

GASS WEBSITE VOLUME THREE

Oct 2012 to AGM 2016

OCTOBER

Tuesday 2nd October

Venue - Roffen Club

Visit by 'Polar' and famous explorer and motivational speaker (and mate of Brian's) - Jason De Cartret

Jason and Brian worked together in Operation Raleigh many years ago and Jason has gone on to become a world famous explorer and speaker. (Brian on the other hand has remained a useless waste of space and gone no further at all)

In December 2011 extreme adventurer Jason went to Antarctica to break the World Record for making the fastest journey from the coast of Antarctica to the South Pole – a journey of around 1,000 miles. The team shattered the old record of two days 21 hours and 21 minutes (which by the way was Jason's own record, I mean how crazy is that??) with a new record of one day 15 hours and 54 minutes - slightly faster than **Tucker Sno-Cats used on the 1955-58 Commonwealth Trans-Antarctic Expedition** (and DO check out that link and see their vehicles) led by Dr Vivian Fuchs and Sir Edmund Hillary. The clue to their timings is the term 1955-1958! May I just repeat - our man did it in one day 15 hours 54 minutes. Jason achieved this World Record in his specially designed truck POLAR.

Jason brought POLAR down, showed us around the car, and over dinner in the restaurant he will told us all about his experiences.



Jason showed us a short video and some photos to back up the chat.

There used to be a link here to a Discovery Channel video on YouTube, but they forced it to be taken down, sadly.

As you can see from Jason's biog below - he had a lot to talk about!!

(and note he is in the £1000-£3000 price band so once he has spoken we are totally broke!!!!!! Thank goodness he has extremely kindly agreed to do it for friendship, old times sake, food, booze and introductions to any passing single birds!)

<http://www.gordonpoole.com/Jason-De-Carteret.aspx>

Many thanks to Jason DeCartret for kindly coming down and talking to GASS and not charging us a penny, damn decent!
Good luck on your next amazing undertaking!!!!

NOVEMBER

TUESDAY 6th November

VENUE - THE LOWER BELL P.H Bluebell Hill

www.lowerbell.com

GASS PORTRAIT PHOTOS



Bit like this!

The venue was picked because it is the geographic dead centre for all GASS members in the hope that EVERYONE would turn up. And they did - in spades! Only Stuart (sorry, bit tired) and Alan (bit missing) missed the meeting. They will sadly not have a portrait in the GASS THIRTY YEAR BOOK, not one they will like anyway. As promised it will be the clown face photo or the nude one going in for posterity. To make up for their absence we were lucky enough to

welcome good old Neil and a blast from the past , Brian's guest - John Terry (ex-member, joined 1991).

We were also lucky enough, through Keith's guest at the last meeting, Graham Bridgewater, to have found an excellent photographer to take our portraits for the GASS THIRTY YEAR BOOK. Tony Hucks and Graham set up an professional photographic studio in the corner of the Lower Bell pub , courtesy of Liz the very tolerant landlady. Everyone was processed with amazing speed and the outcome is below. The plan is to send you out a CD with your 4-5 mugshots on, you pick your favourite, let me know, and that is the one for the book. In the meantime take a look at the options.....

Many thanks to Anthony Hucks for the shots. Anthony can be seen at www.anthonyhucksphotography.com and if you want proper copies, call him.

HERE WE ALL ARE.... first the normal shots in black & white

These are the BLACK AND WHITE versions of the two main shots that Tony took of each of us. He also did COLOUR,

I have included some different comparisons at the bottom of this page so we can vote on which we want in the book.

When you get your CD with your personal shots on you may prefer a different one, just let me know.

These are the unabridged versions for a first look! Frankly we don't look that bad. Well done Tony, sick purse, cows ear.









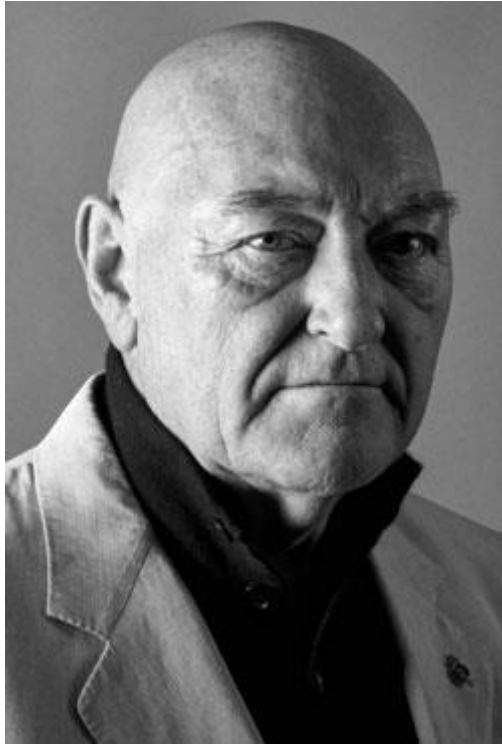
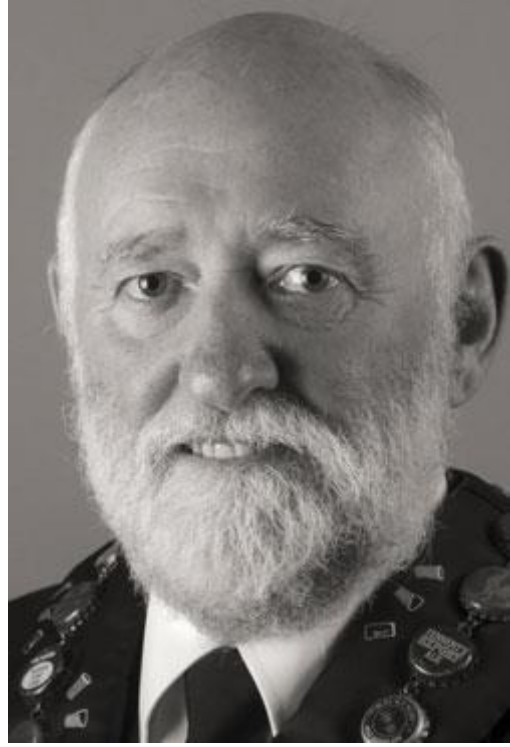
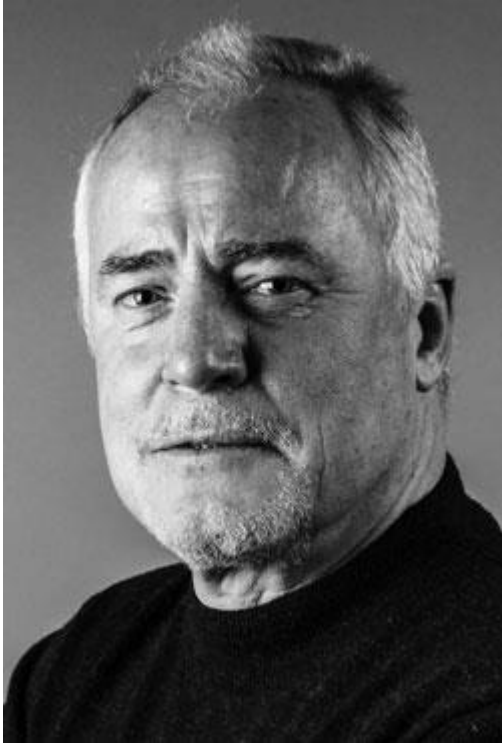


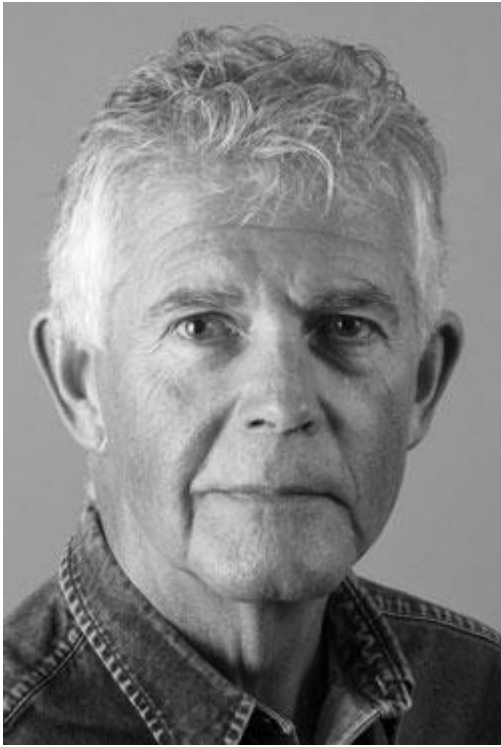


NEXT THE MORE ARTISTIC SHOTS

Bit more of a close up. see what you think of these examples....

We could do the book shots in this fashion.







THE FINAL CHOICE IS..... do you prefer colour?





AND LAST BUT NOT LEAST - The man himself, JT and
his amazing helmet!
Bastard got the best shot of the lot!



Once again, thanks to Tony!
www.anthonyhucksphotography.com

Once the photos were done we went on to scoff. During the excellent meal we actually had a productive meeting. First on the agenda was a grateful thank-you to Tony for taking the photos. Many thanks! Second was railroading Graham Bridgewater into membership. Graham was proposed by Keith and seconded by Nick and was welcomed unanimously into the fold. The first new member since 2007.

The next matter was obtaining a general vote of support for the meetings being organised out of the veritable flood of suggestions coming in - who said we can't think of something new every month after thirty years of GASS? The meeting voted in favour of all the suggestions currently on the list for 2012/13 which include:- UP at The 02, Scottish Country Dancing, The Cube, Bullwhip Skills, Dominatrix Training, View from The Shard and Axe Throwing.

Two new ideas were mooted, JB has a plan for a unique Rum Punch evening where we learn to slice coconuts in half with a machete, then mix a rum punch and drink it from our nuts. Chris has made contact with a Kensei Taiko expert who will teach us Japanese Drumming. Which just leaves August!

John then made an impassioned plea for everyone to consider the next AGM, despite the fact that we are still tanned from the last one. JB is investigating The Algarve. Make of that what you will.

On that note the meeting ended and we retired to the bar.

CHRISTMAS

Tuesday 4th December

UP A THE O2 - EMIRATES CABLE CAR - DINNER

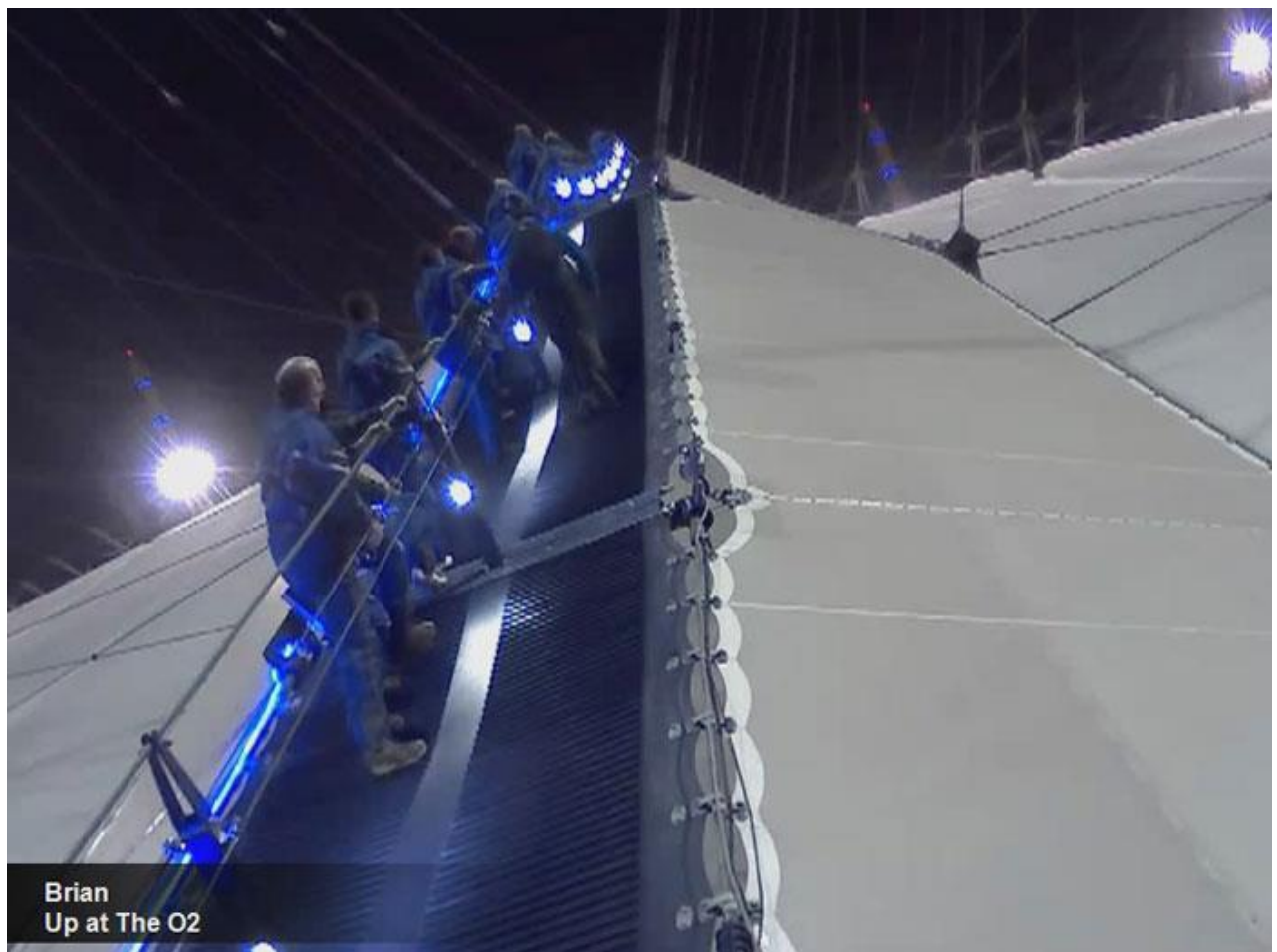
<http://www.theo2.co.uk/upattheo2>

We met at The Roffen for a Coach ride up to the O2 Arena. A very good turnout with guest Miles Henslow, plus a celebrity appearance by Neil Roger, sadly missed were Tony, Phil C (both in Dubai), Len off sick, Stuart working too hard as always, and John Terry just plain lost.

Once there we sank just a couple of pints and made our way to UP AT THE O2 where we were briefed on the massive undertaking that faced us. Sadly during the briefing one of number decided it was politic to write TOSSEY on one of the waiver forms and then to muck about with the fittings in the disabled toilet. The head honcho strode into the changing room, leapt manfully onto a bench and in a loud voice announced that "None of you lot are climbing tonight - you are all drunk and badly behaved". This did come as a bit of a surprise as it takes a shed load more than two pints of Fosters to get us drunk, but wiser heads decided not to pursue that avenue with the outraged boss-man. Instead the Upergruppenfuehrer asked the two guilty parties to own up, and Hew put his mitt in the air, not for one transgression, but both! He was immediately offered up as a sacrificial lamb, if we left him behind could we all be let off and allowed to climb - please sir, please!. Fortunately sense prevailed, not something that usually happens with Hew around, but a suitably chastened Hew was finally allowed to accompany the team up the sheer face of the O2 at last. He never did explain what happened in the loo.



Once on the climb itself we had a great time - great weather, a bit cold but at least it wasn't raining. Very steep, wonderful views.





The team at the Summit



After the climb we had a couple more beers to while a bit of time away before the second highlight of the night - a trip over the brand new Emirates Air Line, the amazing cable car over the Thames. A quick five minute walk to the ticket office to find disaster waiting. The fabled organisational abilities of the Managing Director came crashing down in flames.



The flipping Emirates Air Line closes at 8.00pm - would you Adam & Eve it????? Two recces, not one, two, and he never noticed that it closed at 8.00 in the winter. TOSSER. To make matters worse John Brice very kindly tried to cheer up

said Tosser with a kind reminder that we now shared that 'Can't organise a piss up in a Brewery feeling'. Nice one. That made me feel a lot better.

Everyone was very nice about it, especially Andy who hates heights. Having sunk another couple of pints to ease the disappointment we made our way to a lovely private room at GAUCHO in the O2, a top quality steak restaurant, where we dined royally.



Chariman Brice reminded everyone that it was KILTS for January, so try and buy, beg, borrow or steal one for the Scottish Country Dancing if you possibly can as it will just make the evening so much funnier.

JANUARY

COOK YOUR OWN INDIAN MEAL Stockbury

Idea and Organiser - Chris

An excellent turnout at the Indian at the old Little Chef on the A249, Stockbury Valley
(the name of which cannot be mentioned for legal reasons to do with the Stockbury Gardening Society annual piss/punch up)

The new owners are great guys , really good fun and a very nice restaurant.

The plan was to split us into groups of four, the first group then took orders from the next group and went into the kitchen to cook their orders.

Cooking just main courses and breads only takes a few minutes and so the first shift went smoothly.

Needless to say by the time the second group was cooking things were beginning to fall apart. HUNGER had intervened!

CHEATING soon followed, with dishes being hi-jacked on the way to the table, BAD TEMPER followed hard on cheating's heels.

People changed groups, ate each others food, and the whole thing fell apart.

FISTICUFFS were narrowly avoided - and I will come back to fisticuffs!

First a few photos.....



Service with a smile, this being the first group to cook.

If you'd seen these same chefs and hour later, still not fed, it was a different story!



Two



Chicken Jalfrazi, one Garlic and Coriander Naan, and a deep fried Crocodile - and make it snappy!



A bit more



Cheese in the grins please!



Great food, amazing chefs, and it all



worked out in the end when the REAL chefs stepped in and cooked up a whole mess of delicious victuals for the hungry ones remaining.

Now, back to the fisticuffs!

At the start of the meeting Chris explained why he had a large hole in his bonce, all related to his spending New Years Eve with the Stockbury Gardening Society. When will that man steer clear of such a rough crowd, these gardening society do's almost always end up this way - but he never learns!!!

Nick failed to explain why he had a massive incisor issue.

Alana did explain why he had two cracked ribs from a skiing accident. Brian did explain why he was limping from a wrenched toe (from climbing into the bath!).

However, Hew won the self-inflicted wound of the month competition by a country mile.

Hew was not satisfied with equalling Alana's two broken ribs, he chucked in a badly fractured pelvis as well. This explained his interesting grey colouring.

Hew had come a cropper carrying ski's to the bus home, upended in the middle of the road, miles from any snow.

Hew being Hew had eschewed the surgeons urgent suggestion that he have something done about the pelvis - plates, screws, you know the sort of thing.

Instead he opted for three weeks bed rest to allow the damaged pelvis to knit together, except he missed out the 'bed' and the 'rest' bit,

thus ensuring that the pelvic fracture was kept in a state of permanent movement, with the accompanying agony being the end result.

To say he was in pain was an understatement. Chris was miffed at having his wound upstaged.

Months without any good wounds, and five come along together!

N.B: I stress that the line above says Hew was IN pain, not Hew was A pain. However, he did add £100 to the bill by drinking sherry to dull said pain.



Looking good guys!

Many thanks to the owners and chefs for their tolerance, skill and good humour.

Great food, great decor, great people!

FEBRUARY

BOUNCY BOXING

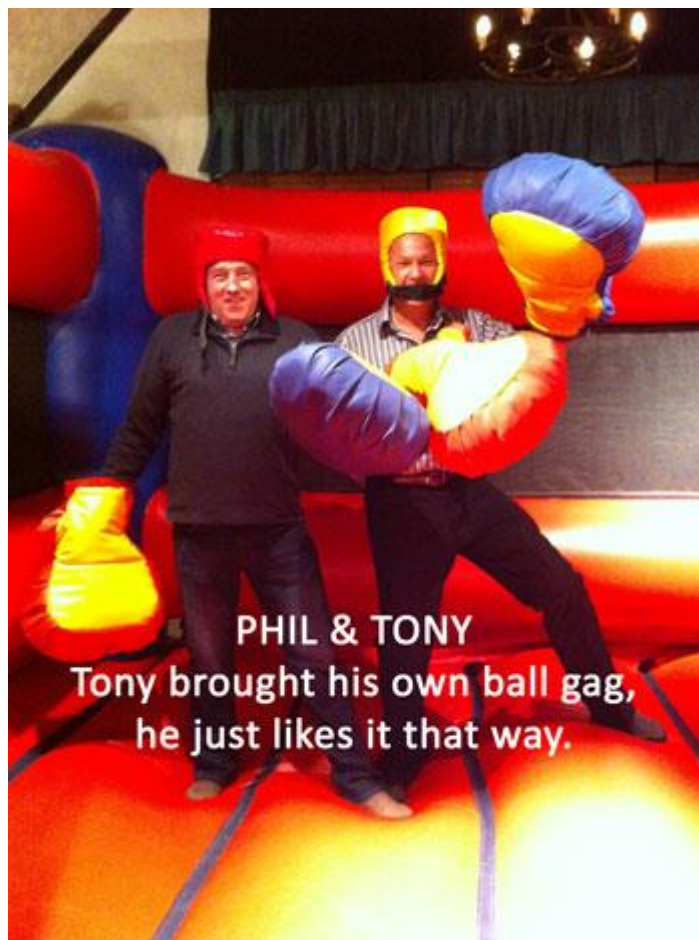
The Roffen Suite

Sadly, the original plan to compete in "The Cube" of TV gameshow fame was cancelled at very short notice.

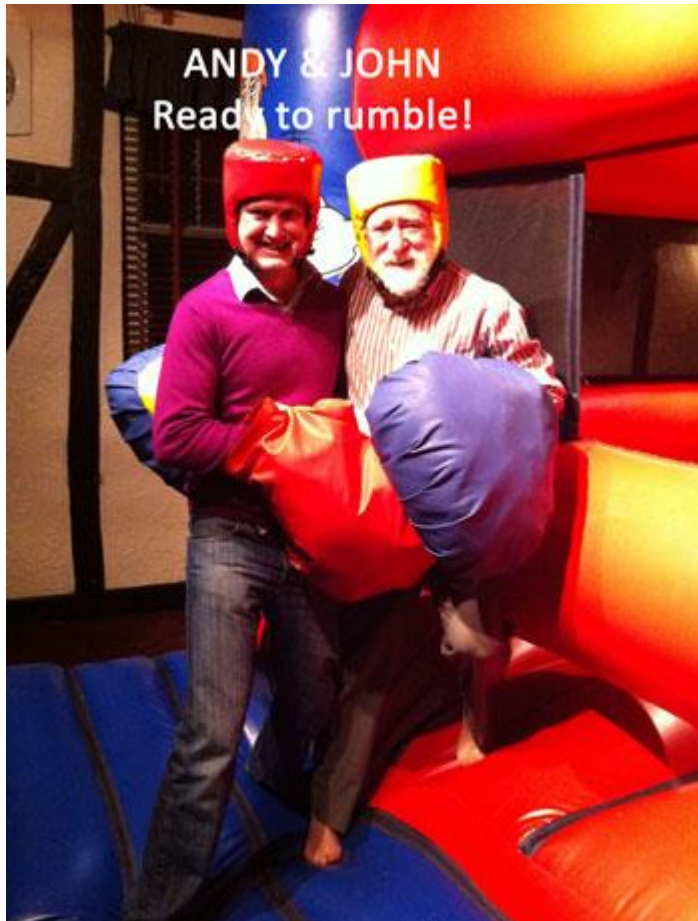
Tony quickly replaced it with Bouncy Boxing and a Curry Buffet at The Roffen.

Brian added an evening of articles, anecdotes and pen pictures for the GASS book.

The best way to explain bouncy boxing is to show some pictures.

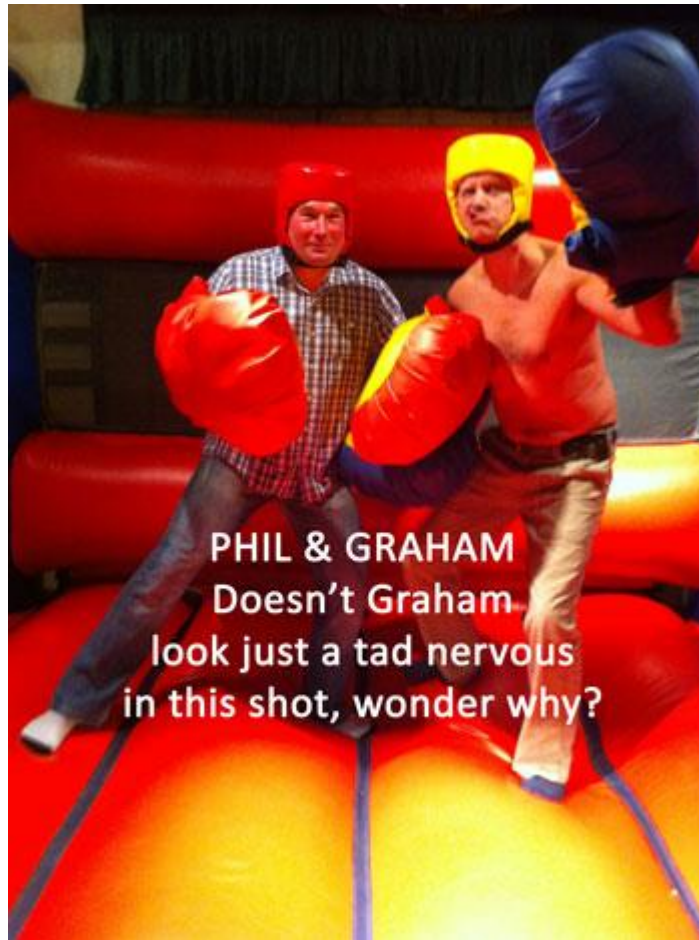


ANDY & JOHN
Ready to rumble!



IAN & GARY POSING





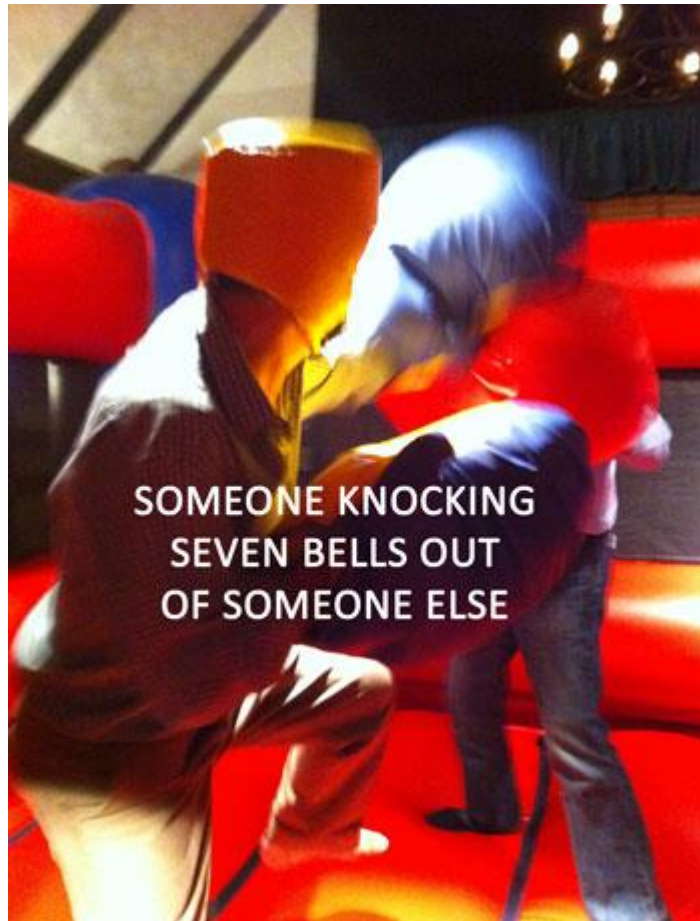
PHIL & GRAHAM
Doesn't Graham
look just a tad nervous
in this shot, wonder why?



PETE ABOUT TO BE
KNOCKED
UNCONCIOUS!

**ANOTHER PILED RIVER PUNCH
ON ITS WAY HOME!**

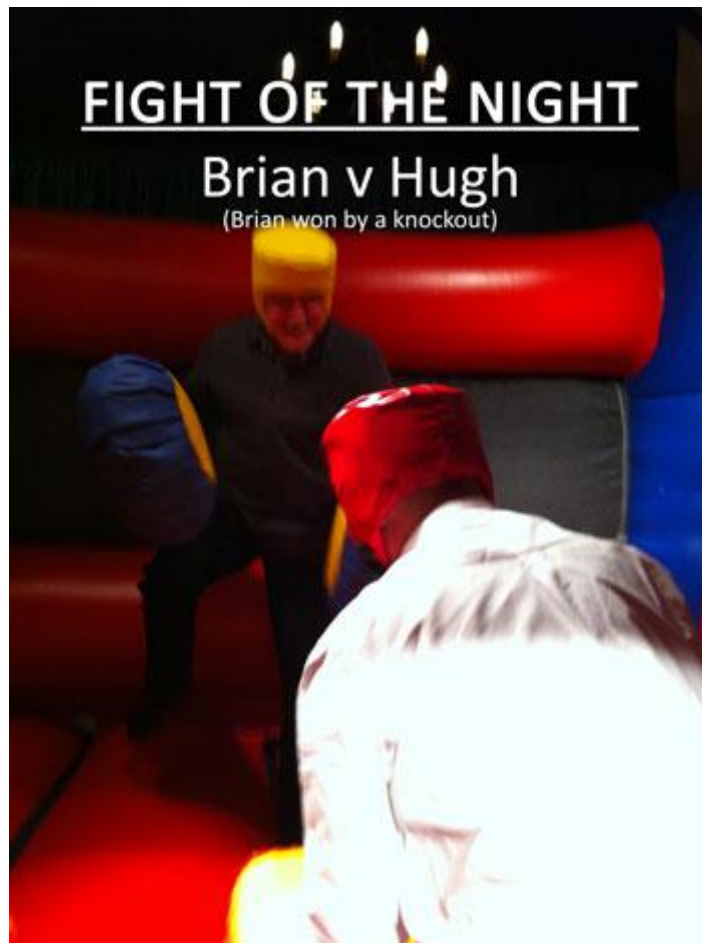




SOMEONE KNOCKING
SEVEN BELLS OUT
OF SOMEONE ELSE



STEVE BELL ASSAULTING
AN INNOCENT PASSER BY



It was hard and smelly work, and Tony did his best to organise a reasonable knock-out competition. Sadly, just before the final, an overpowering smell of curry distracted the fighters and the whole thing fell apart. Good fights though, well fought everyone!

The GASS BOOK took up the rest of the evening.
Brian is still working on it.
PLEASE GET YOUR PERSONAL PEN PICTURES IN - OR I WILL WRITE THEM FOR YOU!
Be assured - you won't want that!

MARCH

WHIPS & WHIP MAKING

The Roffen Club - Dinner after.

With Alex Jacob, London's leading whip maker.

www.cobrawhips.com

See his video right here...

<http://youtu.be/xASYC6PSq1k>

Alex very kindly came all the way down from London to give us a talk and a demonstration. We allowed about an hour for that bit of the meeting before going into the restaurant for dinner, after all, how interesting could whip making and whip cracking be? WRONG! We should have allowed Alex the whole evening and had sandwiches!!!

Alex started in the Piano Bar with everyone seated around him, all within easy range of the 12' bullwhip he soon started wielding with scant regard for those heads above which the 'cracker' broke the sound barrier (for the uninitiated, that is the sound you hear). He went on to explain that some people foolishly think that the safest place to be when faced with a man armed with a whip is to stand right next to him. At the risk of repeating myself, WRONG! Hugh jumped up to test the theory, stood beside Alex, Alex cracked the whip and Hugh jumped a clear foot in the air having been hit roundly and soundly on the arse.

Having explained the theory, shown us the technique, whipped Hugh's arse, deafened Pete, Gary and Steve with overhead thunderclaps (well not deafened as such, bit late for that to be honest, old age had already managed that particular trick quite well), he took us up to The Roffen Suite to give everyone else a go. This is where the time appreciation aspect went out the window. Alex kept up such a stream of witty banter that nobody actually got to whipcrackaway, Steve did make an attempt, but Alex kept cracking jokes (geddit, cracking!), so much so that eventually the Head Chef stuck his head out the kitchen and made it quite plain that 'dinner was served'.

Now as Alex had a long journey home, and it was probably not a good idea to crack whips after a long liquid dinner, and that he probably only had one or two practise whips anyway, it seemed fair to presume that whip-cracking was over. WRONG! Alex made it perfectly plain that he intended to get a few down him, enjoy dinner, then re-open The Roffen Whipperama afterwards. This he duely did and loads got their chance to practise, plus they got their chance to smash vases, prune the hanging baskets, cut through high level wiring, and generally cause the sort of mayhem that four drunks with 12' bullwhips can cause in a confined space.

Great evening, wish we had allocated more time to Alex who was a star. Photos below.....



Alex starting the instruction process



Steve just trying to get hold of the whip



Finally! It's my turn.



Giving it some welly.



Ron, warming up for a cracker



And letting rip!



Pete, pruning, slashing, vasing, anything but whip cracking.

Great evening!

MAY

THE VIEW FROM THE TOP - OF THE SHARD

A trip to the viewing gallery at the top of THE SHARD as one group.
**Meet at The Roffen 4.30 - Sorry that two London ones have come up together,
just like buses!**

Coach from The Roffen at 5.00pm up to London Bridge.

Up the Shard at about 6.30-7.30pm.

Lovely Dinner at BREW WHARF in Borough Market afterwards.

The tickets for this are all booked.

www.theviewfromtheshard.com

<http://www.brewwharf.com/>

A more or less full house met dead on time at The Roffen for the coach to The
Shard.

Even Andy (vertigo sufferer) went up, and everyone was suitably impressed. The
weather was perfect and the view amazing.

WE HAD OUR PHOTO TAKEN ON THE WAY UP,



AND AGAIN ON THE WAY DOWN



Just in case anyone misses Andy, he is the pair of eyes, bottom left. Don is the two fingers on Ian's shoulder, Tony is the big moon faced git on the right blocking out the sun. No way he was being sidelined!

Peter Farrer and Keith Evans are missing altogether as they jumped the queue and went up without tickets!

After the ride to the top, we enjoyed a great meal at the Brew Wharf and then a safe journey home.

JUNE

AXE & KNIFE THROWING

Stede Court Estate

We retained the services of 'Little' John Taylor, the UK's leading knife thrower. John very kindly came down from Yorkshire to teach us Knife and Tomahawk throwing.

He did a great job - just a shame about our natural cack-handedness.

<http://knifethrowing.co.uk/links/profiles/little-john-taylor/>



"Little" John is a tall, kind, patient Yorkshireman - we are of mixed height, normally kind to animals but not to each other, and far from patient. John left us a broken man, having failed to pass on his undoubted skills to any but Steve Bell. We were almost useless, but we enjoyed lobbing various pointed objects in the vague direction of targets the size of barn doors, from a range of about four feet.

John started us off with small multi bladed axes, easier to throw because of their ability to stick in from almost any angle. We all mastered them in groups of five and were then allowed to move on to throwing knives. Harder to master as they only stick in point first, but within a short time most of us were succeeding with most throws. Range was increased with the grip changing from holding the knife handle to holding the point. Everything depends on the number of rotations in the air you see.

Peter Farrer says he was promoted straight from the little axes to the thumping great wooden handled choppers because he was so good. John said Pete was so bad at the small axes there was no point him even trying the knives. As I said earlier, John is a tall, kind, patient Yorkshireman - Pete is a partly deaf and blind mixed up fantasist, who do you believe?

In the final, decided by throwing at a playing card, Steve Bell was the clear winner. He and Phil Ralph managed to tie in the first round and Steve got an amazing three axes onto one playing card to win the play-off by 3-0. Runners up were Chris, Tony & Graham. The remainder of us were pants!

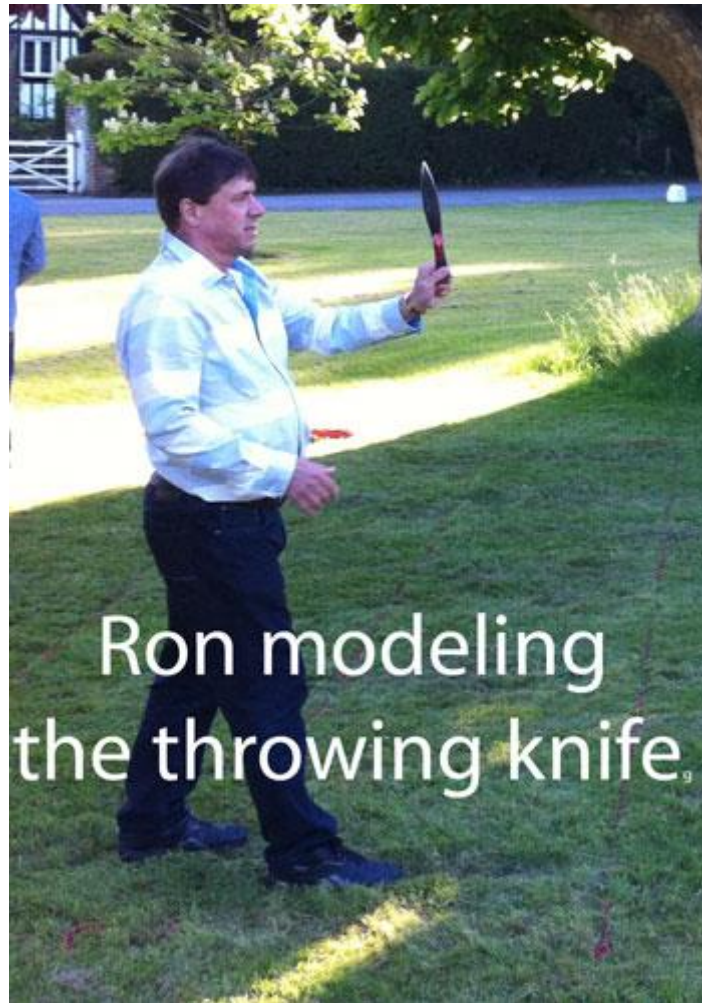


The throwing commences with the multi blade axes - with at least one in three weapons bouncing off the target and flying back at you!



Moving on to the much harder throwing knives.





You can see the difference. The axes have points all round the compass - the knife with just one point.



A convincing and amazing win by Steve, and yes, the picture is genuine, he really did get three axes onto one card.
(he was supposed to put one in each card by the way, but who cares).





And finally, a great big thank you to "Little John", kind and patient until the end - when he lost it completely and had to be taken home to the pub!



Why do they call him
"The Mad Axeman"

Seems a trifle unfair!

Seriously, many thanks John for a great evening.

Thanks to Chef Carol for the food, thanks to Stede Court Estate residents for putting up with us.

Another great GASS meeting!

JULY

KENSEI TAIKO JAPANESE DRUMMING Stockbury Village Hall and The Harrow PH Tuesday 2nd July

The ancient art and the awesome power of Japanese Taiko drumming - wield the bachi!

We met at The Harrow in Stockbury from 6.30 on and downed a few beers to loosen up our drumming arms.

Wandered over to the Village Hall at 7.30, only a few minutes late, but you need that beer, which most of us took with us.

To be met with - an amazing array of drums, and a great team from Kenseitaiko.

The guys gave us an initial display - and then we got started ourselves.
I would have made a video but it would have blown your speakers, so be content with the photos.

Just looking at them hurts your ears.....





As you can see it was like something from primary school, just a bunch of kids
bashing seven bells out of seven drums.
No discipline, no rhythm, just bash, bash, bash, bang, bash, wallop.

Thank goodness we got another show at the end to demonstrate the real power of
the Bachi.



Thanks to our drummers, thanks to The Harrow for a great dinner.

Thanks to the ladies who gave up their slot in the Village Hall.

Thanks to Chris for the organisation.

AUGUST

FLYBOARDING AT LONDON DOCKLANDS Tuesday 6th August

Phil and Brian did a recce to Docklands and met the nice people who run it.

Below are photos and a video of the two people we watched. Complete amateurs and they only had 20 minutes each.

One was a very timid girl who was not keen. The other was her boyfriend who you can see really cracked it, so it is eminently do-able.



Brian,
Phil
R,
Ian,

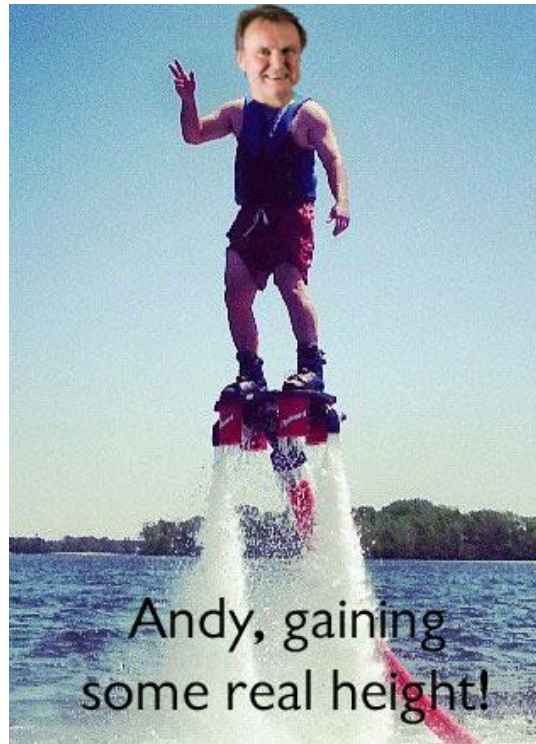


Graham, Hugh, Chris, Andy, Ray, JB , Keith, Pete, Ron, Nick, Gary, Steve B (15) were up for it.

The people who run it, Joanne and Marc, are great, very calm, very good instructors, very good kit.

http://www.flyboarding.co.uk/london_booking_page.html

Here are some photos from the day itself.....



Andy, gaining
some real height!



Brian, the only true pro!



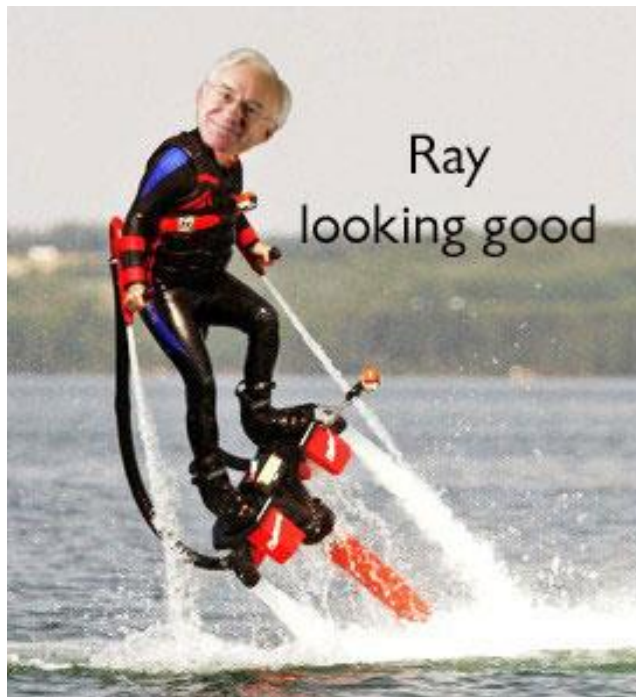
Pete, showing us young'uns how to do it.



Phil showing off



Ray
looking good



Gary, the only
one to pull!



OK, OK, you may have guessed that the pics are fixed,
but only a bit.

Pete never actually got up that high and Phil was really
falling off!

OK, the truth is the bastards at the Flyboarding firm went bust two weeks
before we were due to fly!!!!

GASS has returned to it's roots, back in the old days we used to lose £750
every meeting investing in shares.

(we really did lose that sort of money!)

Now we just lose the occasional £750 down-payment on an expensive day.
Hell of shame, as we all really wanted to do it!

So instead we all went down the pub and drowned our sorrows.

SEPTEMBER

THE AGM

VILAMOURA - PORTUGAL

14 GASS members went for a week of sun, sea and sand. Nice hotel, nice location.

As you can see from the photo below, we dressed for the occasion in the evenings,



And then relaxed on the beach, undressed, during the day. Which look do you prefer?



To be honest we didn't look like that all the time, we actually spent 99% of the whole week relaxing round the pool at our very pleasant hotel. Amazingly the hotel was actually full, and from that fact one would normally presume an 0600 attack on the Kraut Towel Division of the Sunbed Assault Brigade, but weirdly no. Leisurely breakfast, wander onto the pool deck around 11'ish, select a group of 14 beds near each other, and Bob was your proverbial uncle. Strange people golfers, it seemed that apart from us 98% of the hotel guest were either golfers or possibly Vampires, in any case they plainly did not like the sun.

The plan prior to our spending a week in one place, seven whole days as opposed to the normal 3-4, was that some activities would be arranged before going out there. That plan changed to arranging the activities on arrival. That plan changed when we got there and morphed into us spending days 1-2-3-4-5 talking about activities, and then cramming a couple into the last two days. Best laid plans etc!

Part of the reason for the lack of activities (as opposed to the lack of plans, of which there were many), was that it was so damn relaxing just chilling by the pool. Vilamoura is a very nice place. Big enough to offer lots of choice by way of bars, restaurants and clubs, crowded enough for everywhere to be buzzing but not so bad you could not get a table, trendy enough to have an upper end and a lower end in restaurants, in fact a real Goldilocks venue, not too much, not too little. It suited GASS down to the ground and so we simply went with the flow. Lunch at beach bars, dinner in various restaurants, meet at The Cabin Bar for drinks after. No complaints. Despite that there were some things we did that are worthy of note.....

PHIL RALPH'S BEACH OLYMPICS

Phil was tasked with arranging the Beach Olympics, and boy!, did he arrange! First he bought up every beach toy within 20 miles, then he prevaricated for what seemed like days. "Let's do it now - no let's not do it at all - it's too windy - it's too hot - it's the wrong sort of sand - nobody loves me - I'm going to eat worms..... and so on, hour after hour. Finally we could not stand it any longer and picked him up, picked up all his toys and strode manfully down to the beach to Olympicasize the hell out of the place.

Sadly, one among us could not stride manfully. Brian had arrived on holiday with a badly sprained ankle and was having serious difficulty striding at all, more a sort of weird hobble. Andy very kindly took pity on him and out of the kindness of his heart (and out of his own wallet which GASS really must refund!) paid to hire a wheelchair for Brian. Sheer luxury! The guys wheeled him onto the sand, through the sand, onto the foreshore, and straight into the waves. Much to the consternation of the locals who actually started to get up to effect a rescue attempt. Obviously Portugal has a better record in how they treat their 'Raspberry Ripples'!

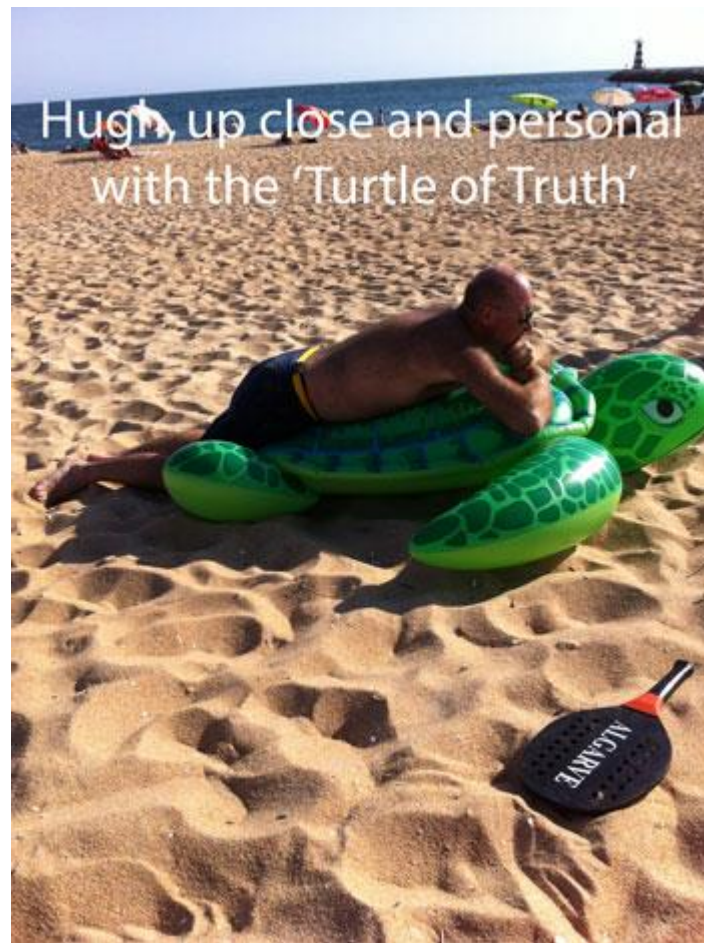
Having a ready made umpire in Brian the games got underway. The opening ceremony consisted of Phil laying down the most arcane, convoluted, complicated, asinine, daft, illogical and unworkable (get my point?) rules you have ever heard for Beach Football, Beach Rounders, Bat & Ball, Throw the Ball in the Sea and Chase it, Push the Ripple in the Sea again, and some more games too difficult to describe. The results were, predictably, confused, contested, argued and disputed. Here Phil came into his own. To describe him as controlling is an understatement. He took CHARGE! He DECIDED!, He ADJUDICATED!. We were still none the wiser, but had a real laugh. Many thanks Phil. Many thanks must also go to 'The Turtle of Truth' without whose wise and sagacious words we would have fallen on each other in a massive punch-up. Who would have thought such wisdom would come from a big green blow up toy that only communicated through telepathy with Phil, truly amazing.



Beach Games,
under gamesmaster Phil



More beach games,
with a ripple





WHEELCHAIR ANTICS

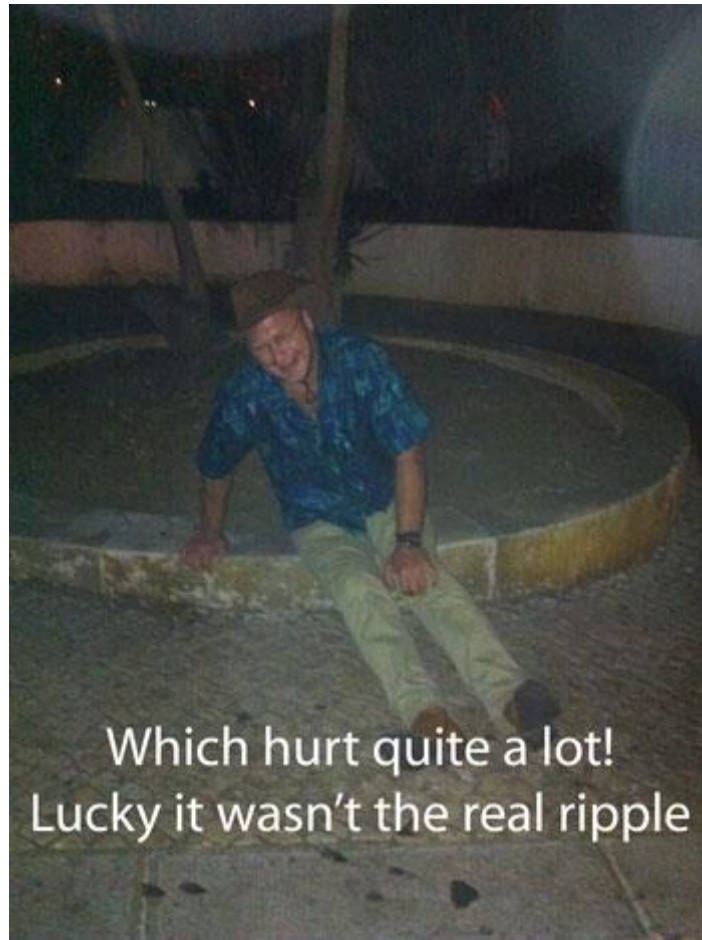
Once the Beach Olympics were over and the sun went down, it was out on the town. By this time Brian was losing interest in his wheelchair, partly due to the increasing number of attempts on his life. The attempt to push him down a steep hill into the harbour was a deal breaker. However, this did not put Hugh off having a go. Sadly his bottle went at 30mph and he bailed. Fortunately 'Diggerland' trousers are made of sterner stuff than tarmac, and other than a dislocated kneecap Hugh was fine. Certainly fine enough to persuade Brian to trust him to push again, this time straight into the oncoming traffic on the main road. Car after car swerved aside until one just stopped dead, flashed his lights and honked his horn. Brian sat stoically thinking Hugh would give up and push him to the side. No, Hugh had left minutes earlier, leaving Raspberry sitting apparently defiant in the middle of a main road. Luckily Hugh took pity on his charge and came and got him, just to race him round a pedestrian precinct like a demented loon. Gary was nearby and asked a Doorman at a club if they had wheelchair access and the Doorman replied "If you mean for those two f**king idiots, then no chance". Seconds later Hugh and Ripple appeared out of a alley, screaming like banshees (well Brian was), raced the ramp and disappeared inside the club before the Doorman could draw a breath!!

The postscript to this story is that in fact Brian had a completely ruptured Achilles tendon the whole time. He had had it for three weeks, he had driven 2,000 miles,

walked about 50 miles, and it was not diagnosed until another three weeks later. Some complimented him on his high pain threshold, most just thought he was a know-it-all dickhead who did not trust doctors. The truth was it was misdiagnosed at Hospital and the poor man simply did his best to hide his pain and struggle through until the final complex operation to stitch him back together and enjoy eight weeks in a cast! Serves him right! On the plus side he made the AGM!



HUGH, suffering a small
wheelchair based incident

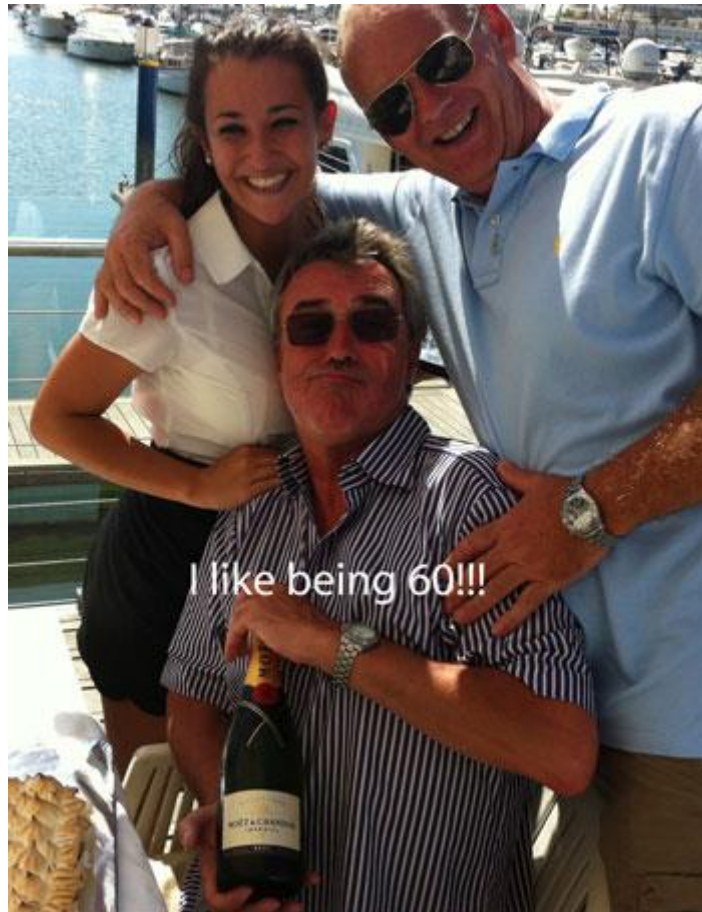


STEVE BELL'S 60TH

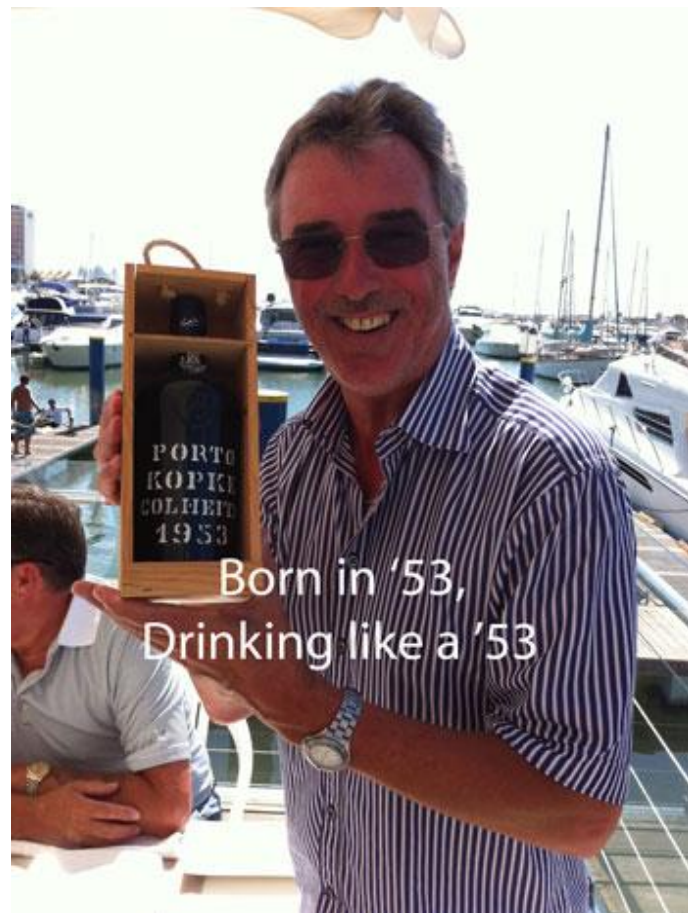
The next major event, some would say THE major event was Steve's 50th. Steve selected an excellent Tapas restaurant for lunch at his expense, and what an excellent lunch it was. 'Dinger Bell' did us proud. "DING-DONG!" was the phrase of the day. The staff were excellent (see photo below, the food was excellent and the pud, in the shape of an enormous Baked Alaska was, you guessed it, excellent! Steve happily posed with his birthday bottle of cheap Port, expensively sign written to look like it had been bottled on his birthday. No seriously, well done to Pete, Nick and John for finding it with an hour to spare. GASS only had 30 years notice of this momentous day and it still went down to the wire.

At the table we ran a sweepstake on the average age of GASS members and the answers ranged far and wide with the correct answer being 57.9. Gary won the £50, which he gave to Nick, ostensibly for the whip, which shows just how trusting Gary is of Blackheart and his understanding of Whip-based issues. Andy was still suffering from his appalling stewardship of the previous whip when he was persuaded to spend everything in his possession on just six members in his group, thus depriving the others of half a glass of Shandy each, he never heard then end of it, so everyone was running whip-shy, except he of the Rhino-hide skin who simply folded up the cash and put it away, for later, of course.





I like being 60!!!



Born in '53,
Drinking like a '53





SHIP AHOY - RALPH!

We also enjoyed a day out on a sailing ship - well most of us enjoyed it. All sat firmly still as it tossed and turned in six foot waves, hands gripping the rigging, one hour up the coast, one hour back down, great fun. Must do it more often. Phil C particularly enjoyed it and spent almost all the time standing on the pointy bit, occasionally leaning right over, possibly to look at the anchor, which for some reason he had christened Ralph. This was only a couple of days after a smaller group had done much the same on a 'Marlin Fishing Trip', a local Portuguese tourist joke where they take you out in a small boat, motor 10 miles, bob around, explain how difficult it is to catch Marlin, then motor back. Again, un-missable. Hugh particularly enjoyed that trip, and he too kept looking into the sea in search of the elusive Ralph.



AND FINALLY - THE AGM

In the aptly named Navy Bar, a nice walk away on the front. We did create a stir. It had taken a bit of cajoling to get everyone downstairs in Naval Uniforms, but don't they look dashing. Many a tourist mistook us for the crew of a Russian trap steamer, but we soon put them right, sorry madam, just another bunch of English wallies.

The AGM itself was a bit of a quiet event, poor Ron was off sick and so there were no annual accounts, there was an attempt to discuss future meetings but that was adjourned, the Managing Director gave an upbeat assessment of the year gone by which went down well with those who can read without glasses, the great Andy Whip Scandal was raked over again, sleeping on the job was discussed, self-diagnosing medical issues was mentioned (and this is before the real diagnosis of Brian's foot was out), new nicknames for Phil R came up, mainly 'Face', and finally there was a proposal for a GASS 'E' Index (E for eccentricity) with Hugh as the baseline with a maximum of 10. On the bright side we continued to look dashing and attract attention wherever we went.





Right up until somebody took Steve's battery out.



The pressure of being 60 kicks in
for Capn' Steve

Another great year, another great AGM, well done everyone!

Full details on the AGM page, click here - [AGM 2013](#)

OCTOBER

LEARN THE FAMOUS RUGBY HAKA

Tuesday 1 October
Medway Rugby Club

James Potter, a friend of Brian's suggested we learn the famous Maori HAKA,

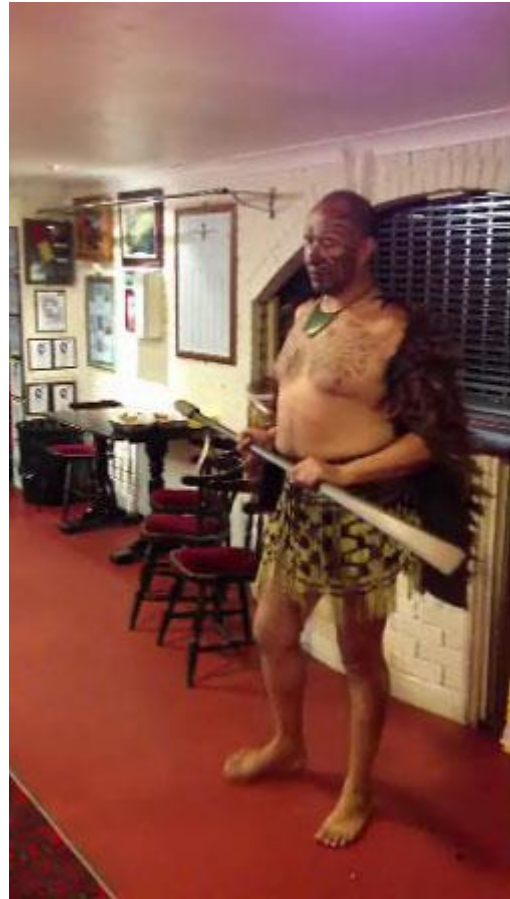
Brian was sadly stricken with a ruptured Achilles tendon and so could not attend.

John Brice kindly stepped in to video the event and write the minutes. Over to John.....

Bruce Simpson is a consultant who works for the New Zealand rugby team as a trainer for the Hakka. He also works for the New Zealand government going around the world spreading the word about the country. He dressed in traditional gear with superbly painted tatoos all over his face and upperbody. He said he stencilled them on before each performance. He told about this history of the various hakkas - there are lots of them - and then got us to run through the traditional one. He trained us in stages and then outlined the movements we needed to undertake. We were pretty poor pupils but surprisingly everyone responded to his instructions. We then went outside to the balcony and performed the whole hakka in one go. (Sadly I thought I was videoing the event but it was only photos, so you have everything I have).

We went inside the club for a meal of cottage pie followed by cheese and biscuits. Medway Rugby Club vice-chairman Mark Marriott led us in a round of rugby songs. The other guest for the evening was Matt Riches - son of Steve. He's a Medway rugby player, referee and coach for the younger players.

Riveting stuff John, factual, yet evocative, beautifully written.



VIDEO OF GASS PERFORMING THE HAKA

(Mr John Brice's agent wishes it known that John was a 'Radio' journalist, not print, and that in normal circumstances he always had a cameraman to do the dirty work)

If you can't see the actual video here on your tablet or phone use this link to access it.

[LINK TO GASS HAKA VIDEO ON YOUTUBE](#)

Oh to have seen you all outside, buck naked but for a reed mini, oiled up,
faces tattooed, pecs pumped,
but no, not to be, gone forever, so sad, soooooooooooooooooo sad!!!!

Maybe next time?

NOVEMBER

BEER TASTING - CANTERBURY

Organiser - John Brice

OK, OK, John has history, but give him (yet another) chance! - This time there will be beer....

TIMINGS

From 1900 - Meet at the Foundry Brewery, White Horse Lane, for samples of ale and a tour of the brewery.

2100 – Move to nearby La Trappiste at 1&2 Sun Street (a two minute walk) for a Belgian beer tasting and supper.

2200 - Return to the Foundry Brewery for final drinks and a GASS panto rehearsal.

For those wanting to travel by train, there is a service which leaves Rochester at 1830. However, the last return train is at 2252.

The Foundry may not be the easiest place in the world to find. Either track it at postcode CT1 2RU or the website below. It appears to be up an alleyway off the High Street. www.thefoundrycanterbury.co.uk

Apparently there was beer.....

But no minutes.....

John can arrange a piss up in a brewery, he just can't document it for posterity.

Shame, but then he is a journalist.

DECEMBER MEETING

OLIVER'S RESTAURANT Rochester

Panto Read Through and Table Magic



An excellent turnout with only Ray & JB missing. Beers in the bar and then through to an excellent 'Read-through' layout of a big open square. Nick explained the format and Del took the floor. Everyone did a sterling job and it was a real laugh.

POINTS TO NOTE

1. You need to sell 5 tickets please, £10 a time.
2. You have 3 tickets so far and another 2 will be posted out in due course.
3. If you don't sell them by New Year then return them or pay up!
4. Rehearsal: SUNDAY 5th Jan 10.30-1.30
Followed by GASS Sunday Lunch (including partners) - £20 a head (incl wine)
A perfect chance to relax, have a bite to eat, and catch up after Christmas.
5. Performance: TUESDAY 7th Jan - Tickets £10 - Doors open 7.30 for Curtains at 8.15.
Audience capacity 120 seated. Snack service on the night.
(Bar opens 6.30 for actors)
6. AFTER-PARTY!: Once it is all over the Cast and close friends (actually the whole audience)

are invite to the after-party (always the best bit). Live Band, dancing, laughter!!!!
May even show the video!

7. COSTUMES: YOU ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR YOUR COSTUME!
Please make a real effort as the wilder and wackier the costumes the funnier it will be.

Hire it, make it, borrow it. Some have more scope than others but please make it happen!

Some guidance is on the CAST LIST below.

8. SCRIPTS & LINES: LEARN YOUR F'ING LINES!!!
You will be allowed to carry your script, but so much better if you actually learn them.
Even better if each group could manage a short private rehearsal beforehand.



The cast working through the script, and learning little things like Widow Skanky
reading out his line

"Everyone knows about your tomfoolery.....TA!..... but I know where he hides his
jewellery"

The 'TA' in the middle being spoken by Tony as in 'thank you', whereas it actually
means TO AUDIENCE.

That was followed by a few tweaks to Ian's camp levels, up a bit, up a bit more, bit more....
Oooh Genie! That's more like Ian love. Now swing the hips.....



Director Del maintaining a sense of humour in the face of the normal GASS 'herding cats' problems.



Mel, with the long blonde hair, doing a great job of blending in as an honorary GASS member and honoured lady member of our cast.

Hugh, dreaming of overcharging GASS with a bottle of Sherry, but holding out against the urge like a true recovered addict. Hold out! Well done!! Oops!



And finally, below, our amazing magician. Many thanks Andy.



GASS PANTO CAST

STEVE RICHES – HIMSELF DEL DELORME – HIMSELF
JOHN BRICE – INTRODUCER
NICK JENKINS - FAIRY 'FAR CANAL'

COSTUMES: Nick to sort out an amazing Fairy costume, hope you still have the white PVC boots!

CINDERELLA

MEL - CINDERELLA
STEVE BELL - THE PRINCE (Berman & Nathan's, uniform of a Captain of Hussars, gold braid, tall bearskin hat, sword, the works)
ANDREW SMITH – UGLY SISTER 1 BRIAN HENSLOW – UGLY SISTER 2
(Andy & Brian are going to compete for the biggest, blowsiest slapper possible, leave that to us, Wendy's Wardrobe here we come!)

ALADDIN

GARY EASDOWN - ALADDIN TONY MANKELOW - WIDOW SKANKEY CHRIS SPREE –
ABANAZAR IAN – GENIE
(Guys, it has to Wendy's Wardrobe for you lot too.... Turbans, big baggy pants, brown oiled skin... go for it).

HUGH – MAGIC DIGGER/WHEELBARROW DRIVER – FULL MONTY STRIPPER
(Hugh, painted up prop wheelbarrow please, and then use your epic imagination for the outfit!)

PHIL RALPH – PRINCESS SHIRL
(Bikini, Manquini, up to you Phil.....)

SNOW WHITE

MEL - SNOW WHITE
JOHN BRICE – WICKED QUEEN (Needs a Wendy's Wardrobe again)

PETE FARRER - HAPPY RON PRICE – GRUMPY STUART GILBERT – SLEEPY DON
PILCHER – DOPEY
GRAHAM BRIDGEWATER – BASHFUL RAY GUTTERIDGE – LAZY KEITH EVANS – MIRROR
LEN SMITH – SNEEZY (SNOW WHITE)
(All wear the White Naval Uniforms, hats and gloves from the AGM please, important for effect)

PHIL COCKERTON – SCENERY SHIFTER LEN SMITH – STAGE SWEEPER
(long brown work coats and flat caps)

Some of you have more difficult costumes than others. Some are happy just to sort it out and hire a funny costume in, paying for it themselves.
If your costume is important and you need financial help, just ask Brian, GASS can't pay for all the costumes but can help.

HAVE A WONDERFUL CHRISTMAS AND NEW YEAR
(and if you want to party - join some GASS members at
The Roffen)

JANUARY MEETING **THE GREAT GASS PANTO!**

A full scale traditional comedy panto at The Roffen for friends and family
In aid of the FACE charity effort, it's the last event, promise!

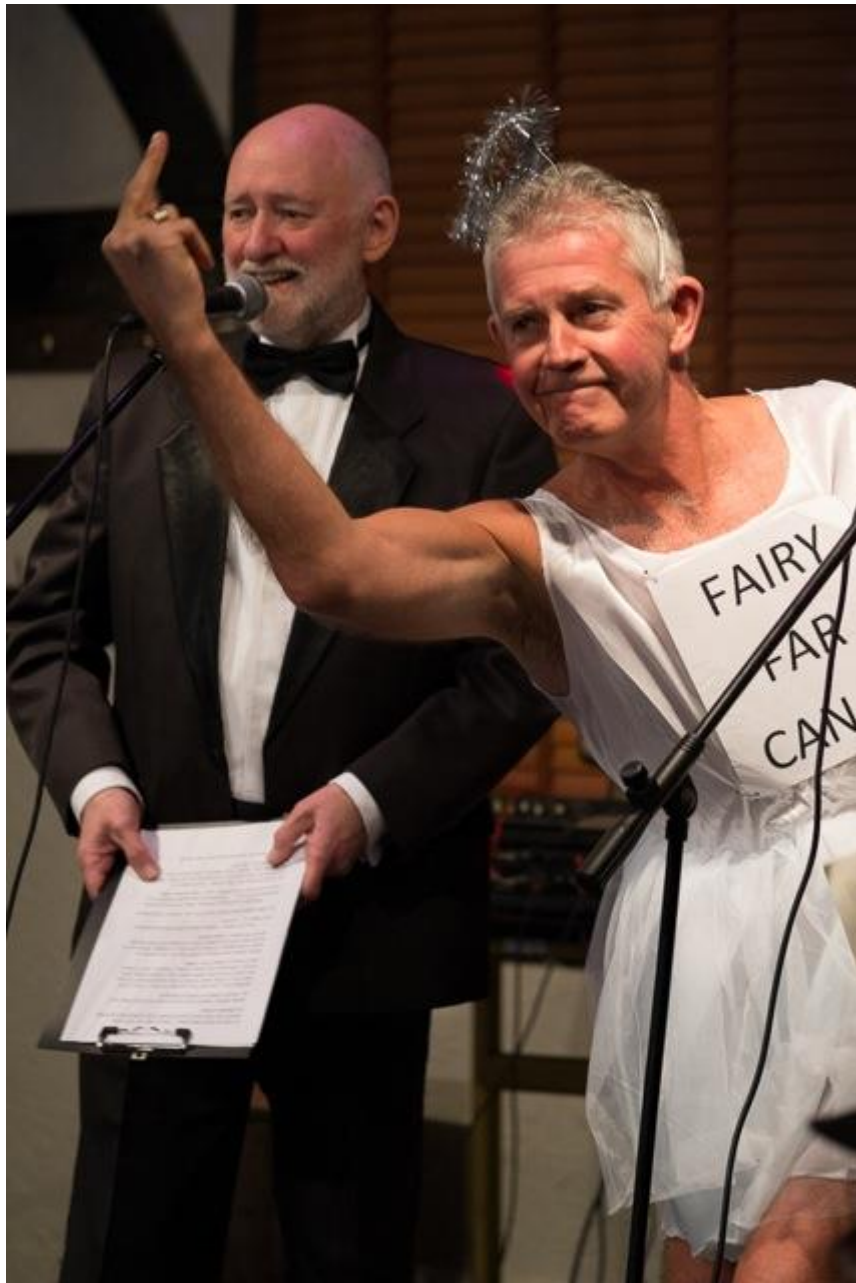
This is what we imagined we would look like



This is what we actually looked like!























and during lunch it was decided to reward Nick for all his hard work...



TICKETS - £10

Everyone entered into the spirit in every way, including selling at least £50 worth of tickets each, so we made over £1,000 for FACE.

THE PERFORMANCE: Tuesday 7th January

Everyone got a part - not actually the part some were expecting as Nick, for reasons only he could fathom, had changed a number of the key parts prior to the rehearsal, but without telling anyone. So actors turned up having hired the costume and learnt their lines, only to find they had been relegated to bit-parts, and vice-versa.

The simple solution was to revert to the original cast list, problem solved. Nick choose the harder approach - "It is a play wot I writ, and it stays as I writ it!". With logic flying out the window we now had Ron promoted from Dwarf number 3 to the lead in Aladdin as Abanazar. Along with problems associated with not knowing the lines and not having a costume, Ron can't say "Abanazar. Odd you might think, after all Abanazar is a simple four syllable word, ab-an-az-ar . To Ron he was sometimes Abanazazaarer, sometimes Abunazzarrerera, sometimes Abnu-ohfuckit!, but never Abanazar. No matter, the evening went wonderfully, we had a ball, the audience seemed to enjoy themselves too.

Enormous thanks to Del and Mel - without whom we could not have pulled it off. Same goes to Nick, whose single handed determination to raise yet more money pulled him off, sorry, pulled him through. And of course, last but not least, our wonderful cast.....

GASS PANTO CAST

STEVE RICHES – HIMSELF DEL DELORME – HIMSELF
JOHN BRICE – INTRODUCER
NICK JENKINS - FAIRY 'FAR CANAL'

CINDERELLA

MEL - CINDERS STEVE BELL - THE PRINCE
PETER FARRER – UGLY SISTER 1 BRIAN HENSLOW – UGLY SISTER 2
(BLOODY TYPE CASTING!)

ALADDIN

GARY EASDOWN - ALADDIN TONY MANKELow - WIDOW SKANKEY RON PRICE –
ABANAZAR IAN – GENIE PHIL RALPH – PRICESS SHIRL
HUGH – MAGIC DIGGER/WHEELBARROW DRIVER and FULL MONTY STRIPPER

SNOW WHITE

MEL - SNOW WHITE JOHN BRICE – WICKED QUEEN ANDY SMITH - THE MIRROR
CHRIS SPREE – GRUMPY STUART GILBERT – SLEEPY DON PILCHER – DOPEY
GRAHAM BRIDGEWATER – BASHFUL LEN SMITH – SNEEZY

PHIL COCKERTON – SCENERY SHIFTER

THE AUDIENCE

Thanks to you too for tolerating - Possible the Worst Panto Ever!



and finally to the GASS band



Sea-sick Steve and his boys!

Apologies to Mudsticks, the actual band, who played until midnight for the after-party, I never got a photo!

NEXT YEAR

Either GASS - THE MUSICAL, or GASS - SWAN LAKE BALLET

FEBRUARY MEETING

NUDE ART CLASS

Professional artist Karl Farrer showed us how to create a masterpiece

See Karl at www.karlfarrer.co.uk



THE ASHFORD CLUB

High Street, Ashford, Kent TN24 8TD

We were all supplied with a drawing board, quality art paper, pencils, charcoal, pastels and Karl set us to work drawing our life subjects.



You would think this would be a time consuming activity - but not the way
Karl does it, heck no!

Karl simply placed a model in front of us and gave us two minutes to draw
her, yup, two minutes, not 20, not an hour, 180 seconds.

As you can imagine the results were more stick men than Hans Holbein.
Karl even did his Master Chef impression, "10 seconds to go, right! pencils
down!!!"

For our second attempt we were allowed 10 minutes, that was a bit easier,
but this time there were two models, not one, so back to stick men.
It went on like this until the buffet was served and we could get a rest from
the black clouds of pencil lead floating in the air
and the rubber fragments bouncing around like we were sketching on the
edge of a Formula 1 track.

Buffet over and it was back to work, this time there were no less than
THREE models and a chair to worry about.

But, because Karl had honed us to the point of a 5H pencil of the recently
sharpened persuasion, we were on it like T.S Lowry on a good day.
45 minutes for the task. Hands a blur, pencils, crayons, rubbers flashing
everywhere.

And here are the results.....

FIRST, Nick Jenkins



SECOND, Brian Henslow



THIRD, Ian Westlake



Then the also rans, which are amazingly good, bearing in mind none of can actually draw!



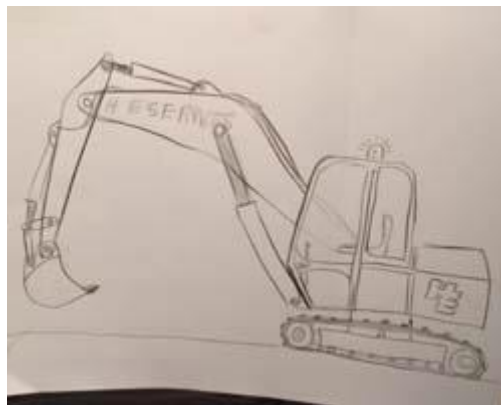




And Tony, who drew a different group altogether, possibly from memory.



And Hugh, who really does not have a clue about life drawing, or is simply completely and absolutely obsessed with big yellow machines.



Many thanks to Karl for his excellent teaching skills.
The speed drawing build up gave us the confidence to draw the final group.



Many thanks to our models who were amazingly tolerant and very kind bearing in mind how we made the look.

Many thanks to Mark at The Ashford Club for putting up with us and providing an excellent buffet.

Great evening, well done Nick for winning.

Another first for GASS!

MARCH MEETING

SAMURAI SWORD DEMONSTRATION

THE UPCHURCH VILLAGE HALL
The Street, (behind the Crown Pub) Upchurch, Sittingbourne, ME9 7AJ



A shot from the well known film 'Please Kill Hugh'

Be afraid, be very afraid!

Bill, of Japanese War Drumming fame, brought along his collection of Samurai Swords.

He gave us a very informative talk and then a very convincing demonstration which explained why the Police, when faced with a Samurai sword waving nutter, tend to escalate straight to a bullet through the heart. Sharp is the word. Bill sliced and diced a number of innocent beach mats, as though they were, well ... beach mats.

He then donned a suit of Japanese Samurai armour and dispatched a few more passing beach mats, but in amazing style and with a great deal of fascinating historical detail.





Many thanks Bill, great demonstration!
www.kenseitaiko.com



Thanks also to Anne-Marie at The Crown PH, Upchurch,
for a lovely Chilli and Curry,
and some great beers.

<http://www.upchurchmatters.co.uk/Adverts/thecrown.html>

APRIL MEETING

The Dirty Habit Pub and Hollingbourne Church

CAMPANOLOGY

Campanology (from Late Latin *campana*, "bell"; and Greek *-λογία*, *-logia*) is the study of bells.

It encompasses the technology of bells — how they are cast, tuned and sounded — as well as the history, methods, and traditions of bell-ringing as an art.

We gathered in the garden of The Dirty Habit at Hollingbourne, dressed for action.....



Most of us - some were too slow getting out of the bar!

We then proceed to walk normally down the road to the Church, 22 Monks carrying flaming torches, as you do prior to bell ringing.

(well at least that is what WE do, maybe not everyone dresses as Monks, noR puts the fear of God into the villageRs by striding down the middle of the road with flames everywhere)



Finally we made it to the church and up into the belfry, and as you can see we lined up for Nigel and his team to explain the finer points of ringing out a peel or two.



Monks actually bell ringing down below while up above another group of monks were being sent deaf.



Up in the Bell Tower itself



Our Medieval dinner.

In our case it means meeting at THE DIRTY HABIT pub in upper
Hollingbourne
(a Maidstone meeting under the "Spread the Meetings Fairly Initiative").

Try and be there by 7.00 to change into your Monks Costume that will be
awaiting you ,
first there gets the pick of the costumes.

At 7.30 we make our way to Hollingbourne Church where under the stern
eye of Nigel Baker

(Bell ringer in Chief) we will ring out a peal.

We have been trying to arrange this for years - why I hear you ask -
because none of you have done it before, duuhh!

Yes, we have rung hand bells, but never the great big 4' tall, 1.5 ton
monsters like these,
where we dangle helplessly on the end of long ropes.



Once we have pealed, we will dine in Medieval style in 'The Monks Corner' (yes,
really) in The Dirty Habit.

We will also be welcoming Owen Brunning, our newest member, to the Society.
Owen has been introduced by Gary and seconded by Ian, and takes us back to a full
complement of 22 members.

Guests welcome - £40 - but you MUST let me know and they MUST bring their own
Monks Costume.

MAY MEETING

QUARRY BLASTING and TELSA DRIVING

We were firmly instructed to meet at The Gallaghers Quarry, Hermitage Lane at
1.30pm and everyone was there
on time to get kitted out in high-viz jacket and hard hat and on the coach provided.

For lovers of broken up pieces of Kentish Ragstone the details of the quarry are
below.....

landfill/hermitage-quarry <http://www.gallagher-group.co.uk/our-services/aggregates-ready-mix-concrete-and->

We were then driven down into the massive quarry to stand and watch the 2.30p.m blast and learn at the feet of quarry-master Ian.

He certainly knows his stuff, because at 2.30 there was a muffled roar and several thousand tons of crap slumped into a loose pile.

Seconds later several massive machines rumbled past to scoop up said crap and squirrel off with to God knows where, actually to another part of the quarry to which we were shortly to become acquainted.

Once we had seen the blast it was time to see the other parts of "Quarry-World". Pat Gallagher's answer to "Digger-land".

And most impressive it was too. A well oiled, if slightly dusty, machine turning the aforesaid crap into regular and ordered piles of everything from the type of small gravel that costs £20 a sack at B&Q, up to massive rocks big enough to bury a GASS member under.

Here are some shots of the actual event....

First of all the blast, obviously it would have been more impressive from much closer, but apparently there are rules, health & safety gone mad if you ask me!



Next was the obligatory group shot.
Hugh told us all to fold our arms to look hard, and it worked, for those that folded
their arms.
Gary took a more effeminate approach with the arm draped round Ian in a loving
way.
Andy's hat blew off.



The next stop was on high ground where we could see the quarry processing the
stone from the blast. most impressive!



The finally the shop. Everywhere has a shop at the exit where you buy souvenirs. The quarry was no exception to that rule and here you can see Brian standing on top of his purchase.

A five ton slab of Ragstone destined to be his headstone in 30 years time. So this shot is of Brian standing on top of the headstone, the next time you see that headstone the situation will be reversed!



After the tour we returned to the Quarry car park for our introduction to the TESLA model S

Hugh has arranged for two cars to be there for us to test drive, as in actually drive them.

Sadly due to an accident there was only one car, but it was lovely to behold.

An all electric, top of the range, luxury car with every possible extra.



So obviously we needed a beer before we could appreciate it. Instead of using the quarry as the base for test drives we decided to make the base the car park out the back of The Hengist, just yards from the bar. Mark and Lester, the guys from Tesla, were great, they managed to take 23 people for test drives right up until the car had just 19 miles of charge left.

Don't forget this is no hybrid, it is 100% electric, 350 miles range, and all used up.
Did this worry Lester, the hell it did, he simply planned to drive the 19 miles to Clacketts Lane Services and charge the thing in under an hour.
(for all we know he is still parked by the side of the M20 at West Malling, but at least he had confidence).

The other issues he had to contend with were the TWO accidents on the test drive, yes, TWO.

Quarry-Master Ian managed to clip the wing mirror against an oncoming horsebox, and guest Rob managed to kerb the wheel and rip the tyre.

Any guesses on costs? Lester was too polite to say. Guesstimate: Wing Mirror = £150, Wheel = £500, Tyre = £300, a grand in total?

Why Lester was still smiling when he left is anybodies guess, if it was mine I would have been weeping - and I drive a shit Discovery!

See the wonderful car right here....

http://www.teslamotors.com/en_GB/models



After the test drive it is off for DINNER at the newly re-opened HENGIST in Aylesford.

Ian had agreed the excellent price of £17 a head for dinner, so with no charge by the Quarry for the visit,
just the coach to pay for, this was looking like a cheap meeting,
that was until the CHEESE!

During the meal (which I remind you was just £17 a head) the MD noticed plates of cheese sneaking out.

Now being a restaurateur by profession he knows just how much gets loaded on the price of cheese, so he politely requested a halt to the cheese epidemic.

This was in the interests of the GASS budget, not simply because he hates mice.
Sadly, he was ignored - another flurry of cheese boards arrived.

FINAL MEAL COST (and remember this was 23 at £17)
= £1208!

CHEESE = £152

NUTS = £24
BEER = £136
FOOD = £391
WINES = £505

Thus making this the most expensive meeting since FLYBOARDING!

The main loser was poor Tony, he had his son Rob as a guest. Had Tony had the sense to pay the guest fee on arrival he would probably have got away with £40. As it is the cost of the whole meeting was £1358, divided by 23 is £59, so cough up Tone!

GASS FUNDS

On a sober note, we don't actually know how much we have in funds (Ron does but he won't say) so we will have to slot in a real cheezy.

This will be in July as we have another expensive one in August, Penny Farthings and dinner at The Castle Club.

The likelihood is this will be PILLOW FIGHTING so we need a pub with a garden and a tolerant landlord.

We will have two beer barrels, a plank and two pillows. Fight to the death.

Under the official "Share the meetings Fairly" policy this would be held in either Maidstone or Sittingbourne, so somewhere in-between would be good.
Any pub suggestions welcome.

JUNE MEETING

BIG BOYS TOYS

Stede Court Estate, Harrietsham

Classic Cars, Sports Cars, Big Bikes,
Tractors, Jetpacks

We all brought whatever made us feel
good in the trouser department.

The meeting was held at Stede Court Estate and we parked the toys on the lawn for general interest and mutual admiration.

Geoff Crabtree of Crabtree Classics brought along two genuine classics from the 1920-30's and the members brought along everything they could lay their hands on.

www.crabtree-classics.com



Other appearances will be a classic rally BDA Escort Mk2 and the red tractor made famous in 'Big Barn Farm'.

The courtyard roadway will be clear for test drives, as will the gallops round the farm.

Once we had admired, stroked, tested and smelt the toys, we enjoyed a Barbie and a few Tinnies.

Let the pictures tell the story....



Geoff explaining the intricacies of the first classic he ever bought - and has kept ever since.



Classic car and bike collectors - and a man who was not allowed to bring his helicopter, in case he frightened the horses!



Two poor farming boys toys (Brian & Mike) - and a lovely red toy (Phil) - would you swap?



Two really big bikes - Graham & Chris



James's lovely classic Rally car - Pete's amazing E Type Jaguar



Geoff's two beautiful classics that were the stars of the show.



Gary's Merc and Steve's Bentley





Owen's new Ducati (congrats on getting the license just to drive it here!) - Stuart's number 7 bike.



Len's Range Rover (should really have been parked in the field, hardly a proper toy!)
- Phil's amazing Nitro Truck



The a bite to eat on a nice British June evening - Note the big coats.....

Many thanks to everyone for bringing along such an interesting array of toys.
Special thanks to Geoff Crabtree for bringing along the two genuine classics.
If anyone ever wants to buy a classic for fun or investment, or has one to sell -
Crabtree-Classics.

JULY MEETING

HORSESHOES and LINE DANCING

THE DANCING DOG P.H, BOBBING



<http://www.dancingdogsaloon.co.uk/>

Along the A249 towards Sittingbourne, the pub is just past the Crematorium on the left hand side.

Sean, the Landlord of the Dancing Dog Saloon was pleased to welcome us for an evening with lots going on.

The Dancing Dog is an adults fun pub, so we all turned up in Stetson hats and Cowboy boots!!!



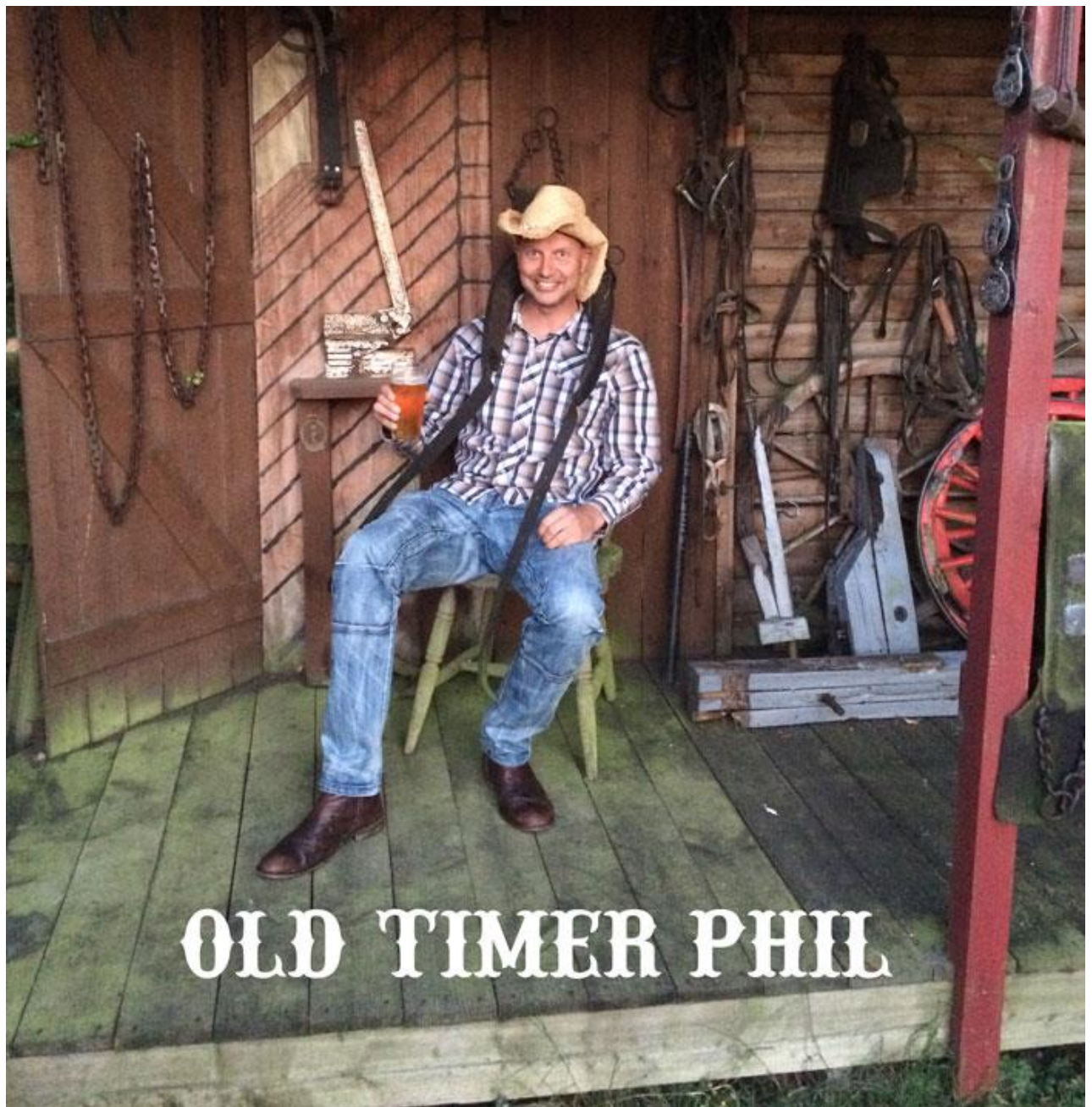
The landlord had been as good as his word and contributed two beer barrels and a plank - for PILLOW FIGHTING.

Chris, our excellent stand in organiser forget one thing - the pillows - or did he forget to tell the landlord we had changed to Horseshoes?

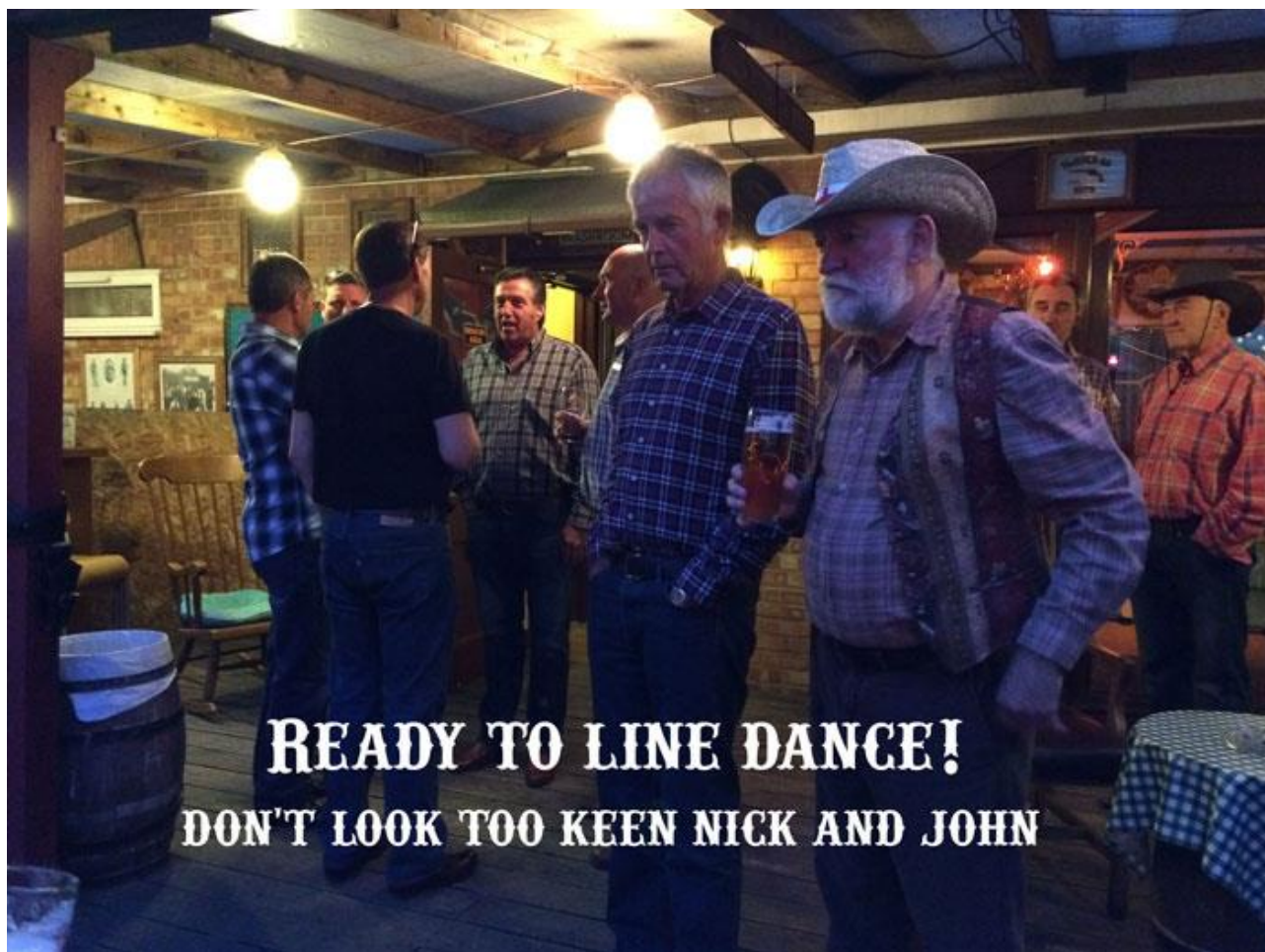
No matter, no pillows means pillow fighting gets to live for another meeting. Horseshoes was played - in a sort of disorganised desultory way, no organisation I guess.



watched by various cow poker, or cow pokers....



Then the nervous anticipation before the line dancing starts - it's the waiting that gets to you.



READY TO LINE DANCE!
DON'T LOOK TOO KEEN NICK AND JOHN

Until finally its Hoot-nanny away!!



**AND IS IAN
REALLY SERIOUS??**

**IS PHIL CASTING LOVING GLANCES
AT PARTNER KEITH??**

THE LINE DANCING BEGINS!

A great evening was had by all!

THE AGM THEME AND DINNER DATE

Everyone agreed with the suggestion to hire a load of bikes and have a days riding followed by posing with the theme of GASS ANGELS. It was agreed this would be on the MONDAY. We would ride out and then go straight into the AGM dinner on Monday night.

Everyone agreed to obtain their own jackets and decorate them. Brian agreed to create and print off iron-on GASS transfers for the back of everyone's jackets.

It was agreed not to mimic Hells Angels - but to just label us G.A.S.S.

To see the full details on the AGM page click here [GASS AGM DETAILS](#)

The Dancing Dog Saloon is a great venue for GASS and we will have to go back next year for a Quick Draw Competition.

Good food and a cheap meeting - £313, not due to anyone keeping to the austerity rules,

mainly because so many were away on hols, but it was cheap no the less!

Well done Chris, well done guys!

AUGUST

PENNY FARTHING

RIDING

**in the Castle Gardens, Rochester
Castle**

DINNER AT THE CASTLE CLUB

**DRESS: Summer Blazers, Boaters, Collar & Tie.
(collar and tie essential please as it is required for The Castle Club)**

The dress code above was what it said on the website. The Castle Club is a bastion of old fashioned taste and decorum.

I was asked to stress 'collar and tie', which I did. I did not feel I needed to also say trousers, shoes, shreddies, shirt, or anything else.

My mistake - a number of members turned up with just a collar and a tie. No jacket. 'Nicks Jacket Hire' did a roaring trade in cheap polyester jackets, thank goodness!

We met for drinkie-poops on Nicks wonderful balcony overlooking The Castle Gardens. Many thanks Nick.

At 6.30 we could see Les and his Penny Farthings ready to roll, so we got started.

It went something like this.....





Yes, only a few of us got a go round the circle, then the wheels fell off the entertainment - quite literally.

As you can see above the damage to the forks, wheel bearings and handle bars was pretty catastrophic!

Les, the kind and generous owner of the Penny Farthings looks less than happy. Luckily the two top engineering firms in Kent offered (or were press ganged) into repairing the poor bike for free.

Not sure whether the Defibrillator Team was for us or the poor bike, but a sensible precaution in any event.



Now the problems started.

Nick had kindly, if unwisely, broken the GASS 'No Sherry' rule. He thought it unfair that Hew could not avail himself of his usual poison and so provided a bottle.



We made our way to the aforementioned Castle Club, where manners, dress code and passing the port the right way are still of immense importance. Its a bit like an early Victorian outpost in a modern world. Shoulders back, ties done up, shoes polished, and most importantly - Jackets on!!!



GASS ENJOYING DINNER at The Castle Club

(if you are a Castle Club member - please look away now)

Please Note: Hugh having jacket issues, and never distract Ron when he is eating!)

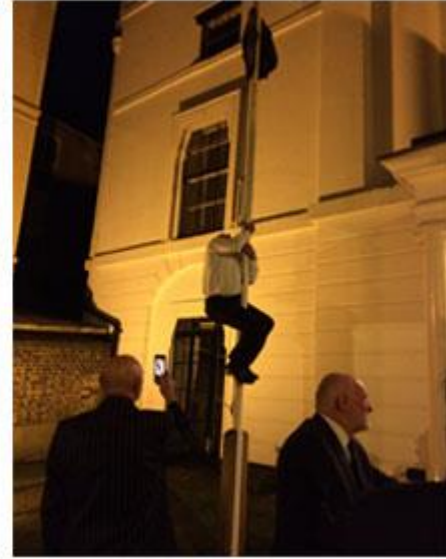
On this particular evening Hew, in his Sherry haze, seemed allergic to his own jacket and kept taking it off.

JB as Chairman kept asking, requesting and finally ordering Hew to put it back on. Hew did exactly what he wanted and has now been formally barred from The Castle Club for life.

Hugh's final visit to the Castle Club (or the man who broke the 'jacket' rule once too often)



After dinner we adjourned to the gardens for the 'Flag Ceremony'.
The Union Jack was lowered ceremoniously, and on the other flag pole Hew's jacket
was raises unceremoniously
As you can see below Hew was required to climb the slippery pole of justice to
recover his garments - he failed..



At the meeting Brian did a 'Show and Tell' to show everyone how to explain to their wives how to iron on the GASS Biker Jacket transfers for the AGM.

There was an agreement to the AGM plans for Monday being Biker day and the AGM, Tuesday free, Wednesday Catamaran Trip,

Thursday was free but Nick got it changed to the La Gomera Trip, Friday free. Plane tickets will be available soon to be collected from The Roffen Club. Date available TBN.

Brian reminded everyone about the massive party at The Roffen, 4.00pm Sunday 24th August, for Sara, Miles and Beth's birthdays.

Wear something RED to go with the the theme. Drinks reception 4.00pm so please don't be late. Live band, entertainment, grub, the works!

THE GASS BOOK - IT'S FINISHED!

A sample copy will be available for everyone to see at the AGM.

After that we will place orders. If we order 20 the price is £75 a copy (it is 170 pages with 700 photos!). If we order less than £20 it is £85 a copy.

JB suggested Husky Driving and Hovercraft Racing as meeting ideas, Graham suggested Pole Climbing.

Everyone had a great evening - except that poor bike.

Thanks to Les for the bikes, Nick for the drinks, and John for the meeting.

SEPTEMBER

THE 2014 AGM TENERIFE

AGM DETAILS ON AGM PAGE - [click here](#)



The 2014 AGM was a great success - 17 members attended with apologies for absence from Chris Spree, Stuart Gilbert, Ray Guttridge, Steve Riches and Don Pilcher.

The theme was decided as a result of the Big Boys Toys meeting in the summer where we realised that six members had big bike licenses, so we decided to go as bikers.

We hired six Harley Davidsons, two normal bikes, three buggies and a convertible Jeep and off we jolly well went on a 150 miles round trip ranging from up into the mountains to down along the coast line.

To make the event funnier we all created our OWN biker jackets and dressed the part. As you can see below....



Now how is that for a fantastic bunch of guys? GASS really is amazing. Thanks to Graham for such a quality shot for the album.

After the photo shoot, and Hugh trying to do doughnuts in the car park with a vile hangover, we set off for the days ride. Let the photos tell the story.....



The boys getting ready to roll.....



An attempt (failed) to get a picture of all our backs. As this failed I am obliged to record all the nicknames for posterity.

BELL- THE MECHANIC, BRICE - FIRKIN HELL, BRIDGEWATER -
SOAPY, BRUNNING - THE DUKE, COCKERTON - THE COCK, EASDOWN -
DEALER,

EDELEADANOODLEDO - CHOPPER, EVANS - LANDLORD, FARRER -
SLASHER, HENSLOW - CAPTAIN, JENKINS - BLACKHEART,

MANKELOW - PORN STAR, PRICE - ADDER, RALPH - COWBOY, ANDY SMITH
- GOLDIE, LEN SMITH - GRIM SWEEPER, WESTLAKE - ROCKY



An impressive sight, and a hell of a noise when they all fire up.









A bit of a gay line up.







Gary and Owen continue the slightly gay theme, so Steve evens things up a bit with his macho pose.





And Phil pulls it back onto the gay track with a bit of imaginative (and slightly scary) hitch-hiking.



Our biker lunch stop.



On into town for a bit of a pose along the front.

THE BIKING DAY SUMMARY

We had a ball! We drove through some amazing countryside, up to several thousand feet to Mount Tiede, loads of hairpin bends (not easy on a massive Harley).

A stop for Gary and Owen to be arrested and fined £100 by the Police each because Andy told them you don't need helmets in Spain, which oddly enough - you do! We amused ourselves by pimping out Phil and his naked arse to passing motorists as we waited the hour it took the rozzers to process our boys.

Then onwards and upwards to the Volcano, and just a mile or so short of our stop Phil fell off and rolled in the road right in front of Brian driving the Jeep.

Narrow road, tight bends, all the traffic stops to avoid Phil - Steve falls off! OK, OK, "Steve lays his bike down". Then he fell off.

With the mornings amusement ended we stopped for coffee by the Volcano before a lovely ride down to lunch.

Great lunch stop with excellent views, then a nice run back down the coast to pose up and down the strip, before returning the bikes.

BOATING DAY

We hired a catamaran and went whale watching for the day, hangovers to the fore,

especially Hugh, plenty of swimming,
but for once GASS failed to drink the boat dry - too many late nights!





See, we really did watch Whales!

STEVE'S BIRTHDAY LUNCH

Who could be so unlucky as to have his birthday on every GASS AGM? Steve has been astoundingly generous each year, and despite our genuine intention to pay for him this year - he insisted on paying for all of us!!!! Again!!!! Many thanks Steve.







As you can see from the cheeky little pigs head on Steve's shoulder we had the traditional 'Suckling Pigs'.
And a good time was had by all! N.B: Brian still has his weird protective boot on, for the second year running - when will he stop going for the sympathy vote?

THE AGM DINNER

For some odd reason there is no picture of the AGM Dinner
(next time MY phone gets priority as that is the only way to guarantee we do get the important and historical shots on record, even if they are crap).

MINUTES OF THE MEETING

The meeting was pretty organised and the Chairman passed out copies of the accounts for two years which made pleasing reading.
Without boring everyone with the details we started in September 2012 with £5833 and ended the year with £4,634 in August 2013.
We started in September 2013 with £4,634 and ended the year in August 2014 with £6,740.

The aim is to have £5,000 in funds at the year end so we have managed to accumulate a surplus of £1,740.

This was mainly due to the Panto, Big Boys Toys and the Line Dancing all coming in under budget.

The Hon Sec/M.D/Dictator made the point that this once again proved that we did magical things with £40 a month fees.

That and the ban on Sherry being drunk at meetings worked wonders for the funds and we could go another year with just the occasional top up.

Ron, the Financial Director, made the point that occasionally members forget (?) they have a guest standing beside them all evening long, and don't pay for said guest - not good!

It would help the funds even more if members simply fessed up to a guest and coughed up without being asked.

The votes for officers took place and the usual suspects from the dream team were re-elected. Chairman - John, M.D - Brian, F.D - Ron, Fines - Graham.

Why spoil a winning combination?

The AGM venue for 2015 was agreed as Benidorm and Hugh will be organising the hotel and flights.

It was agreed that we would discuss the meetings for 2014-2015 at the next meeting, and that the idea of buying 22 GASS OppoSuits for the Christmas meeting was a runner.

With that the Chairman declared the meeting closed.

Another fine AGM!!

OCTOBER

PUNCH & JUDY SHOW

The Roffen Suite - Tuesday 7 Oct

By Professor Robert Styles

www.robertstyles.com



(and the great OppoSuits try-on)

The how's, why's and wherefores of the famous Punch & Judy tradition told to us by Professor Robert styles.
We saw Robert set the show up, as he explained the history and the performance.





The stars of the show duly appeared, Mr Punch, Judy, Baby, The Policeman, The Crocodile, and even a Hooker.

They proceeded to knock seven bells out of each other and the kids were soon in floods of laughter, no really, it was amazingly funny.

Many thanks to Robert for a unique evening and great entertainment.

The next entertainment we provided ourselves.

The plan was to try on our 'OppoSuits' in readiness for the Christmas meeting. I am not sure whether it was the OppoSuits or Punch & Judy that got one of our rare 100% turnouts or not but everyone was on parade, all 22 of us.

In no time the room was a flurry of pants, ties, jackets and trousers of many, many colours.



We had a couple of star struck posers to deal with first





Then we got a couple of decent group shots



How good are these photos? - how weird do we look?



And finally we sat down to a slap up nosh - Roffen Club style!



The whole point of dressing up as we did was to provide us with the final photos for the GASS 32 year book and these definitely did the trick. Full details of the book, which will be published soon, will be on the website as soon as it is out.

Every single GASS member bought a book at £75 a copy (it is 180 pages and 700 photos you know).

NEW MEMBER ALERT

We are honoured to have been approached by Wayne Rodriguez, a friend of Brian's, and Wayne would like to join GASS.

As we recently agreed our absolute upper limit is 25 and Wayne would take us to 23. Brian proposed and Gary seconded.

After the customary few days grace for any member who wished to do so to object - I am please to say there were no objections.

We therefore welcome Wayne as our 23rd member.

Now we need another suit

NOVEMBER

Pub Meeting & Fireworks

Tuesday 4 Nov - 7.30pm

The Rose & Crown pub in Hartlip

Organiser - Phil Cockerton

**A great pub, lovely meal, amazing fireworks,
Bang! Ohhh, bang!, ohhhh, bang!,
oh shit I am going to move my Tesla!**





Many thanks to Phil and to the pub for a great evening.
Many thanks to whoever it was that said fireworks were a total waste of money,
sadly he did not say it loudly enough!
Many thanks to Owen for the incredibly funny story about his car - proper GASS
member!

SEE YOU IN DECEMBER!!

DECEMBER

The GASS amazing Christmas Meeting Tuesday 2 Dec

ATTENDANCE - EVERY MEMBER (except Chris Spree away in The Falklands, decent excuse!) GUEST: Neil Roger = 23

We were all collected from our very own front doors and whisked by chauffeur driven
TESLA S Class all electric super cars to The Roffen
for pre-party drinks and snacks. We looked amazing (or weird, depending on your
take on it) in our Opposuits.
See us here trying hard to make a start on our odyssey.



We then drove to London wasting just 45 minutes in a complete traffic snarl-up on
Bluebell Hill (I know, odd way to head to London).

Once underway our first port of call was The Perkin Reveller under Tower Bridge, a quick beer and then the first of our series of photo shoots. The idea being to get the best out of the suits, have a laugh, and try to avoid drinking non-stop! The first shot was of us stopping the traffic - quite literally - on Tower Bridge at rush hour.



See what I mean!

The Police were remarkably sanguine about it too, especially as we had delayed them.....



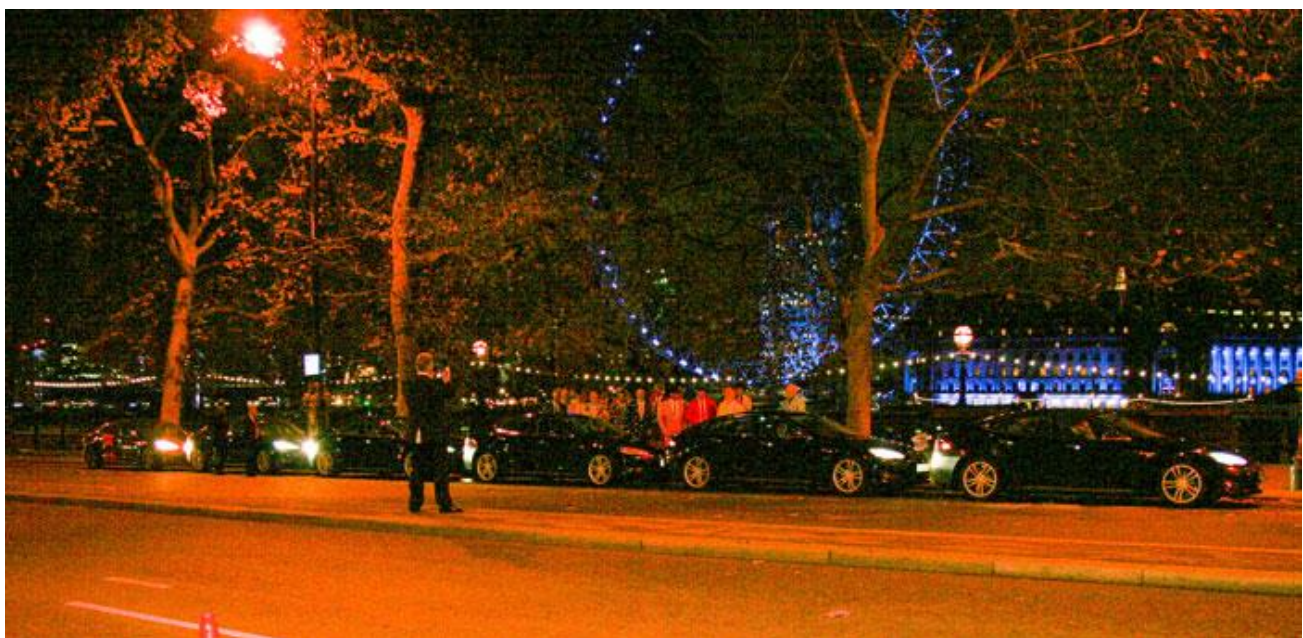
Next was a backdrop of the Tower of London shot.



Then on to the London Eye.....



plus a look at our amazing cars, seven in all (one got cut out of the shot!)....



Then we enjoyed a nice picnic and a few tinnies.....



In full view of The Houses of Parliament.... as you do.....



Before we made our way to Buckingham Palace



Where once again we managed to park seven cars with no issues....



To be honest that was after the lead car tried to actually pull into Buckingham Palace before being told in no uncertain terms

by the Police that he had better move along sharpish like, as there was a top level reception going on and we were NOT invited!

Throughout the evening the Police were conspicuous by their absence and their tolerance, they left us to our own devices on Parliament Square, and bear in mind we had seven cars parked on double yellow lines, picnic tables, beers, sandwiches, and 23 of us were larking about like loons and getting pissed on the Square.

They saw us, cruised past us, even waved to us - but hassle us they did not. Mind you, take a look at us, would you?

You can tell we were having fun.....



That was because the next stop was another pub.....



Notice we have managed to remove all the patrons from what was a very crowded pub.....

In fact we simply crowded them even further - into a corner and out of the shot.

To be fair to the patrons, and to the Police, and to the general public, everyone was so friendly and so complimentary.

The Opposuits (www.opposuits.com) were a real conversation piece, dozens of people came up to us to say nice things.

Which for GASS is a first, normally we are being asked to leave, stop swearing, get Hugh down from a swinging chandelier etc.

The suits were a palpable hit everywhere we went!!! Amazing what you can do with a sow's ear and a silk purse.

By 9.30 we were in Soho where we had our table booked for 23 of us for dinner at LITTLE ITALY, a restaurant that later becomes a nightclub.

There we had a four course dinner. Sang our hearts out to the lovely old 60's hits they were playing, then we danced our socks off until the early hours.

Finally, and courtesy of the amazing staff of ever tolerant and kind chauffeurs, we were ferried home back to our own front doors.

A genuine and massive thank you goes out to all the girls and guys who drove for us that evening.

Your good humour, tolerance and kindness was greatly appreciated by all in GASS. We could not have done it without you - many thanks!!!!



Now although all these shots are available to GASS members on our DROPBOX site, here are just a selection of mug shots....











As you can see a good time was had by all!!!

Just for the records

GASS MEMBERS COUGHED UP AN EXTRA £100 PER MEMBER
That included: Your suit, which is yours to keep, collection and return to your door by Tesla, a four course dinner and drinks.

REASON FOR THE HIGHER THAN NORMAL CONTRIBUTION

The costs are: Suits £60, Meal £50, Drinks £50, Transport £90 = £250 a head at least.

This how the accounts panned out.....

INCOME

We had a total budget of £5,700
The GASS fund normally pays up to £2,000 for Christmas, add in £1,300 of our £1,740 surplus carried over from last year, plus the £100 a head contribution from 22 members (Chris Spree is not coming), making £2,200, plus a £150 guest fee from Neil, plus an extra £50 which Wayne kindly offered for his suit as he has only just joined.

EXPENDITURE

£1,272 went on 23 suits. £1,950 goes to HE for the cars.
£1,292 went to Little Italy for the meal (23x£49.95 plus 12.5%= £1,292).
£300 went to The Roffen for an hour of drinks and nibbles beforehand, plus 48 cans and sandwiches for 30 for a picnic en-route.
£200 went to the two pubs for two rounds. Leaving about £766 for drinks at Little Italy (£33.30 per head), which paid for house wine at the table.

AND FOR THE MEMORY BANKS

A beautiful Tesla S Class!



Your chauffeur driven car. With GASS badges on the bonnet.

Happy Christmas everyone!!!!

JANUARY Whiskey Tasting

January 6th 2015

THE MUGHAL DYNASTY

14 London Road, Maidstone, ME16 8QL

01622-763360

www.mughaldynasty.com



A really good turnout yet again for our home grown Whisky Tasting under the expert tutelage of Tony Mankelow and his able assistant Clive Perry (or was it the other way round?).

We were introduced to the charms of four different 15 year old single malts:

- DALWHINNIE - a light heather tasting malt from Speyside.
- GELNMORANGIE - from white oak casks, finished in Sauterne wine casks.
- GLENDRONACH - matured in sherry casks.
- BOWMERE DARKEST - peat smoked malt and finished in sherry casks.

We were also taught the changes wrought on the whisky by just 2-3 droplets of water from a pipette, amazing!

Clive went through the method of making whisky and explained how each stage can affect the final taste.

From the taste of the water, through to the type of malted barley and how it is dried (burning peat smoke etc), through to how the whisky is matured and gains flavour from the type of cask it rests in.

During the process we were encouraged to sip at the four whisky's to compare their tastes.

Clive and Tony sipped away throughout to wet their whistles as they spoke, and in true whisky expert fashion,

by the end of their erudite exposition there was zero chance of either of them being able to say 'erudite exposition', or anything even approaching it. Their own names were a challenge.



We were then served an excellent Indian meal by the guys at the Mughal
Dynasty.
But not before they had set Gary a right brain teaser.....



A great night was had by all and many thanks to Tony & Clive and to the Mughal Dynasty for a great meal.

Tony pulled a blinder by getting the first meeting for months in on budget, well done Tony!

FEBRUARY

ICE CURLING at FENTONS ICE RINK

Dundale Farm, Dundale Road, Tunbridge Wells TN3 9AQ

www.curlinginkent.co.uk

WEDNESDAY 4th FEBRUARY

Yes, it was a Wednesday.

That means it is NOT a Tuesday..... Got it? Wednesday (day after Tuesday)

Despite this, and three months notice, it was still too much for Nick and Graham.

"Wednesday? - it can't be - GASS is a Tuesday!"

Tracey at Fenton's Ice Rink explained they could not give us Tuesday as it is their regular team practise night and would you believe it....

" If they changed to another night, half their members would fail to realise and still turn up on Tuesday"

So GASS members - you are not alone! Not alone in being a bit simple I mean.

Apologies for absence from Jenkins, Bridgewater, Riches, Smith L and someone else, I forget.

Welcome to HE's guest Ian who tolerated us and kindly took our group photos.



Fenton's Rink is England's only dedicated ice curling rink. Whilst there are other ice rinks in England they are used exclusively for skating and ice hockey which makes the ice too sticky for curling. Curling really needs properly prepared ice in an ice rink dedicated to the sport. Having been a frustrated curler in England for over 30 years, Ernest Fenton, an exiled Scot, decided to create a 3-lane dedicated curling rink on his estate near Tunbridge Wells in Kent. Fenton's Rink opened in November 2004 with an International Bonspiel, which attracted competitors from all over the world. Curling has been an Olympic Winter sport since 1988 and Curling is one of the few Olympic winter sports everyone can try. The sport of Curling is suitable for young and old, and can be played as a social or competitive sport. The spirit of curling demands good sportsmanship and honourable conduct.

THE OBJECTIVE

The objective is simple: to slide a granite curling stone weighing 20kg from one end of the ice rink to the other (40m) to a target marked on the ice. The player slides out of a starting block called "the hack" and releases the stone when it is on the right path. As the player releases the stone the handle is twisted to the left or right thus making the stone spin slowly as it travels down the ice. This makes it Curl down the ice - giving the name of the game - "Curling".

HOW TO PLAY

Two teams of 4 play against each other using two stones per player and playing in turn. All players in the team are involved in every stone played, taking turns to deliver the stone, to sweep (two players) or as "skip" - who guides the delivery and tells the sweepers when to sweep. Sweeping can help to keep a stone on the right trajectory

and make it go further than it otherwise would have done. After everyone has played the "end" is finished and the team whose stone(s) is nearest the middle of the target wins the end; one point for each stone nearer the centre than the opposition. A stone must be within the outer (12 foot diameter) circle to count. A game typically lasts 8 ends over a 2 hour session. Special shoes are worn to enable the player to slide over the ice. Skates are definitely NOT used as the surface must be perfectly flat and smooth. A single hair or piece of fluff is enough to make a stone go completely off course.

THE PLAN

We hired a coach with 3 stops (and NO detours!), and it worked!

Three pick up locations -

18.00 - THE TUCK IN - HARTLIP

18.20 - THE ROFFEN - ROCHESTER

18.40 - THE VILLAGE HOTEL - MAIDSTONE

We paid for our own drinks in the bar while waiting for the coach.

THE FARE WAS £20 A HEAD, same for everyone.

Be there on time or make your own way was the rule so unsurprisingly - everyone was on time.

We had three rinks booked from 8.00pm until 10.00pm.

There was a lovely bar at the rink, staffed by the beautiful Tracey.

We even had a MEAL served at the rink by excellent caterers - www.thecompletelunch.co.uk

We were due to depart the rink at about 10.30 for reverse order drop offs. Tracey kindly kept the bar open a tad longer for a farewell libation so we a smidge late in departing.

It was a once in a lifetime chance to ice-curl - and it was amazing.

Tracey Brown and Sarah Decoine - were our amazing hosts there to welcome us and give us a safety briefing.

Tracey is the rink manager and an England Team Coach, Sarah Decoine is an England Team Player, talk about quality instructors!

But first we got stuck in to some excellent food and a couple of beers.

Finally we were tempted on to the rink by our lovely hosts and split into two groups so that we would have the normal teams of four per lane.

Let the pictures start to tell our story.....

FIRST THE TWO GROUPS

THE PRETTY ONES



AND THE NOT SO PRETTY ONES
YOU CAN SEE NOW HOW THEY WERE SELECTED - IT PRETTY MUCH DID
ITSELF.



THE PIG UGLY GROUP

Serious apologies to the lovely Tracey - she was forced to stand there.

NEXT WAS BRUSH TRAINING - AN ESSENTIAL ASPECT OF THE GAME



BRUSH TRAINING - ESSENTIAL!

First they break you down - then they build you up again.

WHICH LED TO SOME SERIOUS BRUSH ISSUES

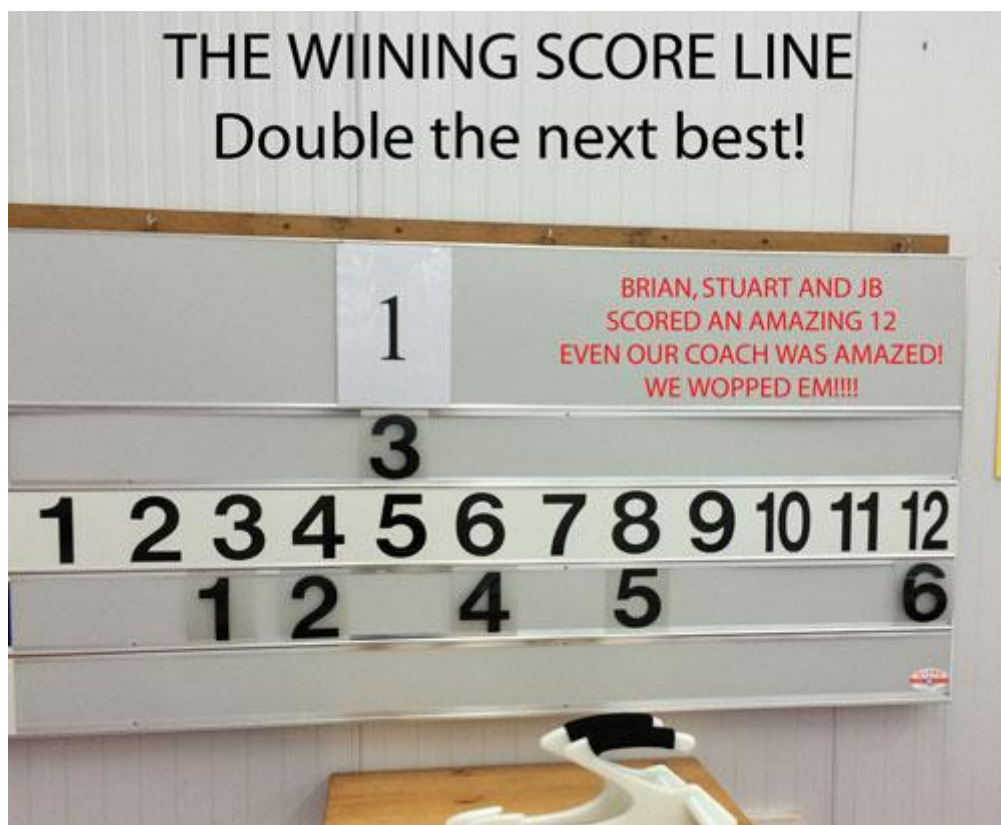


A CASE OF BRUSH ENVY

THEN THE ACTUAL GAME - WHICH FASCINATED STUART
STONE CHARGING DOWN THE RINK,
TENSION CRACKLING IN THE FREEZING AIR,
STUART 'THE SKIP' AT BREAKING POINT



MIND YOU, IT WAS STUART'S TEAM THAT CRACKED IT!!!!
WHAT A SCORE!!!



TEAM MATES STUART, BRIAN AND UNCLE ALBERT



AND FINALLY..... THE ASSEMBLE GASS THRONG AFTER OUR SUCCESSFUL
GAMES



It was an absolutely amazing evening and has to be highly recommended as a great way to have a fun night out.

Curling is one of those things that you really don't get much chance to try in southern England and what a box to tick!

Great for a corporate event or just for a bunch of friends.

Many thanks to Tracey and Sarah and to our caterers, and the bus company, and everyone that knows me.

FENTONS ICE RINK

Dundale Farm, Dundale Road, Tunbridge Wells TN3 9AQ

www.curlinginkent.co.uk

MARCH MEETING

STEAM ENGINES in THE DOCKYARD

JB organised our visit to get up close and personal with the leviathans of the RAILWAY

We all rode on the footplate of a steam engine at Chatham's Historic Dockyard.

The engine driver and stoker started preparing the fire at around lunchtime, it was freezing so they bloody needed too!

JB was there by their sides with a few cans of beer, ale and cider to warm our cockles too.

Bill, the boss of the Steam Engine section, kindly took us in groups for a chuff around the yard, as the photos below lovingly record.

Once we had alternately frozen our nuts off waiting, and then been burnt to a crisp in the engine room, we departed for the Ghurkha Restaurant in Chatham.

There we proceeded to blow one enormous hole in the budget for the year.

A hole that nicely matched the other, slightly smaller, budgetary holes we had already blown, leaving us £665 down on target to date.

Not a disaster, but it is becoming increasingly clear that some members can't fathom that if everyone attends every bloody meeting, and if everyone eats three courses, oh!, and they order liqueur coffee, Oh! and cheese, our money will actually run out.

We may need a discussion on whether we:-

a: Wind our necks in a bit and behave more responsibly over food ordering reflecting on the fact that we only pay £40 a meeting.

b: Agree that if a meal starts to get a bit heavy then we cough up an extra £20 each.

(and if we really want individual extras like liqueur coffee then we pay for it personally - I mean, sorry??? Liqueur coffee - is this the GASS I know and love?)
As an example £20 a head at the last meeting would have more than sorted the issue and maybe it's my or JB's fault for not spotting it and asking for the money there and then when the bill started to get a bit lively..

c: Up the monthly fee to £50 forthwith.

(and you still don't get to kick the arse out of it for just an extra tenner)

On this one we need to ensure that members who miss more meetings than most won't feel they are losing out.

I am genuinely concerned that Ray, Stuart and Steve R in particular may consider their position if the fees rise and vote with their feet, because they miss more meetings than most.

If that happened we would not only be poorer as a group, but poorer financially, which would be really shooting ourselves in said feet in a counter-productive sort of way.

I know it is a laugh to over order or be the person who has ordered the most, and it is perfectly fair to say that if someone wants something on a night out then we are all old enough and certainly rich enough to feel that we should not be restricted. However, we are out with GASS, not as individuals but as a group, and we are on a limited group budget, which actually does extremely well most of the time. What it is not is un-limited.

My personal feeling is that GASS is about unique entertainment, good company, beers, simple spirits, house wine and good basic food - as a group.

It will always struggle to be a gourmet dining club with some people happy with one course, others wanting three courses, some happy with beer, others ordering more expensive wines.

As the self appointed (I know!) Chief Executive Officer it behoves me to make this point - my attempt to bolt the stable door before the GASS budget horse gallops off, never to be seen again.

So no shooting the messenger please. Just a fair discussion on how to behave as a group when food and drink ordering are involved because of the effect on the budget.

By all means start a heated email discussion - I think a,b,or c above are the only options - My choice is b because it is easiest, less admin, no risk of losing members.

Therefore, in the true spirit of dictatorship I will use this method until I am forcibly restrained or someone gives a big enough shit about it to force a vote on a counter proposal.

I PROPOSE A £20 CHARGE ON THE APRIL MEETING TO PULL IN £400 WHICH WILL HELP TO US BACK ON BUDGETARY TRACK.

(unless of course I am deposed by a palace coup in the meantime - and we all know what happened the last time!)

SO BACK TO THE PUFFING BILLIES....



A NUMBER OF FAT CONTROLLERS
Just dressed for winter, not fat!



OUR ESTEEMED HOST
Many thanks for a great night!



A SPARE TRAIN





A TERRIBLE ACCIDENT JUST SECONDS AWAY
Who designs these track layouts???



The scene of yet another vast overspend on
food, drink, fine wines, liquers, coffee and CHEESE!
Guys, the budget was £200, not £2,000!
But what can you say? - They all look SO happy!

Many thanks to Bill and his team for a great night out chuffing.

See you with your balloon hats on at the next meeting

.....

APRIL MEETING

Before going into the meeting details, more of which can be found here on the MEETINGS page, we need to consider the:-

INTERIM FINANCIAL REPORT

At the last meeting we had what must be described as an open, honest and surprisingly reasonable discussion on GASS budgetary control. This came about not because of any catastrophic failure in fees or budgets. Just the simple fact that attendance at meetings has soared - which is a good thing. There was the added problem of members losing focus on the fact that they pay just £40 a month into the fund and can't really expect to take our £80 every month in food and drink alone.

The effect of the two problems above is that if left unchecked GASS would run out of money.

Three options were discussed.

- 1. Raise Fees to £50 a month:** This is an obvious solution but could have the effect of losing members. The budget is actually fine for our needs if we wind our necks in a bit.
- 2. Have an 'Attendance Fee' of £10 a meeting:** This is a good idea and solves the budget problem and puts the cost on those actually attending. BUT it is a real pain to collect and administer at every meeting.
- 3. On expensive meetings have a £20 levy:** This works a bit like 2 above, but only happens 2-3 times a year or when a meeting is looking costly. Easier to tailor to our actual budget needs.

SUMMARY OF THE MEETING

The upshot of the meeting was that everyone seemed to accept that we need to bear in mind we are paying £40 a month to GASS and to tailor our expectations accordingly.

Whilst everyone is entitled to order what they like when they go out socially, when in a group such as GASS if they want something special like better wine, liqueurs etc. then please just pay for it yourself - do not bill it to GASS.

Everyone seemed to accept that it is fairer to raise funds from those who attend a particularly expensive meeting and that options 2 or 3 are the best bet.

It was decided that we would go for option 3 for the time being - a £20 levy on attendees at expensive meetings.

Brian and Ron would continue to monitor the budget and Brian would include more budgetary information on the website as guidance.

That will solve the problem for 2015-16, and maybe even further.

(note from Ron - If you bring a guest please pay your guest fees direct to Ron as soon as you arrive. Too often members bring along a friend and simply 'forget' to cough up or have to be chased)

Balloon Twisting

At The Black Horse at Thurham
<http://www.wellieboot.net>
Pilgrims Way, Thurnham, Kent ME14 3LD

Yet another first for GASS

We had Twistina! We had Twistina!

Winner - International Balloon Twister of the Year - as seen on BBC and
ITV

The queen of little balloon animals.

Check out our famous hostess at - www.twistina.co.uk

Twistina came all the way down from somewhere a long way away in a magical land up North to entertain us, and so she did!

She started slowly by creating some fabulous creations while battling away a steady stream of obscene banter based entirely around gentleman sausage shaped balloons.



Her first main creation was a lovely hat with flashing lights which ended up on Pete's head at a jaunty angle.

The banter immediately changed to pointing out that the hat was the perfect cover for Pete's cranial ashtray and that he should wear it more often.

It certainly beat that old comb over from way back!



Next she made some hats in the shape of a monkey, and attached it to the shoulder of our own little monkey, Steve Bell.
Bellie was then subjected to the ignominy of having the little fellas tail turned into a cock and jammed in Bells' mouth.



Next was a sodding great fish, which ended up on fish face Henslows' head.



Then a small delicate penguin, which ended up on the massive hand of indelicate Stuart.



The came the free for all - our hat making competition.
With all the possible designs of hats in the world to choose from Twistina decided to
pick a Valkyrie Warrierness's helmet complete with blonde pigtails.
Here is how it was supposed to look....



Here is a selection of how our efforts looked after at least 40 minutes of blowing, swearing, twisting, and a host of loud explosions.

















Finally it was done and we assembled for a group shot.



Many thanks to Twistina who was fantastic, she kept us in stitches and everyone had a great time.

A prime example of how the most esoteric meetings can often be the funniest.

Many thanks to everyone at The Black Horse. An excellent room, great food and service.

Well done to the members for appreciating that a budget of £40 a month each really does not stretch to £80 a month of food and drink each.

Everyone sensibly agreed to live within budget and pay for any extras and extravagances themselves from now on - or just not go mad.

The everyone coughed up £20 to cover part of the overspend so far this year - very generous guys!

[Back to the top of the page](#)

MAY MEETING

(awayday - early start 3.00pm - budget £1,200)

There is a £20 levy on this meeting

TOWER BRIDGE

A private evening personal guided tour of Tower Bridge.
**INCLUDES THE BRAND NEW HIGH LEVEL GLASS
WALKWAY**



How cool is that Andy???

We booked Tower Bridge exclusively for GASS on Tuesday 5th May

For a **PRIVATE EVENING PERSONAL GUIDED TOUR**

THE PLAN

- 15.00 - Meet at The Roffen Club for drinks.
- 15.30 - Walk to Rochester Station in time to get tickets and get on the 15.57 Train to St Pancras International
- 16.35 - 5 minute walk from St Pancras to Boris Bike Station and hire bikes.
- 17.00 - Set off on bikes to Tower Bridge. About a 35 minute ride.
- Bike to The Walrus & Carpenter in Monument Street where there are a lot of Boris Bike spaces to dump the bikes.
- 18.15 - Dead on - we depart for a 10 minute walk along the Thames Path to Tower Bridge, North Tower.
- 18.30 - Tour starts. 20.00 - Tour ends.**
- 20.05 - The Perkin Reveller for dinner. The pub under Tower Bridge where we started the Christmas do.
- 23.25 - Last train from St Pancras to Rochester.

And amazingly the plan worked swimmingly.
We all got there (apart from a couple of Tesla related issues) more or less on time.

Everyone jumped aboard a Boris Bike and we cycled through some beautiful London streets including The Law Courts and The City. Nobody was knocked off a bike, although near misses were in abundance. Everyone was impressed by Tower Bridge and we had a great meal at The Perkin Reveller.

To tell the story in pictures.....

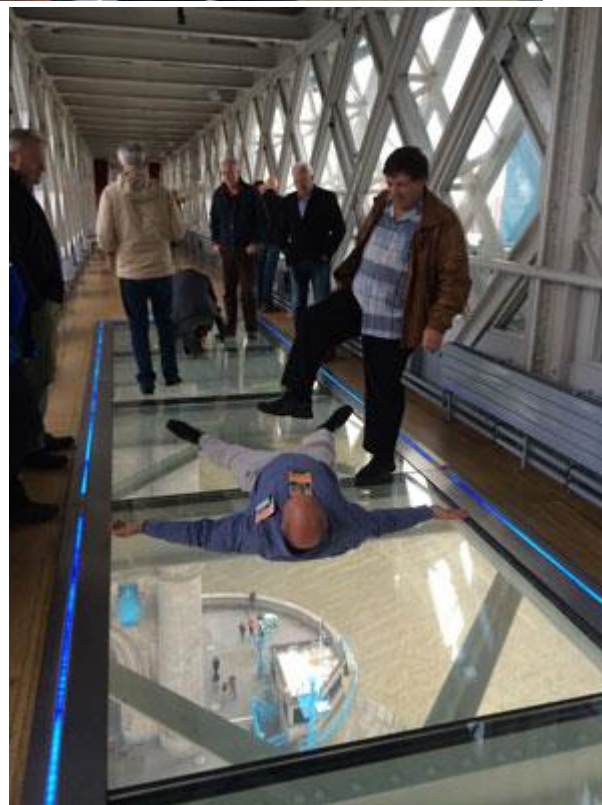
BORIS BIKES - Right across town, not a GASS helmet in sight!



GASS ON THE GLASS WALKWAY - TOWER BRIDGE



Some members unsure of the concept, or just plain daft.



Phil finally gets a proper job - on reception

JUNE MEETING

(pub meeting - budget £600)

BUBBLE FOOTBALL

Organised by JB

As a result of a slight Blackheart related date snafu, unusual I hear you sigh, we did not go hunting treasure in cars in June.

Nick was otherwise engaged and JB could not shoulder the admin load alone. Instead we are did this - as described by JB.

**BUBBLE FOOTBALL - Organiser – Mr John Brice,
Chairperson**

“After a lot of false trails, I have organised the next GASS meeting. We will be playing bubble football in Strood!

The plan is to meet at the Coach & Horses, London, Road, Strood, ME2 3PA from 1900. We will then cross the road into the Kicks Soccer Centre for a 2000 start. This begins with a briefing before two 20 minute sessions. Teams will be arranged on the basis of how many turn up, who wants to play and how much we can tolerate!

Dress code - wear clothes & footwear suitable for outdoor astro-turf.

You can get pictures of this amazing sport for their website <http://www.groupon.co.uk/deals/maidstone/kicks-soccer-centre/49955392>

So, we duly met at the pub, had a couple of swift ones, and then trooped over the road to the sports centre dead on time.

Where, we were not expected.

This lack of expecting us was even after JB had visited them that very day to confirm. This is possibly due to the fact that every one of the several hundred employees in this lovely centre was under 12.

Having arrived at dead on 8.00 in time for a briefing, we were actually lucky enough to be there dead on time to see our own personal 12 year old pulling 20 deflated bubbles out of a cupboard.

She then started the laborious - and very time consuming - job of blowing them all up. As they are each four feet across this was going to take some time.

In the meantime we were taken to one side by a 14 year old and briefed - "Don't nick the balloons, don't smoke in the balloons, no knives". Job done. Back to watching balloons inflate.

As it turned out bubble football is one of those sports that sounds better than it is, a lot better.

We donned bubbles, we ran around a bit, some of the fitter members bounced several feet in the air, some ruptured spinal discs.

We then returned the bubbles for another 12 year old to then deflate and pack away until the next bunch of mugs turn up, maybe a month or three later.

Total palying time 15 minutes.

It's not going to be Olympic, that's a fact.





AND HERE IS A SORT OF GOING - GOING - GOING - GONE SEQUENCE
 (note - not a football in sight anywhere)



It sort of mostly ended up like this - just big men in bubblewrap running full pelt at each other.

There is actually a reason for that - other than a deep seated anger management issue quite a few GASS members suffer with.

You can't see an f'ing thing through the balloon once your smelly hot breath has
misted up the grey plastic in front of your eyes!

Blind, exhausted, hot, sweaty, claustrophobic. hungry, thirsty - even a saint would
barrel straight at the nearest muppet and bowl them over.
So barrel away was the word of the day. As I said, and Olympic sport it ain't gonna
be!!!

But we had fun, then we had a curry.

Well done JB.

JULY MEETING

(sort of awayday - budget £1,300)

HELICOPTER MAGICAL MYSTERY TOUR

**(actually to The Fighting Cocks at Horton
Kirby)**

**Organised by a man who must remain
nameless.**

Some say he runs entirely on electricity and that he does not know the
meaning of being on time.....

Some say he is the King of Benidorm and has a massive chopper.....

**All we know is - He's called the.....
Ediloudaloodaloodalooo!!!**

And a damn good job he (or was it Linda) did in the organisation,
and the execution, brilliantly flown, great venue.

We were collected from five different locations, almost all on time, and
literally dropped onto a postage stamp of a lawn
at The Fighting Cocks pub in Horton Kirby where we were welcomed by
hordes of kids and lots of locals.

Each of the five groups had to dress differently and so inevitably two
groups dressed identically.

Steve Bell's group decided to wear white tuxedos, Nick Jenkins group
decided to wear white tuxedos. Good choice chaps!

Luckily the other three groups saved the day.....



But this is what we all looked like



And afterwards we enjoyed an excellent dinner.....



Yet another amazing GASS night.
Thanks to Ediloodaloodallou
and to Chris and Vanessa at the Fighting Cocks.
<http://www.fightingcockshortonkirby.co.uk/>

Now at the end of the evening we were all a million miles from our homes
and cars.

But never fear - electric cars were here!
Sadly, just two of them.

So there was suddenly the realisation that once two groups were on their
way home at 10.30, the cars would not be back until at least 11.30.

That is assuming they still had any charge of course.

That meant the last group could reasonably be expected to be waiting at
the pub until at least 12.30 and get home at 5.00am (run out of juice).

SO - the A Team worked on the principal that possession was nine tenths
of the law and literally ran for the cars and bagged one.

Home by 11.15! Result! What time was the last man in? Who cares.
Sorry about that boys.....

AUGUST MEETING

(pub meeting - budget £600)

**POOL, DARTS & TABLE FOOTBALL
OLYMPIAD
LASHINGS SPORTS BAR**

Lower Stone Street, Maidstone.





We were granted private use of Lashings new dedicated games room and bar, with dinner afterwards in their restaurant.
Teams competed in a round robin triathlon of pool, darts and table football to decide GASS champions.

Great venue for this sort of event,
POOL table, DARTS board, FOOTBALL table, all in a nice room.
See what I mean





We had a strict system of playing each game for 10 minutes, each team played every other team and every bloody thing. Administrative nightmare!!!! Thank Christ for that wonderful little whistle. Who would have thought such a small thing could make such a massive noise.

This is how we organised the event so that everyone played everyone at everything.



GASS TRI-SPORT TROPHY

TEAMS OF 2-3
5 X 10 MINUTE ROUNDS
start and finish dead on the whistle
TOP SCORE WINS IN EACH GAME
POOL: Least number of stripes or spots left on the table
FOOTBALL: Most goals DARTS: Highest total score
TWO PLAYERS FROM EACH TEAM PLAY POOL & DARTS
ONE PLAYER PLAYS FOOTBALL

TEAMS

TEAM **A**rschholes BRIAN, PHIL C, LEN
TEAM **B**uggers ANDY, PHIL R, NICK
TEAM **C**rappers WAYNE, KEITH, TONY
TEAM **D**iddlers GARY, RON, HUGH
TEAM **E**xcrementers RAY, GRAHAM, IAN
TEAM **F**ornicators OWEN, PETE

ROUND	FOOTBALL	winner	DARTS	winner	POOL	winner
1	A-C	C	B-D	B	E-F	E
2	D-F	D	C-E	C	A-B	=
3	B-E	B	A-D	D	C-F	F
4	A-E	A	B-F	F	C-D	D
5	B-C	C	A-F	A	D-E	E

Not all teams play the same games, some play pool twice, some play darts twice, its just how it runs

SCORES

10 for WIN 5 for DRAW

Round	A	B	C	D	E	F
1		10	10		10	
2	5	5	10	10		
3		10		10		10
4	10			10		10
5			10		10	10
TOTALS	15	25	30	30	20	30

85 77

150 118

As you can see the FORNICATORS won, that being Peter and Owen,
Second was the DIDDLERS of Gary, Hugh and Ron,
Third was the CRAPPERS, who were crap.

The winners are shown here.....



Mind you this happy shot was a bit fraught earlier.....



**YOU MAY WONDER WHY
OWEN IS DANCING...
IT'S NOT JUST COS HE WON!**



**NOT EVERYONE ACCEPTED
THE RESULTS WITH EQUINIMITY**

a state of psychological
stability and composure
which is undisturbed
by experience of or
exposure to emotions,
pain, or other phenomena
that may cause others to
lose the balance of their mind.

Some disgruntled member decided to continue the darts game with Owen's foot as the bulls eye.

At least those that came second seem happy.



And then we sat down for a great scoff.



Many thanks to Lashings who provided a great night at a great price.

www.lashings.co.uk

[Back to the top of the page](#)

AGM 2015

BENIDORM - SPAIN

Following some two years of non-stop promotion by Hew Edilodoloodaloo during which he bad-mouthed Las Vegas, New York, Shanghai, St Tropez and many other locations suggested for our annual bean feast, all in favour of that jewel in the Spanish crown - Benidorm, we finally went there.

Here's the the hotel official website, www.melia.com/en/hotels/spain/benidorm/melia-benidorm/index.html

Also on our site: <http://www.groupholidays.com/benidorm-group-hotels/melia-benidorm>"

Which is a result as there was a suggestion that we stayed in the Hotel Solana, where the TV series Benidorm was filmed.

What a jolly jape that would have been!!!!

Our organiser for 2015 was Mr Keith Evans. So thank you to Keith for all the travel, hotel, and AGM dinner organisation. Spot on!

19 members attended, only Chris, Ray, Stuart and Steve R had the good sense to stay in the sunny UK.

The 19 of us choose to go to Benidorm in monsoon season.

It went a bit like this.....

We arrived at our actually really nice hotel and got stuck straight in to the fully inclusive beers in the bar and then the very reasonable wine & food in the restaurant.

Then we walked to 'The Strip'. Sadly we were the only people who walked. Everyone else went on a mobility scooter or in a wheelchair. To be fair the only alternative most of them had was to be rolled there.

John made four really good new friends on his way home and gave them all his money, that John, generous to a fault. He also learnt that his phone is not even worth nicking.

Sunday was a bit of the same, Tapas Alley for lunch, Strip Alley for the evening. Ready for Monday!

BULL RUNNING!

Yup! Actual Bull Running. Nobody had an idea what it would be like and everyone was a tad nervous of the bulls.

Mainly because we had the extra risks caused by the fact it was raining cats & dogs - would they all mix.

Sadly, the answer is no. Torrential rain makes a bull ring more like an ice rink, apart from the fact it was raining so hard you couldn't even see a bull if it kissed you.

We were sad, we had all made such an effort for those bulls, just look at us!



So we enjoyed lunch. Sadly no, Lunch was a plate of stale Quavers and some dodgy plates of mixed bullshit.
So we got hammered on beers and sangria, Sadly no, we were all so hung over we drank precious little.
Depression set in, even in our funny bullfighting hats, suddenly an idea was floated, and I do mean floated - "GROUP PHOTO".

Graham to the fore!!!!



As you see, we were dressed to run over bulls, no wonder they were too scared to come out.

NEXT - We got on the bus. Depressed, beaten by the rain, but unbowed. At this point we think it finally dawned on the bullring owners that no bulls for us - no cash for him.

So he brought the little darlings out and the next few shots show you how much fun the bulls had with us.

They are not toys! They enjoy beating up English tourists. Those are not joke horns (ours are by the way).



As is traditional in bull fighting - we started with the Matadors - Brian and Gary were there to sexually arouse the bulls. They failed.





Then the bullshit stopped.....







And to give you an idea of scale this was how big the ring was, no place to hide! Well except behind the wooden bits I guess.



On with the scary photos..... Mainly of Senor Smith..... Bullfighter extraordinaire....



Oh, and we can't miss Senor 'Two Cape' Bell..... Or Senor Westlake, who started us off with his actual running....



Oh, and Senor Ralph, he only fights fat bastards..... Ron thinks about it..... Hugh causes the bulls to think about it.....



No bulls were injured in the event, nor were any GASS members, sadly.

From Bullfighting we jumped straight to Gay Baiting - This was the theme for 2105



and Flamenco was our theme dance!



Quality dancing!

Do we never stop taking cheesy group photos of weird Flamenco dancers?



Apparently not.....



The winners, Pete came first and won the Breitling Watch as a prize, Owen second, Ian third (or the other way round).

We also enjoyed a couple of lovely lunches.....



And for once we paid for Steve on his birthday (back to normal next year please Steve, paying for you right throws our budgets out!)

MINUTES OF THE AGM

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

The usual suspects, work too hard, no time for their mates, 'er indoors won't let me out to play. Riches, Spree, Guttridge, Gilbert.

FINANCIAL DIRECTORS REPORT

We started the year with £6,740, we aimed to spent the surplus to get us back down to £5,000, we ended the year with £5,636. Bloody good show!

During the year we had a financial wobble with some members entering into a spending competition with fine wines, brandy and cigars going on the bill.

That was knocked on the head and we all agreed to act as though we were out with our mates, not out to see who could nick the most out of the fund.

We agreed that as big boys we could all have exactly what we wanted when we want it - as long as we paid for it ourselves and did not try and sneak it on the GASS bill.

We also agreed to leave the fees at £40 and when the going got tough (as in expensive) the tough would put in £20. That was fair and it took the pressure off fees.

A genuine vote of thanks was given to Ron for his sterling work with a quill pen. Many thanks Ron.

CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICERS REPORT

Another fine year. Great meetings and great company. Here is to another year, 34 years next year!

MEETINGS FOR 2105-16

Total chaos. Not a decision in sight, apart from members poo-pooing every single idea that came up.

Lots of Jeremy Corbyn style flammery about how we could maybe fly to the moon for dinner, ride camels up Everest, dine off oysters on a yacht.

Very little about the how, when, where, what time, sort of boring detail that gets these f'ing meetings off the ground - but no matter.

I am sure somehow, somewhere a programme will materialise and we will have a great time.

You could try looking here and there may even be a programme for you to consider - click here - [meetings 2015/16](#)

We did have a couple of great ideas come up, both from John Brice and Nick Jenkins, and they will appear in the programme.

Brian is 65 on the first Tuesday in December and that may appear too in some shape of form.

AWARDS

The prize of a very nice Gucci Bag for the best pants of the night went to Nick Jenkins.

The Nick Jenkins Breitling Award for the best Flamenco Dancer went to Peter Farrer.

The Mannequin Pisses Award 2015 also went to Peter Farrer.

The Peter Farrer Award for the best Peter Farrer impersonation went to Peter Farrer.

The Poorest Millionaire in Town Award went to Hu Ediloodalloooo for permanently being skint.

Another great year - no issues, no problems, great company, great entertainment every day.

See you next year!

OCTOBER

PUB MEETING

Tuesday 6th October

THE MAYPOLE P.H - BORDEN

The Street, Borden ME9 8JN

01795-424253

www.themaypoleborden.co.uk

As it had been almost a full year since the Sittingbourne guys had a meeting in their area, we picked the The Maypole which has GASS written all over it.

Lovely little country pub, lovely landlady called Lesley, who is also a master pie-maker.

So it's was a PIE NIGHT!

Hand made short crust pies, and vegetables from her very own garden.

PROGRAMME

Test your strength on a fairground machine.



PIE time - we choose from the great menu below:-
STEAK & KIDNEY - CHICKEN, LEEK & GAMMON - STEAK &
GUINNESS - VEGETABLE PIE - VENISON, PIGEON & RABBIT (may
contain shot)

We also went outside to try our strength in traditional
circus fashion. Outside being the operative term.

As in outside in the pitch black and the pissing rain because the daft
suppliers failed to mention when booking an INSIDE entertainment, that the
inside 'Strike it High' machine was almost 100 feet high.

Unless they thought we were holding the meeting in a Cathedral, which to
be honest was not what the address 'The Maypole Pub' suggested, then
how the hell we were going to get in inside I don't know!

Any road up, the insistent and heavy rain certainly took the edge off the
competition, oh! and the fact it as dark as a coal cellar did not help either.

On the bright side the pies were bloody brilliant!
Good pub meeting.

READY!



SET!





DISCUSSION ON MEETINGS FOR 2015/16

As explained elsewhere we did not really achieve much on a meetings programme at the AGM, but we did have some good suggestions.

The point of the October PUB meeting was to approve or amend this outline meetings programme which you can see here - [meetings programme](#)

It was also to take early suggestions for next years AGM.

The decisions of the meeting went something like this:-

1. Keith proposed either Norway or Cyprus for the AGM 2016. He asked people to mull it over and give him a steer on preference.
2. With regard to the years programme nobody seemed to care much one way or another as long as we have fun.
3. With regard to Christmas, Nick made a suggestion that we go to The Roffen with wives, but that there be a separate GASS meeting in December.

There was some discussion that in the very busy month of December it might be difficult to fit in two meetings when everyone was bounced into a vote.... which was strongly in favour of one meeting at The Roffen.

Based on these decisions, and/or lack of decisions, we will run with the programme as it is unless anything better comes along.

[Back to the Top of the Page](#)

NOVEMBER

GASS DOES 'THE FULL MONTY' DINNER MEETING

THE ASHFORD CLUB
Tuesday 3rd November

ORGANISER - WAYNE

EVEREST RESTAURANT
Saturn House, 113 Station Road, TN23 1PJ
Take a look - www.everestinnashford.co.uk

FIRST WE ENJOYED A PROPER SLAP UP NEPALESE DINNER!

A slap up Dinner in the highly recommended Nepalese Restaurant in Ashford called EVEREST to get up a bit of Dutch courage.
We left it to the owner to pick for us all, except of course for our increasing ban of food faddists.....

Ron, as usual, no tomatoes, Nick, nothing that ever breathed or swam, Don, nothing unusual, plus various others who are just plain intolerant of other people, let alone food items.
Excellent meal, well chosen Wayne.

ENTERTAINMENT

GASS had acquired three properly velcro'd Full Monty Dress Costumes and a Choreographer and The Ashford Club provided the stage and the music.

Here is an indication of how we should have look in our attempt - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vZaSIV0sy0>

Or, a slightly more freeform version? - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SEBqGBKV0Bw>

Sadly, the best laid plans of pissed up mice did indeed 'gang aglay'. To say that Wayne stinks as a Choreographer is perhaps being unfair on Wayne, or perhaps not. We needed way more discipline, way more forcing drunken participants to participate, way better photography and far less booze. Suffice it to say that rather like the famous un-photographed 'Hakka', we failed to get the much vaunted YouTube video.

Just a GIFF!

(which will animate if you give it a mo to load, hardly worth the wait to be honest, but give it a go anyway)



and a few shots of the other contestants....







You decide who won!

Great evening as ever, thanks to Wayne, see you all next month.

DECEMBER CHRISTMAS MEETING

GASS CHRISTMAS LADIES "IT'S NOT A GASS MEETING" MEETING

GASS MEMBERS - WIVES & PARTNERS

(PLEASE NOTIFY **ANY NON-ATTENDANCE** AS OTHERWISE YOUR PLACES
WILL BE LAID AND MEALS COOKED)

THE ROFFEN SUITE
Tuesday 1st December

We all assembled at 7.30 in The Roffen Suite Bar for an 8.00 Dinner Service
Dress: Smart

As in SMART OPPOSUITS!

Yup - the good old suits made it out again, not to be wasted those suits. Everyone
made the effort, everyone.....

Except Andy. Why? "Because I don't like my suit, it's orange" What a strange
excuse.

Does Andy seriously think others among us 'like' our suits? Mine is powder blue with
fetching pink tulips - you think I 'like' that suit?

Andy, in the good old days that would (and still should) rate a massive fine!
Can we prepare something for Andy for the next meeting please.



A SELFIE OF A MAN IN A SUIT HE DOES NOT REALLY 'LIKE' - BUT HE LOVES HIS HAT.

We all sat down to a slap up Christmas Dinner accompanied by our loved ones, wives and significant others.
Not everyone brought all three along, most just brought the wife. Loved ones were for later in the week...
(Only joking wives, just a joke, anyway, what are you doing reading these minutes, they're private!!!)

Actually ladies - see, I know you're there - it was a singular honour for you to be invited. GASS almost never invites our ladies anywhere.
I voted **in favour** of having a ladies night, as did several others - BUT - certain members, who shall remain nameless, voted **against** the proposal.
Shame! I hear you cry. Name and shame I hear you cry even louder!!! Well follow this link and all will be revealed

[GASS MISOGYNISTIC BASTARDS LIST](#)

Welcome back - I think that dealt with that sensitive subject in a fair and reasonable way without ruffling any feathers or revealing any names, so moving on.

We had a lovely Christmas Dinner, a lot of very nice wines and then a fine old boogie.

As is often the case in these matters a picture saves a thousand words.....















The last two made the cut because it shows that Graham can carry off a bow in his hair, and proves Julia looks good in anything!

That brings to a close yet **ANOTHER** successful year for
GASS

So guys, onward and upward into 2016!

JANUARY

ROYAL NAVAL ASSOCIATION WHISTLE SIGNALS

GASS learn to communicate by whistling to each other - often useful in survival situations, like Benidorm for instance, JB could have whistled 'HELP!!'

LORDSWOOD TEN PIN BOWLING CENTRE
Newton Close, Lordswood, Chatham, Kent ME5 8TR
<http://lgn1326122893.site-fusion.co.uk/home>

ORGANISER - JOHN BRICE

**THIS BEING THE JANUARY MEETING IMPORTANT THINGS WERE DECIDED -
DO PLEASE READ THE MINUTES BELOW**

Many thanks to The Medway Towns Sea Cadets under the C.O Sub Lieutenant
Buck Buckingham R.N
The cadets did an amazing job showing us a number of calls on the Bosun's Whistle,
and for those that have no idea what a Bosun's Whistle is then here's one I made
earlier....



A single tone whistle held in one hand with tone changes achieved by bending fingers over the one air hole.

The cadets gave a demonstration, then we had 15 minutes of one to one training, then the best four were chosen for a whistle-off.

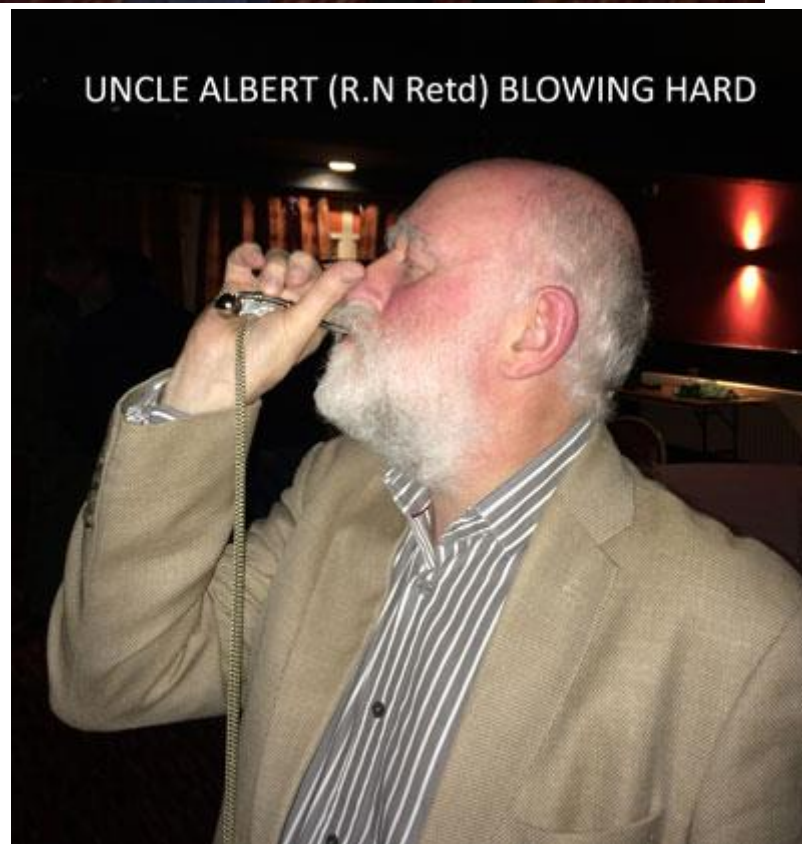
Brian, Graham, Chris, Ian were the famous four. **'Carry On'** was the call to play, high note - low note.

Graham was chosen as winner by the GASS audience because he mistakenly blew three notes instead of two. Show-off. But he actually sounded **'Haul Away'**.

Brian was chosen as winner - because the C.O decided he was the best. Oh, and he played the right call. Small matter, but important in the heat of battle.

If you want the Matelots to keep firing you play 'Carry On'. If Commodore Bridgewood is in charge playing 'Haul Away' by mistake, they get in boats and bugger off!





We then went on to enjoy an evenings ten pin bowling and a hearty curry and chilli. Well done to the girls at the centre!

MINUTES OF THE MEETING

First of all thanks to everyone for being patient. The January meeting is normally the one where we flesh out the programme for the year and to avoid the whole of GASS becoming a dictatorship, simply dedicated to the ego of one loon.
It is always nice to get at least vague approval for the multifarious plans, meetings, travels, budgets etc.

UNLESS I MISUNDERSTOOD THE VARIOUS HECKLES AND INSULTS WE BROADLY AGREED THE FOLLOWING:-

1. We will have 13 meetings this year - to include Tuesday 6th September
- **WOODLAND WILD MUSHROOM FORAGING.**
2. We will have the **GASS MAGIC CIRCLE MEETING** in March.
3. We will be **FIRE BREATHING** in February.
4. In the summer we will be mimicking the Royal Tournament and performing the **NAVAL GUN CARRIAGE RACE.**
5. I will be hunting around for a real live Sumo Wrestler for a **GASS SUMO WRESTLING COMPETITION.**
6. **NEW MEMBERS** - There is a moratorium* on new members at present. **(noun - temporary prohibition of an activity)*
Translation, we have stopped taking new members for a time. We technically have two spaces left, but some members queried this saying they felt we were full at 23.
There is no current overwhelming need to bring in new blood - with such good attendances at meetings the numbers are always plenty high enough anyway.
This absolutely does not stop guests coming along and they are always welcome. It also does not stop someone making it plain they would like to join at some time in the future.
7. **AGM DESTINATION** - There is a straight choice and two highly competent organisers, Keith and Tony, and two locations.
The locations could not be more different - Vilnius in LITHUANIA and Aya Napa in CYPRUS.

AYA NAPA - CYPRUS - Keith is researching decent hotels in the nice end of Aya Napa and will come back with his plan.
VILNIUS - LITHUANIA - Tony is using our old mates Vamos Travel for an agent organised event.
As soon as I have both plans I will send them out as an email. We can then discuss them at the February meeting.

The most obvious differences are:-

AYA NAPA - Beach resort, warm weather, suitable for a 4 and a 7 day stay. Long flight.

VILNIUS - Capital City, mild weather, probably 4 day stay only. Short flight.

My guess is this might be a close vote. To keep things honest we need to remember three things.

1. Only members who are actually going on the AGM can vote.
2. Votes will be one vote per member, with the voting list written out and fair and open for all to see.
3. Once the vote is finalised then everyone gets behind the majority decision and goes with the flow in an enthusiastic GASS like manner.

As a suggestion - the losing venue becomes the venue for the AGM in 2017.

I think that was about it.



APART FROM THE ROFFEN CLUB 30TH BIRTHDAY OF COURSE!!

**SATURDAY 6TH FEBRUARY - ALL GASS ARE INVITED - NO CHARGE -
GUESTS WELCOME.**

LIVE BAND (THE CHOOS), BUFFET, DISCO, SURPRISES.

Be there - or be square!!!!

FEBRUARY

FIRE BREATHING

at The Dancing Dog Saloon - Bobbing.

Sheppey Way, Sittingbourne, ME9 8QP
www.dancingdogsaloon.co.uk



A YOUNG GASS MEMBER WITH BROWN HAIR AND BAD BREATH
But the only one who has breathed fire before!

ORGANISER - GRAHAM

Graham has a friend, Trent, who was prepared to throw caution to the wind
and let us set ourselves on fire.

THIS WAS ONE OF THE "IF IT AIN'T DANGEROUS - DON'T DO IT" MEETINGS

The 'Dancing Dog Saloon' did a great job, mainly in ignoring any 'Elf &
Safety' regulations.

This is definitely one of those meetings where the pictures tell the story
better than I can.....

FIRST, THE REAL FIRE BREATHING DRAGON SUPERSTARS



ANDY - LONG AND STRONG



CHRIS - LOW AND FRINGE SINGE



KEITH - FULL VOLUME



OWEN - COMPACT WITH A NICE UPPER BLOW BACK



PETE - ARTISTIC FLAME WITH EXTRA OVER SPIT



GARY - A TRUE SHOWMAN'S FLAME



WAYNE - TWO FLAME WAYNE



STUART - NICE BLOW

NOW SOME OF THE
ALSO-RANS



LEN - NOT BAD FOR THOSE OLD LUNGS



PHIL - HE'S GOT A BAD SHOULDER YOU KNOW



IAN - NOT QUITE GOT IT, BIT LIKE HIS SKIING



AND FINALLY - STEVE - WHO SHOULD HAVE BEEN A FIREMAN.
ALL HE DID WAS PUT THE WAND OUT!
EVEN TRENT WAS LAUGHING!

Brilliant evening, even though Brian was missing and so could not show off his fire breathing skills, he's got a bad ankle you know.

Mind you Brian had an excuse not to fire breath - he was after all 20 miles away with his foot in the air.

Not sure what excuse the following had : - Tony and Hugh. Must just be chicken was the feeling of the meeting.

Many thanks to Trent for teaching everyone how to do it.
Many thanks to The Dancing Dog for letting us do it - not many pubs would!

IF YOU HAVE NOT DONE SO YET PLEASE

- 1. VOTE FO THE AGM.**
 - 2. MENU CHOICE FOR MARCH**
- DO IT NOW!**

MARCH

GASS MAGIC CIRCLE DINNER

THE FARMHOUSE - West Malling

www.elitepubs.com/the_farmhouse/index.php



A REALLY GOOD MEETING!!!!

**A lovely three course dinner, during which we
provided the magic cabaret.**

(an original concept for a GASS meeting by John Brice)

THE FARMHOUSE - WEST MALLING

Private room upstairs, "The Ballroom", which was set up with a U shaped
table as our stage

*It was at West Malling as Andy has never had a meeting near his home, he has never moaned and
always had to travel. This time. for the first time ever, he walked to a GASS meeting!*

For this meeting each member acquired or purchased a proper magic trick, and boy did they do well.

The performances were amazing!!!

We were lucky enough to have the services of Andrew Paul, a professional magician.

Andrew was our Master of Ceremonies and our Judge.



As you can see we dressed for the occasion.

Sadly we were missing a couple of members, Nick, Owen, Keith and Graham were away on holiday.

AND SADLY

Steve Riches had decided that after 10 years of membership at £480 a year, costing him £4,800,

and having only made 10 meetings in that time,
then maybe, just maybe, GASS was not for him. GASS members felt exactly the opposite!

We felt that if we had 10 more members like Steve we could stop paying our monthly subs altogether.

We therefore regard this as a retrograde step by Steve, thinking only of himself, without a thought for us poor sods.

Despite our annoyance at the loss of 480 sovs a year - we wish Steve well and look forward to seeing him as a guest at any time.

CHAIRMAN'S NOTE - The Guest fee for ex-members (as opposed to prospective new members) is £480 a meeting.

Won't make a lot of difference to Steve - as that's what he's been paying anyway.

WAYNE'S TRICK

Wayne was sadly unwell - so he performed a trick that Gary was already famous for from years ago.

It goes like this -

If you can't make a meeting that involves an expensive three course meal what you do is you tell Gary, no-one else (that's important).

Gary comes along to the meeting and keeps quiet about your intended absence.

The kitchen cook your PRE-ORDERED meal. Brian delays the meal 20 minutes waiting for you to turn up. Finally the delay is too long and so Brian rings you.

Ta -Da! - You announce on the phone that Gary knew all along.

Ta - Da! - Gary announces that he was going to tell everyone you aren't coming wait for it during the meal!!!

Outcome - A long delayed meal, plus we get to pay £26 for the wasted food.

Good trick!!!!

Except we all know that trick - because Gary performed exactly the same trick with Ron - years ago.

I know, I know, we have some new members who may not have seen it, so was worth a go.

BUT PLEASE - If you are not f***ing coming to a meal where you have pre-ordered your food - TELL BRIAN!!!

It's nowhere near as funny, but it makes so much more sense.

And finally - Ian did not perform a trick. Apparently he felt that leaving the bedside of his lovely Hayley and his new baby daughter Eva

to come to the GASS meeting was enough in itself. We agreed and bought him two bottles of Bubbly - which we promptly drank.

Congratulations to Ian and Hayley - and welcome little Eva!

MOVING ON TO THE MEETING

The problem with minutes on a meeting that involved very visual magic tricks is that it's difficult to capture.

Hugh did suggest that we hired a cameraman to video the whole thing but we felt that the cost, at around £500, would far exceed the enjoyment.

After all - who really wants to watch 16 guys perform amateur magic in a TWO hour video???? Two hours it took. Even with edits it's still an hour.

So for posterity its just a few stills I'm afraid. At least it captures the essence of a magic night (geddit?).

Apologies to everyone for the less than descriptive descriptions of the tricks, it's what I wrote on the night. I don't understand them either.

So here we go - THE GASS MAGIC CIRCLE....



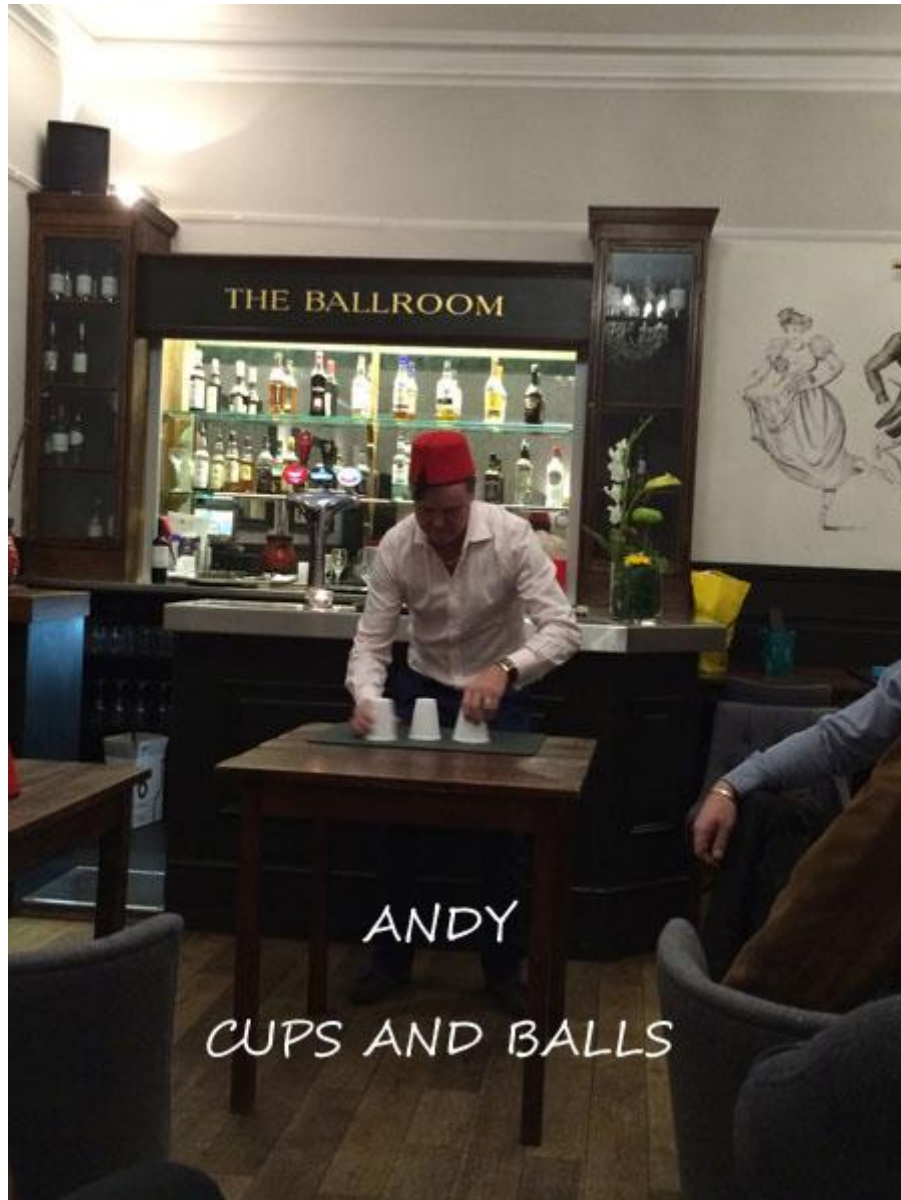


COINS THROUGH
A SOLID PIPE



LEN

HANKIES INTO CHOCOLATES



ANDY
CUPS AND BALLS



PETE

AN AMAZING CARD TRICK



PHIL
FIND THE KING





STEVE

SMASHING YOUR STUFF
WITH A Mallet



BRIAN

CASINO ROYAL PREDICTIONS



JOHN
SHOELACES & RINGS



DON

THE EGG TRICK



RON

£20 NOTE THROUGH
A RING TRICK





GARY
X RAY SPECS



CHRIS

POO BAG TRICK



As you can see, Andy managed two tricks, the one above was the best.
Members spent between £2 and £200 - and you could not tell the difference.

THE RESULTS

1st - RON 2nd - DON 3rd - JB

Many thanks to Andrew Paul
<http://kentmagician.co.uk>

Andrew did a wonderful job, not only holding the whole thing together, but also showing us how it is really done with a superb finale.

Many thanks also to our main trick supplier.

ALAKAZAM MAGIC UK

Ellingham Industrial Estate, Ellingham Way, Ashford, TN23 6LZ. Open Mon-Fri 10-5
and Sat mornings.

www.alakazam.co.uk

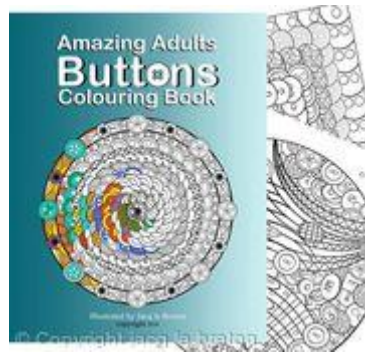
And finally thanks to The Farmhouse, West Malling, Andrew's local, for such a great spread.

www.elitepubs.com/the_farmhouse/index.php

[Back to the top of the page](#)

MAY

COLOURING BOOKS



The Command House, Chatham

Tuesday April 5th

Organiser - John Brice

GASS enjoyed our first foray into the trendy new world of adult Colouring Books

We are had our own ADULT (with a capital A) colouring book to work on. Designed just for GASS by the artist Jacq Le Breton.

Colouring books - by Jacq Le Breton

www.jacgovarts.co.uk

"January 2016 saw a new phase develop in my artistic career. With colouring books having swept the whole world off their feet and onto the sofas with a good book and set of pens, I embarked on designing these myself".

BRING IT ON!!!





Look at everyone, heads down, crayons out, keeping inside those lines like good little boys.

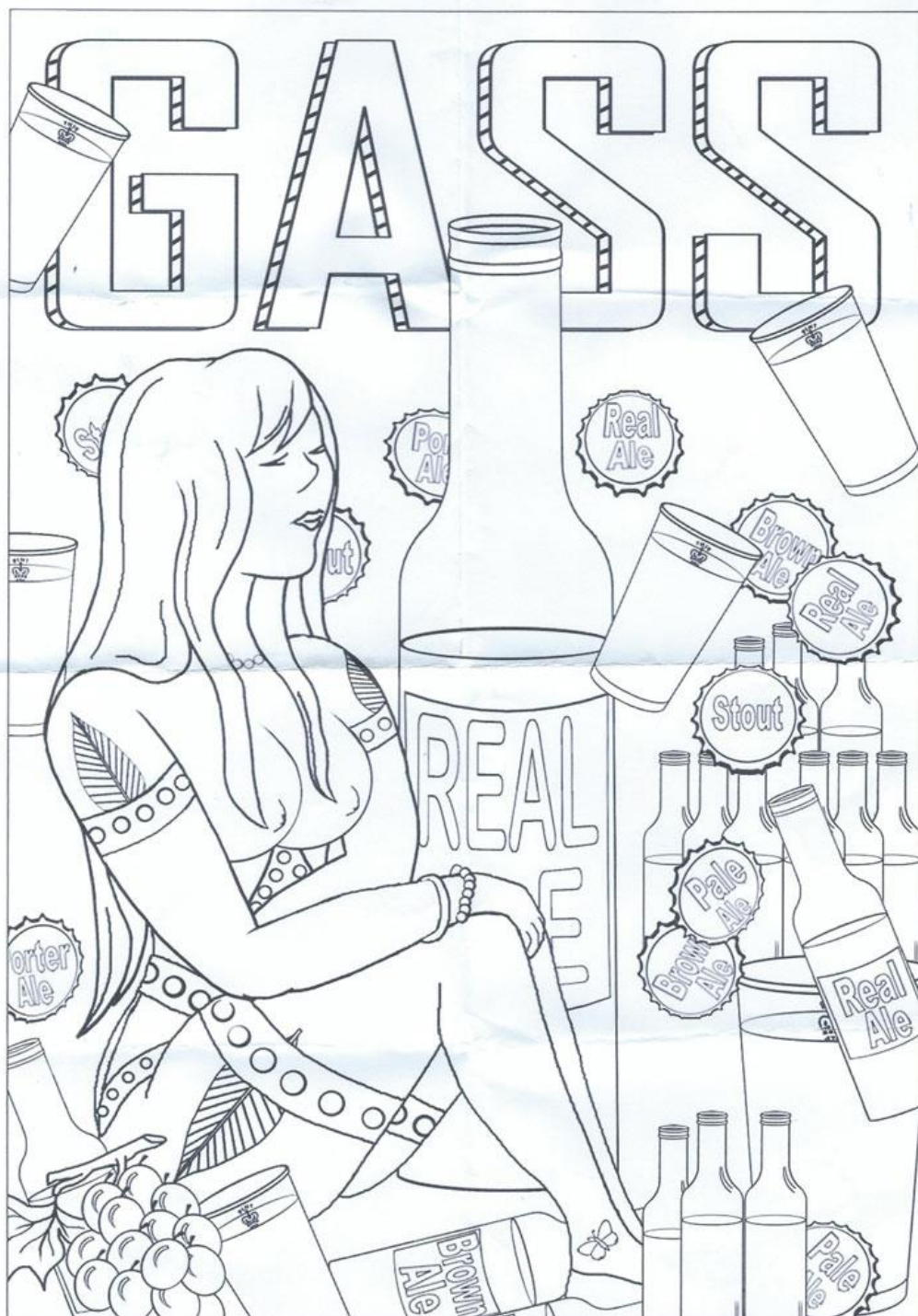
John and Jacqs judged the winners - I wrote them down - then promptly lost the list. Sorreeee!

So - I re-judged them myself.

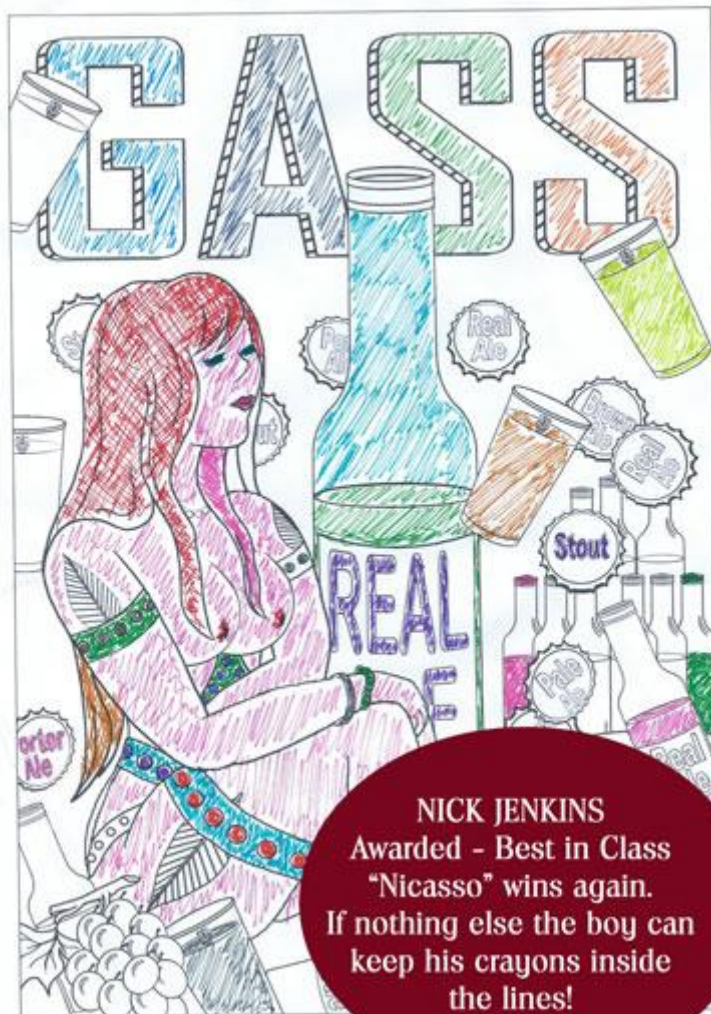
The first thing I noted was that every single GASS member coloured in the ladies nipples!

Everyone, not one set of uncoloured, bright red nipples in the room. They missed her hair, her body, the background - but boy, did they get those nips!!!!

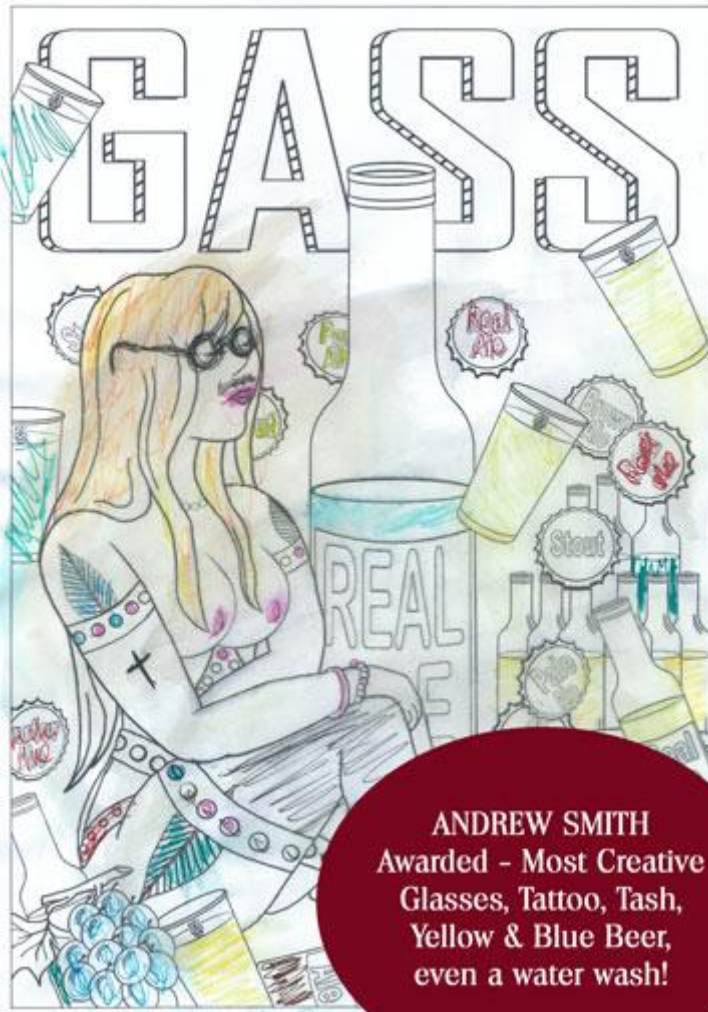
This is the page we worked with.....



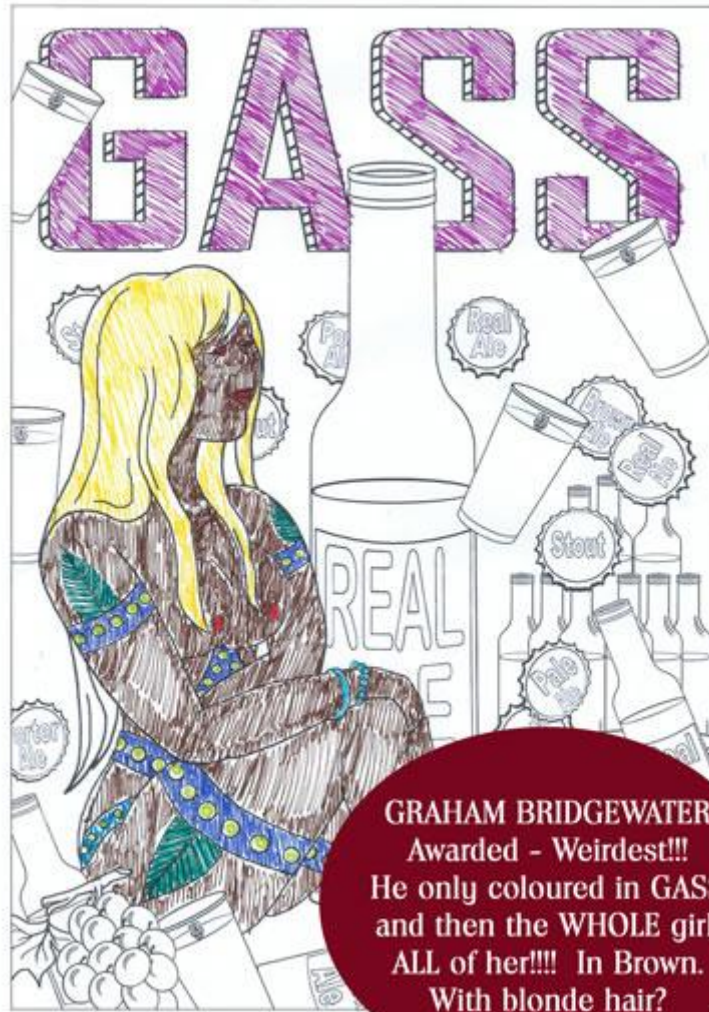
And here are the top four



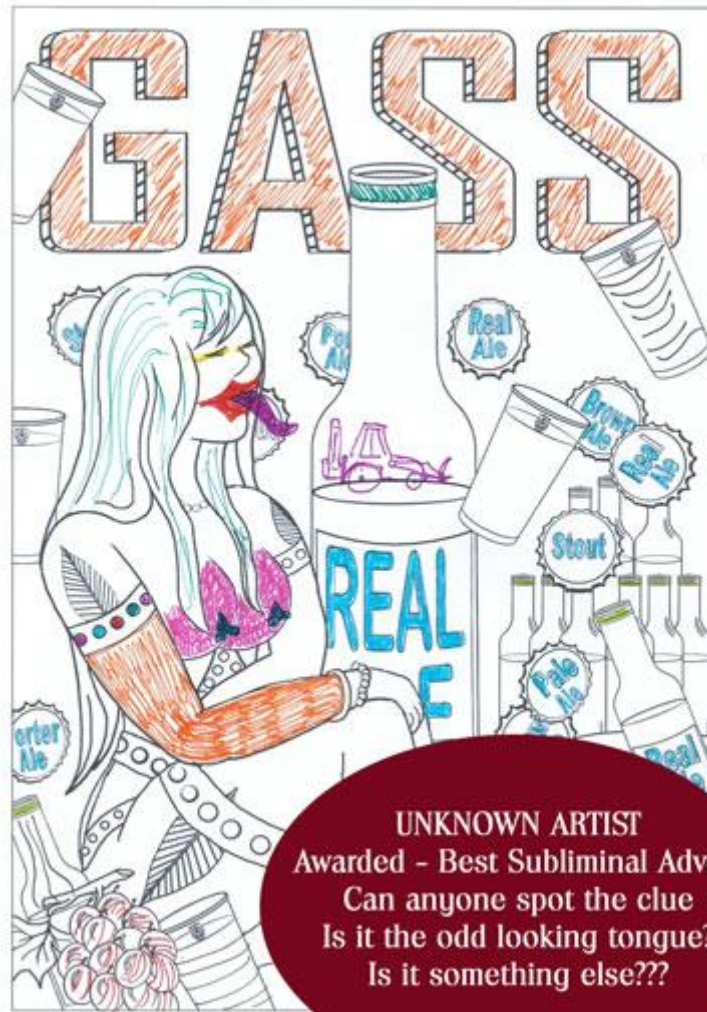
NICK JENKINS
Awarded - Best in Class
"Nicasso" wins again.
If nothing else the boy can
keep his crayons inside
the lines!



ANDREW SMITH
Awarded - Most Creative
Glasses, Tattoo, Tash,
Yellow & Blue Beer,
even a water wash!



GRAHAM BRIDGEWATER
Awarded - Weirdest!!!
He only coloured in GASS
and then the WHOLE girl,
ALL of her!!!! In Brown.
With blonde hair?



Another interesting meeting, challenging, exciting and definitely not dangerous for a change.
Many thanks to Jacqs for her themed picture and her judging skills.

GASS MOTTO
"If it ain't dangerous, don't do it"
So true, so true.

MAY

The Panic Room

7 Berkley Crescent (Opposite the Clock Tower)
Gravesend DA12 2AH

www.thepanicroom.net/home

Suggested by Ian

A new idea that is catching on all over, and as always GASS was at the forefront.
We booked two rooms - maximum of 16 people. OK, they did us a favour and squeezed 18 in.

So GASS being GASS, 20 turned up. Only Keith and Don were missing.
Despite that we rammed everyone in and got on with it.

We did good!

To be fair the crowding did lead to a couple of missed or fumbled clues, but good we did.

So good we almost made it out in time.

Sadly we are under oath not to show any photos or mention anything that happened. It would spoil it for others.

So all you get is the blurb.



In "The Panic Room" you are a team sent to a crazed conspiracy theorists mansion where he has been found dead.

He found out something he shouldn't have and clearly someone wanted to cover it up and hide it.

The room is trashed and clearly in the murderers haste he couldn't find the secret file.

It is now your job to solve the trail of puzzles and riddles left by the conspiracy theorist,

find the files and exit code and escape before the 60 minutes is up.



In "The Witch House" you are a student who rents a room inside an old house with a long and dark history

His dreams are haunted by those of a Witch from the town's legend.

During the witch trials of 1682 she disappeared never to be seen again.

It's 11pm and your team has been sent to help the poor student uncover the mystery that lies within the room.

What happened to the witch? Can you break the curse before the clock strikes midnight?

FOLLOWED BY DINNER AT

DIVIZIA

Italian Restaurant

32 Queen Street, DA12 2EE

A really great and amazingly authentic Italian!
They did us a great deal. Starter and Main £20.

Great atmosphere and really good food.

THEY DID ALLOW PHOTOS.....



**We got fed,
Len lost out**

Sadly, there were some meal malfunctions.... See above.



**Steve played for us
We all left the room**

Followed by some Cabaret malfunctions..... See above.

We also took a straw poll on BREXIT

Amazingly the results were as follows:-
REMAIN - 3 (Nick, Owen and one other)
UNDECIDED - 4 (Brian, Phil, Tony, Ron)

OUT - 13!

Other than that we had a great evening.

JUNE

BIG BOYS TOYS



Stede Court Estate - Harrietsham

Everybody turned up as planned, some a bit wetter than others.

IT PISSED DOWN

Which rather took the fun off the night this year.

Still, we had some lovely cars turn out and the pub did a great job!



THE STAR OF THE SHOW!!!



A CLOSE RUNNER UP



THOUSANDS OF POUNDS OF TOYS



WISHFUL THINKING TONY!!!

Note 1 - There are no bikes on show, chickens, a little bit of rain - Huh!!!

Note 2 - GASS called the referendum about right then.

JULY

NAVAL GUN CARRIAGE RACE



We finally did something dangerous again!
(if you don't count fire-breathing and sliding down the world's biggest slide that is).
We've had it with safe meetings where the worst that could happen is the nib of your
crayon breaks.

WE WANT TO CUT OUR FINGER TIPS OFF, CRUSH AT LEAST ONE LIMB,
EVISCERATE AT LEAST ONE GASS MEMBER.

*(eviscerate - disembowel a human or animal - as in "The Gass member was eviscerated by the gun
limber in the race" - just for clarity)*

AND WHAT BETTER WAY THAN IN A 'NAVAL GUN CARRIAGE' RACE
On The Great Lines, followed by essential life saving surgery, then dinner.

Note to Medical Team - Defibrillator on hand please, extra plasters too.

We met the Sea Cadets on The Great Lines at the appointed time and they gave us
a demonstration of the whole thing before allowing us to compete in part of the
event.

We huffed and we puffed and we blew the Gun and Limber down - or at least we
wrenched the wheels of the thing!

The winners of the event were Gary and Owen. They won fair and square by simply
being the ones who noticed their little Limber was half the weight of the big Gun,
Oh! and by wiggling the axle around when the opposing team come to fit the wheel
back on. Small technical issues. Well done to the father and son team.



The Victorious Gun Runners



The Real Deal



The Winners _ Gary and Owen







Everyone else having fun!

Great day as always.

Thanks to everyone at the KGV Pub for a lovely dinner!

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AUGUST

THE ARCELORMITTAL ORBIT SLIDE!!!

Named as Time Out London's number 1 thing to do this year, you do not want to miss this!

AND GASS WON'T MISS IT!

WE HAVE 20 TICKETS FOR 17.00 (latest ride) ON TUESDAY 2nd
AUGUST

RIDE DOWN ON THE HIGH SPEED TRAIN - RIDE DOWN THE SLIDE -
DINNER AT WESTFIELD

WE MUST BE AT THE TOP OF THE SLIDE AT 5.00PM - SO WE NEED
TO BE AT THE BASE AT 4.45 LATEST!!!

OR AT LEAST THAT WAS THE PLAN!!!!



What actually happened was that on our way there the powers that be decided that due to the humidity they were going to CLOSE.
Which they duly did. They made one phone call - to late for us - and closed due to water running down the inside.

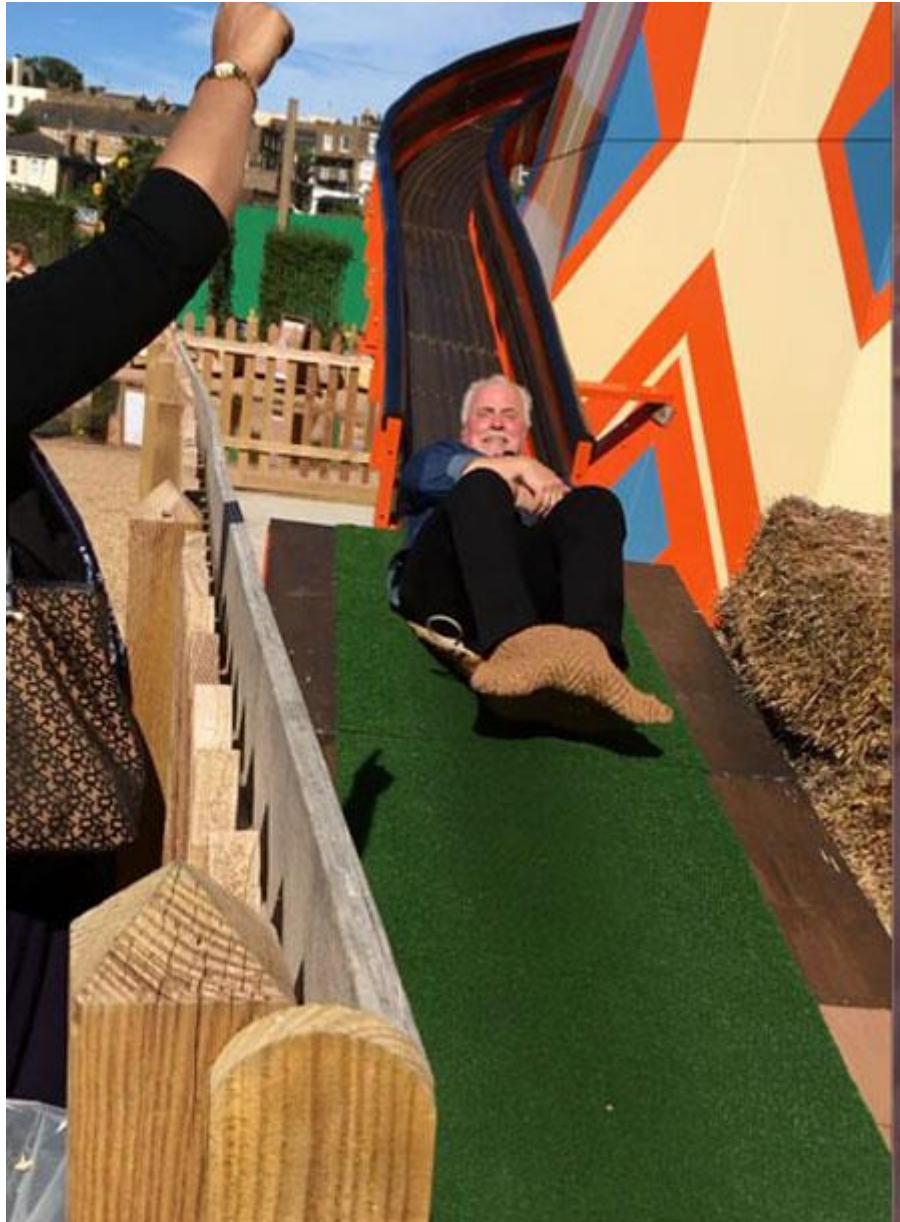
We had a few pints - went up to admire the view - then WALKED down, yes we bloody walked down!!!!

At least dinner at The Cow was a success!



And at least one member went down a slide - even if it was the following day, at Dreamland.....





MINUTES OF THE MEETING

We had a very pleasant (if expensive) dinner but it was marred by some bad news.

Don Pilcher, a loyal member for many, many years handed in his resignation. He is moving north to somewhere remote and northern. Don joined GASS in 1985 and, had he not kept resigning, he would have been the 6th equal longest serving member, after Bell, Brice, Henslow, Spree (founder members of unbroken service) Jenkins (founder but missed 91-96), and Edeleanaloodalooo and Farrer (also 1985).

Sadly Don has a resigning habit. He resigned in 1985, 1994, 1999 and 2003. So goodbye again loyal and valued member - and see you again soon we guess!!!

THE KING IS DEAD - LONG LIVE THE KING!

No sooner had the phrase "I resign again, for the fifth time" escaped Don's lips, and the rousing cheers faded away, then the 'young pretender' danced on his grave!!

Dan Smith, the fruit of Andy's loins, leapt up and claimed Don's place as his very own.

Andy has proposed Dan for membership, seconded by Nick Jenkins.

There was a brief bout of lobbying and rule querying - so for the record these are the rules as they stand.

1. We have an absolute upper limit of 25 (agreed a few months back).
2. We had a temporary hold on membership at 23 (agreed at the same time as 1 above), but that was prior to losing Steve R and Don.
3. The plan was to discuss the criteria for GASS membership for the future at the AGM - do we want to set new rules about all new members being business owners or similar?
4. If someone new expresses an interest in joining they should attend 2-3 meetings and meet the guys.
5. They are then proposed and seconded at a meeting.
6. They do not attend the next meeting and their application is discussed in their absence.
7. If anyone objects it has to be in the open and they have to give a brief reason, but one clear objection is sufficient to prevent the applicant joining.

The plan is that at the AGM we will discuss both the criteria for suitable new members and Dan's application.

CAN WE PLEASE GO BACK!!

Another item for discussion is GASS policy of always trying to something new at each meeting and at each AGM.

As the years go by the fact that we did something once in the year 2000 is increasingly irrelevant to quite a few of our members - they weren't there! Because of this rule we are missing out on good meetings and good AGM venues.

We might like to feel we can break that rule more often in future.

See you all at the AGM!!

SEPTEMBER

AGM 2016 - VILNIUS

First off it was an odd choice of choices
and went down to a close vote.

Aya Napa or Vilnius?

Results of the AGM vote - work it out for
yourself!





It was an age related split - and the final result was 10-7
for Vilnius

There was a genuine fear (even among some who voted for Aya Napa) that Aya Napa was a just too young and too far downmarket, especially after Benidorm last year.

More members would have voted for Cyprus - but needed the reassurance of a slightly more upmarket resort.

VILNIUS turned out to be a nice place, about as nice as Middlesbrough, or Doncaster, or Droitwich, just nice in a nice sort of way, but not exactly lively.

No matter - as always, we made our own entertainment.

The first entertainment was for several GASS members to revolt at the flight times.

The newly formed 'Double Four Club', a sub section of GASS formed in tribute to the 'Double Six Club' (a sub section of a local geriatric establishment), felt it was nicer to arrive at lunchtime rather than bedtime, and leave after breakfast rather than at bedtime.

So they were the lucky few to find out what Droitwich is like on a Thursday. Quiet is what.

On the bright side the Hotel Amberton was central, modern and pleasant, some would say - quite nice.

PROGRAMME

FRIDAY - SEGWAY at 13.45-15.45
SATURDAY FREE - AGM DINNER
SUNDAY - SHOOTING RANGE at 13.45-16.30
MONDAY - FREE

You can see our programme - quite lively I am sure you will agree. Not as lively as some years, but then you try and find things to do in Droitwich.

As ever the pictures tell a far better story than I ever could.

Starting with our Segway Tour....



All around the town - without mishap.



OK, not entirely without mishap! Note there is not even a Segway in this picture below.
Wayne's Segway was so embarrassed when he fell off it simply pissed off and left him.



Which is not that dissimilar to these bastards below.
They also pissed off and left Wayne with a massive bill at the bar.
Tony, Phil, Hugh, Gary, Ian, John, Andy, Owen.
Is there not a gentleman among you?



The bloke at the back in this picture on the bridge is obviously Wayne again.



Wayne? Wayne? What is it mate, keep up!!!!

Moving on to our fine AGM dinner in a lovely restaurant in a (luckily) private room.



Spoilt only by the crap cabaret!!!



Andy, stop it! The smell of your burning chest hair is enough to put anyone off.

Who on earth are you trying to impress anyway?
Saturday night in Droitwich - The fun just never stops!!

Luckily Sunday held the promise of the smell of a different smoke - gunsmoke.



And unlike in the restaurant where there were 16 people who had to leave the room
as a result of Andy's arsonism.

This time just JB left the range because he can't stand the smell of cordite - He
doesn't like it up him Captain Mannering!

That did not stop a group of members showing what they would do to John if he
came back in.





We all then had a lovely half hour listening avidly to Hugh's jokes.



Hugh then performed a cunning stunt on T.V to show that at least a small excitable man found him funny.



THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

As I know nobody reads down this far I will keep it brief.
For the record -

1. ELECTION OF OFFICERS: Non Executive Chairman - John Brice, Chief Executive Officer - Brian Henslow, Financial Officer - Ron Price
2. The post of Fines Officer has been disbanded through lack of interest. It was funny once.

3. NEW MEMBER POLICY - The cost of joining GASS is now a non-refundable £250.

Anyone may come along as a guest (as long as there is room at a meeting). No limit on how often they come. Remember to pay the Guest Fee please.

If someone wants to join they let their sponsor know, he tells all the guys at a meeting, and then the applicant must attend at least three meetings and chat to everyone before being proposed and seconded.

The absolute upper limit on members remains at 25. We currently number 21. We are not in any hurry to recruit as our regular almost full attendance means we don't need to.

4. THERE IS NO LONGER A RESTRICTION ON RE-USING OLD MEETING IDEAS AND AGM LOCATIONS -

The length of time GASS has been going means a lot of members missed some great ideas and places. We can start to revisit successful meetings.

5. MEETING SUGGESTIONS -

GASS BARE KNUCKLE BOXING - At Wayne's gym (with gloves over the bare knuckles)

BANGER RACING - Len to speak to Terry Russell.

DARTS CLUB IN LONDON - Nick to investigate.

BIG CAT SANCTUARY HEADCORN - Ian to investigate with Tanith.

GIN DISTILLERY IN DOCKYARD - JB to investigate.

6. AGM 2017 -

There was a groundswell of support for returning to PUERTO BANUS.

7. FINANCIAL REPORT - Amazingly we started the year with £5,636 and ended it with £7,329, having not paid any £20 subsidies BUT having had a cracking year.

Nobody said it at the time - so as I am writing this drivel I will say it - well done Brian! Bloody good organisation!! Thank you everyone, that was very kind of you to say so.

That means that fees remain at £40. It goes without saying no sliding back into sneakily ordering expensive wines, liqueur coffee, sherry, and absolutely NO cheese.

It also goes without saying that everyone MUST pay their fees monthly . Whoops - Apparently that is not happening - so would those that don't want to pay their fees monthly bloody well pay up a year IN ADVANCE as is the rule. There was a deficit of £650 in fees in the accounts from current members that Ron had to explain - hopefully now sorted.

It also goes without saying that when you bring a guest - please walk straight up to Ron or Brian and volunteer the guest fee.

**ALL IN ALL - ANOTHER SUCCESSFUL GASS YEAR -
HERE'S TO 2017!!**

