



Wroxham and District
Membership Number: 962/940/13

Chairman: John Long, 01603 722254

Secretary and Membership Secretary: Sue Badger 01603 737572

NEWSLETTER OCTOBER 2017

General meetings

September's speaker was Derek George, a director of the Caister Volunteer Lifeboat Service. He gave a detailed presentation about the history of Lifeboats in this country and the emergence of Caister as the UK's only independent establishment. There are 239 all-weather lifeboats around our shores: 238 manned and paid for by the RNLI and only 1 independent boat, which is the Caister Lifeboat

The history of lifeboats in this country is fascinating. In the 13th century fires were lit on the shore to guide mariners along the east coast at a charge of 2d, though it's not known how this was collected. In 1596 two lighthouses were built to replace these fires, lit by candles and then in 1746 changed to oil. These were replaced by the Winterton light in 1790.

During the Industrial Revolution coal was the most important cargo carried and as this was mined in the North and needed in the South it was carried by ship down the North Sea, with roughly 2000 ships in any one day. Survival at sea depended on the weather and knowledge of the sandbanks, of which there are many off the coast of Norfolk. A boat that ran aground would break up in less



than 4 hours, so speed for recovery was of the essence. In ten years in the 1860s 10,000 ships were registered as wrecked between the Humber and Gt Yarmouth: about 20 a week. Initially to combat this Beach Companies were set up to rescue seamen, although more importantly to them, salvaging the ships, which made them very wealthy.



This changed after a while and soon lifeboats were set up just to save lives, but the men needed to be paid and the system was set up to pay one guinea (21 shillings) for a daytime launch and one and a half for a night one; this was for each man plus five guineas for the village as many people were needed to launch the boat. Soon there were 15 lifeboats along the Norfolk coast, with lookouts on the beach who would call the boat out. Any number could go on one rescue with all claiming the money when only one was needed and obviously this was very costly and inefficient so common sense prevailed and in 1823 the Norfolk Association for Saving Lives of Shipwrecked Mariners was set up and the NLI was formed in 1824, and given the *Royal* prefix by Queen Victoria a few years later. From 1857 to 1969, the Caister boat saved 1814 lives, a UK record, and won many awards.



In 1969 the RNLB decided that the Caister lifeboat was no longer necessary and that the area could be covered by the Cromer and Great Yarmouth boats. However, the Caister men knew the sandbanks and tides so well they knew this would not be the case and decided to set up an independent service. Funds were needed to set up their own lifeboat; the first inshore boat was purchased by the children of Caister following a sponsored walk organised by the Headmaster.



This was fine but they really needed an all-weather boat and in 1987 the Mayor of Gt Yarmouth launched an appeal. Skipper Woodhouse, (*pictured above*) the coxswain, appeared on the Terry Wogan Show and celebrities pledged support, including Jim Davidson, who adopted them. The largest sponsor was Bernard Matthews, and consequently the all-weather boat acquired was named *Bernard Matthews*. Later, Prince Charles persuaded him to buy a new tractor to launch it as the previous one was not powerful enough. The latest boat, the Bernard Matthews II, is the fastest

lifeboat in the UK.

There have been disasters in the past with many crew losing their lives and as the boat was crewed by family members often more than one family member at a time. Since independence in 1969 Caister Lifeboats have been launched 606 times and saved 304 lives to date, proving that the RNLI may have been wrong.

Their motto remains: **CAISTER MEN NEVER TURN BACK**

October's speaker will be **Jenny Gibbs**, who has been described as "A Turkish Shirley Valentine"! And if you know the story of the original 'Greek' Shirley Valentine, you'll recognise that this speaker promises to be extremely entertaining. She will be at The Hub on Tuesday 17th October, from 2.30.

Another successful event was the **Paul Bryant Painting Day.**

On the 5th September last, thirteen U3A Wroxham members took part in a "Bob Ross" style painting day. After watching a demonstration of this method by Paul Bryant at our General meeting previously they were so impressed they could not wait to have a go themselves!



The Group was very mixed, being made up of three who had never put a brush to canvas before, several who had not painted since leaving school and others who were used to painting in water

colours or at least making a drawing before starting to paint.



Paul proved to be an excellent teacher, having a laid back, do-not-rush attitude, and showing each stage of the painting. During the day, the room became full of well painted, purple glow pictures of a peaceful landscape of a



winter woodland, reflected in clear water. Everyone produced a painting to be proud of, (to the amazement of some of them), and received many 'Wows' from friends and families, when showing them later.

Everyone agreed it had been a great experience!

With this in mind, another painting day will be arranged, this time the subject will be a 'Seascape'.

There will be a list at the General Meeting to add your name to if you would like to take part.

Open to All MEMBERS of Wroxham U3A.

(More examples of the members' paintings can be viewed on the website: u3awroxham.co.uk/events.)

ACTIVITIES

Photographic Group met in September at the East Ruston Old Vicarage Garden. The group usually meets on the third Friday of the month, which will be **October 20th**. For October's activities contact Mary Long 01603 722254.

Classical Music continues to be popular at the home of Brian Keane, Prior Thatch, Beech Road, Wroxham, and meets fortnightly to listen to a variety of music. Brian encourages people to bring their favourites as well. All welcome on **11th and 25th October, 2.30 – 4.30 pm**.

French Conversation All welcome to come and chat in French at whatever standard, every **Thursday afternoon at 3 pm** at Bouchon (opposite Hoveton Station). Jane Monks 01603 782496

Bird Watching has been blighted by bad weather on the days chosen to go out – such bad luck. These are usually on Saturday mornings, and could be to any of the many possible sites that Di knows about to find birds, leaving her home by the double roundabout at 10.00am. Contact her to find out about the next excursion. Di Stagg, 01603 784214.

*Bird Banter” is a wonderful way to learn more about birds and butterflies in the comfort of Bouchon over a cup of coffee, with Di’s great knowledge, books, laptop etc. This is monthly on a Friday morning, and in October will be **6th October at 10.30 am.**

Play Reading also meets at Bouchon on the first Tuesday of the month, namely **3rd October at 2.30 pm.** More participants would be very welcome. For further information contact Jane Monks on 01603 782496

History Group meets on the last Thursday of the month, which will be **Thursday 26th October.** Over the last few months they have had expeditions, to Dedham and a few historical walks in Norwich. For details of October’s meeting contact Anne den Engelse on 01603 782121

Swimming fortnightly at the victory Pool in North Walsham (cost £3.30). The October dates are **October 4th, 18th, and 1st November from 2.30 pm.** The pool is usually fairly clear allowing uninterrupted swimming of lengths if that is what is desired. Corrie Mould 01603 782755 (who hopes to join in again soon)

Lunch Out Disappointingly and most unusually no one wanted to come to the September venue, so we will try again. The October meeting will therefore be on **Friday 27th October at 12.30 pm** at “The Chequers”, Hainford (quite easy to find!). Sign the sheet at the next general meeting, or ring Corrie Mould by 25th at the latest if you wish to come. Corrie 01603 782755

Evening Dining The group met at The King’s Head in Coltishall in September.



Thanks to Gini for the photograph. The group meets once a month. Contact Maggie Flatman for time and venue. Maggie 01603 783091.

NB I have received no information whatsoever from group leaders for this issue. I appeal to leaders to let me know about their activities by 20th of the month so that we can make it more interesting and get the newsletter out in good time. Thanks to Jan for the extensive report on the Lifeboat presentation; to Maggie for the painting day and to Sue for the photographs. Please keep Corrie informed of any activities your group has planned: Corrie 01603 782755 or candrmould@gmail.com