

Chinese, Indian or a carvery – we wonder if some come just for the lunch trip and bowling just gets in the way!!!! Whatever, we look forward to The Inter Regional Bowling Competition before Easter.

No more for the present. Ride safely: it's a busy world out there.

Sent from the depths of East Anglia by an ageing Rebel rider –

Diane XXX

Capital Region

Firstly, an urgent appeal and a correction. Taz and Trudy are heading to Bangladesh on 10th February for what is likely to be their last ever annual Sari Run. In 2017 they handed out at least 460 saris to impoverished girls and women in tea gardens and elsewhere. The saris cost £4 each and not the £10 I mentioned in last month's report. My error, sorry. If you would like to sponsor one or more saris, please let Yetti know and he will pass the information and monies on to Taz. We wish them a safe and successful journey motorcycling around with those bundles of saris strapped to themselves and to the back of their bike.



Capital got involved in another charitable venture in December when we supported the children's Christmas party at Noah's Ark Playscheme, Hertsmere Mencap. Many people donated presents and money in 2017, when the event had to be cancelled at the last minute due to massive snowfalls in the capital, and again in 2018. As well as Santa, Big John, Roy, Joe and Barry turned up on their Wings and everyone had a brilliant time.

'Big John Bubble'



Rochelle, the Playscheme Co-ordinator, sent the following email to Joe afterwards:

“Hi Joe - I just wanted to say a huge thank you to yourself and your fantastic team, for the generous donation to our Playscheme, as well as all the lovely presents we had kept from last year! Thank you also for allowing our children to climb all over your beautiful bikes. They were fabulous and the children had some lovely photos taken. I’m so pleased you could all come along and meet our team and some of our families. We really do appreciate the support we receive.

A big thank you also to Santa who made a spectacular guest appearance and was loved by all.

Many thanks once again.

Hope you all have a great Xmas and a Happy New Year!

Kind regards

Rochelle Gould.”

A huge well done goes to Ingrid, Wayne and Dani for liaising with Rochelle and for organising us.

The Saturday of Epiphany weekend saw a group of around 30 attend the Ceremony of the Keys, an ancient ritual held every evening at the Tower of London, when the main gates are locked for the night. It is said to be the oldest military ceremony in the world and is the best-known ceremonial tradition of the Tower.

After a day or so of shopping, sight-seeing, theatre-going and eating and drinking, everyone gathered in The Liberty Bounds pub near Tower Hill before walking en masse behind leader Kerrie to the gates of the Tower.



'Taking a Liberty'



'Follow the Leader'

A cold day with a searing wind had fortunately turned into a warmer, still evening so there were no worries about having a drink and then wanting to find a loo, which didn't exist anyway.

The Ceremony started with the Chief Yeoman Warder, dressed in Tudor watchcoat and bonnet and carrying a candle lantern, leaving the Byward Tower and falling in with the Escort to the Keys, a military escort made up of armed members of the Tower of London Guard, in this instance, the Irish Guards.

The Warder locked the outer gate first and then the gates of the Middle and Byward Towers. The Warder and escort then marched until they reached the Bloody Tower archway where a sentry challenged the party to identify themselves. We all had to keep very quiet while the men shouted various questions and answers about the keys. After that, they marched with Queen Elizabeth's keys to the foot of Broadwalk Steps where the main Tower Guard met them. The party halted and the officer



in charge gave the command to present arms. The Chief Warder stepped forward, doffed his bonnet, and proclaimed: "God preserve Queen Elizabeth" to which the Guard and us replied: "Amen!". The Waterloo Barracks clock then struck 10pm and the Last Post was sounded by a novice bugle-player, thus marking the end of the Ceremony. The Guard was dismissed and the Chief Warder took the keys to the Queen's House for safekeeping overnight. Fortunately we were let out through a small door within the gate and then adjourned to the pub.

WingSpan Editor thanks Yeoman Warder



Capital released from The Tower

Our thanks go to Kerrie for organising the event.

If you are interested in attending the Ceremony, tickets are free but they must be obtained in advance from Historic Royal Palaces, the organisation that looks after the Tower.

Finally, a belated, fantastic fifty to Ingrid who reached this milestone birthday on 22nd December.

Don't forget Valentine's Day

Miss (Helen) Whiplash