



Remembering the “Big Freeze” – sixty years on



With an average temperature of $-2.1\text{ }^{\circ}\text{C}$ ($28.2\text{ }^{\circ}\text{F}$) January 1963 is the coldest month on record for the United Kingdom and the “Big Freeze” lasted until Easter! For Shell-Mex and B.P. it was in Managing Director John Davies’ unassuming words “A testing time for us all”! In this edition we look back on that testing time and the crucial role that SMBP, with a share of 40% or more in most markets, played in keeping Britain’s wheels turning.

Useful Contacts

The 44 Club – For anyone who worked for Shell-Mex and BP

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Welcome

Looking back sixty years to the “Big Freeze” was, as ever, nostalgic. I’m sure that we have many members who were involved back in 1963 – it would be good to hear your stories.

As a ‘Baby Boomer’ myself I have no illusions about how lucky I have been both in SMBP and later in Shell. Our generation’s children and grandchildren in the main don’t “have it so good” it seems to me living as they do rather impersonal lives that are driven by gadgets and instant communications. I quite like the new technology. My tickets at Twickenham, Tottenham Hotspur are electronic, and this works well. But how do those without a smartphone manage? We have members without email which must hugely complicate life in these high-tech times.

Whilst I use and accept the digital age, I am averse to the phrase “It’s on the web”. It probably is, but what a soulless remark this is. Nothing can beat face to face communications which, of course, is by definition two-way. Looking something up on the internet is not the same as chatting about it with a beer in the Coal Hole!

This brings me to ‘Working From Home’. The only time I did this in my career was when I was a Group Commercial Rep. ‘Doing paperwork’. Even this, I can now reveal, was often a euphemism for meeting colleagues at the ‘Bricklayers Arms’ in Brentford. This pub was not too far from the Thames and one of our colleagues, Selwyn Halls, used to skulk to our meetings. What style! The slightly serious point is that work in my day was a collegiate activity and the office (or pub) a place where we worked together as well as doing our specific jobs. Can you really build a team remotely?



I remember when in Shell we used to attend ‘Change Management’ courses though I can’t recall what I learned at them. The old cliché that ‘Change is a Constant’ was true in those days and even more so now. The change we are all grappling with at the moment is, in a high inflation time, needing to manage when our pensions, Shell or BP or State, don’t keep up. This is not a whinge and I accept that pension arrangements are superb, even if they are not quite as inflation proof as they used to be.

This edition of the Club News is planned to be with you for Christmas, so I am pleased to pass on the best wishes of all of us helping to keep the Club on the rails. And let’s hope that 2023 is healthy and calm.

Paddy Briggs

Noticeboard



Branch Activity

In the last edition of the 44 Club News, it was reported that branch activity is, inevitably, lower than it used to be in some parts of the country. Some of this is a result of Covid, some of it due to our members becoming older and less willing (or able) to travel. Another factor is finding someone who is willing to organise social gatherings.

In recent times the organisers of two branches that had been active have stood down after many years of ensuring events took place to enable members and their partners to reconnect with old friends, past acquaintances, and former colleagues.

King's Lynn

Tom Cannon served as secretary of King's Lynn branch for 29 years. This is an amazing and valued contribution to the branch and to the 44 Club for which we should be (and are) truly appreciative. Many thanks indeed, Tom. However, no events have been organised since Tom stood down in April.

South Yorkshire

Jim & Audrey Broughton held this branch together for many years before deciding they needed to hand over the reins. Many of the events they organised were in the Doncaster area and were well supported. Members of South Yorkshire branch owe a debt of gratitude to Jim and Audrey for all they did to sustain the branch for many years.

Bournemouth & Southampton

A few months ago, all active members were emailed to gauge interest in attending functions. Tony and Stella Reeve-Parker became concerned that events (pub lunches) had been arranged but had to be cancelled due to low numbers. Responses to the email 'poll' were disappointingly low.

Tony and Stella have now decided not to organise any further events unless you contact them to express an interest in attending. Tony's contact details are in the Branch Activity pages of this magazine. Tony & Stella have worked hard over the past nine years to reinvigorate a 'dormant' branch, and it would be a shame to see it become dormant once again. Closer to Yuletide, a decision will be made about running a seasonal gathering. Once again, let us know if you would attend a Christmas gathering of this branch.

What's Next?

For King's Lynn and South Yorkshire, we need someone to step forward to organise events for each of these branches please. Admin support will be provided by Colin Hill, National Secretary, and out-of-pocket expenses will be reimbursed. Please contact Colin if you are interested and want to find out more about the support provided. 44-club@shell.com.

For Bournemouth and Southampton, please get in touch with either Colin or Tony if you have time and an interest in attending events in your area. Admin support will be provided by the Club Secretary and expenses will be paid.

At the end of the day, branches can only survive with your support.

BP Pensioners

Regrettably, BP Pensions and Benefits do not notify us of the deaths of our members who are BP pensioners. Sometimes this means birthday cards are sent when the member has already died, sometimes causing distress to the families.

If you are aware of the death of one of our members, can you kindly notify Colin Hill so that our records can be updated?

Christmas Birthdays

Being born at this festive time must have drawbacks in terms of celebrations, so let's take time to wish a very happy birthday to those born on Christmas Eve, Christmas Day, and Boxing Day (St Stephen's Day in Ireland).

According to our database, we have five members whose birthday falls on Christmas Eve and seven on Christmas Day. Strangely, we don't seem to have any members celebrating birthdays on 26th December.

Maybe you Christmas babies could write to us telling us how you celebrate both occasions!

Rosemary Cannon

It is not usual for us to write obituaries for spouses unless they also worked for Shell-Mex & BP at some time. However, it is with sadness that we report the death of Rosemary Cannon. Rosemary was the wife of Tom Cannon, the organiser of branch events in King's Lynn. She was a great support to Tom in getting events running and attending them with Tom too. She died on 14th June at the age of 82.

We send our condolences to Tom and his family.

The Winter of 1962/3. When Shell-Mex and B.P. kept the wheels of Britain turning in the 'Big Freeze'

"One of the UK's top three chilliest winters since 1659 is still the inhospitable cold season of 1962-63. Bitter, icy air from eastern Europe and Scandinavia reached Britain in December and very deep snow took root across vast swathes of the land. In some parts, a snowdrift of over 20ft deep was recorded. Rural areas saw villages cut off and without power. Snow sat in the coldest areas for months.

In January 1963, parts of Scotland experienced temperatures nearing -20 °C. The Thames did not freeze over in London, but it did in Oxford, with a car being driven over the river there on 22 January. Winds of 120 mph were recorded on the Isle of Man and across Britain, hundreds of major sporting fixtures were cancelled.

This long, harsh winter has lived on in memory as 'The Big Freeze'." in the words of *James Brigden*.

When I joined Shell-Mex and B.P. in 1964 the winter of 1962/3, though quite recent, was already part of the folklore of the company. The watercolour on the front page of

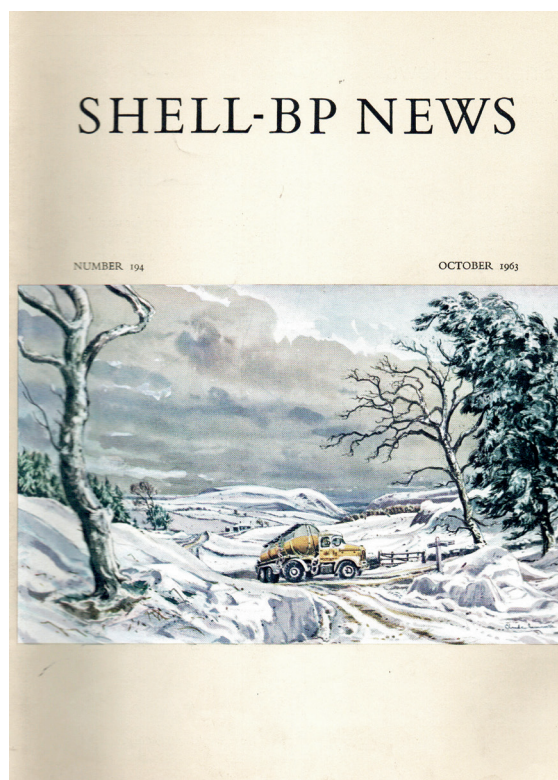


this 44 Club News was commissioned by SMBP from the distinguished artist Claude Muncaster (1903-1974) and it appeared in the October 1963 edition of the Shell-BP News. This painting will be familiar to many of us as prints were displayed in all the Company's offices and distribution centres.

Sixty years on from the Big Freeze it is appropriate to look back at those distant days because without over-sentimentalising it too much it was a time in which the very special character of the Company was very much on display. As two rather different customers put it "Due to your efforts we were able to maintain full production" wrote the MD of the Britannia Iron and Steel Works of Bedford. And "If your drivers had not accomplished this most difficult journey [delivering fuel oil] the hospital [in Weston-Super-Mare] would have had to be closed with serious consequences for the town."

The driver in the photograph is from Inverness Installation and is using the spade which became essential equipment.

As the Shell-BP News in February 1963 put it "The thermometer's off the clock – thirty odd degrees below – a wall of snow in front... get out of the cab with a shovel... blaze a new trail in the strange arctic landscape.



Somehow the oil must get through."

And get through it did. SMBP drivers "... with a dogged, imaginative, and courageous effort beat the wrath of nature to deliver the oil. They brought warmth and power to hospitals, kept the wheels of industry turning, saved the jobs of countless factory workers and the lives of animals on scores of farms." They worked up to eighteen hours a day.

Along with the drivers the yard and installation operatives kept the yards and roads clear – as here at Cakemore Depot with an improvised snow plough. And across the country



coastal and river tanker crews battled through ice flows, maintenance crews kept the tankers moving, and office staff coped with often

desperate customers and did all they could to help. The drivers helped other motorists as well; "We were five miles from Swindon when he ran into a blizzard – our troubles really began then, we were shovelling and pushing cars to keep going. We took turns to shovel and then get into the cab for a warm. We got to Faringdon."

At the installation tanks, pipes and lines, gantries and roads were all frozen. Harwell Atomic Research Centre rang their installation to say that unless fuel reached them, they would have to close and lay off thousands of workers. Eight tankers with motor inspectors set out with the county authorities standing by to clear

the roads. The convoy got through just in time. Thousands of broiler chickens were saved at Brockford by regular deliveries of bottled gas. In Clarence Dock, Liverpool Dingle Bank Installation managed to keep the CEGB Power Station going despite horrendous weather. Belfast Airport where SMBP was the sole supplier "The Airfield Supervisor and his staff worked in Arctic conditions to keep the aircraft fuelled."

The BBC said on 25th January "One bright spot... is oil and paraffin. There is terrific demand, but the companies say supplies are good and there is no danger of running out."

Shell Tankers retiree Michael Mancey, who was at the time a deck apprentice and on his first trip, remembers arriving in the Crude Oil carrier the Capisteria (above right) in the Mersey estuary in January 1963 ... with a cargo of Iranian Crude for discharge at Tranmere. The Mersey was frozen over, and dozens of ships were at anchor unable to discharge their cargoes. They waited a few days and

decided to heat the cargo to make it easier to discharge and prevent ice forming on the hull. The south side of the Mersey was beginning to melt and they steered a course through all the other ships, helped by three tugs standing by, and berthed and the oil was discharged.



We often call SMBP a 'family' and in a crisis family members rally round. That was certainly true in 1963. The storage and delivery of petroleum products in the very different circumstances of today is contracted out to third parties. Quite what would happen if January 2023 has weather like January 1963. One wonders what contingencies those that manage Shell and BP's distribution of fuel have in the event that this does happen. Maybe Global Warming makes the event unlikely. Let's hope we don't find out! **PSB**

The world as I turned eighty

I've recently turned eighty which comes as no surprise,
The years have just gone tumbling by before my very eyes.
The world's treated me kindly with far more ups than down,
But now in twenty twenty-two our grass has all turned brown.

We've had Covid pandemic and a crisis NHS,
We struggle to see a doctor, but not with much success.
The government's a shambles and Prime ministers resigned,
At least we're vaccinated - that's one thing off our mind.

There's Russian tyrant Putin waging war against Ukraine,
Killing innocent civilians - over and over again.
One consequence of Putin's war is high priced oil and gas
With energy costs soaring and shortages en masse.

Inflation is now rampant - price of everything is high,
We'll soon be in recession, and the winter cold is nigh.
And climate change contributes to the hottest UK day,
So hosepipe bans are certain and a drought is on the way.

Now China follows Russia, trying to emulate Hong Kong,
As the West's supporting Taiwan which the Chinese say is wrong.

So the world is in a turmoil, let's hope my next decade
Will see more peace and harmony, but I fear that hope may fade.

The 44 Club's resident Bard Alan Fitzgerald

The gloomy man with the Quill pen. Its being so cheerful that keeps him going!



Looking back at the spirit of National



It was in 1957 that Shell-Mex and B.P. acquired the National Benzole Company (NBC) which had carved a distinctive and successful niche for itself in the UK oil sector since its foundation in 1919. In the Retail market its fuel was initially pure Benzole but by the 1920s a blend of Benzole and petrol became the main product and, in the days, long before solus dealers often chose to have a National pump alongside other brands. By the mid-1950s Shell and National were the two best selling grades on sites with three or more pumps. No doubt getting control of the National brand was a major motivation in the 1957 takeover!

By the 1960s the Benzole element in the brand's petrol had disappeared and the name became just 'National' however the company retained its 'National Benzole Company' trading title and despite being part of SMBP it was fiercely independent in character. It had its own house magazine 'National Journal', and we are grateful to former NBC man



Marie Shadbolt

Len Nash who has sent us a copy of the June 1964 edition which had been passed to him by his former National colleague Marie Shadbolt (nee Sewell). Marie is

pictured (bottom left), she was at the time Secretary to the Divisional Manager in Guildford.

The magazine is a fascinating read. National was a substantial operation with seven Divisional Offices across England, a Commercial markets business as well as Retail. Len says that it shows how 'paternal' NBC was and that this "Family spirit fostered a high level of loyalty amongst staff to the Company, something I feel even today after all these years."

One of the stories is a report of a lunch at Mercury House (national's HQ) for the 'Salesmen of the Year' – there were fourteen of them and they are pictured in the photograph below with some of the National management including GM Sydney Tindale (in the front row with his hands together), Freddie Jackson, David Shaw, and others. It is interesting that being a "Salesman" was not only seen as a professional calling but the descriptor was more used than in the Shell, BP and SMBP brand streams where 'Superintendent' or 'Representative'

were more commonly used. Len Nash is modest about his achievements (he was one of the Salesmen of the Year) but the magazine reports that to gain selling experience "... he worked evenings for six months selling brushes door to door... [and] took a course in Salesmanship in which he gained the Dale Carnegie award for continuous outstanding performance."

National was a bit different in the SMBP establishment and had a very modern and sporty identity with the one-word slogan "Getaway" prominently used. In 1964 I recall the strength of this identity at the first Grand Prix I attended – the British and European GP at Brands Hatch. Happy memories of the "Getaway People". A couple of years later the brand became even more "with it" embracing the Swinging Sixties with the catchy "Getaway" song performed by Georgie Fame and the Blue Flames.

At Brand Separation the National brand was allocated along with its assets to BP and it retained a separate identity for a time - however it was phased out over the next decade and the petrol stations were rebranded BP.





The NBC story is a classic brand management case study. As a company it had a distinctive character and employee and customer loyalty. SMBP handled it well. In the June 1964 edition of "National Journal" there is no mention of Shell-Mex

and B.P. even though by then National was operating out of 195 Knightsbridge alongside Shell and BP. **PSB**

Birthday Thanks/Your Letters

Barges and The Node

Following the recent mention in the 'Club News' I agree that swapping The Node for a barge does not seem a good bargain and I agree that the cultures could be that BP's interest is in oil facilities and perhaps The Node would seem a trinket rather than a valuable piece of real estate.

There were particular circumstances in 1975 though which perhaps explains the BP position. At that time construction on the Sullom Voe crude oil complex in the Shetlands had commenced. It was BP Oil's responsibility to provide fuel for the contractors' plant. The Chief of the Shetlands Islands Council was Ian Clark, a strong character who vigorously pursued the protection of the environment from the crude oil development. Sullom Voe is at the top of Main Island which is over 50 miles long, and transporting fuel by road from the depot at Lerwick is a 40 mile round trip which Ian Clark strongly objected.

Providing sea fed storage on site would be delayed due to the detailed investigation for any development. There was an old RAF depot which could have been brought into operation but the time to obtain consent would be long and though near the site it was quite a journey by road. I went to see Ian Clark and it was obvious that he was not sympathetic to our needs. Thus, a large barge moored in the Voe and sea fed which could be brought alongside a jetty seemed to be the

best solution! Ian Clark later became head of BRITOIL.

David Roberts

77th The card was a real reminder of my first ever day of employment! I started my career in the Group on the first Monday following my 17th birthday when I joined National Benzole in Mercury House, Knightsbridge. I can still remember the office and the three colleagues I worked with: Arthur Jones, John Moon and Peter Hayward in a unit called 'Cost Control', part of the 'Costs' section whose Head was Tony Eliston. It was all very exciting and the start of a most varied and enjoyable 31+ years. I was lucky to be around at that time.

Eddie Edmonds

78th Thank you so much for my birthday card, which arrived on time despite the postal strike! It's always lovely to be remembered. I have appreciated the companionship of fellow members at the lunches that Jim and Audrey Broughton have arranged over the years. My best wishes to those of you who keep track of all the birthdays.

Carol Smith

80th And so I complete my seventh decade on Planet Earth! In late August I married a Swiss lady I first met in London in the 'Swinging Sixties' – "those were the days my friends". The excitement of that event will go on for ever but we have resumed our tranquil life, getting the necessary injections to resume travel to Zurich where we catch up with the grandchildren and fraternise with other 'oldies' counting the days to our final departure! Luckily our Swiss home gets BBC channels, and we keep reasonably informed about the goings on in the UK. Who would want to be a politician nowadays? It would need a Merlin or Arthur to answer that conundrum.

In North Berwick we will be frequenting the shoreline and keeping our eyes open for birds of passage and skeins of geese... wrapped up and longing for the end of the hibernation season.

Ken Guthrie

80th Thank you for once again for remembering my birthday with a beautiful card of S.M. House and the Victoria Embankment gardens. I used to drive past this beautiful scene most mornings en route for the Savoy car park where old John would greet everyone with a tirade of expletives to remind you that beauty is temporary, and a hard day ahead was in prospect. Great times!

continued on page 8



I still revisit the gardens on trips back to London from my home in Romania as the area prompts so many happy memories of my years there. Sadly, the years mount up, thankfully the memories remain.

John Long.

84th To all those toilers in the 44 Club Association office. Many thanks for the birthday card once again. It is nice to be remembered by some in the 44 Club although the annual card is a little worrying, marking yet another year gone by. A little reminiscent of the message from my SatNav as I pull up on my driveway. "You have reached your final destination." I just hope this isn't an accurate prediction for a few years yet.

I joined SMBP in 1965 and many of the names quoted in the Magazine ring bells for me. In particular Peter Yarranton, who was Divisional Manager during my spell in Industrial Relations and Manpower. Peter was a man easily to remember, probably, in my case, for his enthusiastic participation in our Christmas parties. On a couple of occasions, I tottered off home on their conclusion, definitely a little the worse for wear after participating in one or other of

the various 'rugby' style party games to which, on those occasions, he introduced us.

Norman Monahan is another who later featured largely in my working life, when I joined the advertising and promotions fraternity. Marketing Communications as it later became. The various promotions in Retail probably helped numerous people stock up on their glassware, both amongst the public and within the company I know it did me! Most interesting to read of all those people and events and the reminders they stir, when age has dimmed so much of the memory.

I know it is a different magazine, but I was also delighted to read, in the Bookworms Corner of the Shell Pensioners Association News, the review of Robin Nye's last book, 'Assassin'. We worked together in my early days in Advertising and Promotions, sharing many a lunchtime jar with office friends and colleagues in the Rose of England forecourt pub. We lost touch when Robin moved on to Personnel in Shell Expro in Shell Centre and enjoyed a successful and varied Shell career, before taking early retirement and enjoying further success in, for want of a better word, 'civilian' life. It is only now, after my removing from Devon to East Yorkshire that we have regained contact. Having now read his first two published novels, I look

forward to reading his third book, due for publication this autumn all being well.

Regarding my move north, I would caution anyone else considering 'downsizing' that it not only means moving to a smaller property. The whole of one's previous life requires downsizing too. It is quite surprising just how much baggage one can accumulate living for 80+ years the last 30 in the same nest. Apart from an excess of furniture, there was a mountain of books, records, DVD's, clothes etc. that really became surplus to requirements and needed to be disposed of. With two daughters and son in law to assist, there was a rich harvest for various charities, the charity shops and, failing all else, the local recycling centre. Now, after eight months, we are reasonably well settled in to the 'land of my father's birth', though in the East rather than the West Riding. At least the smaller house and compact garden are considerably easier to manage, for we two elderly pensioners.

Tony Wilson

Ed: Thanks for your greetings, Tony, however sadly I must disillusion you about the 'Toilers in the Club Office'. The 44 Association no longer has an office, and our admirable Secretary works from home just two and half days a week, with no helpful toilers around him. The Honorary Editor of the magazine has a home office also devoid of toilers! We owe a lot to the unpaid volunteers around the country who keep the Branches going. We are, I'm afraid, a 'shoestring' operation these days but the spirit is still willing.

85th Very many thanks for my birthday card – it was such a pleasure to receive it. Your data systems are not wrong! It reminds me of the time that computers were first introduced to the company - most of us ignored this 'progress' - because we didn't

understand it, besides which, quill pens were fine.

Faced with such resistance, a wise person near the top of the tree decreed that unless all business expense claims were completed using the computerised system, they would not be paid.

Guess what happened?! They were Balmy days. Greetings to all who claim to know me, as well as to those who claim not to!

Stuart Howell

88th Once again, many thanks to all those involved in organising that I - and all other "oldies" - receive a birthday card from the 44 Club. Yet another memorable picture - this time of Shell-Mex House looming over the Embankment Gardens.

I am now only two years or so from achieving a personal ambition, which is to have been paid by SMBP/Shell for at least 70 years - by which time I shall have received a pension for as long as I was employed!

John Bamberg.

89th How very kind of you to send a card on my 89th Birthday. I must say that to survive for so long is a considerable surprise! My ambition when I was young was to live to 25, by which time I expected to be past my prime!

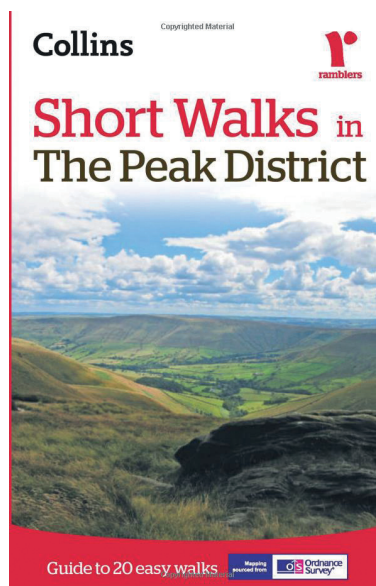
I realise now how fortunate I was to join SMBP from Shell International and learned as a salesman what it was like dealing with real customers. Moving to management training I found a role in which I felt I could make a difference. However, I am indebted to Shell for finding me a wife - Joyce (nee Smith)- and 62 years later we are still very happy together.

Roy Fielder

91st I'm into the nervous nineties, in cricket parlance! I love cricket and played for many years for Cardiff CC, RASC (during National Service), Ipswich CC and Glenelg C C in Adelaide, South Australia. I have had happy and enjoyable times.

Peter Phillips

91st Thank you for your card with its pictures of the Node that brought back memories of an enjoyable stay as a new entrant to SMBP.



I am pleased to report that despite age, I have reasonable fitness, both physical and mental. Having taken up freelance scribbling more years ago than I like to think, these days I mainly produce countryside and travel articles for a local monthly glossy magazine. It doesn't pay a fortune but making me thump away at my keyboard on a regular basis keeps the little grey cells active, as Agatha Christie's Hercule Poirot would say.

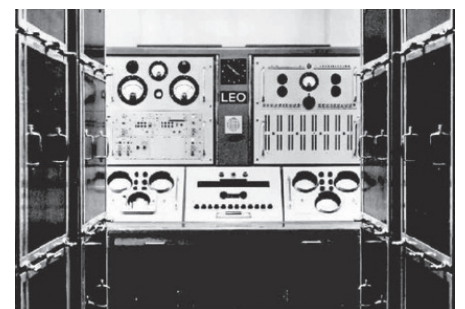
I did have a pleasant surprise when out of the blue I was recently approached by Harper Collins publishers, as I wrote a series of walking guides for them some years ago, [Ed: Example shown] covering the north of England National Parks. They also contracted me to write walking guides to four major French

regions, which became a most enjoyable exercise. What Harper Collins wanted me to do was write three 'blogs' introducing a series of new guides, still unpublished by the way. Not really knowing what a 'blog' is - and I am still unsure, I just wrote 3x300 words based on what I knew about the proposed area covered by the guides. Amazingly I got a gushing thanks for my efforts, and more important, the fee was more than I could have ever expected.

I often wonder if there are still any of the Manchester Branch sub-committee still around, whose lunchtime meetings at Tommy Ducks, a Victorian pub once popular with visiting theatrical personalities were a daily pleasure. When the pub was unexpectedly demolished over a weekend to make way for the Bridgewater Concert Hall, the Guardian's report sounded like an obituary. This was a place where our own in-house impresario Tom Hind held early auditions for his sketch based on wifely misunderstandings of the work being undertaken for SMBP by Messrs McKinsey & Co, mistaking it for the American gentleman of similar sounding name who wrote a rather interesting report on an entirely different subject. The sketch was so good, by popular demand it even went on tour round the other North Western branches.

Brian Spencer

93rd I visited the 'Centre for Computing History' in Cambridge



continued on page 10

NEWS FROM THE BRANCHES

which has an amazing computer collection, including a Leo section which brought back happy memories.

Mike Hancock

94th I was fortunate to work for over 30 years with SMBP and then ten with BP. The last year has been good and not so good. I survived Covid, had cataract treatment to both eyes but

sadly my dear wife Doris died last July. But with thanks to the NHS and a good GP my general wellbeing is OK. Regards to those who remember me.

Bernard Smith

Thanks also received from: Michael Livesey (80), Ian Hacker (83), Peter Clarkson (87), Donald Stephen (89),

John Wells (88), Alistair Forrester (89), Ken Doran (91), David Forward, Tom Burrows (80), Gordon Pattenden (88), Peter Blackmore (78), Mary Pickering (90), Donald Cook (86), Norman Monahan (99), Norman Waterfall (91), Jerry Barr (85), Jean Langley (96), Graham First (82), Neil Norman (93), David Carter (87), Irene Hawksbee (93), Michael Beacham, Anthony Evans (91), Alice Brown (86),

News from the Branches

Inverness

Contact: Keith and Mary Pickering

We in Inverness Branch continue to meet the last Thursday of October and have decided to avoid Christmas busy period and have our next lunch in January. Twenty-two people continue to appear at our coffee mornings in the Kingsmill Hotel and it's good to see familiar faces. We miss our late friends and Alan McClery was mourned by many.

Aberdeen

Contact: Graham Walker

Glasgow

Contact: Elaine Ellen

www.smbp44glasgow.weebly.com

The Glasgow Branch met up in the summer for the first time since Covid stopped play. Nine members met to enjoy coffee, cake and chat and it was lovely to see everyone again. In November we had an early Christmas

lunch at Amarone in Glasgow, a favourite venue. More next time!

As always please get in touch if you would like to be included in our mailing list, you will be made most welcome.

Belfast

Contact: Norman Mavitty

Londonderry

Contact: Mr. A.T. Hoy

Northumbria

Contact: Keith Taylor

West Riding

Contact: Bram Allport

Teesside

Contact: Brammer Allport

South Yorkshire & Lincolnshire

Branch in abeyance pending appointment of new organiser.

Manchester

Contact: Pat Withers

North Midlands

Contact: Frank or Carol Barnett

We are aware it is a while since we last met up, but we have been trying to set up a game of Bowls only to find that the pub we use only opens on a lunch time from Thursday to Sunday and have not been able to contact them by telephone just yet.

At present we are also trying to arrange a Christmas Lunch so have been ringing around to see if we are able to get in somewhere. If I

do a letter will go out to those who normally join us although due to illness and a few deaths our numbers will be extremely low.

As some of you know we did arrange some holidays during the year and for the few that joined us we had an incredibly enjoyable time with the weather being good to us. Our trip to Scotland was wonderful although there were only 4 of us but the place, we stayed at had a great atmosphere and the food was excellent.

South Midlands

Contact: Malcolm Bury

In late August we returned to the calm waters of the Grand Union Canal for a cruise between Nash Mills, Hemel Hempstead and Hunton Bridge. Because of an early afternoon start we invited our group of 23 members and guests to bring a picnic lunch with them to eat on board. Fine late summer sunshine added to the enjoyment of a very relaxing afternoon of conversation with good friends whilst watching the canal side scenery drift past at a leisurely pace. Christine Cowie, Bernadette McConville and Val Peachey made sure that we were well supplied with

tea and cakes at regular intervals later in the day and the overall organisation of the cruise was in the very capable hands of Malcolm Bury. Our group was in the care of an excellent volunteer boat crew from the local charity Waterways Experience who were ably assisted from time to time at the lock gates by some of our more nimble and enthusiastic members.

Our 2022 programme of pub lunches drew to a close in mid-October with our second visit of the year to The White Horse at Bourne End near Hemel Hempstead. About 25 members and guests enjoyed a very pleasant lunchtime helped by the customary efficient and friendly service from the pub staff. Our thanks must also go to Christine Cowie for making all the prior arrangements to ensure that everything ran smoothly on the day.

Although for understandable reasons some of our pub lunches this year have not been as strongly supported as in the past, the Branch Committee looks forward with optimism to better times and continued success with its programme of events in 2023.

Coming up:

Our first pub lunch of 2023 will be held in early/mid-March and the actual date and venue will be chosen

at our next Committee meeting in January. Our usual diary circular giving full details of our 2023 programme will be circulated to all active members in February.

Chelmsford

Contact: Tony Scott-Russell

The Oysterfleet Hotel, Canvey Island provided the venue for the branch's summer lunch on 21st June. The weather was good and 41 members and guests enjoyed the usual high standard of food and service in our own function room overlooking the adjoining lake. A successful raffle was held with prizes boosted by welcome donations from members. At the brief AGM, Tony Scott-Russell noted that attendance at lunches had declined since the pandemic but that the branch was still thriving. Funds were in a healthy state which was allowing enhanced subsidies to be given to branch lunches this year in the face of large hikes in restaurant prices.

The branch's autumn lunch was held at the Beauvoir Arms, Downham on September 22nd. Although numbers were affected by illness and other commitments there were still 34 members and guests attending on the day. As usual, the quality of the food was good and the staff were friendly and helpful, making for an enjoyable occasion.

Coming up

15th December: Christmas and raffle at the Langdon Hills Golf Club, Bulphan.

Ipswich

Contact: Tony Grayston

Or Contact: David Cattermole

The well attended autumn lunch of the branch took place on 29th



South Midlands Branch

continued on page 12

NEWS FROM THE BRANCHES

September on a beautiful sunny day at the Ipswich Ski Lodge restaurant. A really excellent meal was enjoyed by all with the result that the venue will be high on the list for a return visit next year.

We finished the years activities on Thursday 8th December when we gathered for Christmas lunch to be followed by our seasonal grand raffle at the Bramford Golf Centre.

Coming Up

Whilst it is a little too early to advise of venues for next year it is significant that the Ipswich Branch of the 44 Association will be celebrating 44 years of existence in 2023. I'm sure that nobody envisaged the Association lasting that long back in 1979.

King's Lynn

Branch in abeyance (see noticeboard)

South Wales

Contact: Viv Perry

<https://www.44club.co.uk/south-wales.html>

Since those lazy hazy days of summer when we enjoyed the beauty of the South Wales coast meeting at the Mumbles in July our group met once again at The Norton House Hotel 14th September. We missed a few of our regulars through ill health but hopefully we will see them at our Christmas function.

Coming up

Christmas meal is again at The Norton House Hotel Mumbles on Wednesday 14 December 2022 gathering at 11:30 for coffee/pre-drink for a catch up. We wish all our friends speedy recovery and look forward to seeing everyone at Christmas. Should any of our non-regular members wish to join us you will be very welcome.

Greater Bristol

Contact: Roger Gamlin



Greater Bristol Branch

Our Autumn lunch event was a return visit to The Salt House in Clevedon. It was three years since our last visit here, due to Covid. Once again, our Chair and Events Organiser, Roger Gamlin, had arranged both an excellent venue and good weather. Our numbers were 17. Once again, a special mention of Geoff. and Barbara Clemens as they had travelled up from Plymouth to join us. And they were the first to arrive! The food and service, as ever, were both very good. There was plenty to chat about and to reminisce over. Roger was congratulated on organising the event. We all came away with a smile on our faces, having remembered times gone by and absent friends.

Coming up

Roger will now be busy organising our Christmas lunch and, possibly, a very brief AGM. The event may possibly have to be held early in January as our usual venue has indicated it was having trouble obtaining staff for the Christmas/ New Year period. As ever we will be holding a raffle to replenish our Branch funds.

Please do take a look at the SMBP 44 Association website, especially the Greater Bristol branch section, to enjoy the photos of our Branch events. Plenty of ex-colleagues faces to admire.

South East

Branch in abeyance

Bournemouth and Southampton

Sadly, after several attempts to keep the club running, it has been to no avail. Therefore, the 44Club in this area is likely to lie dormant for the foreseeable future. Please look at the Noticeboard.

London West & Surrey

Branch in abeyance

Harrow

Contact: Greta Chandler,

Welcome New Member

Mr Henry Laferla - Bishop's Waltham

Wedding Anniversaries

Second Diamond (75 years)

Jean and Tony Langley

12th July 2022

The 75th anniversary is the original diamond anniversary and the 60th was added when Queen Victoria celebrated her Diamond Jubilee on her 60th anniversary of accession to the throne in 1897.

Couples who make it to 70 years represent just one-tenth of one percent of all marriages. Couples who make it to 75 years are so rare,



Jean and Tony Langley

there aren't even statistics for it.

HM The Queen and Prince Philip were married 73 years.

Diamond

Brian and Doreen Durrant

7th July 2022



In Memoriam

Stuart McGrory

Paul Heseltine writes:

I was one of Stuart McGrory's many friends who were shocked and saddened by the news of his sudden and unexpected death on 14th August. I'm sure that I wouldn't be the only one to have received a joke from him – on WhatsApp in my case – on the very day that he left us.

Stuart was one of those rare people who have the wonderful gift of making every one of their friends feel that they are their best friend. I wasn't in the Commercial Lubricants Department in BP Oil, but I worked with Stuart on one project and attended management meetings with him.

We suffered the same manager at one stage – who will remain nameless! This was the basis of our friendship, which continued post retirement.

I have never come across anybody with a bad word to say about Stuart. All the people who worked for him and all the people who worked with him appreciated his humour, his good sense, his expertise, and his hard work.

Even people who played a round of golf with him enjoyed it – even if he kept on getting them into bunkers. Stuart was a gifted raconteur, and I will always remember his presentation at a management meeting when he lightened the content of his talk, and indeed the mood of the entire meeting, with an hilarious tale of a recent round at a BP Golf day when he had partnered Ian McIntosh, who was the Divisional Manager at the time. On one hole, there were 3 bunkers in a row, and Stuart put the ball into each of them, and each time Ian got him out without (audible!)complaint!



Somehow I acquired the task of writing farewell odes for many a colleague retiring or being promoted or even getting married. When he was Area Manager at Croydon South he invited me to one of his sales meetings, and to join in the

continued on page 14

fun afterwards. It certainly was fun! He supplied me with some facts about his sales representatives and asked me if I would do a little bit of doggerel for each of them. I duly obliged, but also did one for Stuart himself. After some searching through my bits and pieces, I have

managed to unearth this. It reads:-

*A veteran of the rugby field
who tells a good story,
A lubricating genius is a certain
Stuart McGrory:
Connoisseur of good living, and
Marston Pedigree beer,*

*He makes a pilgrimage to "Skeggie",
each and every year:
He fills himself full of fish and chips
and lots of mushy peas.
Then comes back to the office – to
create his own sea breeze!
What more can I say? – we are
missing him already.*

Obituaries

We regret to announce the deaths of the following members. We send our condolences to their family, friends and past colleagues.

ALLEN (99). Mrs Betty Allen of Bungay died on 27th May 2022. She was the wife of Mr George Allen, who once worked in SE Region, Knightsbridge.

ANDREWS (86). Mr Kevan Andrews of Warrington died on 11th July 2022. He was a Cylinder Controller with Shell Gas, Manchester Regional Office when he left group service in 1988 after 35 years.

BAINES (96). Mr Idwal Baines of Bristol died on 17th October 2022. He worked in OPI, Bristol Regional Office when he left group service in 1979 after 31 years.

BAKER (104). Mrs Beryl Baker of Warwick died on 17th August 2022. She was the wife of the late Kenelm Baker who once worked in Birmingham.

BAKER (80). Mr Raymond Baker of Littlehampton died in July 2022. He was a Driver at Wandsworth when he left group service in 1990 after 28 years.

BALL (99). Mrs Dorothy Ball formerly of Steyning died on 12th September 2022. She was the wife of the late Stanley Ball who once worked at Portslade.

BLUMER (80). Mr Thomas Blumer of Burford died on 12th August 2022. He was a Real Estate Surveyor, Retail, Manchester Regional Office when he left group service in 1992 after 25 years.

BROWN (92). Mr Desmond Brown of Bath has died. He was a Commercial Representative, Bristol when he left group service in 1981 after 16 years.

BUNT (90). Mrs Christine Bunt of Penzance died in May 2022. She was a Secretary at Shell-Mex House when she left group service in 1975 after 9 years.

BUTLER (94). Mr Raymond Butler of Taunton died in July 2022. He was a Motor Inspector at Northampton Terminal when he left group service after 17 years.

CLEALL (91). Mrs Doreen Cleall of Ringwood died on 20th June 2022. She was the wife of Mr Alfred Cleall, once an Airfield Operator at Gatwick Airport.

COOK (87). Mrs Valerie Cook of Totnes died on 7th May 2022. She was a Secretary at Shell-Mex House when she left group service in 1984 after 23 years.

COOKE (83). Mr Allan Cooke of Falmouth has died. He was a Shift Manager at Falmouth when he left group service in 1992 after 17 years.

CORNELL STOCK (83). Mrs Anthea Cornell Stock of London died on 20th September 2022. She was a Member of Chairman's Office Management Team, Shell UK Limited, Shell-Mex House when she left group service in 1992 after 18 years.

DELVE (88). Mrs June Delve of Cardiff died on 25th September 2022. She was the wife of the late Albert Delve, once a Driver at Newport.

DOE (84). Mr Dennis Doe of Surbiton died on 10th July 2022. He was a Marketing Assistant at Shell-Mex House when he left group service in 1977 after 14 years.

EATON (82). Mrs Kay Eaton of Manchester died on 25th September 2022. She worked at Shell UK, Wythenshawe when she left group service in 1988 after 20 years.

FINCH (93). Mr John Finch of Cardiff died on 30th April 2022. He was Assistant Accountant at Duckhams Oils Limited, Bromley when he left group service in 1973 after 40 years.

FISH (76). Mr George Fish of Weston Turville died on 2nd November 2022. He was Manager, IT Services, BP Exploration, Hemel Hempstead when he left group service in 1996 after 29 years.

GODDEN (89). Mr Brian Godden of Strood died on 5th October 2022. He was Chief Engineer, MV Shell Distributor, Estuarial Craft when he left group service in 1989 after 22 years.

HALL (97). Mrs Daphne Hall of Tunbridge Wells died on 19th August 2022. She was the wife of the late Desmond Hall, once a Purchasing Manager at Shell-Mex House.

HOWARTH (86). Mr Charles Howarth of Christchurch died in August 2022. He was a Regional Supervisor with BPA Limited at Saffron Walden when he left group service in 1990 after 29 years.

LAMBERT (92). Mr Clifford Lambert of Oldham died on 8th September 2022. He was Head of Cashiers/ Direct Debit Unit, Wythenshawe when he left group service in 1987 after 27 years.

LAMONT (82). Mr David Lamont of Aylesbury died on 28th August 2022. He worked at Buncefield, Hemel Hempstead for BP Oil UK when he left group service in 1994 after 24 years.

LEE (93). Mr Gerald Lee of Lutterworth has died. He was a Retail Sales Representative in Birmingham when he left group service in 1983 after 20 years.

LEWIS (87). Mr Brian Lewis of Llanelli has died. He was a Retail Territory Supervisor, East Anglia when he left group service in 1992 after 19 years.

McGEE (82). Mr Ronald McGee of South Shields died on 23rd August 2022. He was a Driver at Jarrow when he left group service in 1993 after 14 years.

McGRORY (76). Mr Stuart McGrory of Tring died on 24th August 2022. He was UK Distributor Sales Manager, Lubricants at Milton Keynes when he left group service in 1998 after 27 years.

MALLEN (90). Mrs Rita Mallen of Jarrow died on 5th October 2022. She was the wife of the late Lawrence Mallen, once a Driver at Jarrow.

MONK (90). Mr Kenneth Monk of Strood died on 30th September 2022. He worked in National Benzole when he left group service in 1983.

MORTON (88). Mr Edward Morton of Tunbridge Wells died on 18th August 2022. He was Operations Manager, Distributor Trade, Shell-Mex House when he left group service in 1988 after 30 years.

NORTHWAY (95). Mrs Adele Northway of Ringwood has died. She was the wife of the late Robert Northway, once Deputy Chief Inspector at Shell Mex-House.

PEARSON (88). Mr John Pearson of Monmouth died on 6th September 2022. He was a Retail Representative, Shell UK Oil, Northern Region when he left group service in 1989 after 29 years.

RAYMENT (80). Mr Edward Rayment of Stourbridge has died. He was Terminal Manager, Belfast when he left group service in 1995 after 35 years.

RICHARDS (73). Mr David Richards of Brackley has died. He was a Marketing Assistant, BP H&A Division, Shell-Mex House when he left group service in 1999 after 32 years.

RINGSSELL (90). Mr Robert Ringsell of Hemel Hempstead has died. He was working at BP Oil, Buncefield when he left group service in 1982 after 14 years.

ROWLEY (88). Mr Derek Rowley of Ellesmere Port died on 14th August 2022. He was a Training Officer at Haydock when he left group service in 1987 after 28 years.

ROWSE (91). Mr David Rowse of Salisbury died in November 2021. He worked as a Lubricants Planner in Shell-Mex House when he left group service in 1975 after 6 years.

RUSH (92). Mrs Joyce Rush of Otley died on 16th September 2022. She was a Secretary at Leeds Regional Office when she left group service in 1982 after 13 years.

RUTLAND (100). Mrs Patricia Rutland has died. She was the wife of the late Mr Rutland who once worked in Press and Public Affairs for BP at 195 Knightsbridge.

SANDERS (94). Mr Peter Sanders of Falkirk has died. He was an Engineer at Shell-Mex House when he left group service in 1988 after 9 years.

SCOTT (84). Mr John Scott of Saffron Walden died on 15th July 2022. He was a Product Development Manager at Wythenshawe when he left group service in 1996 after 29 years.

SWEENEY (99). Mrs Hilda Sweeney of Longfield has died. She was the wife of the late Thomas Sweeney, once a Driver at Northfleet.

SWORDER (91). Mr John Sworder of Tunbridge Wells died on 22nd July 2022. He was the Secretary of The Gases Steering Group, Shell-Mex House when he left group service in 1980 after 11 years.

TEALE (92). Mrs Anne Teale of Arundel has died. She was the wife of the late Tony Teale, once Computer Manager at SPDC, Nigeria.

THORP (90). Mr T A Thorp of Stowmarket has died. He worked in Financial Procedures when he left group service in 1984 after 29 years.

WALMSLEY (91). Mrs Muriel Walmsley of Norwich died on 3rd July 2022.

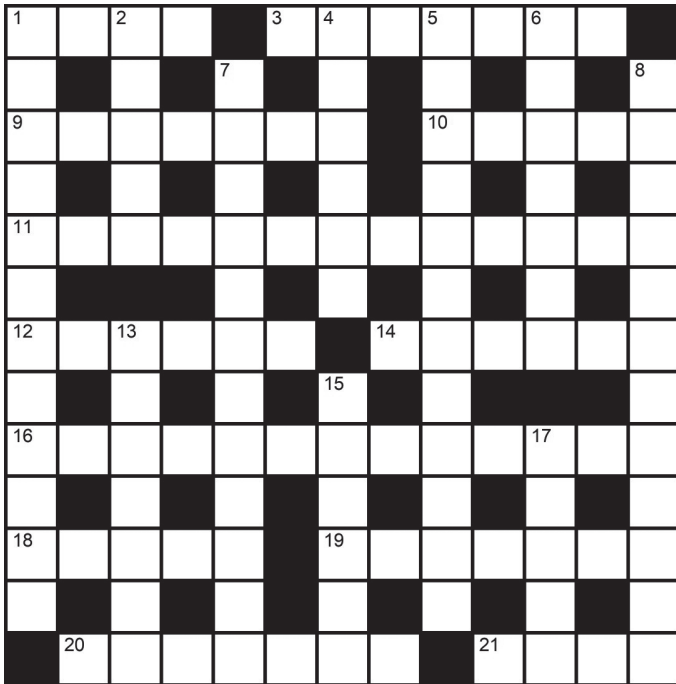
WILLIAMS (86). Mr John Williams of Gillingham died on 8th October 2022. He was a Domestic Sales Representative, H&A Division, Maidstone when he left group service in 1993 after 25 years.

and Finally ...

Quotable Quote

"...A testing time for us all..." John Davies, Managing Director Shell-Mex and B.P. January 1963

Prize Crossword

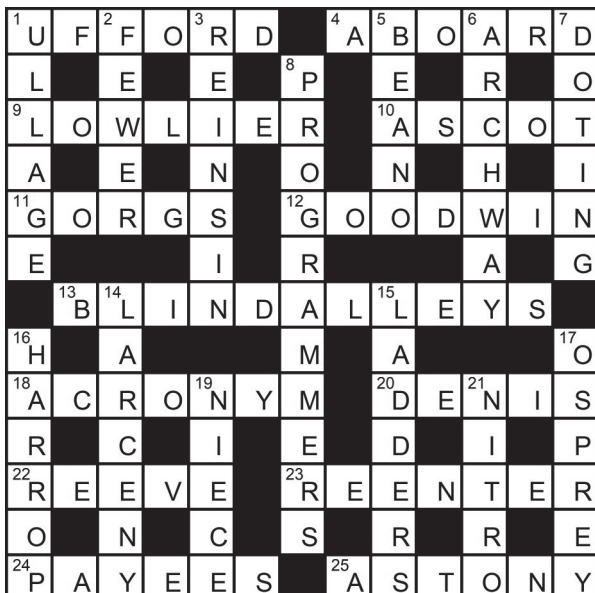


Across

- 1 Len of National Benzole (4)
- 3 City on the Taff (7)
- 9 All patients are needy, but some are _____ than others (7)
- 10 Capital of Bulgaria (5)
- 11 Long-term heating of Earth's surface (13)
- 12 Capital of Japan's Aichi Prefecture (6)
- 14 Standing tall in Trafalgar Square (6)
- 16 Peter Yarranton's waspish sport (5,8)
- 18 To allocate (5)
- 19 Architectural style of SMBP Head Office (3,4)
- 20 Abraham's eldest son (7)
- 21 An instruction to ignore a marked alteration on a printed proof (4)

Down

- 1 There are seven in this edition's birthdays (12)
- 2 Shorthand Typist (American) (5)
- 4 Red ones in formation in the sky (6)
- 5 To be confused (12)
- 6 SMBP's golden post war decade (7)
- 7 Number system with two digits (6,6)
- 8 Cost of the last unit of production (8,4)
- 13 Uncontrolled silly laughter (7)
- 15 Amount of one measure of medication (6)
- 17 Avoid (5)



Last Issue's Crossword

Congratulations to Lesley Kettlewell of Skelton Green, Cleveland the winner. A heritage copy of fellow 44 Club member Brian Spencer's "Short walks in the Yorkshire Dales" on its way Lesley.



Closing date for next issue
20th February 2023