



# Brit Club News

August, 2016

Sarasota British Club, P. O. Box 21063, Sarasota, FL 34276

Vol. 16, Issue 8

## Coming Events

**The SBC Board Meeting will be held on Thursday August 11th** at the Village des Pins clubhouse, 7964 Timberwood Circle, Sarasota @ 6:30pm. Members welcome.

yes, the palm trees are real. Let the mermaids lead the way through the tranquil waters of Sarasota Bay. “

Details will be announced in the next newsletter

### Guy Fawkes Annual Celebration

This year November 5 falls on Saturday, and we will reprise our annual celebration of the dastardly event with hot dogs and baked potatoes at sunset on Siesta Beach. More information nearer the date

### Walk to end Alzheimer's

We will be fielding a team to walk to cure Alzheimer's Disease on the morning of November 12 at Benderson Park. If you wish to join us, please let Paul Wilkinson know –



[pwilkinson18@comcast.net](mailto:pwilkinson18@comcast.net)



**Lunch August 19<sup>th</sup> Noon**  
Our next yummy lunch will be at  
The Tandoor Sarasota  
8453 Cooper Creek Blvd, Bradenton, FL  
34201

Indian Buffet - \$10.99 per person  
Please email Diana at  
[Dwilkinson18@comcast.net](mailto:Dwilkinson18@comcast.net)  
to book in – spaces are limited.

### AGM

We are tentatively planning the AGM for Saturday November 19. Ivan and Sharon have agreed to host an abbreviated Quiz Night to liven things up!



### Le Barge Scenic Cruise of Sarasota Bay

Sue Ford has graciously offered to organize a party cruise on Le Barge one afternoon when the weather has cooled down.

“Come join us aboard Le Barge, a Sarasota landmark for 30 years. Our casual laid-back atmosphere is enhanced by our tropical décor and

### Coming Events

- August—Friday Lunch at Tandoor
- AGM in October
- Le Barge trip TBA
- Guy Fawkes Party in November
- Sponsored Walk in November to end Alzheimer's Disease.

## President's letter – August 2016

It is that time of year for us to start thinking about next year's Board membership. We have 10 positions that need to be filled. While I do not yet know whether your present officers intend to stand again, I encourage any of my dear readers to step up if you feel that you can make a contribution. We meet



once a month to plan upcoming events, and the Board members are the folks who 'make it happen' for you – so you should be prepared to make an active contribution to organizing events. If you are interested, please reach out to me by phone or email. On the subject of Board members, I want to express my appreciation for the efforts that your team has put into recent events. Sharon and Ivan did a sterling job with the Quiz night, which was enjoyed by almost 50 members. Brian Thompson hosted a well-received outing to the Raymond James art collection. He also got us some great publicity in the Herald-Tribune with his contribution on the Brexit campaign. Brian also hosted a recent visit to the van Wezel Center with his wife, Jane, with help from Mark Malkasian. The recent dinner event at Cosimos was hosted by Jane Jacobs, and she negotiated a rebate of almost \$200 from the restaurant, which we will put towards prizes at the Christmas Party! Jane also organized the excellent entertainment evening out at McCurdy's Comedy Club. Please join me in recognizing the efforts of all of your Board in helping to create events that offer variety and entertainment. I hope that some of you will be inspired to join us. Please call me if you want to discuss.

*Paul Wilkinson*



### A quote for our Board?

*"I know of no single formula for success. But over the years I have observed that some attributes of leadership are universal and are often about finding ways of encouraging people to combine their efforts, their talents, their insights, their enthusiasm and their inspiration to work together."*

— Queen Elizabeth II

## Cosimo's Dinner June 23<sup>rd</sup>

We ended up with 33 members and guests for our "Brexit Eve" dinner. Seems our Club members' unofficial vote agreed with the Brexit decision. Thanks to our friend Jeremy Adams (restaurant manager) Cosimo's gave The Club a check for \$180.00 as a thank you for our patronage. The Board consider this money to be equivalent to a 'gift certificate' and will use it for the Christmas Party.



### Sad News

Friend and past member Jean. F. Taylor passed away June 27th 2016. A note was sent to her family.

Sandra Cherry, the founder member, wrote on behalf of the Sarasota British Club: "may we send our deepest condolences on the passing of Jean, and indeed also of your father." Jean will be sadly missed by all who knew her.

Pictured: Jean with Doreen Wilson (right). o  
Thanks to Doreen for the photo.





## Precis of July 14th Board Meeting

Current Treasurer's bank balance is \$4815.50. Newsletter expense for May/June/July was down to \$42.90. Membership currently 163. Some new links on Club website. Review of recent events. About 50 people attended Quiz night. 33 people participated in the Cosimo's dinner and Cosimo gave \$180 to the club. McCurdy's World Series of Comedy was fun as usual and all 32 tickets were sold. Reviewed upcoming events for July, August and October.

*Submitted by Jane Jacobs*



## British TV

Last month, member Tracey Corporan wrote about 'Hinterland' and 'George Gently', TV shows that are on Netflix. There are, or have been, several newer British shows on PBS, AMC or other channels recently. If you miss them they will be worth searching for on Netflix, YouTube or eventually on DVD. In the last year we have been watching 'Vera', 'Dancing on the Edge', 'The Tunnel', 'Luther', 'Scott and Bailey', 'Wallender', 'Doc Martin', 'Grantchester', 'The Night Manager', 'WPC 56', 'Crimson Fields', 'Call the Midwife' and 'Home Fires'. Box sets of DVDs of 'Doc Martin', 'Vera', 'Wallender' and others are in Sarasota's libraries.

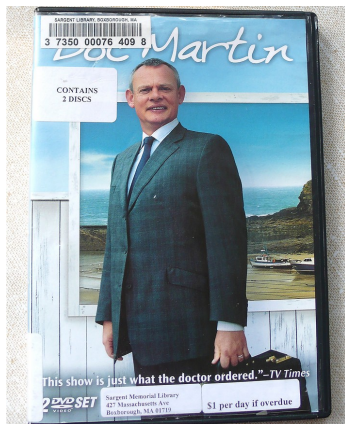
Some of these, including 'Downton Abbey' of course (1912-1924 filmed at Highclere Castle), are period pieces. Scenes from 'WPC 56' (1956) and 'Dancing on the Edge' (early 1930s) were recorded at the Black Country Living Museum in Dudley. 'Home Fires' (WW2) was recorded in Bunbury, Cheshire.

For those who have been away from Britain for a while there could be shows that didn't make it to the USA. For a start may I suggest 'Love Hurts' (1992-94) 30 episodes of a comedy-drama with Adam Faith and Zoë Wanamaker that is on YouTube. (also from £14.93



Idris Elba who plays John Luther.

Image from Wikipedia.com



Martin Clunes as Doc Martin.

Image from Flickr.com:

new and used via Amazon.co.uk, a bargain at current exchange rates!)

Please let me know if you track down more old stuff. Another option is to find boxed sets of old shows on EBay or Amazon. (use EBay.co.uk or Amazon.co.uk if the US sites draw a blank) I have done this for several items but you'll need a Region 2 DVD player and you'll probably be asked for a UK address for mailing. Our eldest son has to leave space in his case for our purchases when he visits!

*Brian Thompson [lakewood2@gmail.com](mailto:lakewood2@gmail.com)*



## Mc Curdy's Comedy Club on July 9<sup>th</sup>

Once again we all enjoyed The World Series of Comedy (semi-final) at McCurdy's, who would have thought an audience could be kept so entertained by the warning script on a prescription medication bottle! Les McCurdy is certainly a good entertainer. It was great being able to vote for the comedian(s) we thought were the best in show and should go through to the final round. 38 people joined us for dinner at Le Bordeaux on Main Street prior to the event; but unfortunately the restaurant did not meet our expectations with either food or service. We had checked out the restaurant before selecting it for this event and were very satisfied with the food and ambiance. We definitely experienced a 'lost in translation' communication problem and this was a learning experience for future events.



**Reminder** The Club's website [www.sarasotabritishclub.com](http://www.sarasotabritishclub.com) is our primary means of attracting potential new members. We look to current members to be our ambassadors familiar with our message and sharing it with those who might be interested in joining. Thank you.

Under 'Events' on the menu you can find the current newsletter and the newsletter archive.

## JOKE

An Aussie Blonde was sent on her way to Heaven. Upon arrival, a concerned St Peter met her at the Pearly Gates.

'I'm sorry,' St Peter said; 'But Heaven is suffering from an overload of godly souls and we have been forced to put up an Entrance Exam for new arrivals to ease the burden of Heavenly Arrivals.'

'That's cool' said the Blonde, 'What does the Entrance Exam consist of?'

'Just three questions' said St Peter.

'Which are?' asked the Blonde.

'The first,' said St Peter, 'is, which two days of the week start with the letter "T"?'

The second is 'How many seconds are there in a year?'

The third is 'What was the name of the swagman in Waltzing Matilda?'

'Now,' said St Peter, 'Go away and think about those questions and when I call upon you, I shall expect you to have those answers for me.'

So the Blonde went away and gave those three questions some considerable thought (I expect you to do the same).

The following morning, St Peter called upon the Blonde and asked if she had considered the questions, to which she replied, 'I have.'

'Well then,' said St Peter, 'Which two days of the week start with the letter T?'

The Blonde said, 'Today and Tomorrow.'

St Peter pondered this answer for some time, and decided that indeed the answer can be applied to the question.

'Well then, could I have your answer to the second of the three questions?' St Peter went on, 'how many seconds in a year?'

The Blonde replied, 'Twelve!'

'Only twelve!' exclaimed St Peter, 'How did you arrive at that figure?'

'Easy,' said the Blonde, 'there's the second of January, the second of February, right through to the second of December, giving a total of twelve seconds.'

St Peter looked at the Blonde and said, 'I need some time to consider your answer before I can give you a decision.' And he walked away shaking his head. A short time later, St Peter returned to the Blonde. 'I'll allow the answer to stand, but you need to get the



Image source: Wikimedia.org

third and final question absolutely correct to be allowed into Heaven.

Now, can you tell me the name of the swagman in Waltzing Matilda?'

The blonde replied: 'Of the three questions, I found this the easiest to answer.'

'Really!' exclaimed St Peter, 'And what is the answer?' 'It's Andy.'

'Andy??'

'Yes, Andy,' said the Blonde.

This totally floored St Peter, and he paced this way and that, deliberating the answer. Finally, he could not stand the suspense any longer, and turning to the blonde, asked 'How in God's name did you arrive at THAT answer?'

'Easy' said the Blonde, 'Andy sat, Andy watched, Andy waited till his billy boiled.'

And the Blonde entered Heaven...



## English Eccentric

**The Curious Tale of the Wall-of-Death hero who buried his lion sidekick outside a rustic villa.**

**T**ornado Smith, a Thirties Wall-of-Death stunt motorcyclist.

The lion, was a 12-stone lioness named Briton, that had been part of George "Tornado" Smith's Wall-of-Death act during the Thirties. As a cub, she had initially ridden on the handlebars of his Indian Scout motorbike. Once she was fully grown, she rode in a sidecar, while he performed daring stunts for his audiences.

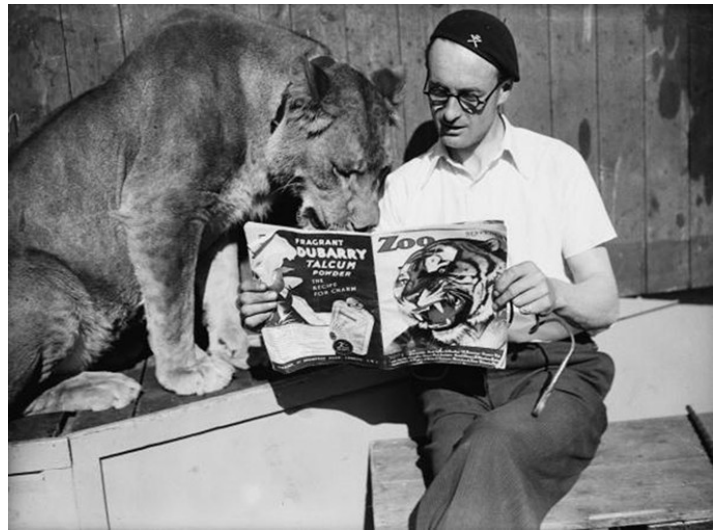
George Smith was born in June 1908 in the Suffolk hamlet of Newton Green, near Boxford. His parents, already in the pub trade, took over the White Hart in 1921, which they ran until the early Fifties. George was a nervous child, so afraid of his teachers that his concerned mother once sought help for him. Despite this, the boy reportedly got himself into trouble, performing daredevil high-speed stunts with a soapbox cart, for which he was caned. He left school at 14, having been apprenticed to a local wheelwright.

He didn't settle, however. By the age of 17, he was driving a lorry for a coal merchant. Shortly afterwards he became, variously, an AA patrolman and a taxi driver. It was during the latter job that Smith, dropping off a fare in Southend-on-Sea, happened upon his first Wall-of-Death. It seems to have been love at first sight. The fairground amusement had been recently imported from America. It comprised a giant drum, 20-feet high, lined with short, wooden boards around which stunt motorcyclists rode at speed, almost at 90-degree angles to the floor.

Spectators who paid to stand on a parapet surrounding the top of the drum would feel the whole structure move as they looked down upon the motorcyclists racing around below them. There were occasional injuries and tumbles although, strangely, it's now claimed that no deaths were ever attributed to the Wall-of-Death.

Having become obsessed with the idea of being a stunt rider, the young Suffolk lad began applying for jobs. He was unsuccessful, until the boss of a new Wall-of-Death, at an amusement park in Whitley Bay, near Newcastle gave him a job as a mechanic. Here he gained a chance to perfect his own act. In September 1930, aged 22, George was taken on by a touring company and made his debut as "Tornado" Smith in Malmo, Sweden.

Upon his return to Britain, during a short run of work for Bertram Mills Circus, Tornado met the woman he would eventually marry. A pretty teenager, then working as a cosmetics sales assistant, Doris Craven fell head-over-heels for the charismatic stuntman. Slim of build, with a David Niven-style pencil moustache, he wore tortoiseshell spectacles and sported a jaunty beret. Doris wasted no time and soon learned to ride the Wall herself, settling upon the stage name Marjorie Dare. Tornado, a consummate showman, was always looking for new ways to bring customers into his shows. So it was that in 1933, he purchased Briton, the lion cub, intending to train her for his act. Just in itself this part of the story illustrates how much circum-



Tornado Smith reading Zoo magazine with his pet lioness.



Tornado Smith and Maureen Swift

stances have changed during recent decades. It seems impossible to believe now that anyone might have been able to easily acquire something as exotic as a lion cub. Up until as late as 1976, however, when the Dangerous Wild Animals Act was passed, almost anyone with the money to do so might have placed order via the Harrod's department store an order via the Harrod's department store in Knightsbridge.

A short British Pathé newsreel clip from the Thirties helps illustrate the whole incredible story. The clip opens with shots of Marjorie Dare walking a large lamb (actually almost a fully grown sheep) on a lead through a busy Southend street. Subsequent footage shows her swimming in the sea with the creature.

Photos by kind permission of [boxfordsuffolk.com](http://boxfordsuffolk.com)

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There follows footage of her husband parading his lioness around on a lead. The film ends with husband and wife alongside their lioness and lamb, all sat cheerily outdoors together, at a table sharing tea and cakes. Dubbed over the film is an unintentionally hilarious commentary, in the Cholmondley-Warner style of comedian Harry Enfield. The clip allows a window into the recent past, a world so different from our own that it seems almost Monty Pythonesque.

From a modern health and safety viewpoint, Tornado Smith's lifestyle represents almost a perfect storm. Consider it: two motorcycle stunt-riders with little or no safety procedures, conducting performances in an unstable wooden structure into which unprotected members of the public are invited in order to view the spectacle from a parapet.

Now throw in a lioness being walked around on a lead and a sheep swimming at a public beach. There's even more. With regard to his lioness, who was reportedly, somewhat fierce as a cub, Smith did actually have a contingency plan. In case she should ever turn on him during a performance, he always carried a loaded pistol. During their early married life, Tornado and Marjorie lived in Feltham, Middlesex, where the stunt man was frequently to be seen in the streets walking the lioness around. In the winter, the couple returned home to rural Suffolk. Here, they had set up the Wall-of-Death in the yard of his parents' pub and performed for the locals' amusement. Smith would take the lioness out on her morning constitutionals around the village streets.

Sadly, Briton's short life ended at the outset of the Second World War. A 12-stone lioness requires a fair amount of meat. With a prevailing meat shortage and what little there was now rationed by price, feeding her would have become economically unsustainable. Smith, probably short of money at this point, was left with little option but to shoot her. He buried her in the courtyard of the White Hart, where her remains have lain for more than seven decades. Smith's glory days too, began to tail off towards the end of the Thirties.

During the war, he applied to become a fighter pilot but, rejected because of his poor eyesight, served instead in the Navy. It was during this time that his marriage to Marjorie Dare broke up.

Remarkably, Smith continued to entertain spectators at the Kursaal Amusement Park in Southend-on-Sea right up until the mid-Sixties. He retired from the Wall in 1965, having spent his last years struggling somewhat. In a new era of ever more spectacular stunts conducted

by formation motorcycle teams, the heyday of the Wall-of-Death artistes had passed. Tornado retired, firstly to Spain and finally to South Africa in 1966, where he died in 1971 aged 63. It was reported that he departed owing money and later declared bankrupt. When he died however, he left £100,000! In newspaper reports he was variously described as a "Gentle Daredevil" and a "Kindly Miser", the latter being the preferred description of the tax investigators.

His Wall-of-Death has been set up in the car park of the White Hart, Boxford.

He's not entirely forgotten, however. A Suffolk micro-brewery, Mill Green, not far from Boxford, brewed a beer, winning an award in 2011, commemorating the motorcycling legend.

Tornado Smith, 4% ABV, appropriately enough, is described as "an eccentric pale ale".

#### Sources

Boxford, website <http://tinyurl.com/zcvaagz>. Here there are links to several Pathé Pictorial videos.

Daily Express

BBC News <http://tinyurl.com/hbbm4jv>

**Editor's note:** I met Tornado Smith's son Gerry, who was an employee at Ford's Dagenham Engine Plant. Other people had told me that his father was a Wall of Death rider, but Gerry was not very forthcoming on the story, and he died of cancer before reaching retirement.



Tornado Smith's Wall of Death at the Kursaal, Southend-on-Sea in 1964.

## Club Photos

In recent copies of BritNews I provided links to online albums of photos from Club events. Most of these were my Picasa albums. On May 1st we were informed that Google has migrated to Google Photos. This means that those original links will no longer work. I'm gradually adding more links to this list. Note that apart from downloading individual photos at (hopefully) a good resolution, you can download the whole album. Click on the 3 vertical dots in the top right corner and select 'Download all'. To select one or more photos, click on the top left corner of each photo so you see a check mark then when you click on the 3 vertical dots, the option to 'Download' will be just for those choices.

### Ladies' Evening March 2011

<https://goo.gl/photos/hc7gM8675VHYH9Uw8>

### February 2016 mini-golf

<http://tinyurl.com/jkzhxpz>

### Guy Fawkes 2012

<https://goo.gl/photos/C2NDPEZ9fUzeJSoq7>

### 2012 Xmas Party

<https://goo.gl/photos/qFgBMgw7iCJLUgTV7>

### 2013 Xmas Party

<http://tinyurl.com/jsuyk6d>

### 2014 Xmas Party

<http://tinyurl.com/jsuyk6d>

### 2015 Xmas Party

<http://tinyurl.com/jjq33xf>

### Historic Spanish Point 2013

<http://tinyurl.com/zanc42g>

Please let me know if any of the links fail and if you can add more albums to the list.

*Brian Thompson* [lakewood2@gmail.com](mailto:lakewood2@gmail.com)



## Cowboy jokes

What did the buffalo say to his son when he left for college?

"BISON"

What did the mama cow say to the baby cow?

"It's pasture bedtime"

How did the farmer find his wife?

He tractor down!

If you wear cowboy clothes, are you Ranch Dressing?



What do you call a cow that has just had its baby?  
Decalfinated

Why did the cows return to the marijuana field?  
It was the pot calling the cattle back.



## Indian Food Ingredients

If you cook your own curries or just want some accompaniments, you could try India Bazaar in Bradenton. The store is located at 5149 14th Street W, 100 yards north of the junction with SR70 and just across the Tamiami Trail from a previous location. I found a good range of chutneys, sauces and pickles, papads, spices, and a wide range of foodstuffs plus fresh ginger, okra and exotic vegetables. Some of the items are from Britain with brands that that readers would recognize, including Pataks. The owner gave me one of her own recipes so "watch out" fellow Board members!



The store is open from 10 am to 8 pm Monday to Saturday and 10 am to 5 pm Sunday.

They have a small vegetarian Indian cafe in the back where they cater and have Indian fast food.

*Brian Thompson*

Don't forget that the Sarasota British Club is on Facebook. The Club's logo is the profile picture.

Check out the numerous photos from recent events. Why not 'friend' us for another way of keeping in touch with the Club and its members. Why not add your event photos to the 'wall'.





## Sarasota British Club name badges

Please obtain Club badges directly from:  
Sarasota Trophy 6601 Superior Ave, Sarasota  
FL 34231. 921-4339.

\$8 + tax for badge with magnet = \$8.56

\$6 + tax for badge with pin (without magnet) = \$6.42.

Badges can be collected in person

(M - F 8.30 - 5 or Sat 9 - 12) or shipped to home for  
\$3.75.



## Muhammad Ali Quotes

“A man who views the world the same at fifty as he did at twenty has wasted thirty years of his life.”

“I don't count my sit-ups. I only start counting when it starts hurting. When I feel pain, that's when I start counting, because that's when it really counts.”

“I never thought of losing, but now that it's happened, the only thing is to do it right. That's my obligation to all the people who believe in me. We all have to take defeats in life.”

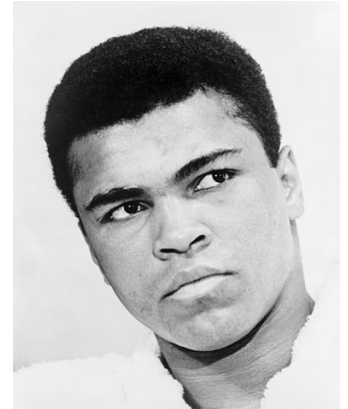


Image from Wikipedia.com

### Board of Directors (1/1/'16)

President	Paul Wilkinson	410-990-4698	<a href="mailto:pwilkinson18@comcast.net">pwilkinson18@comcast.net</a>
Vice-President	Sandra Cherry	921-3162	<a href="mailto:yourcupatea1@yahoo.com">yourcupatea1@yahoo.com</a>
Treasurer	Maggie Hughes	487-7216	<a href="mailto:mvhughes50@gmail.com">mvhughes50@gmail.com</a>
Secretary	Jane Jacobs	847-370-2811	<a href="mailto:jane60010@yahoo.com">jane60010@yahoo.com</a>
Membership Chair	Ivan Gould	941 323 9655	<a href="mailto:ivangould@hotmail.com">ivangould@hotmail.com</a>
Newsletter Editor	Brian Thompson	388-8018	<a href="mailto:lakewood2@gmail.com">lakewood2@gmail.com</a>
Website Liaison	Mark Malkasian	445-2890	<a href="mailto:mark@armeng.com">mark@armeng.com</a>
Director at Large 1	Sharon Gould	941 323 9655	<a href="mailto:sharon.gould@floridamoves.com">sharon.gould@floridamoves.com</a>
Director at Large 2	Diana Wilkinson	410-990-4698	<a href="mailto:dwilkinson18@comcast.net">dwilkinson18@comcast.net</a>
Past President	Gary Lee	706-1172	<a href="mailto:glee01@verizon.net">glee01@verizon.net</a>

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P.O.Box 21063  
Sarasota, FL 34276