

DAVID ELSBURY 'BRISTOL AT HOME' MEETING

SATURDAY 3 SEPTEMBER 2016

Mary Ann Auckland

Once again the Bristol meeting, held on 3 September, had a warm, friendly ambience all of its own, despite the drizzle outside. Nearly thirty members, friends and family – a full house in All Saints Church Hall – came for this special event organised by members from the South West and especially **Eunice Elsbury, Jennifer and Keith Utteridge**.

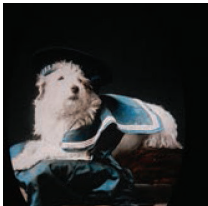
None of the shows was pre-arranged and this ad hoc format delivered a rich and varied programme. We started with **John Finney's**



slides of Blackpool with expert commentary from nearby resident **Andrew Gill** (who seemed to distance himself from this seaside jewel!). Bathing lovelies, piers, funfair rides like the Big Dipper, the first electric tramway in the world (and the only one suffering today from corrosion), the Opera House and Empress Ballroom all featured.



Next **Gordon Casbeard** told us the salutary tale of *Jan* who purchased some stilts in order to grow. It all ended in tears as they were full of woodworm and the moral was clear – if you want to grow fast avoid dodgy internet sites. He then introduced a series of suitably attired canines, including Algernon the Afghan hound painter, Bernie the St Bernard notary (pay with brandy) and Nathaniel the Spaniel, a down-and-out.



David Bailey, with phonograph, enlightened us on the origins of the Stephen Foster song *Swanee River* (1851), attempting to stay on the right side of PC. David then projected a series of adverts for must-have products such as Smith's curiously strong peppermint lozenges for 'flatulency', Dr Wilson's amazing hair restorer and Dr Mackenzie's 'guaranteed harmless' arsenical soap.



Alan Brindle gave us an upstairs/downstairs tale – *Retaliation* – of warring neighbours in Peace Cottage, ending with both moving out. *The Passions*

was a tale of jealousy when an amorous policeman chose one maid over another – the second immediately snitching on the couple to the master of the house. The final tale concerned Mr Hypo the photographer and Ponto the dog with the predictable disastrous results, and a final footnote that Mr Hypo no longer photographs dogs.

Two interesting alphabet sets made up **Mervyn Heard's** presentation. The first comprised two or three men wrapped round each other to form the appropriate letter. The second were so strange that Mervyn concluded the creator was probably under the influence of some substance. Alliteration abounded. For example, 'F for the falcon ferocious and free, filching the figs from the finch on the tree'. N featured a nightingale with sheet music singing to a hippo, V was for vampire and X for xiphias – the swordfish's family name!

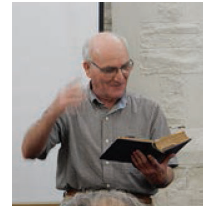


Keith Utteridge showed the value of local knowledge with a selection of beautiful Graystone Bird slides of Weston-super-Mare and one he spotted in reverse on ebay. Some featured the pier, uniquely built on an island, and its water chute ride. **Lester Smith** projected more local scenes –

from Bristol and Bridgewater to Gretna Green with some hard to identify in between. He then showed a series of dog slides – including Landseer images, dogs dressed as dressmakers, a sailor, 'duchess' and dogs smoking and drinking!



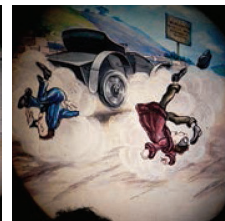
Humphrey Hamlin showed some reconstructed slides from a 'box of bits' he had purchased, including fighting cats and a 'bottled porter'. These included a map of the world with Australia labelled 'New Holland', possibly dating the slide to around 1810. **Stan Roberts** brought no slides but gave us a reading that would typically have been part of a show.



Kevin Varty showed some rare publicity slides from St Dunstan's, set up to care for blind soldiers returning from WWI (now called Blind Veterans UK). They were shown learning crafts such as basket making, cobbling, typewriting, cabinet making and physiotherapy. He also told the story of the first temporary Cenotaph made of wood and plaster to Lutyen's design for the Peace Parade of 1919. When replaced by the permanent one in 1920, most of the wood went to St Dunstan's. They turned it into money boxes, one of which Kevin brought along.



Andrew Gill presented *The Reward for Honesty* with a string of characters trying to do the right thing but ending up with general misunderstanding – and in court! Following this, **Gordon Casbeard's** tale *The Joy of Motoring* saw Mr Whip and his co-driver take their shiny new motor car on a disastrous trip that ended with them being carted off by the 'emergency services'!



The **Rigbys** then showed a set of 3.75-inch square slides of *Cinderella* – using no slide carrier as their specially made carrier would not fit in the lantern. With Richard projecting and Jan reading this was, as always, a treat. **Lester Smith** gave us *A Tale of One, Two, Three and Four Legs* (a leg of meat, butcher, stool and dog respectively) from *Merry Riddles* published in 1660. All ended happily with one leg restored to two legs having been stolen by four legs.



A wonderful day ended with **Andrew Gill's** caption competition. The audience were still in sparkling form – except when it came to the *Ten Commandments* (keep taking the tablets!). And then, of course, we enjoyed the now traditional fish and chip supper.

