



'Tis a glorious game, deny it who can That tries the pluck of an Englishman

THE annual luncheon for Ashbourne Royal Shrovetide Football is a triumph for the Derbyshire Dales District Council and all the staff at the Leisure Centre. With over 400 hungry mouths to feed in an 80-minute window it is a feat that defies logic every year that I attend. This Shrove Tuesday the turner-up was the serving Lord Lieutenant of Derbyshire, Willie Tucker and he made an amusing and anecdotal speech thanking the Committee for giving him the honour of turner-up and explaining that his post was to represent the Queen in the county as well as upholding the dignity of the Crown. The usual hustle and bustle ensued as Willie was escorted to the plinth and the game began promptly at 2pm with a heaving mass of over 200 in the first 'hug'. Eventually a goal was scored by the happy Down'ards at 8pm and the masses returned to The Green Man and other



With the Lord Lieutenant at Shrovetide

hostelries in the town for celebrations. On Ash Wednesday the Upp'ards were victorious with a goal late-on and all the locals partied into the night with many a sore head (and sickies taken) on the Thursday. Long may this great community game continue!



Sir Richard with the Robert Bowring butcher bag!

Footsore

gining of February saw my admission to hospital and an operation on my feet. I had survived 12 years since my last skirmish with the surgeon over my tootsies and I had obviously forgotten the pain and the gross inconvenience of not having working feet! No walks to start the day before breakfast with the dogs, the lack of driving for three weeks and the notion of seeing a perfectly respectable and normal staircase

as an obstacle course were part of the recovery process but I had to make an appearance at Shrovetide, such was the occasion. This necessitated the placing of plastic bags over my recovery slippers lest the wounds got wet! You will see from the photograph that I took the opportunity to publicise our local village butcher, Robert Bowring, in the process. By the time you read this I hope to be well on the way to recovery.

HAIL TO THEE, STONE OF CAWDOR

The monthly planning meetings I attend as a Member of Derbyshire Dales District Council take me to some fascinating spots around the county. The disused site and former workings at Cawdor Quarry just south of Matlock have exercised the planners for over 20 years and the recent application for over 70 houses, a shop and associated dwellings was approved unanimously at Council in February. On looking further into the site it appears that the quarried stone was used for the construction of both Hyde Park Corner and the Thames Embankment in London. Now it will be the site for new homes in the Matlock area with a further 300 pending. Such is evolution.

OMNE TRIUM PERFECTUM?

They say that things happen in threes. One such coincidence was my appearance on three TV shows in one month. First, as I have reported before, was our appearance in the Channel 4 series of Village of the Year with host Penelope Keith (formerly of The Good Life sitcom) where the village was knocked out in the group stages. Second came the slot with presenter Anna Richardson as the dogs and I took part in her walk from Dovedale to Tissington on more4's 'Walk With My Dog' which included some stunning drone footage of the Stepping Stones and the stretch into our village. The third piece was not for UK viewers but rather for Norwegian TV and I had to act as the owner of a castle (Tissington Hall) who has to eject a ruffian from the building. It sounds odd – and it was! I had not acted since school in 1980 and I'm afraid to admit it showed! Now what will 2018 bring us in tv appearances?

CELEBRITY SNAPPER

The cold snap and snow storms christened 'The Beast from the East' in late February/early March brought the village to a standstill as it did with most of the country. The opportunity to take photographs of the snow covered countryside and village was too good to be missed. With the gritter-trucks ably doing their jobs it was the impact of intermittent snow showers that led to compacted snow and ice on the nearby roads and so the main A515 became a lorry park in sections as the vehicles could not gain any grip to get up the inclines. The local paper was inundated with hundreds of snow



The Beast from the East at Tissington

scene photographs from the Ashbourne area and fortunately one of mine was picked! It's always a thrill to get in 'the Stunner'!