



**Retired Staff Association**

## **Summer Newsletter 2024**

Unfortunately, there has not been a sign of Summer so far this year, but we can live in hope.

We had an excellent talk by Paul Whittle at our May social afternoon at Bedfont Football Club. Paul talked about the Venetian Connection it was much enjoyed by everyone. Don't forget our social afternoons at Bedfont Football Club are held on the third Monday of the month from 1400 to 1600, we often have a quiz, bingo etc. and of course a cup of tea and cake. Many of our members are happy just to come along and have a chat and catch up with old friends.

We have also had a very successful afternoon at the Holiday Inn Shepperton for the Best of Broadway. This was well received by our members.

Our next outing is a Golden Oldies afternoon on the Tereza Joanne moored on the Thames at the East India Dock. This will probably have taken place by the time you receive this newsletter.

Our first holiday is to Durham 2/5 August.

We will leave Bedfont Football Club at 0900 for the journey to Durham where we will stay at the 4-star Blackwell Grange Hotel in Darlington on a half board basis. Set in the Durham countryside the hotel is a 17<sup>th</sup> century manor house with a host of amenities including a heated pool, spa, sauna, solarium and gym. All bedrooms have ensuite facilities, flat screen TVs and free Wi-Fi.

There will be comfort stops and a lunch break during the journey and after arrival at the hotel you can settle in and enjoy the hotel facilities or take a walk in the grounds before the evening meal.

On Saturday after breakfast the coach takes us to Durham where you will have free time before taking a cruise on the River Wear which runs through the city centre with views of Durham Cathedral and Castle. We return to the hotel for an

early dinner after which the coach will take us to the Kynren spectacular – an epic tour of England with a cast of over 1000 taking us through 2000 years of history, myth and legend.

On Sunday we take a trip on the Weasdale Heritage Railway, 16 miles of restored line through the Dales with beautiful scenery and multiple river crossings. We then head to Richmond the Gateway to the Dales and one of England's most vibrant market towns with its iconic Castle. On day 4 we board the coach for home stopping enroute for lunch. The cost is £469 for members and £479 for non-members with a single supplement of £90.

Our second holiday is to West Wales 8/12 September

We will depart from Bedford Football Club at around 0900 (exact time to be confirmed) to make our way to our hotel in West Wales.

Our hotel is the Ivy Bush Royal Hotel, Carmarthen, website [www.ivybushroyal.co.uk](http://www.ivybushroyal.co.uk). On arrival we will have a welcome tea/coffee whilst our cases are taken to our room. We are on a half board basis with full cooked breakfast, 3 course menu with 3 choices per course, plus a vegetarian option Choice made at dinner. Tables are 4 and 6 in the main restaurant. If you wish to sit with anyone in particular, please note this on the booking form. Tea/coffee after dinner. Entertainment will be on 2

nights. The Ivy Bush Hotel was a favourite retreat for Lord Nelson and Lady Hamilton. The hotel is on three floors and has a lift to every floor.

The hotel only has 3 rooms with walk in showers and this is on request. Please state this on the booking form but with only 3 available we cannot guarantee.

On our way to Carmarthen we will have a lunch stop in Cardiff.

Monday we will visit the Gower Peninsular. The Gower Peninsular was the UK's first Area of Outstanding Beauty 67 years ago. Mumbles marks the beginning of the Gower Peninsular and is a well loved area of Swansea. There is a lighthouse built in 1794 and a Victorian Pier. It really is a beautiful area.

Tuesday we will go on a return journey on the Gwili Steam Railway. Gwili Railway is one of the most picturesque, preserved lines set in beautiful countryside with abundant wildlife and follows the Gwili River on a steady uphill journey. In the

afternoon you will be free in Cardigan before returning to the hotel.

Wednesday we will have a day tour to Tenby which will include a boat ride to Caldey Island. Caldey Island lies cradled in the magnificent South Pembrokeshire coastline and is one of Britain's Holy Islands. The Cistercian monks of Caldey continue a tradition which began in Celtic times. More than a thousand years of prayer and quiet living has made this remote and beautiful island a haven of tranquillity and peace. The monks and islanders are pleased to welcome visitors.

If you do not wish to go on any of the excursions, you can spend the day in Carmarthen. Carmarthen is the county town of Carmarthenshire lying on the River Towy 8 miles from its estuary in Carmarthen Bay. There is an indoor market, and the hotel is within walking distance of the shopping centre.

Thursday after checking out of the hotel we will have a lunch stop in Laycock a beautiful National Trust Village in the Cotswolds before making our way back to Bedford Football Club. We should arrive back there early evening.

If you would like to go a booking form is attached. The cost will be £499 for members and £509 non-members. There are 4 true single rooms without a supplement, we also have 5 double rooms for sole use of a single person which has a supplement of £116 per room. This figure is beyond our control and is fixed by the hotel. As we always state if you can find someone to share with this will give you a better chance of getting on the trip. Single rooms are always at a premium. The price does include all gratuities except anything you would like to leave for the staff who make up your room.

Our third holiday is to Warners, Littlecote House for a Turkey and Tinsel break 11/15 November.

We will leave Bedford Football Club, Hatton Road, TW14 9QT at 1330 to make our way straight to Littlecote House. Check in is 1500. It is not a long journey so you will have no excuse to say you are too tired to enjoy the evening entertainment!

Littlecote is a beautiful house set in 113 acres in Berkshire. It has a colourful past with occupying Romans, a Tudor tryst and a Civil War, it is a historical landmark and has England's last remaining Cromwellian Chapel.

There is plenty to occupy you at Littlecote ie aqua aerobics, archery, beauty treatments, bowls, cookery demonstrations, croquet, game shows, quizzes, gin

tasting, grounds tour, laser pistol (no idea what this is)!

If you do not wish to go on the two excursions (destinations to be confirmed) you will not be bored at Littlecote.

As the name “Turkey and Tinsel” suggests this is an early Christmas and New Year rolled into one.

Accommodation is on a bed, breakfast and evening meal basis with entertainment every evening.

Monday you will be entertained by the Warners Theatre Company, Tuesday Simon Austin will entertain us with songs from Les Mis, The Lion King and the Greatest Showman as well as songs from the Kings of Swing.

Wednesday we will be entertained by Steve Stevens and Thursday again the Warners Theatre Company.

We will leave Littlecote on Friday morning after breakfast at around 1000/1030 to return to Bedfont Football Club.

If you would like to go the cost will be £420 for members per person and £425 for non-members per person, this includes all the above plus coach to and from Littlecote, it will also include gratuities except if you wish to leave extra for staff looking after your room. A booking form is attached for you to complete. We have only been allocated 5 single rooms with no supplement on a first come first served basis so if you can find someone to share with you will stand a greater chance of getting on this trip, once we reach this number a further 5 will be available on request with a supplement of £120 for the 5 days.

We had our first Christmas lunch at the Holiday Inn Shepperton last December which was very successful. We were entertained by Jason Searle and Tony Murphy, and we have booked them again for December 8<sup>th</sup> this year at the Holiday Inn. Full details will be available later in the year, but we hope you will come along and join us.

Please check our website “British Airways Retired Staff Association” as we do add trips.