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QM FORMER STAFF ASSOCIATION

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Hon Treasurer and Social Secretary
Mrs B Paine
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May 2013

Dear Member

This Association was set up at the request of the then Principal, Professor Zellick, as a means of keeping in touch with ex colleagues through social events such as day trips, theatre visits, Christmas lunch etc., so I must assume that is why you all joined when you retired. Some of you have moved away and some cannot get around as easily as they used to but many of you who live within easy travelling distance never ever join in any of the events that I arrange. I accept that not everybody enjoys the theatre but the day trips are as varied as I can make them and I don't think they could possibly be deemed expensive. We are obviously restricted in the distance we can travel for a day and it is inevitable that we may go to a venue with which you are familiar (especially if it has been recommended by a member) but if you want this Association to continue, we need more active, not passive support.

I'm sorry if these comments upset some members but it really is very discouraging to spend time deciding where to go, getting as much information as possible, completing application forms, booking coaches etc., to be met by a complete lack of interest. I would love to hear from those of you to whom this applies, as to the reason.

After the long hard winter and cold spring, it really was a treat to see the spring flowers at Kew. I do hope a few more of you will join in the next two outings. As you know, I had hoped to book a cruise on the Thames to Southend but there are no summer mid-week sailings, so I've booked a coach instead for a day out to Worthing on Wednesday 12th June. We've had previous trips to both Brighton and Eastbourne so hopefully there'll be something different to see at Worthing. You can pick up the coach at Redbridge Station at 9 am or Harford Street, opposite College, at approximately 9.20 am. Cost is only £4 per person.

On 10th July I have arranged a trip to Wimpole Hall, Farm and Gardens at Royston, Cambridgeshire. This is a National Trust property and was recommended at the AGM. Wimpole Hall was built in 1643, has been much altered by subsequent owners and is now the largest country house in Cambridgeshire. "Don't miss the yellow drawing room, the plunge bath and the basement corridor which offers a glimpse of life below stairs. Wander through the pleasure gardens to the walled garden, then visit Wimpole Home Farm, which is home to many rare breeds of sheep, cattle, pigs, poultry, horses and goats and is one of the Rare Breed Survival Trust's approved conservation centres. You may even be able to join in grooming the donkeys and ponies and/or watch animal bath time."

The usual coffee, hot meals, cream teas etc. are available in the restaurants. I am sure you will find something of interest to you, so look forward to seeing you. You can pick up the coach at Harford Street, opposite College at 9.15 am or Redbridge Station at approximately 9.30 am. We shall leave to return home at 5 pm. Cost of coach and entrance to Wimpole Hall is a very reasonable sum of £5 per person.

Please complete the following reply slips and return to me, together with remittances, by the dates stated. You may pay separately or together as you please but do reply in good time as the post is rather erratic and unreliable.

BERYL RYAN WRITES: Visit to the Fortune Theatre on Tuesday 9th April 2013 to see "The Woman in Black": The FSA members who went to the matinée performance occupied seats in the Royal Circle and we had an excellent view of the stage with its very simple but very effective set. The seating was a little cramped, but this did not spoil everybody's enjoyment of what was a spine-chilling and very atmospheric play. I also heard quite a few gasps of surprise (or was it fright) from the audience during this production which was acted brilliantly by just two actors, but not forgetting the actress who appeared as the woman in black.

It follows in the tradition of a ghost story and yet it is not a ghost or horror story as we would imagine it. It uses the devices of atmosphere, tension and shadowy goings on to create a certain uneasy and spine-chilling experience. It is set on England's bleak east coast. In this harsh setting is a house called Eel Marsh House where a Mrs Drablow had lived all alone and had recently died. A junior solicitor is sent by his firm to attend to all legal matters and he travels up from London to tackle the relevant paperwork after he attends the funeral, where he first spots the young woman dressed all in black. I think the audience were left on the edge of their seats throughout before being lead up to a blood-curdling climax.

The play has been running in the same theatre since 1987 and is now on the national curriculum for English and Drama and normally there would be quite a few school groups, especially for the matinée performances, but if there were any groups there on the day we went they were certainly very well behaved. No child under the age of 8 years is allowed in the theatre.

Beryl

Yours sincerely

Beryl

Beryl Paine
Treasurer/Social Secretary