

## October 2021 Newsletter from your Chairman



Hi everyone,

Autumn is definitely here – the nights are drawing in and we have had three nights of single figure temperatures already! I am sorry I missed the first full meeting last month, but I hear it went well.

This month we are very Autumnal with our speaker Andy Thomas speaking on **‘Lewes Bonfire Society and Bonfire Night’**. This will be at 2pm on Wednesday 27<sup>th</sup> October at Crockham Hill Hall. Edenbridge has its own strong links to Guy Fawkes celebrations and every year some members of the Lewes Bonfire Society are to be seen in the Edenbridge procession. I look forward to a topical and interesting talk from Andy.

With the links I had in Edenbridge and with all the local schools we always got fully involved with the bonfire celebrations and I have some very fond memories of being part of the processions on the Edenbridge Bonfire Night.

As a child my mother helped me make a guy to be used for the *‘Penny for the Guy’* a tradition that was prevalent at the time. Using some of my father’s old trousers, shirt and jacket we stuffed the clothes full of straw to fill them out, made a head and painted on the features before finishing him off with a hat. He was then placed in my father’s wheelbarrow, and I positioned him outside the village shop to catch all the village folk shopping. The call was ‘Penny for the Guy’ and the usual donation was an old fashioned penny. The money collected went mainly to buy some fireworks - bangers that at the time were one old penny each! On the 5<sup>th</sup> November we made a bonfire in our back garden and the guy was ceremonially burnt - I think we had a 10 shilling box of Standard Fireworks which my father set off. Roman candle, silver fountain, snow storm, catherine wheel, rockets and a volcano-shaped small firework called Mount Etna were the main fireworks in the box, accompanied



by hand-held sparklers of course. In those days there were four main firework manufacturers in the UK – Pains, Brocks, Standard and Astra were the names I remember. Astra were a company based just outside Sandwich – the factory was actually a series of small brick-built buildings about the size of large sheds where

the fireworks were put together. I think only Standard fireworks have survived – most fireworks are made in China and are certainly not pennies each!

My fascination went on to my teens where an incident in school with a banger resulted in me getting the “Whacker” from the Headteacher – but that’s another story!

It is looking like being an interesting Autumn for colour as the chlorophyll green colouring of leaves begins to break down into the reds, yellows and other shades that characterise our Autumn colours.



Looking around today I am reminded of the saying '**a plethora of Autumn berries a severe Winter foretells!**' When the waxwings arrive soon, they will be in for a feast with the hawthorn berries on the hedge at the bottom of our garden. We will see if there is any truth in this traditional saying?

This hedge of scarlet firethorn (*pyracantha coccinea*) is also heavily laden with berries this month. Scientists would say that this enormous crop of berries seen across many shrubs and trees this year is just the result of good pollination.



Finally, a plea. Many of you have complimented our team for the way the sound and visual equipment is set up each month. Of course it doesn't happen by magic – we have a team who get it plugged in and connected up ready for our guest speaker. If you feel you could be a member of this team, please approach Brian at our meeting in two weeks' time. We need a couple of extra hands for this vital task. Full training will be available!

Similarly we are always looking for new members of our committee. With the different talents many of you have you can make a great contribution to our organisation.

I look forward to seeing you all on the 27<sup>th</sup>. Remember, if you feel more comfortable wearing a mask, please feel free to do so.

Take care, stay safe and see you soon!

Best wishes

*Mike*

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PS – **November Meeting is on Wednesday 24<sup>th</sup> at 2pm**. The speaker, **Janie Ramsay**, will be talking about '**Queen by Right**' highlighting the passions, loves and legacies of our 5 Queen Regnants (Mary Tudor, Elizabeth I, Anne, Victoria and, of course, Elizabeth II