



Pipe Club of Norfolk

The Pipe Club of Norfolk 1973 to 2010 Miscellany

A Short History of the Club and its Activities

www.pipeclubofnorfolk.co.uk

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INTRODUCTION

The Pipe Club of Norfolk "Sweet Briars" meets on the third Wednesday of each month at 2000 hrs at the Nelson pub in Norwich.

Activities include smoking contests, quizzes, sampling evenings and talks by guest speakers. The annual subscription is six guineas which includes a free magazine once a quarter.

The club is a sociable organisation with over forty members. New members are always welcome. For membership enquiries, please contact keith.garrard@ntlworld.com

We hope that you enjoy reading this snapshot of our history and activities.

IN THE BEGINNING ... A REMINISCENCE FROM KJ COLEMAN

I thought that some members might be interested in how the Pipe Club started.

As I recall, it was around September 1973 that we heard rumours of a meeting for pipesmokers, to be held in Norwich. Sure enough, confirmation came through that the event would be held on 1 October 1973 in the Royal Hotel.

With the promise of refreshments and perhaps a few free samples, and having nothing better to do that evening, I duly strolled along.

Arriving a bit early, I was advised to hang around in the foyer until the others turned up.

Whilst admiring the fading splendour of the tiled and wood-panelled walls, something rather exciting happened, for Valerie Singleton, celebrity and star of countless TV programmes, arrived to book in. I wondered if she would be the guest speaker, but this never materialised. She was probably merely appearing in some TV spectacular.

After a while a decent crowd of pipesmokers had turned up and we were ushered into the Acanthus Room where, true to their word, refreshments were laid on. Eventually some cove introduced himself as an Officer of the Pipe Club of Great Britain.

This organisation, he explained, had been formed with the aim of promoting pipesmoking throughout the land. To this end they had been travelling the country to set up pipe clubs in main centres of population. These clubs, whilst affiliated to PCGB, would otherwise be independent. They would hold contests and pipe-related activities to foster pipesmoking in their catchment area and their doings would be reported in the PCGB's glossy magazine Pipeline.

A number of clubs had already been formed: would there be sufficient interest in Norwich?

Well, no doubt the lavish hospitality had weaved its spell and enough showed interest for a club to be formed. A few worthies even volunteered themselves for office. I should perhaps add that Walker and I, being but callow youths at the time, eschewed such responsibility.

The cove then explained that some clubs had adopted nicknames to add to the excitement. This brought forth a rash of suggestions, some of Norvic Puffers standard while others were more esoteric. Eventually a less contentious name was agreed upon - "Sweet Briars" after a particularly attractive part of the ring road. So ended what can be described as the vesting meeting.

The first meeting proper took place on 27/11/1973 and was so full of incident that I can remember not a thing about it, not even where it was held. It would be interesting to know if records of that meeting still exist.

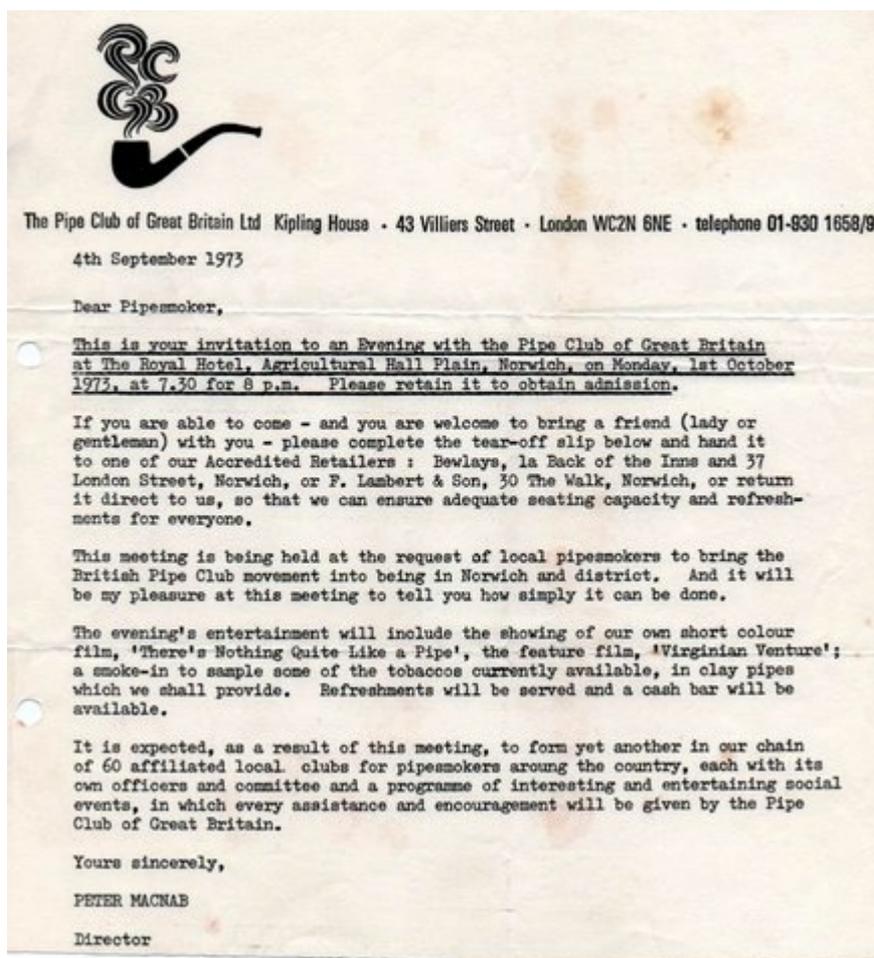
One final thought: our Silver Jubilee pipes are inscribed 97. Did we celebrate it a year early, like the millennium?

The Secretary responds:

I have a record of that first meeting. It was held at the Iron Duke, Waterloo Road, Norwich. Thirteen members attended: Messrs. How, Coleman, Palmer, Reg Walker, Rule, Gormer, Fairrie, Struthers, Gaffer, Richardson, Mimms, Hall and Kenyon. The following officers were elected: Chairman GP Richardson, Secretary MR Palmer, Treasurer JS Struthers. The rules of the PCGB were read and signed by all members. The late Sir Alex Maxwell was elected club patron. The meeting closed at 2215 hours.

As for the Jubilee pipes, it has always baffled me as well.

A typist adds: The first PCN smoking contest was held in December 1973 and was won by M. Gormer (70 mins). At the same meeting we set the subscription at £1.20 per year. Contests came fast and furious in the following months: G Lowe managed 60 minutes in January 1974 and J Fairrie 76 minutes in February.



THE EARLY DAYS

PCN meetings were originally held in The Iron Duke (now the Wellington).



This photo was taken around 1973, when the Chairman (far right) was Godfrey Richardson. He is standing beside Secretary Malcolm Palmer and Treasurer Shaun Struthers. Elsewhere in the photo are current members Elvin and Walker (Coleman must have been behind the camera). Past members Meek, How and Wilde (who was then Manager of Lambert's Tobacconists) are among the crowd. Anyone name the others?

A cutting from the Eastern Evening News dated 21 May 1976 falls out of the folder...



"Reporters are used to sniffing out facts, but there was no difficulty in scented the story at the Royal Hotel, Norwich, last night. The pleasant aroma of concentrated pipe smoking drifted from the Acanthus Room, where the regional championships were being staged. Fifteen competitors happily puffed at their briars in a contest in which

concentration and effort play no part. The secret is relaxation as the pipe enthusiasts vie to see who can keep four grams of tobacco alight the longest. Ken Palmer saw off all opponents and kept puffing until, with a splutter and a wheeze, the last whisper of smoke drifted from his red-hot pipe after 88 minutes 30 seconds. Ken, who lives in Haddiscoe, entered the contest only after having his arm twisted by his brother, Malcolm- Secretary of the Pipe Club of Norfolk (Sweet Briars).

His last rival, MW Gormer, dropped out after 79 minutes. The smokers are not allowed to relight or refill their pipes during the contest. In spite of his success, Mr Palmer is unlikely to win a place in the Great Britain team to take part in the world pipesmoking championships in Tokyo in November. Times of more than 100 minutes are needed to qualify, according to Charles McConnell, MD of McConnell tobacco company, which along with Charatan was backing the event. Mr McConnell said there were about 100 clubs in Britain with 4000 members. Numbers were boosted by the campaign against cigarettes and their increased prices. He said there seemed to be a bond between pipe smokers, a thread which ran through them all. One thing they had in common last night. As each dropped out of the contest he retreated to another corner- and lit up his pipe!"

The accompanying photograph shows 14 smokers, among whom are Messrs Struthers, Lissimore, Richardson, Palmer, Walls, Bennett, Coleman and Walker.



Frank Bennett, Malcolm Palmer, Shaun Struthers, R Walker, Terry Walls, Norman Brooks. Behind Frank Bennett is Rod Howard.



Norman Brooks, Frank Bennett, unknown RAFA member, Shaun Struthers, Rod Howard, John Elvin, Brian Fish. The contest was held in The Nelson pub, where we have our meetings now. The then Landlord, Derek Sharpe, was a RAFA member.



September 1976: Contest held with RAFA at Norwich Conservative Club. Front row: KJ Coleman, R Walker, Malcolm Palmer, Frank Bennett, Shaun Struthers, Norman Brooks, Terry Walls.

Meetings Past 1974-1978

PCN was initiated following a presentation by The Pipe Club of Great Britain in *The Royal Hotel*, Norwich on 1 October 1973. The inaugural meeting was held in November, and in December a meeting set the subscription at £1.20 per year.

During 1974 we met at *The Iron Duke*, and in February held our first Contest, which was won by John Fairrie with a time of 76 minutes. Apart from a July meeting with the Colchester Pipe Club, and a talk on 'Old Bottles' by Michael Panayi, the year mostly comprised monthly meetings.

1975 saw the January contest held at *The Maid's Head* won by Frank Meek in 74 minutes, and a Clay contest held against RAFA at *The Duke of Norfolk*. Darts matches, a film from Ogdens on 'The Story of Tobacco' (held at *The Pigeons*), a home-made wine tasting at Lamberts, a Beer and Tobacco tasting at *The Ten Bells*, a December AGM at *The Coach and Horses*, Thorpe Road, and a Steak Night at *Berni Inn*, Exchange Street saw 1975 to a conclusion.

More pub visits: *James 1*, *Coach and Horses* Union Street, *Bystanders Beer Festival*, Christmas Pubwalk- *Bell*, *Gardeners' Arms*, *Sir Garnet Wolsey*, *Fruiterers*, *Whites*, *Louis Marchesi*, *Maid's Head*- helped 1976 along, with a McConnell/Charatan Contest at *The Royal Hotel*, won by Kenneth Palmer in 88.5 minutes, a talk by Terry Walls on his US visit, and a RAFA Smoke-in at *The Conservative Club*, St Giles Street. And more darts.

Frank Lissimore gave a talk on his pipe collection during 1977, and there were visits to and from Bury St Edmunds pipe Club. Reg Walker won the contest at *The Nelson*, Nelson Street, with a humble 58 minutes, and there were more visits to pubs. And more darts.

Shaun Struthers started off 1978 with a talk, with slides, on Cyprus. A visit to Bury for a 'Falcon' contest, won by Reg Walker, a talk on The Weather by Norman Brooks, and a visit to Norwich Airport took us up to the November contest, presided by Peter McNab and won by Frank Lissimore.

If nothing else, the above shows how the face of Norwich has changed over 20+ years.

THE RAMBLINGS OF OLD SMOKEY

Many moons ago members of the Pipe Club would take part in "The Chairman's Tour of Historic Houses." This seems to have died out, probably because we're all too old and knackered. Nevertheless, I think we ought to have another go. I suggest a tour of Prince of Wales Road - we could take in some "Filthy House" at Po Na Na followed by a greasy kebab at El Greco's (other brands are available). Of course we will need minders - a recent government survey says that all the best minders are named John. We'll be fine then.

Recently I attended the Association of Tobacco Specialists annual dinner in the famous Long Room at Lords Cricket Ground, the guest speaker Carol Thatcher gave a most amusing speech and was introduced by the association chairman David Shelton who said grace in the following manner:

We sit Dear Lord cheek and jowl
Eager to eat both fish and fowl
But Dear Lord it is no joke
We have to leave this room to smoke.

I see that the health and safety brigade want to stop Boy Scouts carrying pen knives, but its not so much the knife that's important to the scout as the attachments that go with it. How will he be able to remove things from horses hooves, how will he be able to open a can of Watney's Party Seven, how will he "BE PREPARED?"

One of our members recently attended a 1940s weekend at the North Norfolk Steam Railway. Standing on Weybourne station he attempted to light his pipe only to be told 'you can't smoke that here.' I would imagine that in the 1940s there would have been more than one pipe smoker to be seen at Weybourne station. Then the steam train in all its glory pulled into the station billowing clouds of (you guessed it) smoke.

Mr. And Mrs. Secretary arrived in Prague on the Saturday evening and spent Sunday sightseeing. An evening meal of traditional Czech goulash included bread dumplings and pig fat dumplings and was very filling. Monday, and more sightseeing in the heavy rain. In the afternoon we met up with Honorary PCN member George Kristlik. George took us on a guided tour that included a visit to four pipe shops. The first was a very nice shop called Baker Street; then came Stanislaw Cigar and Pipe shop, where the lady was very knowledgeable, then on to a shop called Sherlock Holmes and finally The Kingdom of the Pipe, which was very small. All shops had a good selection of pipes including Czech made. There were also plenty of Stanwell and Peterson in evidence. I could not find any pipe tobacco that isn't available in England but I did notice plenty of English tobacco from Samuel Gawith.

We were then taken to a bar where the only beer was draught Budvar and very nice it was too, better than that American rubbish. Our next port of call was a bar with a micro brewery where you had the choice of light, dark or mixed beer. We dined here and trying to avoid dumplings. I ordered a Bohemian mixed platter, but I was foiled as it came with bread dumplings and potato dumplings. We then found a bar where we sat and drank, chatted and smoked our pipes. Ah yes I remember those days. An early flight saw us back in non-smoking England by 10 o'clock the next morning.

ANNUAL CALENDAR

Here is a typical PCN annual calendar:

January: AGM

February: 3 grams briar contest

March: Quiz

April: Talk

May: 4 grams contest

June: Social meeting

July: Social meeting

July: Annual bowls competition

August: Auction

September: Clay contest

October: Social meeting

November: Annual darts match

November: Cheese and pickles

November 27th: Anniversary of first PCN meeting in 1973

December: Christmas draw and buffet

Annual General Meeting



Chairman Len Ellis banging his gavel at the start of the 2010 AGM

The AGM is kept as short and sweet as possible and is followed by a social evening.

The club continues to thrive in spite of difficulties caused by the smoking ban and is on a sound financial footing.

The following officials were elected for 2010:

Chairman: Len Ellis

Vice Chairman: Reg Walker

Secretary / Treasurer: Keith Garrard

Auditor: Keith Coleman

3 Grams Briar Contest

The main pipe-smoking competition of the year. Always keenly contested.

2009: The Annual Club Briar-smoking Competition was held at the Smokeasy with three grammes of Bosun Cut Plug being smoked in pipes of the contestants' choice.

Keith Garrard did not really get going and was out after only three minutes. Three people went out soon after the 40 minute mark, leaving Len Ellis to battle it out with Tony Larnar for the gold medal spot. Len recorded a time of 44:50, leaving Tony the winner with 51:50. The winner was presented with a pipe and the runner-up a tin of tobacco. John Walker's atmospheric photographs of this prestigious event appear on the PCN Website.



Tony, Frank and Reg

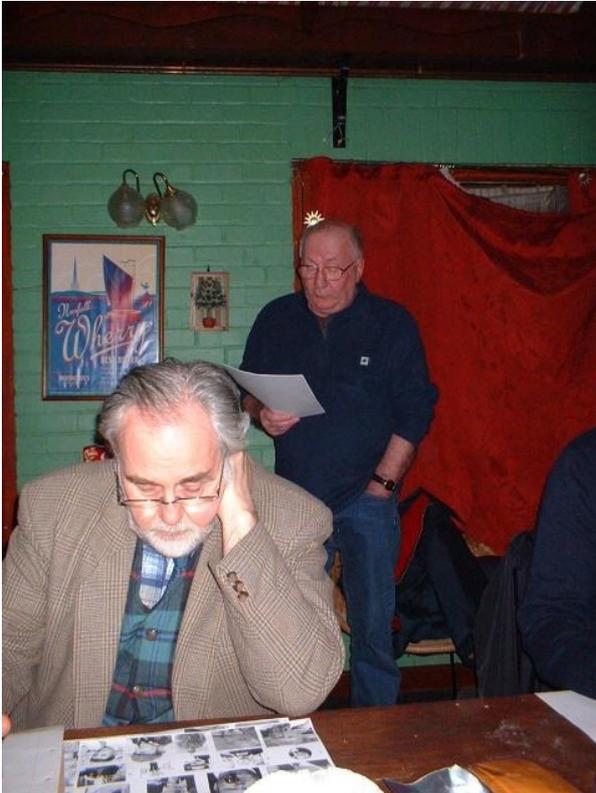
2008: The annual Briar smoking competition was held at the Smokeasy using 3 grams. of Gawith Hoggarth's Curly Cut in pipes of the competitors' choice. The first one to hold his hand up was Frank Gurney-Smith, closely followed, surprisingly, by Len Ellis who had something blocking his stem, Keith Garrard developed a gurgle and was next to go. When John Walker went out after 49 minutes 50 seconds it left Keith Coleman as the winner. Keith kept puffing and finally recorded a time of 64:40.

According to club records this was Keith's first major win: club records show that he finished a close second in the Briar contest in 1989, fourth in the Norfolk Open in 1993 and second in the 4gr. contest in 2003. As Keith is one of the founder members of the club from way back in 1973 he may remember other victories that were not recorded in the misty archives. The usual raffle was run and, guess what, the Secretary didn't win. Neither did Messrs Elvin and Walker, who paid for their absences with advance purchases of raffle tickets. There's no fools like old fools.

Quizzes

The club holds two or three quizzes every year - often in conjunction with a tobacco sampling evening.

2009: The Mind of a Fiend: The Alternative Report on the PCN Quiz Night



Ronnie Bobbin sets the questions and acts as quiz master at the ever-popular Famous Pipe Smokers Quiz.

It was with some trepidation that a select band of the intellectual elite of Norwich gathered in the grounds of the Nelson P.H. - months of sleepless nights spent perusing volumes of reference books were about to be put to the test. It was the first time that many had not had a cold towel wrapped around their heads for many weeks, and John Walker had felt the need to replace the headgear with a lucky baseball cap that he claimed had been worn by Einstein when he spent some time in Norfolk almost a hundred years before. Looking at the state of it, we believed him, indeed some noticing that it had been washed at some time in its long history thought it might have been the one worn by Archimedes when he had his Eureka moment in the bath.

Of course, one expects one's mental faculties to have faded with age, and mine could not match an obscure closing line with the entertainer Jimmy Durante, even though I had seen a programme on the said Schnozzle only a few weeks before.

But the old long-term memory was still in full working order, hence First of the Tudors? Henry VII- "A" Level 1960; the London station with the most platforms? Waterloo- Eagle Diary 1953: QED. But alas, what young innocents like myself don't expect are Booby traps like 'who was the first Yorkshire Captain to tour Australia?' Hutton? No., Cook and 'which four letter game starts with a 'T'?...golf!

And another thing to remember in such circumstances is "Always trust your first reaction." And a second one is "never trust a man who claims he is an Irishman." So when I put down potato and cabbage as the ingredients of Colcannon, I should not have listened to Reg "I've got an Irish passport" Walker, who piped up with "it's called Champ in the North of Ireland" So I should not have altered cabbage to onion, but there it is. I did. Mea culpa. So to the final reckoning, and I am pleased to say that notwithstanding the above, the winner by a whisker from Einstein Walker was me. And a prize of a death-causing but legal substance in a tin was well received if not well deserved.

Talks

2009: The first summer meeting, held at the Nelson Public House, got off to a cracking start with a most entertaining and educational lecture from KJ Coleman, who holds the Waterford Stool in Porcelain-assisted Relief. Our special correspondent, WC Handy, has provided the following 'Alternative report' on the proceedings:

When one thinks of the great movements of history one thinks of Genghis Khan and his Mongol hordes pouring across Asia and Europe, or the opening up of the American West, but Keith Coleman's thoughts turn to the smallest room in the house and to the development of what is surely the greatest contribution to urban civilisation: the Water Closet.

He began his talk by pouring cold water on the myth that ascribes the invention of the modern toilet to Thomas Crapper, and having given a brief outline of toilets in ancient and mediaeval times he came to the Elizabethan age, when Harrington's Jacques was the first flushing toilet that we would recognise as such today.



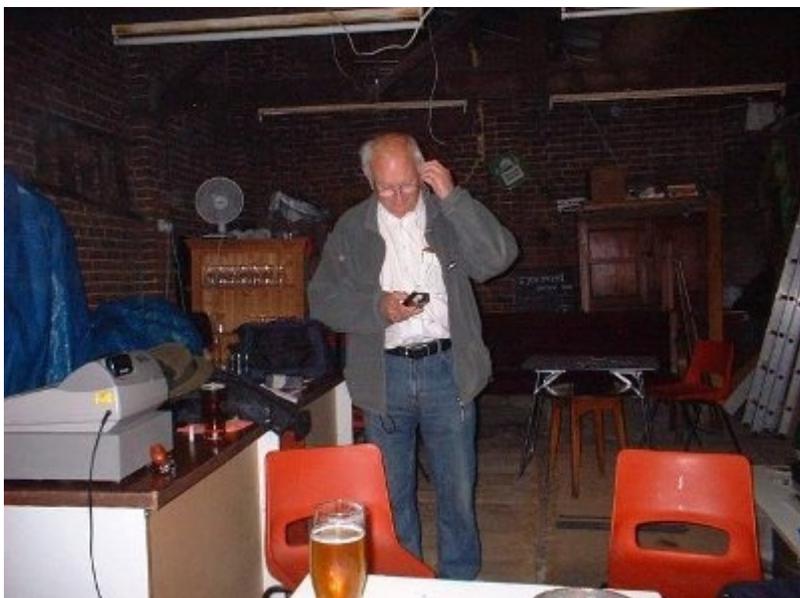
Keith gives his talk

This design was improved by the locksmith Joseph Bramah, who solved various problems, but who managed to imprison two old ladies and give rise to a popular song. After further improvements by Jennings (all the rage at the Great Exhibition of 1851 at a penny a go). The Valveless Closet of 1870 was made in glazed ceramic, and was a further step towards the sanitary ware that we know today. Unfortunately it used a massive four gallons per flush, and needed a greener approach.

Hence Humpherson's Washdown Closet of 1884, which used only three gallons a go.

Even greener, though perhaps slightly smellier, was the Reverend Moles' Earth Closet of 1860 (pause for joke about "Beyond the Pail"). The meeting was then thrown open to members' recollections of various holes in the ground in southern Europe and of Swedish two-seater earth closets. All this was a far cry from the bowl at Brooklands about which Keith has spoken to us before, and from those we are used to filling with tobacco. But surprisingly interesting, as the Actress said to the Bishop. Thanks Keith.

2009: A fascinating talk by Frank on bats. After having bats roost in his house, Frank studied the creatures and, being an electronics engineer, built his own bat detection devices. I never expected to stand in a pub car park at 10pm listening for bats but that is what we all did. Sadly, no bats made an appearance. Perhaps there are not enough belfries in the neighbourhood.



Frank and his bat detector

When a pipesmoker hears the word BATS he usually thinks of the products of the British American Tobacco Company. We are not so obvious, as our correspondent reports straight from the Belfry:

'It was indeed a select band that gathered at The Nelson for the June meeting. Some apologies had been received (A. Larner cooking books; K Garrard over-indulgence).

Taking advantage of the Hon. Sec's absence, and mindful of his failure to supply either raffle tickets or prizes, a motion of censure, no-confidence and

automatic re-election for a further five years was passed nem con.

We then settled down to listen to Frank Gurney-Smith tell us about bats. Of course, the pre-meeting drink in the pub gardens had enabled us to tell all the jokes about Batman and Robin that have ever been invented, so we were all ears as Frank began.

Frank's first encounter with bats came about when the little darlings moved into his porch, with all the associated disadvantages: noise; mess; smell. But his initial diagnosis of mice proved to be wide of the mark. When he realised that he did indeed have bats, he decided to wage electronic warfare (although, dear readers, you must remember that bats are protected and must not be disturbed). Anyway, the FGS Universal Bat Detector and Deterrent Mark One was developed and seemed to work, since the bats quickly disappeared. However, Frank soon realised that he was on a journey of discovery when the bats returned the following year. What he had was, he learnt, a nursery roost, which is only occupied for a short time, and may or may not be used the following year. But now his interest was aroused, and he is now able to relate numerous bat facts- e.g. the number of species in Britain (16, of which 10 can be found in Norfolk); their habits (messy) ; sizes and weights (small and light); and the secrets of their radar-like echo location system.

Personally I have always enjoyed watching bats swooping around in my garden at twilight time, and that enjoyment will be greatly increased now that I know they each devour thousands of bugs each evening.

Another unusual and interesting evening. But I am left wondering whether Frank isn't going too far, for I am given to understand that he now sleeps suspended upside-down from a rope in his loft. Still, Mrs G-S is not complaining as it gives her the whole duvet to herself.'

Bowls



Keith and Keith

2009: Once again Tony arranged a bowls day at the wonderful Morley Club in Sheringham, we were greeted by our hosts and divided into blocks. Eighteen ends of three wood triples followed which was very entertaining, the novice bowlers making up for their lack of skill with large slices of luck. (A Typist writes: does anyone else smell a whiff of sour grapes around here?). After three hours fighting the infestation of Ladybirds we retired to the clubhouse for a well earned drink and a splendid buffet.

Clay Competition



2009 competition under way

2009: A clay pipe smoking contest smoking 3 grams of Samuel Gawith's Scotch Cut Mixture in a variety of strange shaped clays. True to form John Elvin was first out in 2:11, but surprise surprise Len Ellis was next to go after 6:15. John Walker eventually finished runner up with 37:33 leaving Keith Coleman with his first ever clay pipe victory in 40:35. Keith was presented with a Churchwarden pipe and sandwiches rounded off a good evening.

Outdoor Competition



A foggy night in Old Norwich City

2008: This meeting was our second annual outdoor pipe smoking contest. A pleasant and windless evening meant the possibility of good times being recorded. Unlike last year, not one mosquito was to be seen (or felt). 3 grammes of Kentucky Nougat was smoked in pipes of the contestants' choice, and John Elvin kept up his record of "wooden spoon" wins and was first out after 24:30. Two members went on to break the hour: Reg Walker finished second in 69:30 leaving Len Ellis with his first win for a while with 71:50.

Unfortunately the Secretary forgot to bring the prizes so these will be presented at the next meeting after he has visited the pound shop. The Vice Chairman was given the task of finding a replacement club tobacco jar to replace the one that got broken. A full report on his progress will appear later.

Auction



Reg is a masterful auctioneer

2007: An amazing number of used pipes had been donated, many of which were sold for a song.

An excellent, unsmoked, Petersen donated by Tony Lerner fell to Frank Gurney-Smith and a 1980 original Taylor-made PCN Club Pipe, once owned by late Secretary Malcolm Palmer, to the Secretary. We wisely held this one back until he turned up, wallet bristling with bowls winnings.

The auction was a great success raising £131.50 for club funds.

Annual Dinner



Nosh up!

2006: Twelve members gathered in the clubroom for the annual dinner. Starters were served which included soup, prawn cocktails and king prawns with a sweet chilli dip. Most people opted for fillet steak for their main course and this was followed by raspberry and apple crumble and cheese and biscuits. The wine flowed (a very fine South African Pinotage) and tales were told. As is our tradition the guest speaker is put on the spot on the night, this year webmaster John Walker was the unlucky chap.

A free raffle was held with the Chairman kindly donating a fine pipe as first prize, the Secretary issued everyone with a numbered card he then shuffled a pack of identical cards and put them into his hat, to everybody's amazement the first number drawn from the hat was the Secretary's (has he been taking lessons from Paul Daniels?). The assembled members were all very pleased for the Secretary and many made comments. A very good evening was had by all, the food was good the service wonderful (thanks to waitresses Michele and Clare) and Chris our landlord, chef and wine waiter organised the whole event very well.

The annual dinner has fallen by the wayside of late due to the difficulty of finding a suitable venue.

4 Grams Briar Contest

A fun pipe-smoking competition with no rules in particular.

2006: Many years ago, before we adopted the CIGP rules, our contests consisted of smoking four grammes of tobacco. Every year we hold a contest to maintain this tradition and to attempt to beat the club record of 97 minutes. This year we smoked four grammes of Mick McQuaid Ready Rubbed tobacco in pipes of the contestants' choice. First out, to keep up his fine form of late, was John Elvin at 26:55.

At the hour, three smokers were left. John Betts managed 68:47; John Walker 70:09. This left Richard Adamek the winner for the second contest running (could he be the new Len Ellis? We couldn't ask the old Len Ellis, as he was in America at the time). Richard's winning time was 79:16 and he was presented with a pipe by the Vice Chairman.

Darts



John congratulates Len

2008: The annual dart hurling contest took place at the Rosary Tavern and the usual standard was evident (rubbish mainly). This is being written by someone who didn't win a game. After everyone had played four games two players had tied for the lead. Yes, the Grand Final between Frank King and Reg Walker... and what an exciting final it was with Reg just sneaking it on the doubles. Double one, of course. We had to keep the audience interested. Just how many bottles were thrown from the bar will never be known.

The arrows that the winner was using were most unusual, apparently a family heirloom. Several of the professionals from the Rosary dart team tried to throw these and not one of them could throw them straight

After an emergency committee meeting it has been decided that an independent body will inspect the contestants' weapons before the match next year. The winner was presented with a tin of high quality pipe tobacco, as was Frank King for the highest score of the evening. The evening was finished off with most welcome sandwiches and sausage rolls, and KJ Coleman was rightly credited for his superb organisational abilities. He is indeed the Harry Redknapp of the PCN Sports Section.

Cigar Smoking Contests

An occasional fun competition.

2004: Who could produce the longest ash? We smoked Guantanamera Company Cigars- a machine-made Havana. KJ Coleman was there with his measuring equipment, acting as invigilator (not to be confused with invigorator). Chairman Ellis proved himself less of a cigar hero than he is a pipe hero- his end was the first to drop off. John Walker was the winner, with two and eleven sixteenths of an inch (he was presented with 25 grammes of Robbie Burns Flake). Walter Thompson was close, with two and nine sixteenths. John 'Biggles' Betts made third. Everyone was presented with a Certificate of Length.

Cheese and Pickles



An excellent cheese board

something which looked like the vegetable equivalent of roadkill, Reg found a mildly hot Indonesian relish and John Walker produced some red-hot pickled chili peppers, the heat from which caused him to stagger to his chair in tears.

Some strange dreams were had later that night, as well as cases of indigestion and heartburn.

Christmas Draw and Buffet



Tucking in to the Christmas spirit!

2008: As is usual every year, the club Secretary went to the cheese stall on the market and obtained about ten pieces of different varieties of cheese. This year we had types ranging from goats, farmhouse Cheddar, soft Brie, something very similar to Gorgonzola and a particularly tasty Calvados-flavoured Livarot.

The Secretary also procured some pickles - onions, gherkins et cetera and members were encouraged to bring their own. Tony brought some "bread and butter" pickle made from

2008: John Betts was presented with a small gift in recognition of the work he has put into 'The Smokeasy' and landlady Michelle was given a Christmas gift. There were over 50 prizes in the Christmas draw, which were shared out fairly evenly among the members, with perhaps the Secretary and Chairman winning the most (no change there). A seasonal buffet was enjoyed, and what a wonderful spread it was.

THE SMOKING BAN



Sad but true.

The Labour Party Manifesto 2005 contained a deliberate lie as regards the smoking ban.

They said:

"We recognise that many people want smoke-free environments and need regulation to help them get this. We therefore intend to shift the balance significantly in their favour. We will legislate to ensure that all enclosed public places and workplaces *other than licensed premises* will be smoke-free. The legislation will ensure that all restaurants will be smoke-free; all pubs and bars preparing and serving food will be smoke-free; and *other pubs and bars will be free to choose whether to allow smoking or to be smoke-free. In membership clubs the members will be free to choose whether to allow smoking or to be smoke-free.* However, whatever the general status, to protect employees, smoking in the bar area will be prohibited everywhere."

But what we got was a TOTAL BAN!

Holy Smoke

A vicar who protested against the smoking ban by lighting his pipe inside a police station has failed to get himself arrested. The Rev Anthony Carr walked into the station in Tonbridge, Kent and told officers: "I want to report a crime." He then took out his pipe lit up. When told he would not be arrested, Carr replied: "What a pity."

The Whiff

Have you noticed that in pubs since the smoking ban that the smell of tobacco smoke has been replaced by the wonderful whiff of stale beer and body odour?

Only in Ireland

The Republic is banning children's sweet cigarettes, as they are thought to encourage the little ones into bad habits. Guinness Lite is probably OK, though.

The 2007 smoking ban made life difficult for the club.

We are no longer able to hold the Open Championship and the Rosary Tavern where we used to meet is closed so we have had to find alternative accommodation.

However, the club continues to thrive in spite of all the difficulties.

MORE RAMBLINGS OF OLD SMOKEY

I started playing bowls over forty years ago and a fair number of the greens I played on were attached to a public house, how I miss wonderful greens like The Jubilee, The York Tavern, The Garden House and The West End Retreat, the old boys would turn out dressed in waistcoat and trilby and many still played with wooden bowls. Now we are expected to turn out in a uniform of white shirt and grey trousers, I'm never sure who we are supposed to be impressing as we never have any spectators. The latest trend in the world of bowls is the non-smoking bowling green, I played on one recently deep in the Norfolk countryside in the middle of a field, where the first thing you encountered was a large notice which announced "No smoking on the green". How can a skip concentrate on his game without his pipe?

PCN RECORDS AND CHAMPIONS

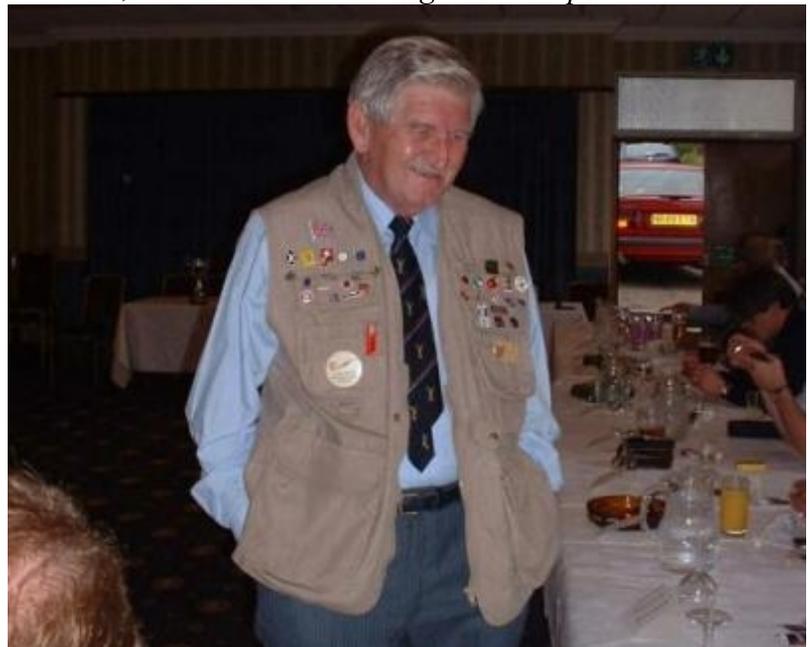
PCN Records

Briar 3 grams. Len Ellis 95.45 mins set 2004-10-10
Clay 3 grams. James Oxley-Brennan 82.47 mins set 1995-09-20
Outdoor 3 grams. Frank King Jnr. 51.10 mins set 2007-07-19
Briar 4 grams. Len Ellis 97.01 mins set 1983-02-16

PCN Open Championship

1992 Jo Lewis
1993 Len Ellis
1994 Keith Garrard
1995 Shaun Struthers
1996 Andrew Briggs
1997 Alan Rockliffe
1998 Andrew Briggs
1999 Len Ellis
2000 Len Ellis
2001 Len Ellis
2002 Len Ellis
2003 Len Ellis
2004 Reg Stevens
2005 Len Ellis
2006 Len Ellis

Len Ellis, PCN chairman and eight times Open winner.



PCN Briar Smoking Contest

The annual briar smoking contest has been held every year since 1980, with the exception of 1983 when clays were used.

- 1980 Reg Walker
- 1981 Rod Howard
- 1982 Len Ellis
- 1983 Not held
- 1984 Reg Walker
- 1985 Reg Walker
- 1986 Reg Walker
- 1987 Reg Walker
- 1988 Reg Walker
- 1989 Shaun Struthers
- 1990 Frank King Snr
- 1991 Rod Howard
- 1992 Len Ellis
- 1993 Jo Lewis
- 1994 Len Ellis
- 1995 Len Ellis
- 1996 Frank King Jnr
- 1997 Shaun Struthers
- 1998 Frank King Snr
- 1999 Len Ellis
- 2000 Len Ellis
- 2001 Keith Garrard
- 2002 Len Ellis
- 2003 Reg Walker
- 2004 John Walker
- 2005 Len Ellis
- 2006 Richard Adamek
- 2007 Richard Adamek
- 2008 Keith Coleman
- 2009 Tony Larner



Len Ellis and the red-vested Reg Walker at the British Championship 2006. Len has won the Briar eight times and Reg seven times.



Richard Adamek, Reg Walker and Keith Coleman.



John Walker, Frank King Jnr, James Oxley-Brennan, Sean Struthers, Colin Wylie

PCN Clay Smoking Contest

A clay pipe smoking contest was held for the first three years of the club. In 1983 a clay contest was held instead of the annual briar contest. From 1987 the annual clay contest became a regular feature of the PCN calendar.

- 1973 M. Gormer
- 1974 G. Lowe
- 1975 R. Meek
- 1983 Len Ellis
- 1987 Len Ellis
- 1988 Phil Lewis
- 1989 Reg Walker
- 1990 Not held
- 1991 Frank King Jnr.
- 1992 Frank King Snr.
- 1993 John Betts
- 1994 Frank King Jnr.
- 1995 James Oxley-Brennan
- 1996 James Oxley-Brennan
- 1997 Len Ellis
- 1998 Len Ellis
- 1999 Len Ellis
- 2000 Frank King Snr.
- 2001 Frank King Snr.
- 2002 Len Ellis
- 2003 Len Ellis
- 2004 Frank King Jnr.
- 2005 Colin Wylie
- 2006 Reg Walker
- 2007 Tony Larnar
- 2008 John Walker
- 2009 Keith Coleman



Tony Larnar and Keith Garrard.



John Betts and Frank King Senior

Winners of the PCN Open Wooden Matchstick (First out and first to the bar)

- | | | |
|----------------------|-----------------------|-------------------|
| 1992 Len Ellis | 1993 Alan Holmes | 1994 Len Ellis |
| 1995 Jo Lewis | 1996 Robert Rockliffe | 1997 John Elvin |
| 1998 Richard Neville | 1999 Norman Tucker | 2000 Rob Knight |
| 2001 Balraj Singh | 2002 Adrian Baker | 2003 Balraj Singh |
| 2004 George Kristlik | 2005 George Kristlik | 2006 Mark Dyer |

JOHN ELVIN RETIRES

May 2008: Tobacconist quitting after 50 years



John Elvin is retiring after 50 years in the business.

The best known tobacconist in the city is retiring after 50 years in the business - but is not holding out for a long-service medal from the Queen after once running out stock of her late sister's favourite brand of cigarettes.

John Elvin in Churchills tobacconist

John Elvin, 64, has been the manager at Churchills in St Andrew's Street since it opened in 1988, and started his career at Lambert's tobacconist in Gentleman's Walk in 1958.

But the popular shop on the corner of Bridewell Alley will continue without him, although current owner Keith Garrard said he would be a hard act to follow. The grandfather-of-seven, who occasionally smokes a Cuban cigar or a pipe, is retiring on May 31, which conveniently is the day before his 65th birthday on June 1.

It will be a landmark occasion for Mr Elvin, but not one he expects to end in any special recognition from the Queen.

He said: "I forfeited that possibility several years ago when Princess Margaret was at a function at nearby St Andrew's Hall and sent out to Churchills for a pack of her special cigarettes. But, for the first time in months, we were out of stock."

But despite missing out on the chance to supply cigarettes to a member of the Royal family, Mr Elvin has thoroughly enjoyed his time as a tobacconist.

He said: "They have been 50 really happy years. I have been here so long that the tots who once came into the shop are now parents.

"I will miss the customers most. In a little shop like this you build up a relationship with some customers.

"The big majority of art students we get in here smoke and for the three years they're in Norwich, you become a sort of father figure to them. And, then, when years later they call in just to say hello, you know you have done something right."

He said he owed it to his wife Maureen, 68, to quit.

He said: "I get to work at 6.30am and get home at 6pm so there's not much time to be together. It will also give me more time for gardening, bowls and bird watching."

When Mr Elvin, who lives in Sprowston, started in the business, about 70pc of the adult population smoked - that figure is now just over 20pc.

He said: "I started at Lambert's in Gentleman's Walk in 1958 and my job title was just the 'boy'. I earned £3 2 shillings a week, less deductions, which left me with £2 12 shillings take-home pay. I started work straight from Wensum View School, which is now a middle school.

"I stayed at Lambert's until 1982 when the managing director died and it was sold to Imperial shops. I continued working for them at Gentleman's Walk and other shops until 1988, when the Gentleman's Walk shop closed down. And then we took over the shop in St Andrew's Street, which was then a shoe shop. We started that from scratch and it has gone from strength to strength."

Contrary to popular belief, the shop was not named Churchills after the wartime PM Winston Churchill.

He said: "It was next to a church and at the bottom of two hills, and that's how it became Churchill's."

Mr Elvin has served under three different owners at Churchills, and Mr Garrard, 58, owner for the last four years, said he would be missed.

He said: "He knows the whole trade back to front and is popular with the customers."

Mr Elvin said that, if it was left to him, May 31 would come and go without much fuss, but he probably owed it to his customers to let them know he was going.

Photo: Angela Sharpe. Eastern Evening News

EVEN MORE RAMBLINGS OF OLD SMOKEY

Mrs. Garrard, who works for "One Railway", was on duty at Norwich Station when an elderly gentleman approached her at the end of platform 1, "Is this the London train" asked the elderly gentleman, "Yes" replied Mrs. Garrard. "How nice to see you smoking your pipe, my husband is secretary of the Pipe Club of Norfolk" , "How lovely" said the elderly gentleman shaking her hand. With that, Mr. Tony Benn wandered off towards the first class carriage.

Since the smoking ban came into force in July, a new word has entered the English language: smirting. This is defined as flirting while smoking. People who normally keep themselves to themselves while drinking in the bar are finding they are holding conversations with all sorts of folk whilst outside having a smoke and a lot of smirting is taking place, possibly leading to relationships. So if you are feeling lonely, get out your pipe, light it up and try a bit of pipe smirting.

CHAMPIONSHIPS

Sadly, the Norfolk Open and British Pipesmoking championships are no longer held due to the smoking ban.

2006: 15th Norfolk Open Pipesmoking Championship



This year's event was held on Sunday 8 October at the Lansdowne Hotel. As we clashed with the AITS show at Trent Bridge, the normal trade stands were unavailable. Churchills had a stand for the first time, ably manned by Kelvin and Roz, selling pipes and loose tobacco. George Kristlik had a display of Pavel Happ and Jan pipes from the Czech Republic and Mustafa Akkas some very good quality Meerschaums.

Some of the Hollingsworth competitors.

We were called to lunch at one and enjoyed a very good three course meal, after which the toastmaster Dave Bullock introduced the guest speaker, famous band leader Jack Parnell. He gave an excellent and witty speech, and even entertained the competitors with jokes during the contest. The usual giant raffle was held (thanks again to Sheila for her excellent sales technique) with some people doing very well (it may well stop a certain Mr. Elvin from moaning for a while).

41 competitors took part in the championship smoking Mick McQuaid Ready Rubbed in pipes made by Ian Walker of Northern Briars. Five British champions were in the field and it was one of these, Mark Dyer, who was the first out and therefore winner of the matchstick. In a nail-biting finish Len Ellis won the championship for the eighth time with Reg Stevens the runner up. Len was presented with a Pavell Happ pipe and Reg received a Morelli which was specially made for us by Marco Biagini. As the smoking ban comes in next year this could be our last contest, but we do have a few ideas, watch this space. Full results below.

History of the Norfolk Open Pipesmoking Championship

Although several local heats of the National Championship, club contests and inter club contests had taken place prior to 1992 this was the year that "the open" started.

1992 A Female Winner

After some club members travelled to Hungary to take part in a pipe smoking contest John Betts suggested that we hold our own championship, with the aid of the late Darren Jenner

of Crossways Tobacconist in Cromer the first Norfolk Open was held at the Lansdowne Hotel. The guest speaker on this occasion was Mike Butler, secretary of The Pipesmokers Council. The pipes were made by Invicta Briars and the tobacco smoked was Glengarry Flake. 31 contestants took part mainly from Norfolk, first one out was Len Ellis (oh, happy days), but the winner was Miss Jo Lewis in a time of 56:07, the runner up was Reg Walker.

1993 A Champion Is Born

This years guest speaker was Laurence Marks the writer of such things as Birds of a Feather and Goodnight Sweetheart. Bosun Cut Plug was smoked in Falcon Bantams. 29 took part and Alan Holmes only lasted 30 seconds, the winner was Len Ellis (62:12) with Ken Paterson of Merton & Falcon the runner up.

1994 The London Invasion

For the first time 6 members of the Pipe Club of London swelled our numbers, also taking part was Mike Pollitt a journalist for the Eastern Daily Press. The guest speaker was Peter Knight of Rayknight Enterprises; Radford's Mixture was smoked in Wilmer briars. For the second time Len Ellis was first out, the winner was Keith Garrard (68:45) with Darren Jenner the runner up.

1995 Secretary's Success

John Gawith of Gawith Hoggarth was our guest on this occasion; Ennerdale Mixture was smoked in Barling pipes. Previous winner Jo Lewis was first to bite the dust and club secretary Shaun Struthers was the winner (66:59) with PCOL secretary Peter Wiseman finishing second.

1996 The Briggs Year

Bill Taylor was this years guest speaker, 36 contestants took part smoking Scotch Mixture in Invicta Briars. Robert Rockcliffe from PCOL, probably our youngest ever contestant was first out, Andrew Briggs won (108:08) with his father finishing second.

1997 John Elvin Gets the Wooden Matchstick

John Elvin scooped the Wooden Matchstick as Alan Rockcliffe is the first PCOL winner (81:31) with John Betts finishing second. 40 contestants took part smoking Sundowner Mixture in BBB pipes. Roger Merton was our guest speaker.

1998 Briggsy Does It Again

In a field of 37 Andrew Briggs won for the second time (80:48) with Len Ellis finishing a close second. Sir Malcolm Bradbury was an excellent guest speaker. Ennerdale Mixture was smoked on this occasion in pipes supplied by Wilsons of Sharrow. The wooden matchstick went to Richard Neville.

1999 Len Is Back

Charles Rattray's Hal o' the Wind was smoked in BBB pipes as Len Ellis won for the

second time (80:50) with James Oxley- Brennan in second place. Norman Tucker was first out and the team trophy was played for, for the first time. PCN were the winning team on this occasion. The guest speaker was Howard Smith of Alfred Dunhill Pipes.

2000 Len Does It Again

Len Ellis won for the second year running (70:00) with Peter Wiseman in second place, Rob Knight was the first out. Robert McConnell's Glen Piper was smoked in Hardcastle Shell Briars and the team trophy went to PCN. The guest speaker was Douglas Hewat, chairman of the Pipesmokers Council and MD of Hewat & Booth, the only British pipe cleaner makers.

2001 Len Does It Again Again

Wind up radio man and 1999 Pipeman of the Year Trevor Baylis OBE was this year's guest speaker. Len Ellis made it three years in a row (69:36) with Chris Griminsky in second place, PCN again won the team event and Balraj Singh finished last. Dunhill de Luxe Navy Rolls was the tobacco and Hardcastle the pipes.

2002 The Brummie Invasion

For the first time a large contingent from Birmingham swelled our numbers. Len Ellis made it four years running (75:15) with Dave Polhill runner up, the dreaded matchstick went to Adrian Baker and the team trophy to PCN. Fiona Adler MD of Cadogan was our guest speaker; her speech took the form of a quiz. Perfection Mixture was smoked in Big Ben pipes. There were 35 contestants.

2003 Guess Who

Len Ellis wins for the fifth year running (75:35) with Reg Stevens finishing second, Balraj Singh once again wins the matchstick and PCN the team event. The guest speaker was Bob Gregory of Samuel Gawith Ltd. and their Kendal Cream Flake was used in the contest. The pipes were made by Murray, Frame & Love and 40 people took part.

2004 Beaten At Last

In a grandstand finish Reg Stevens (96:59) beat reigning champion Len Ellis, the John Hollingsworth club took the team trophy and George Krislik from the Czech Republic finished last of the 43 competitors. Dunhill My Mixture 965 was smoked in Peterson Donegal Rockies. The guest speaker was Simon Clark, Director of FOREST.

2005 He's back!

Len Ellis gets back to winning form (84:10) with Balraj Singh in second place and George Krislik taking the matchstick again and JHB won the team event. Robert McConnell's Scottish Cake was smoked in pipes made by Murray, Frame & Love. Our guest speaker was Ian Walker of Northern Briars.

2006 Keith Garrard Breaks the World Record: Oh! No that was last night's dream.

2006: The British Championship: A Three Day Event

We (Secretary Garrard and Vice Chairman Walker) started out from Norwich on a warm Saturday morning heading for the West Midlands. After three trains and a bus we eventually arrived at Knowle, where a refreshing pint of Bass awaited us. Sitting in the sun outside The Wilson's Arms we were joined by Tony Lerner (and about 150 Football supporters from the local British Legion who had just seen the Football World Cup on the big screen). After a few more pints we decided to have a wash and brush up before our evening meal. An Indian restaurant was the choice, and we enjoyed such delights as Lamb Bhuna and garlic nan, the evening was rounded off in The Vaults, an excellent real ale pub.

Sunday morning, a hearty breakfast and the morning papers in the sun, where we read all about England's 1-0 thrashing of Paraguay. We arrived at the Old Silhillians Club to be greeted by our fellow team members, trade stands were perused and I for one resisted the temptation to buy yet another pipe. We were split into two teams for the championship, an A team of 5 and a B team of 4. Dr. Plumbs were packed with 3 grammes of Samuel Gawith's Westmoreland Mixture, the signal was given, and 46 smokers lit up. Our main man Len Ellis did us proud by finishing 2nd behind the runaway winner, ember chasing Andrew Briggs. Len's time was 1:29:17, other Norfolk places were 11th John Walker, 12th Reg Walker, 13th John Betts, 16th Keith Garrard, 17th John Eason, 21st Colin Wylie, 22nd Dave Polhill and 25th Tony Lerner. We all received prizes for taking part and most of us won raffle prizes. The event was once again excellently organised by the Birmingham boys. Hopefully this won't be the last.



Keith Coleman collects his prize

Sunday evening and the intrepid three met for a wonderful Thai meal washed down with South African Chardonnay, chosen by the Secretary. Sunday night quiz at The Red Lion was the next thing on the agenda. We have finished last in this in the last three years, but this year we spoiled our record and did quite well.

After a mardle and a few more beers we called it a night. Monday and it was time for the long journey home, but not before we had a walk round Birmingham and sat in the park in the sun and watched the world go by.

A game of bowls awaited me on return to home soil followed by a few pints of Young's Bitter back in the local, not a bad weekend at all, just a pity I didn't the championship, the quiz or the bowls.

Championships Abroad

2006: I arrived on the Friday morning at Thorpe station, wide awake and full of vigour to be met by a very sleepy looking Walker and Eason. We travelled to Harwich where we boarded the ferry, I settled for a cup of coffee in the casino bar but the other two got stuck straight into the beer. After a very filling all-day breakfast the 3 hour 40 minute journey went very quickly, during this time I had successfully completed dozens of cryptic crosswords. After a short rail journey via Rotterdam we arrived in Dordrecht and took the short walk to our hotel- well it would have been a short walk if the other two had listened to me. We booked in and Walker was given a luxury ground floor room, Eason, the honeymoon suite (complete with pet mosquito) on the first floor and I was lumbered with the attic. After a much needed drink in the hotel garden we headed for the town centre where we dined in an Indo-Chinese restaurant. The Saturday morning was spent exploring Dordrecht's shops and market, alas not one tobacco shop could be found. We stopped for lunch in the town square where Walker and I each ordered a rather large plate of cheese, meat, salad and bread, Eason decided this was time to start a diet and partook of nothing but the fresh air.

In the evening we headed for the Café Little Beaver and met up with the members of Dordrecht Pipesmokers Guild, we were greeted by their Secretary Hans who had helped me make the arrangements for this trip. I also received a big cuddle from my old friend Jannie who I had met on several occasions before. We had a very nice three course meal, my pork fillet in mushroom sauce was excellent, our drinks were paid for from their club funds and we were each given a present to take home with us. A very enjoyable evening. The Sunday morning we awoke to grey skies and a little bit of rain, Walker and Eason hid in their rooms waiting for the weather to clear while I went for a walk down by the river. We eventually ventured out to find a mid morning cup of coffee, and one member of our party had abandoned his diet and was now gorging himself on giant Dutch sausage rolls.



Montage of trips to Den Helder (2003) and Oirschot (2004)

The weather had by now cleared and members of the party who had carried umbrellas and raincoats all the way to The Netherlands now began to regret it. We drank and dined in a bar called the Bear where we were to return for our evening meal. Walker and I had a fairly late session in the hotel bar chatting to the very nice barmaid who had gone to the trouble to remember our names. Monday and the trip home which included a few hours in The Hook for drinks and a bit of last minute shopping.

We arrived back in Norwich in good time and I headed straight for the Rosary Tavern just to check that English beer still tasted good.

PIPE SMOKING COMPETITION FAQ

What is a pipe smoking championship?

A pipe smoking championship is simply a competition between individual pipe smokers, who are sometimes grouped into teams, to see who can keep a pipe with a given quantity of tobacco alight for the longest.

How is it judged?

The objective is to keep the pipe alight for as long as possible. When a competitor finishes smoking, a note is made of their time and the slowest smoker wins.

What are the rules?

In a formal competition such as the British Pipesmoking Championship (ably hosted by the John Hollingsworth Pipe Club of Birmingham (JHPCB)) or our very own PCN Open Pipesmoking Championship, each competitor is given a brand new pipe. In casual club competitions, members use their own pipes.

The competitor also receives an amount of tobacco... usually 3 grams but some competitions use 4 grams.

They also have:

- 1) two matches with which to light the pipe;
- 2) a pipe cleaner to clean out the pipe before the competition as some pipes come with the stem blocked with sawdust. The cleaner may not be used during the competition.
- 3) a tamper. Usually the tamper may be used right through the competition but the Norfolk rules are that the tamper is withdrawn after ten minutes. This is to make it difficult for people to do ember chasing (q.v.).

At the start of the competition, the smokers are allowed 5 minutes to fill their pipe with tobacco. Then they have one minute in which to light the pipe using only the two matches provided.

They must keep the pipe alight for as long as possible without relighting or adding any further tobacco. There are also strict rules about the use of the tamper... the pipe must be in the mouth when the tamper is used.

What is an "ember chaser"?

Ember chasing is a technique used by a few people in the UK but is more common on the continent. A small section of tobacco is lit and then the tamper is used to push this burning tobacco around the pipe bowl. This technique is difficult to master but if successful, very long smoking times may be achieved.

Clay pipe competitions

The Norfolk clay pipe competition has exactly the same rules as for briar except the pipes must be either all clay or clay bowls with a non-clay stem.

MEDIA APPEARANCES

The club has featured in several newspaper reports and TV and radio programmes.

Keith Garrard, Keith Coleman and Reg Walker appeared live on BBC Radio Norfolk's Drive Time on Wednesday 4 May 2005. This was the local sports section and the subject was pipe smoking contests. John Walker should take a bow, as presenter Chris Goreham was complimentary about the PCN Website. He nearly had a seizure when we whipped out our pipes in the strictly non-smoking building, but luckily nobody had a light.

Chairman Ellis, Vice Chairman Walker and secretary Garrard met on a cold and windy night in November 2004 at the Forum, the headquarters of the local BBC, to be interviewed live on radio Norfolk. The interview took place outside so that we could smoke our pipes on radio - a bit like Peter Brough and the Archie Andrews, really. We answered questions on pipe smoking, the pipe club, and smoking contests, and according to the one person we spoke to who actually heard it we came across pretty well. Incidentally, the Vice Chairman also won the the evening's phone-in quiz with the answer "cat's droppings" Nothing to do with Black Cavendish, since you ask.



Dean Arnett and his camera with Frank King Jnr

A special meeting was arranged on June 2 2004 so that BBC Look East cameras could film us 'training' for the British Championship. We assembled in the Rosary clubroom and held a contest smoking 3 grammes of the British Championship tobacco, Samuel Gawith's Firedance Flake in pipes of the members' choice.

BBC reporter Dean Arnett interviewed most of the members prior to the start of the contest, after which our Chairman ran through the rules.

First out of the running was Frank King Senior with 28:05. Len Ellis finished third with 52:20, John Betts second with 53:25 and the winner was Reg Walker with 61:40. Luckily the camera did not pick up the unseemly grumblings of 'only win when there's no prize, mutter mutter.' The following evening edited highlights of the film were shown on Look East, with the stars of the show being Frank Snr. ('it's cos me leg's playing up'), Keith Coleman (rumours are that BBC are commissioning a series on his training regime of jogging and press-ups, not to speak of 'tobacco-caressing') and Tony 'I've got a blockage' Lerner. John Walker's attempt to inject a riper comment in the pre-watershed programme was unfortunately masked with a fit of someone's coughing.

A light-hearted piece of television, well put together. Well done Dean, who should be encouraged by the fact that people as far away as Southend and (incredibly) Spain rang in to say that they had seen it.

FAMOUS NORWICH TOBACCONISTS

John Buckle

John Buckle was Sheriff of Norwich in 1787 and Mayor in 1793. He was a Whig, an Alderman for Mancroft Ward and a tobacconist at 6 The Haymarket. His trade sign was The Golden Pipe. He died intestate at his home in Hethersett on 4 February 1818, aged 70, leaving all to his only son and next of kin, Thomas Starling Buckle the rector of Bramerton. His daughter, Rebecca married John Herring. There is a mural to their memory in St. George's, Colegate.

Thomas Verlander Brook

Thomas Brook was landlord of the Eldon Stores, 2 Bethel Street from 1867 to 1889. His advert of 1877 reads – TEA DEALER AND TOBACCONIST WINE, SPIRIT, ALE AND PORTER MERCHANT IMPORTER OF FOREIGN CIGARS AND FANCY GOODS BULLARDS SPARKLING CHAMPAGNE ALES London Brown Stout, Bitter and Imperial Ales drawn from the wood. CONCERTINAS FROM 4/- EACH.

James Pratt Addison Shields

With 15 minutes of the game left, nippy inside left Jimmy Shields fastened on to left winger Tommy Newell's cross. He smashed the ball into the back of the net and Norwich City, playing their first ever game of football had equalised. Jimmy Shields had the privilege of scoring City's first ever goal. It happened on Saturday, September 6 1902 when Harwich and Parkeston provided the opposition.

Jimmy's playing days were cut short by injury, he only made four other appearances. For several years he and his wife ran a tobacconist and cigar merchants shop in Magdalen Street. He died in 1947.

Thomas Hutton

Thomas Hutton ran a successful tobacconist shop in St. Andrew's parish in the 17th century. His profits must have been good because he opened a second shop in the neighbouring town of East Dereham. Like many businesses of the time, Thomas Hutton traded in a variety of things including groceries and paper but his principal trade remained tobacco. The smoking of tobacco had grown popular in England during the 17th century. When Hutton died in 1673, he left over seven-hundred weight of leaf tobacco stored in hogsheads, driers and presses. There were also clay pipes, tobacco boxes and hot charcoals provided free in the shop for customers to light up.

John Gittens

Grocer, Tea Dealer and Tobacconist having opened a shop opposite the White Horse, near St. Michael's Coslany Bridge, in the parish of St. Laurence, Norwich, humbly solicits the favours of his friends and the public in general. He sells Teas, Coffee, Chocolate and every other article in the grocery trade on the lowest terms. The Norfolk Chronicle 20 May 1780

THE LAST SPECIALIST TOBACCONIST SHOP IN NORWICH



Churchills of 32 St. Andrews Street

Churchills of 32 St. Andrews Street, the last specialist tobacconist shop in Norwich, closed its doors on 30th January 2010.

A sad sign of the times.

Excerpts from an Eastern Evening News report by Rob Garratt on 29 December 2009

Norwich's last remaining traditional tobacconist will be closing down in the New Year because of a fall in demand for its specialist smoking products.

For more than 20 years Churchills has stood on St Andrews Street offering a selection of rare Cuban cigars, hard-to-find tobaccos and crafted pipes.

Now as more and more people give up the smoking habit the shop will be forced to close its doors for the last time early next year.

When the shop opened in 1988 around 33pc of adults smoked, a figure that now stands at around 22pc.

Mr Garrard has worked at the branch for around 15 years and took over as manager five years ago.

Mr Garrard, who is also secretary of the Pipe Club of Norfolk, says the closest specialist tobacconist to the city will soon be the Crossways in Cromer's Chapel Street. However he has plans to sell his specialist tobaccos online, and intends to set up his own sales website in the New Year.

The 60-year-old said: "We're the last of Norwich's old tobacconists."

To most people's surprise Churchills is not named after the country's wartime Prime Minister, but instead was christened because it is next to a church and at the bottom of two hills.

The shop had a brush with royalty when Princess Margaret, who was at a function in St Andrew's Hall, sent out for a pack of her favourite brand of cigarettes.



Churchills owner - Keith Garrard - on the last day

But for the first time in months the shop was out of stock and the late Princess was left empty handed.

Last year the shop's enigmatic employee John Elvin, known as the "best known tobacconist in the city", retired after 50 years in the business, starting at Churchills when it opened in 1988.



**LET US FIGHT
THE SMOKING
BAN BRIGADE
TOGETHER!**

MISCELLANEOUS PHOTOS



Tony wins enough pipes to start a tobacconist shop. Keith and Reg listen for bats. Sheringham bowls. David Bullock, Norwich town crier and Master of Ceremonies. The Three Bowlsateers. Bill Taylor 1945-2009. Richard Adamek and his clay pipe collection. Keith Coleman at the oche. Xmas buffet. Jack Parnell. Leon Pickering MA(Oxon). In the Rosary.

TRIVIA

Seventeenth Century Tobacco Laws

In the light of the much-discussed proposals to ban smoking in public places, The Guardian published a small piece on 27 October giving some historical perspective. In 1604 King James I raised import tax on tobacco by 4000%. In 1617, Mongolia imposed the death penalty for smoking (as did China, in 1638- death by decapitation). 1624 saw the Pope threatening excommunication for snuff use; sneezing was considered too close to sexual ecstasy. The Greek Church's excuse for banning tobacco in 1634 was that it had intoxicated Noah. Smoking was banned in New York in 1639 and made compulsory at Eton School- to help ward off the plague.

The secretary adds: It seems that the Norwich authorities disapproved as well. In 1677, a local motion was passed that "the Bellman doe proclaime in all places through the city that no person do take tobacco in the streets by day or by night"

Crabbe's Clause

The Reverend George Crabbe (1754-1832) was born in Aldburgh, and was from mixed parentage (Norfolk and Suffolk). On the subject of A Smoking Club, he wrote as follows in his 1810 work Clubs and Social Meetings:

A Club there is of Smokers-Dare you come
To that close crowded, hot, narcotic Room?
When midnight past, the very Candles seem
Dying for Air, and give a ghastly Gleam;
When curling Fumes in lazy Wreaths arise...
When but a few are left the House to tire,
And they half sleeping by the sleepy Fire;
Ev'n the poor ventilating Vane that flew
Of late, so fast, is now grown drowsy too...

Pipe Smoking Sportsmen

Jeremiah Dawkins

Goalkeeper Jeremiah Dawkins played for Middlesborough during their days at Linthorpe Road; he used to smoke a pipe during the game when play was at the other end and knock it out on the goalpost when it looked like action was coming his way.

Jimmy Muraco

Jimmy Muraco was born in the state of New Jersey in 1966 and took up pipe smoking at the age of 15 "just to annoy the other guys who smoked Marlboros in the high school courtyard". He started off smoking Captain Black in a corn cob, until a local tobacconist put him right. (What would we do without the advice of our local tobacconist?) Muraco works as a professional wrestler on the American East Coast scene. I think they are the ones who fight in cages.

Fred Perry

The Fred Perry wreath is one of the best known logos in British fashion, but the original logo was to be a pipe. Fred Perry was a pipe smoker of note and his idea was for the smoking pipe to be the logo on his garments.

Selby Jeffrey

Selby Jeffrey, a railway fettler, was captain of the Wingello stalwarts; he was made captain because he was a certified hero as he had faced the Turk at Gallipoli in 1915. He wore a white shirt, white duck trousers, a large black moustache, and a black waistcoat that held a huge bent stem Peterson pipe, Conqueror plug tobacco, a knife for cutting it, and rain proof vesta matches. Selby always placed himself at slip, running about might cause his smoking apparatus to fall out. Bill (The Tiger) O'Reilly was bowling to a young man called Bradman and twice in the first over Bradman edged the ball straight to slip, the first occasion found Selby lighting his pipe and the second he deployed his hands but seemed to lose the ball in a cloud of smoke. "Sorry Bill" he said placidly.

Captain Tobias Hume on Tobacco

Christopher Smith writes...

Born in Elizabeth I's reign, Tobias Hume was a professional soldier who commanded fighting men in Russia and Sweden. A keen viol player, he also wrote the words for his songs. This one was printed in 1605. The Captain was, it appears, more troubled about the price of tobacco than over rhyming 'love' with 'prove.'

Tobacco, tobacco, sing sweetly for tobacco!

Tobacco is like love, O love it,

For you see I will prove it.

Love maketh lean the fat men's tumour,

So doth tobacco.

Love still dries up the wanton humour.

So doth tobacco.

Love makes men sail from shore to shore,

So doth tobacco.

'Tis fond love often makes men poor,

So doth tobacco.....

Tobacco, tobacco, Sing sweetly for tobacco.

Tobacco is like love, O love it.

For you see I have proved it.

Pipe Smoking Prime Ministers

Britain has had several pipe smoking Prime Ministers the most notable being Harold Wilson, who was made Pipe Smoker of the Year. Others include Stanley Baldwin, famous for his Presbyterian Mixture, Ramsey MacDonald, who sent to America for his tobacco, and Harold McMillan. Sweden's most famous was Carl Bildt, whilst Canada had Pierre Trudeau. Ben Chifley was probably Australia's best loved Prime Minister, a former train driver with a voice like worn out boot leather. He was well aware that his image as the typical bloke next door - he was rarely seen without his tobacco pipe- helped to sell an ambitious raft of post war reconstruction projects to the Australian public.

The Prime Minister of Lithuania Gediminas Kirkilas was recently fined for smoking his pipe in a public place. After enjoying a puff of Latikia mixture in a bar in the Baltic seaport town of Klaipeda, he apologised to the owner saying "I simply forgot that we can no longer smoke inside bars". Smoking in public places has been banned in Lithuania since January 2007.

COLOPHON

We hope that you enjoyed reading this interesting piece of social history.

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