, buy postcards and get a visa. Passports of overseas visitors can have an entry stamp but somehow I had “forgotten” mine. You can also become an ambassador if you pay enough.
Opposite the church is “Nature’s Gateway to the Spirit World” the front of which looks like a Chinese Temple guarded by two terracotta type warriors, behind that an open courtyard. Running around the courtyard is a shelf on which there are dozens of animal models above which are obscure mathematical calculations of their spirituality to the nth degree and looks a bit like pi! Later Prince Leonard told us he still does his calculations every day.
Across from the Post Office in the Souvenir Gallery where we met Leonard, now very shrunken and wearing fine black silk trousers from larger, fitter days. Once you enter the Gallery he starts his spiel about his souvenirs which he has given to every visitor since 1970 and does so without a breath or interruption. His newest treasure is a letter from Buckingham Palace, “Her Majesty thanks him for his good wishes on her 90th birthday and is sorry to hear that he had had a fall.”
We really had to buy something so we bought pens which the Prince told would write in any language we chose!
As we left Nain and drove along the orange dirt road past fields of yellow and white spring flowers and wild melons growing along the roadside we agreed that our 80k round trip from the highway had been worth it.

Sylvie Redvers
**Remember 1916 - Whitgift School WWI Exhibition**

We were concentrating mainly on the battle of the Somme but were also told about the lead-up to it. At first, people presumed Queen Victoria could prevent a war that would involve herself and her two cousins, Kaiser Wilhelm of Germany and Tsar Nicholas of Russia. They were wrong!

The present headmaster had done a great job devising and writing this exhibition and some of the things that really caught my attention were:

1. When the French army at the battle of Verdun finally had to admit "we are bleeding here" the English brought forward the start of the battle of the Somme earlier than planned - and we all know about the huge losses there - 420,000 British, 200,000 French for starters. Verdun was so destroyed that the famous trenches were built from the wood of the ruined houses.
2. The huge death toll included 251 pupils and masters from the Whitgift School. In fact, one pupil, Lionel Morris, was the famous Red Baron's first casualty. He was a 2nd Lieutenant, aged 19. How sad is that?
3. Harry Lauder (the comedian who wrote 'Keep right on to the end of the road') tragically lost his son at the Somme. Rumour had it he was killed by his own men - he was a Captain, and many officers were disliked because they were considered too harsh.
4. At first, women were only allowed to join the Red Cross, but when it was a case of needs must, they became bus conductors, pulled ploughs and took dangerous jobs in armament factories. Later, in April 1918, the WRAF was formed and women took technical and mechanical roles as well as driving and cooking. I don't think they actually flew though.
5. When war was over, French Marshall Foch declared 'This is not peace, it is an armistice for 20 years'. 1918 to 1939 - seems he was about right"

Pat Niccolai

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**Walmer Castle**

Recently Sylvia and I spent a few days’ house sitting in our daughter's abode in Whitstable and whilst there we decided to visit Walmer Castle.

Originally built by Henry 8th as a coastal artillery fortress, it evolved over the years into a comfortable home and for the last three centuries has been the official residence of the Lord Warden of the Cinque Ports. Among the most famous was the Duke of Wellington, Lord Warden for 23 years until his death there in 1852 aged 83. There are rooms devoted to the Duke and William Pitt the Younger and references to other Wardens including the Queen Mother and Churchill. The gardens are well worth a visit and there is a lovely observation terrace where you sit alongside the cannons and look out over the Channel. There are two refreshment facilities in the castle but we drove to Kingsdown and lunched in The Red Lion, which was very good. There is another pub on the beach, the Zetland Arms, but the day we went it was packed.

John Farmer

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**Your Bush Loo!**

In Western Australia you only have to drive a few kilometres in from the ocean to be in the bush, going along red dusty roads lined with amazing plants, where an 8ft boomer kangaroo can leap across in front of you, or a friendly emu can wander up for a closer look at the car, and at the roadside a gigantic eagle enjoying its lunchtime prey. All of these of these happened to us.

In such a landscape water can be scarce therefore toilet facilities at designated viewpoints can be rather basic. Two small corrugated buildings, inside the “ladies” 2 or 3 cubicles (can’t speak for the setup in the “gents!”). In the cubicle, the usual stainless steel pan. “Can’t find the flush” I shouted to my friend next door. “Look beside the pan and read the notice on the wall” I was instructed, so I did. In the corner was an enormous bucket full of something soapy and in the bucket the biggest toilet brush I have ever seen, tied to the wall on a length of plastic rope. The notice behind the pan read: “G’day, I’m your OZ BUSH LOO and I’m easy to use. Lift the seat and wet the inside of the bowl with the brush.

Do what you came to do. Wash the inside of the bowl again and close the lid. Do not put rubbish or chemicals in the toilet. Yuck! They kill my good bacteria and make me smell bad. Please keep the door closed. Thank you from the next user.”

Hand washing was also limited, a tiny tap into a tiny basin but the soap smelled nice and there was a mirror!

No hand dryer, just the Aussie sun.

Sylvie Redvers