



Dads, Lads and Lasses Evening

In spite of Warwickshire being heavily blanketed in snow and ice the brothers of **Leamington Spa Circle** went ahead with their annual "Dads, Lads and Daughters Evening" on the 7th January at the Falstaff Hotel. Some 20 brothers braved the elements together with eight of their offspring. After a slightly shortened meeting the company settled down to enjoy a tasty Thai-themed meal followed by the usual speeches and a raffle for President Alfonso Pacitti's chosen charity Zoe's Place, a hospice for children under 5 years old, which brought the rolling total so far for the year to almost £1300. A very pleasant evening was had by all before gingerly stepping out into the chill night air.



Pictured are the Dads with their children: Sean O'Rourke and daughter Kerrie; Paul Insley; Emily and dad Toni Reszka; Melanie and Jim Insley with Andy Blundell behind them; David Insley; Dominic Martin behind David Insley; Dominic Blundell, Joe Martin; Tim Blundell behind Richard Blundell

Streetly Barristas

On 20th November 2009, on the eve of their Provincial Mass for Deceased brothers, 25 brothers, wives and friends of **Streetly Circle** visited Highgate Brewery, Walsall. They had a very enjoyable evening, with a short tour of the brewery followed up by the inevitable visit to the bar for the beer tasting (and swallowing!). Thanks to the brewery for laying on a sumptuous buffet - the tour is highly recommended. President Martin Jackson and Tony Broom took temporary charge of the pumps, but were eventually forced back to the other side of the bar by the brewery staff!



Portsmouth in Cross-Generation Project

Portsmouth Circle responded enthusiastically to an invitation, as part of a cross-generation project, to share their memories and family stories about life during the Second World War with pupils at the St Thomas More's Catholic Primary School, Havant. This visit coincided with and was in support of the 7 to 8 year old children's studies of WW2.

Brian Parker and his wife Margo took along a ration book and a two ounce bag of jelly babies to explain that they had to make them last a whole week and not the few minutes expected by their audience. Brian also showed off medals won by his uncle.

Ted Thompson, 84, was the only war veteran to wear his medals for the visit. He joined up in 1942 and was able to recount his active service experiences. His wife, Micheline, had a wholly different experience. As a child in Antwerp she lived four years under German occupation. 'Were you frustrated?' she was asked. The simple reply was 'Yes'.

Ernst Strassman, who lived in Switzerland, close to the German border, can remember watching the Zeppelin airships burning in Friedrichshafen, after being set on fire by Allied action. The children were fascinated to learn that in winter he travelled to school on skis. This visit was arranged by Maureen Thompson, wife of past President Stuart, the school's Community Development Officer, in conjunction with head teacher Ms Willis, and is one of a series which she is organising aimed at enriching the school curriculum and breaking down barriers between the generations by asking older people to talk about their childhood. Some 25 adults, Catenians and others were involved in this exercise. It is intended to extend this activity to other schools in the cluster group and introduce other topics.



Cyril Brown with the children



Ted Thompson with children at St Thomas More's Catholic School during the WW2 cross-generation project