



BritClub News



VOL 20, ISSUE 3

COMING EVENTS

SBC BOARD MEETING

Next meeting will be on Wednesday, March 11th, at Village Des Pins Clubhouse: 7964 Timberwood Circle, Sarasota @ 6.15 pm. Guests welcome (*please let us know you are coming!*)

All members will receive emailed invitations to the events shown below. Please look out for them in your inbox and be sure to add "Sarasota British Club" to your safe senders list

Luncheon: March 13th, noon at 'Miguel's' restaurant in Siesta Key.

A Day at the Races: Tampa Bay Downs, March 22nd; 11225 Race Track Rd, Tampa, FL 33626

Save the date!

AGM: Saturday, October 10th.

Guy Fawkes: Thursday, November 5th.

Christmas party: December 12th, 2020 at 6:00pm.

Eventbrite

A gentle reminder: please use the Eventbrite system to let us know that you are coming to our events. Many events require us to notify the venue of numbers attending. At several recent events members have arrived without advance notice, and this causes confusion and seating difficulties.

In future members who have not signed up will be asked to wait until registered members are seated and we hope you will understand that it is only fair that we should give priority to members who have used the system.

PRESIDENT'S LETTER, MARCH 2020

Two trips since my last letter. The first, to **Manatee Springs State Park**, near **Cedar Key**, was memorable for the warm weather, which meant that there were no manatees, and the big storm that brought down a tree next to the RV, took out power to the entire park and caused us to come home a day early.

Our next trip, to **Highland Hammock SP** near **Sebring** was much more interesting. First, the Park was constructed in 1931 by the Civilian Conservation Corps, part of FDR's post-recession initiative. There was an interesting museum chronicling the construction, and several great trails through the woods and swamps.

The story of the **Florida Crackers**, however, was most interesting. The "Crackers" were the Florida cowboys who herded cattle across the state from the East coast to Tampa and Punta Gorda for shipment to Cuba in the 1890's. They were named for the 'crack' of their whips. On our way into the State Park, we encountered about 100 riders on their annual commemoration of the Crackers' ride home. The 120-mile ride takes place the last full week in February each year and many of the riders wear period dress.





We discovered that there was a lot more history about the Crackers in the Sebring area. The Pioneer museum in **Zolfo Springs** was very interesting, and google pointed us to **Lake Placid**, where a 170-foot mural was an outstanding work of art. The mural was one of almost 50 others, so we headed for the Lake Placid Chamber of Commerce where a 10-minute video explained their history.

In the early 1990's Lake Placid decided to create a tourist attraction, and the murals were the result of this effort. We were given a handy map to guide us around the town, and it gave an explanation of each mural. In addition to the wall paintings, Lake Placid is the **Caladium** capital of the world, producing 95% of the supply of these colorful plants. A mural shows what the crop looks like in July/August when mature. An excellent trip, and highly recommended for a day out from Sarasota.



Paul Wilkinson

BOARD ANNOUNCEMENTS

Précis of the December Board Meeting

The Treasurer's Report showed a Closing Balance of \$2,087.48 on January 31st, 2020.

Our total membership continues to be the same: 168 and it is comprised of 28 single and 140 family memberships.

The website committee had met and discussed the website changes. The overall look would be the same and unutilized functions would be removed.

The Board voted and approved \$1,200.00 for the building of the new website.

Future event ideas such as a Picnic at the beach; Kayaking; Cooking demonstration; Social night and Bingo for the Summer were discussed.

The Sarasota British Club is celebrating its 20th anniversary this year and we'll be having a birthday party at the Annual General Meeting in October.



COMING EVENTS

March Luncheon:

It will be on Friday March 13th, 12:00 noon, at Miguel's Restaurant located at 6631 Midnight Pass Road, Siesta Key, telephone: 941 349-4024

Miguel's are opening their doors especially for us and have a menu that includes soup or salad followed by a choice of 4 entrees, Salmon with lemon and capers; Chicken Marengo; Veal Piccata or Beef Tipped Diane and dessert. The cost is \$25 per person which includes a non-alcoholic beverage tax and tip.



A Day at the Races: Tampa Bay Downs

March 22nd; 11225 Race Track Rd, Tampa, FL 33626

Price: \$35:00 per person which includes lunch and gratuities.

Sign up at the Eventbrite invitation and let us know you are coming so we can arrange carpooling to the venue.



Annual General Meeting:

On Saturday, October 10th, at Village des Pins Clubhouse.

Guy Fawkes Beach Party:

On Thursday, November 5th, at Siesta Key beach.

2020 Annual Christmas party:

December 12th, 2020; at 6:00pm.

Heritage Oaks Golf & Country Club, 4800 Chase Oaks Dr. Sarasota, FL. 34241

SPECIAL INVITATION:

2020 Kayak Trip on Lemon Bay in Venice

A silent water adventure is now scheduled for **Wednesday, March 25th, 2020** from a launch point off **Caspersen Beach into Lemon Bay.**

Morning arrival/gathering and launch times are TBD as we await receipt of Regional Tide Tables. Detailed directions to the Launch Point are also TBD.

The trip will last for approximately three hours at our usual leisurely pace on the waters of the Intracoastal Waterway, Lemon Bay and Alligator Creek.

Our trip leader will again be John Sarkozy who has over 20 years of experience running area kayak trips under the auspices of the American Littoral Society (ALS) <https://www.littoralsociety.org/sarasota-bay.html>. John provides all the necessary equipment and safety gear and especially welcomes first time kayakers. He'll have newbies quite comfortable on the water in a matter of minutes. There will be one stretch break en-route and bio breaks will be "in the wilderness".

Fees payable at the launch point are: \$25 per person or \$20 if you are a member of ALS or if you bring your own kayak and life vest a Donation to ALS (suggested \$5 minimum).

Suggested personal items are: a sun hat, plenty of water, sunscreen protection, quick-dry clothing and gripper-soled shoes that you don't mind getting wet. John usually has granola bars at the break-point.

Apres-Trip Lunch is planned at the Old Salty Dog Restaurant & Pub at 1475 Tamiami Trail on the Island in Venice <http://theoldsaltydog.com/location/venice-island/>

Participation is limited to 17 people in 11 single kayaks and three (3) tandem/double boats.

To reserve your boat & indicate lunch participation call the Event Coordinator, Mark Malkasian, at **941-445- 2890** or by emailing marqmalk@gmail.com

Commitments are requested not later than Friday, March 20th.

Mark Malkasian

RECENT EVENTS

Lippizan Stallion Event

February 14th was a warm and sunny day, which was perfect for our club members who attended the horse training show at their winter home in Myakka City.







February lunch:

Another happy gathering that took place at the Lakewood Ranch Grove restaurant, where everyone enjoyed a special menu prepared for us.







MEDIA MATTERS

While we watched all 8 episodes of ***The Stranger*** on **Netflix**, I cannot say that we recommend it. Lots of red herrings to stretch the time, and the cast seemed to struggle with the plot and dialog.

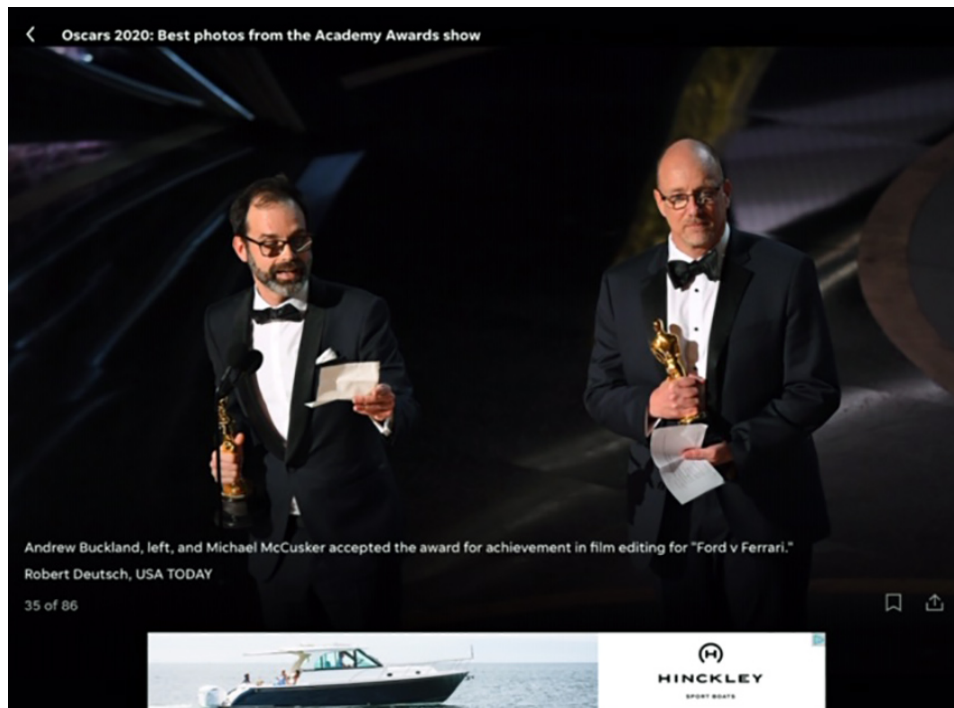
After the Oscars we felt we should check out the nominees and started ***Marriage Story*** on **Netflix** but stopped after 30 minutes as it was just too depressing.

Netflix definitely seems to be descending to a lower level of content, but I am hopeful that the new season of ***Ozark*** will break the trend as the two previous seasons have been excellent, in a dark humor way.

We've just started ***Loch Ness*** on **Acorn**, and we are enjoying the contrived tale of shenanigans in a sleepy town on the banks of the famous Loch.

Paul Wilkinson

Andrew Buckland, is the son of Club members Mike and Linda Buckland. Andrew and Michael McCusker have already won multiple awards for their work on 'Ford vs Ferrari' and have also won the 2020 Oscar and Bafta awards for Film Editing.



Behind the Scenes at Westminster Abbey

By Hugh Morris, TRAVEL NEWS EDITOR

With permission to print, by The Telegraph

“It’s just how it is,” said Martin Castledine, “wherever you are or wherever you walk, you will stand on someone’s memorial or grave.”

I took my next few steps gingerly but he was right, the bodies beneath my feet came thick and fast: Charles Darwin, Robert Stephenson, Clement Atlee. There was no point in attempting light-footed respect. Sorry Mr. Hawking.

“I saw Stephen Hawking’s burial myself,” said Martin. “I know he’s there because I actually held the casket.”



Martin is the Dean’s Verger at Westminster Abbey, and my guide for the day. He pointed to the large, black plaque on the floor near the entrance. “The only grave we always walk around is that of the Unknown Warrior,” he said. Beneath it rests the remains of an unidentified soldier from the battlefields of France, the first burial of its kind, commemorating those lost in the First World War. “Weddings, services, coronations, we always walk around it.”

The presence of some 3,300 ghosts of the great and good at Westminster Abbey is certainly one of the landmark’s key draws, helping attract around 1.5 million visitors a year and earning it the moniker of Britain’s Valhalla.

But it was not my focus on a visit to central London on a brisk winter’s day. I was at the Abbey for a behind-the-scenes tour of one of the world’s most famous churches, to see what few do. As it was, finding lesser-known corners in a building that hustles and bustles with visitors as much as it does history was tough: how many secrets can a site that allows tourists to brush shoulders (nearly literally) with centuries-dead monarchs have?

But then Martin, in his post ensuring all runs as smoothly on an average Tuesday as it does on Coronation Day, had much to reveal. He lifted a velvet rope and we climbed a short, wooden staircase, ducking under a small door into an enclosed apartment in the centre of the building, away from the mid-morning chatter.

But first, a potted history: Westminster Abbey was founded as a Benedictine monastery in 960AD on a small island on the Thames called Thorney Island (note nearby Thorney Street today). It was rebuilt as a royal church by Edward the Confessor in 1065, while the building we see today was begun by Henry III in the Gothic style in 1245. Henry VII added a chapel in the 16th century while Nicholas Hawksmoor’s towers arose in the 18th.

Since its doors opened in the 11th century (a week before Edward's death), Westminster Abbey has been the site of every coronation in Britain, starting with William the Conqueror, not to mention 16 Royal weddings. It has been, therefore, perhaps one of the most important buildings in the UK for over a thousand years.

We were stood in the Shrine of St Edward the Confessor, the first monarch to be buried at the Abbey, and only King of England to be canonised. His tomb stands alone in a chapel space behind the High Altar protected from the view of the visiting public, remarkably, by the coffins of other kings and queens of the Plantagenets.

Martin explained how when work was done on the shrine some years ago, the canopy was removed and he saw what was inside: an unremarkable wooden coffin. "You can only assume and hopefully believe that there is a body within there that is St Edward," he said. "Which is quite extraordinary."

On the floor is set an intricate Cosmati Pavement laid in the 13th century by workmen from Rome. One of the most remarkable examples of the craft still seen today, the tiling is marked and worn but otherwise in good nick. "Probably one of the finest examples this side of the Northern Alps," said Martin. "To us it just looks like a very pretty pattern and very colourful, but within it there is a story of when the world will end." Another 19,000 years, an inscription reads, apparently.



Though closed to the public, the chapel is still used for prayers; daily ceremony among the resting places of some of history's most famous monarchs on a floor laid in the 13th century predicting the end of civilisation. Westminster Abbey still lives and breathes.



After a brief stop in Henry VII's Lady Chapel - "I forgot to tell you, there are quite a lot of other kings and queens buried there, the Stuarts, the Hanoverians, the Tudors," Martin said, as if recalling minor details - we were bound for our next secret stop. We moved through the "jumble sale" of memorials on the Abbey's north side, through the Quire, the tidy, ornate pews and small reading lamps immediately reminiscent of a televised Royal wedding, and past Poets' Corner.

It was slow going at the Abbey where every square inch is encrusted in history. I stepped over a nod to Philip Larkin, noted homage to Dr Johnson and smiled at a memorial to Handel (the composer is not alone in the Abbey in bequeathing money to ensure he got his spot).

Martin led us through an inconspicuous locked door in Poets' Corner, downstairs to the crypt.

Here, beneath the Abbey, where sunlight does not reach and visitors do not tread, I expected to find the resting place of a forgotten (or secret, evil) monarch. Instead, I found the laundry.

"It's extraordinary how it piles up," said Martin. All the linen used in ceremonies - weddings, coronations, choral performances - must be washed in-house and "starched to within an inch of its life". Beneath the Chapter House, robes, tablecloths and the like are managed and stored (I noted for my own home the iron of choice at Westminster Abbey to be a Phillips).

The room, with low-ceiling, arched buttresses and gentle lighting, once homed the Crown Jewels before a robbery led to their being moved to the Tower of London. Today, along with an inventory of modern clothing is kept the coats from events gone by - including both the coronation and funeral of Charles II from the 17th century.

To view the Abbey from outside is to perceive a religious museum, an impressive building suspended in time to capture the splendour of centuries past. But Westminster Abbey is very much in the present, too.

For one, it continues to run 28 services a week, welcoming members of the public; 800 people can turn up to Evensong. The Abbey ascribes part of its rising popularity to the Royal Wedding of 2011 between Prince William and Kate Middleton, and indeed, the Netflix series, the Crown (Ely Cathedral played the role of the Abbey).

For two, there are dozens of live-in residents, from the Dean to the Director of Music of Westminster School, "technically on 24-hour call," Martin said. The nearest newsagent is round the back of the Home Office, he told me.

We moved through to a large, wood-panelled room, where senior members of the Deanery at times hold meetings. Of course, it also happens to be the Jerusalem Chamber, where before the fireplace Henry IV breathed his last (the room is so-named as it is thought Henry believed he was in Jerusalem when he died); Isaac Newton and Charles Darwin laid here before their funeral. And the English version of the Bible was translated here in 1611. Today, in any other office it would just be another meeting room.



In the Abbey gardens, an escape of generous size amid the disarray of Westminster, vegetables and herbs grow today as they did in monastic times. On the large lawn, a man herded four bounding dogs - all belonging to the Master of the Choristers, who lives on site.

Squirreled away in another room - on the way to which we pass through England's oldest door (from the 1050s) - we found the Guild of St Faith hard at work. The Guild is a group of volunteers who work in-house, mainly retirees commuting in from across London every Friday, repairing the Abbey's vestments and altar linen; it can take 250 hours to complete just one. While I interrupted one to discuss her handywork, a hubbub of consultation and collaboration filled the room.

I was exhausted. The Abbey moves at a breathless pace. Along the corridor, another in-house team was busy. Paintings conservator Alysia Sawicka was in the process of cleaning a portrait of Dean Williams. “On the letter that he’s holding there it says 1624, so that’s handy,” she said, when I asked its date. “There’s a lot of surface dirt, discolouring and varnish.”

The conservation team’s job is never done, helping restore works from around the Abbey as and when needed, while also dealing with emergencies in the form of spillages and errant dripping wax.

“There is immense pressure but you become accustomed to it on some level,” said Alysia. “There are times when you stop and think, ‘what am I working on? Oh, it’s Henry III’s effigy.’”

The small team does not have the luxury of peace and quiet, instead required to carry out their research amid the business of the Abbey; they are subsequently confident there are plenty of archaeological, historical and cultural discoveries still to be made. “Definitely.”

Finally, we rose 50 feet above the Abbey floor via the first new construction since the 18th century, a lift shaft-cum-spiral staircase to the Queen’s Diamond Jubilee Galleries, a glorified loft that remained secret for 700 years before it was opened to the public in 2018.



In that attic, amid the baffling exhibits of death masks, coronation dress and Royal armour, I’m drawn to some graffiti etched into the stone window frames. T.C. was carved deep into the stone; VICKERS 1805 looked like it took some effort, while J.S. 1750 was a bit fainter. “There’s quite a lot of Westminster School graffiti about,” explained Scott Craddock, head of visitor experience at the Abbey. Some of it, famously, adorns the 700-year-old Coronation Chair, the oldest dated piece of English furniture by a known artist, Walter of Durham (a replica made for Mary II’s joint coronation with William is preserved in the attic).

The original chair is now safe away from etching arms downstairs near the west door, but its graffiti is testament to its long attraction to tourists, pilgrims and school boys. Personally, I like the graffiti dotted about the abbey - it makes its enormous weight of history a bit more relatable.

As I finished my tour, a blur of vibrant colours caught my eye below. I glanced down at the Queen’s Window, added in 2018 and created by David Hockney. It is startling in its modernity. But with the Abbey as much a hive of activity as it is, perhaps not so startling.

© The Telegraph

COMMUNITY BOARD

This section of the Newsletter is available to members who wish to connect with our community to announce events and seek connections within the community. It is not available for commercial purposes or to advertise events outside the interests of our members. The rules for inclusion are simple: the Newsletter editor has the final call as to whether something is acceptable for inclusion!

Please forward your items to: peter13454@gmail.com

STAY UP TO DATE

To keep up to date on other activities and events throughout the local British community please visit the Links Page of our website www.sarasotabritishclub.com



Thank you!

The editor wishes to thank all the club members who have contributed to this edition.

Also, many thanks to Mr. Steve Pankhurst who so graciously offered to edit the Newsletter in April.



The Peak District, England; Olga Stokes photo

Sarasota British Club name badges

Please obtain Club badges directly from **Sarasota Trophy, 6601 Superior Ave, Sarasota, FL 34321. Phone 941 921 4339.**

- \$8 plus 56c tax for badge with magnet
- \$6 plus 42c tax for badge with pin (no magnet)

Badges can be collected in person (M – F 8.30 – 5pm, Sat 9am – noon) or shipped to your home for \$3.75.

SARASOTA BRITISH CLUB BOARD OF DIRECTORS FOR 2020

President	Paul Wilkinson	240-432-2851
Vice President	Paul Cassidy	248-756-0010
Treasurer	Peter Stokes	941-536-4408
Secretary	Kevin Clayton	941-744-7863
Membership	David Welch	941-210-4455
Newsletter Editor	Olga Stokes	941-536-4408
Website Liaison	Mark Malkasian	941-445-2890
Director at Large 1	Christine Green	941-914-2463
Director at Large 2	Karen Clayton	941-592-8691
Director at Large 3	Vivienne Sivak	703-626-3562
Director Emeritus	Sandra Cherry	941-921-3162

Don't forget that Sarasota British Club is on Facebook. The Club's logo is the profile picture. Check out numerous photos from recent events.

Why not "friend" us for another way of keeping in touch with the Club and its members; you can add your event photos to the wall.