

ARCO (Association of Retired Council Officers) Newsletter

Autumn 2018

www.arco-kingston.org.uk email secretary@arco-kingston.org.uk



Dear Friends,

I am very sorry to have break some very sad and tragic news to you. As was mentioned last time, our Chairman, Mike Belsham, had been unable to attend our AGM. Sadly, we subsequently received news that he had been found dead at his home on 8 June. This was an unexpected and grievous loss to the Association. Elsewhere in the Newsletter you will find a tribute to Mike. We remember his dedication to ARCO and his real sense of humour.

Your Committee met shortly afterwards, and I became Acting Chairman. In addition, we were pleased to co-opt Bob Weedon to fill the vacant post of Social Secretary. We were glad to hear that the Council will continue to support ARCO but with the budget in mind, had requested us to be as economical as possible by using electronic communication where our members had suitable access. You will find further information and a form enclosed which I urge you to read, complete and return regardless of which way you wish to receive communication from us.

Following a very enjoyable trip to the Amberley Museum in June, our next outing will be to Petworth on Wednesday 3 October. Full details and a booking form are enclosed. Please support our outings if you can and remember that members' partners and friends were very welcome. Indeed, unless we can increase the numbers going on trips, they may have to stop.

To offer an activity in September, we have arranged an additional Informal Gathering at The Kings Tun on 12 September as well as the planned one on 22 November. Our coffee morning is set for Wednesday, 24 October – please complete the booking form if you wish to attend. Finally, save the date for our Christmas Lunch which will be held on Thursday 13 December at our favourite, The North Star in Chessington – details next time.

Kind regards,

Chris

Chris Coke

Acting Chairman

Contact me at chairman@arco-kingston.org.uk

DIARY OF FORTHCOMING EVENTS

Tuesday, 31 July 2018	Funeral of Michael Belsham at NE Surrey Crematorium, Lower Morden Lane, SM4 4NU at 9.20 a.m.
Wednesday, 12 September 2018	Informal Gathering at The Kings Tun, Clarence Street, Kingston (opposite Wilkinsons) – drop in to the upstairs bar between 12 and 1.30 pm
Wednesday, 3 October 2018	Outing to Petworth
Wednesday, 24 October 2018	Coffee Morning, Council Chamber
Thursday, 22 November 2018	Informal Gathering at The Kings Tun
Thursday, 13 December 2018	Christmas Lunch
Wednesday, 30 January 2019	Winter Get Together, Council Chamber

Keep in touch at www.arco-kingston.org.uk

Invitation to a Coffee Morning

There will be a short talk by Lyndsey Gamble, the officer responsible for paying our pensions as part of the Kingston and Sutton Shared Finance Service

Wednesday, 24 October 2018 10.30 a.m. – 1 p.m.

Guildhall, Kingston upon Thames

Charge for coffee and biscuits £2

RSVP by post, phone or email to Jenny Longhurst by **12 OCTOBER 2018**

Write: Mayfield, Hoe Lane, Dorking, Surrey, RH5 6RS

Telephone: 01306 730321

Email: jenny.longhurst@btinternet.com

Retain top half as a reminder and send off bottom half

I would like One/Two (delete as appropriate) places for the Coffee Morning on 24 October 2018 and enclose a cheque for £ (payable to ARCO) for £2.00 per head

Name(s) required on Badge(s) (Capital Letters)

1. _____ 2. _____

Telephone No. _____

Email: _____

Mike Belsham – A Tribute

Mike was born and bred in Raynes Park and we believe he lived in the same house throughout his 66 years. After graduating in 1970 with a degree in Chemistry from the University of East Anglia, Mike joined the Treasurers Department at RBK. One of his early colleagues describes him as very kind and thoughtful. Most people will remember him working in the Rates Office and subsequently in Council Tax. During one of the many shake-ups of that function, Mike was made redundant. He moved into the private sector and for several years worked for Dyno-Rod in Surbiton.

On reaching 60, he retired and was propelled into the ARCO Chairman's seat by his predecessor, Mollie Scolding. Mike described himself as a "committee junkie" after many years spent at often interminable meetings, so found himself at home in this new role. Indeed, he had previously held the post of Branch Chairman of the Kingston branch of Unison. Outside work, Mike was a committed member of the Labour Party and was often tramping the streets of West Wimbledon, diligently leafleting his ward.

Socially, Mike enjoyed a pint or three of stout in the winter or cider in the summer. He studied racehorses' form intently and regularly placed modest bets with some success. He was a member of Surrey County Cricket Club and spectated at The Oval whenever he could. One of the shortest ARCO Committee meetings on record ended with him departing to the cricket ground. After that, we made sure our meetings did not clash with cricket fixtures or the Cheltenham Gold Cup!

Mike took his chairmanship of ARCO seriously. He attended all our meetings and functions and was always ready to take the lead. He made sure our committee meetings were kept short and would stop us waffling on about irrelevancies or details – and not just if there was a sporting event later. He also acted as Chris Coke's deputy on the RBK Pensions Panel which could be a very time-consuming job, with all day meetings often taking place.

However, all good things come to an end and we have been robbed of a staunch supporter and principled Chairman after far too short a time. Mike was an only child and lived alone in his house, inherited from his parents. His Kingston friends last saw him in mid-March when he was clearly suffering from a lot of back pain. As you know, he was too ill to attend our AGM later that month. After that, our contact was by very brief phone calls, when he spoke of tests and complications. Then I received the phone call I had been dreading – he had been found dead in his home on Friday 8 June, aged only 66. Apparently, his neighbours became concerned they had not seen him and the Police broke in only to find his body.

It took the authorities some time to trace his next of kin and this delayed arranging his funeral. I understand three cousins were eventually contacted by Merton Council. This cleared the way for his funeral to be organised and it is now set for Tuesday 31 July 2018 at the North East Surrey Crematorium, Lower Morden Lane, Morden, SM4 4NU at 9.20 a.m.

I am hoping as many ARCO members as possible will be there to pay their respects.

Martin Longhurst
Secretary

PETWORTH: HOUSE AND PARK or TOWN

Wednesday 3rd October 2018

A magnificent 17th century mansion, a monument to the Percy dynasty family over 900 years. Rooted through the Tudor Reformation, the Gunpowder Plot, the Napoleonic Wars to the present day, reflecting an astonishing array of treasures that survive at Petworth today. The grand staterooms offer an infinity of paintings and sculptures, including major works by van Dyck, Turner, Flaxman and Blake. Separate servants' quarters offer a glimpse of life 'below stairs', featuring domestic rooms and the historic kitchen with a 1000 piece copper batterie de cuisine.

JMW Turner spent long periods at the mansion under the patronage of the 3rd Earl of Egremont; his paintings can be seen in the Carved Room. The state rooms were laid out by the 3rd Earl of Egremont (1751-1837) to showcase his collection of fine art. As state rooms, they were never lived in by the family, so inside you won't find domestic furniture.

The 30 acre Pleasure Grounds are enclosed within a ha-ha and include the Doric temple, a registered war memorial and the Rotunda, with dense shrubbery and trees, before finding an opening to reveal panoramic views of the park, which was transformed in the 1750s and early 1760s by Lancelot Capability Brown. The 700 acre park is home to 900 fallow deer. There is a restaurant serving seasonal home-made meals and a coffee shop. Two free specials for you to see: the 'Elizabeth II live – A Woman Ahead of Her Time' exhibition and Unlocking Petworth, a peek inside the Stone Hall, Cambridge Bedroom and Chamber Landing not often open.

This trip is open to friends and family, and also for those who wish to visit the historic town of Petworth, with its array of antique shops and olde-worlde ale houses, instead of Petworth House. Please note that no driver's gratuity has been included in the cost; it is up to the individual to tip or not and the usual time to tip is on leaving the coach.

Time of departure from Kingston Library – 10.00 am

Departure for home – 4.00 pm

NT Members and Town only: £19.00 pp

Non NT Members: £32.50 pp

Essential carers for disabled get free entry to Petworth House so pay £19.00 pp for coach travel only

Closing date: Wednesday 19th September

Please make cheques **payable to ARCO** and return to me with the tear off slip to:

Val Weedon

Telephone: 01403 251390

51 Morrell Avenue, Horsham,

Email: val.palaeo@sky.com

West Sussex RH12 4DD

Shona 07934 139834 (for use on the day)

REMEMBER TO TAKE YOUR NATIONAL TRUST CARDS ON THE DAY

..... Retain top half as a reminder and send off bottom half

I/We would like place/s for the trip to Petworth House @ £19.00 NT Members

I/We would like place/s for the trip to Petworth House @ £19.00 essential carers

I/We would like place/s for the trip to Petworth House @ £32.50 non NT Members

I/We would like place/s for the trip to Petworth Town @ £19.00 travel only

(Please enclose an SAE if you require a receipt.)

Please Print:

NAME:

Address:.....

Tel No. Email.....

Keeping in touch with ARCO

In view of the swingeing cuts facing the Council, your Committee has been endeavouring to get confirmation that the facilities that have been kindly provided to us will continue to be available. We were glad to hear that the Council will continue to support ARCO by providing meeting rooms for our functions and Committee meetings. Regarding communications, continued printing and postage has been agreed provided, with economy in mind, we make use of email where our members have suitable access.

We have therefore decided to review our mailing list at the same time as seeking agreement from members to contact them by email. Please can I request all members to complete the form below to indicate their continued interest in the Association and to provide their email address, if they have one.

Details of all our activities, as well as our Newsletters, are always available from our web site www.arco-kingston.org.uk so you keep in touch in any case.

Please opt for email if you can. We will provide printed booking forms on request if you are not able to print one yourself.

IMPORTANT: Life Members please note that if you do not respond then we may delete you from the mailing list on the basis we have lost touch with you or you are no longer interested. However, you may reinstate your membership at any time.

You will probably have already received numerous letters about data protection (GDPR), so here is our bit. We now have a draft Privacy Policy, which you can find on our web site or can be provided on request. Basically, we hold your names and addresses to send you newsletters. We only keep current information electronically, but we keep hard copy indefinitely. Your data will not be shared with any third parties, except for distribution of newsletters by post or email. You can request a copy of your data at any time from the Secretary or Treasurer and ask to have it amended or deleted. If you have a complaint, please address it to the Chairman.

Please return to Jenny Longhurst, Mayfield, Hoe Lane, Abinger Hammer, Dorking, RH5 6RS or email your response to treasurer@arco-kingston.org.uk or bring this form to a function.

FROM (Please print your name): _____

I am willing to receive ARCO Newsletters by email and my email address is:

EMAIL (Please print your address): _____

I wish to continue receiving ARCO Newsletters by post

I no longer wish to receive ARCO Newsletters at all. (The ARCO Diary and Newsletters are on the web site. Life members may ask to be reinstated at any time.)