



CAPITAL WINGS



As 2024 dawns, it's a very happy and healthy New Year to you all.

Capital has gone a little 'woody' of late. The Woodbine Inn in Epping Forest is our regular monthly meet up place and then some of us went to The Woodman Inn near Hatfield for Capital's pre-Christmas get-together and then we had a lovely surprise visit at our December Mole Night from Chris Wood who we haven't seen for ages. After a trip to Australia and Bali with Jo, and catching up with Big John and Julie along the way, Chris had found his way through floods in Norfolk to see his family and friends in London and dropped by to say hello to us too.

Capital's pre-Christmas meal and party on 25th November found 23 Moles and friends gathered for a four-course carvery meal plus mince pies and coffee. The roasties were delicious and we were all stuffed by the end of the evening.



▲ *Christmas Jumpers*

Ray and Ginny had done a fantastic job of shopping and wrapping presents for all of us and decorating the tables with personal menus and crackers. We even had a visit from Santa with his helper and we were invited to rummage in his big red sack for a present each.



▲ Santa and his Elf



▲ Mole Tree

He was very generous. We played pass the parcel and Buzz was the lucky raffle winner with Marvin the Mole.



Party Time



Furthest travelled wingers were Pamie and Phil who clocked up 120 miles from Dorset. Big Al, Kerrie and Chloe were close runners up, driving 110 miles from West Sussex. It was good to see Ted and Madeline who we haven't seen for a while.



Present Time

It was a cold, frosty evening in Hertfordshire and when we left the pub there was a fantastic halo around the moon. Apparently, this phenomenon, which made news on the BBC, is caused by the refraction of moonlight from ice crystals in the upper atmosphere. According to the Met Office, the halo can mean rainfall might be approaching. I'm sure it did pour down for a few days after this.



Halo around the Moon



The Woodman Inn

Our thanks go to Yetti and Ginny for all the organisation.

Capital Wings was saddened to hear of the recent death of Peter Maxwell aka Mr Kipling. It was a coincidence that we happened to publish a photograph in the last issue of WingSpan of Capital at the 2022 British Treffen that also included Peter. He and fellow Sussex wingers had sneaked into our photo just at the right time. He was a great supporter of our Real Ale Bar. We trust that the December ride out and bike night held in Peter's memory were good occasions to remember him. We send our condolences to Sheila and family.

Finally, did you hear that a shimmering mole that swims through sand has been rediscovered nearly 100 years after wildlife experts thought it had gone extinct? De Winton's golden mole, which was last seen in 1936, was found living on beaches on the north-west coast of South Africa. A senior conservation manager at the Endangered Wildlife Trust said: "Though many people doubted that De Winton's golden mole was still out there, I had good faith that the species had not yet gone extinct. I was convinced it would just take the right detection method, the proper timing, and a team passionate about finding it." De Winton's golden mole is a small, blind, insect-eating mammal that owes its golden name to its pearl-like iridescent fur. The shimmering fur is caused by oil that the moles secrete to make it easier to swim through the sand. The moles' burrowing habits make them difficult to track down and the creatures have extremely sensitive hearing that can detect vibrations from movement above ground, helping them to avoid being seen from the surface. Unlike British moles, they rarely leave tunnels behind that are visible from the surface.

Moles will never be extinct!

Enjoy planning your travels for the forthcoming year.

Miss (Helen) Whiplash