



A BARONET'S DIARY

SIR RICHARD FITZHERBERT

THREE TIMES THE BEST MAN

It is 33 years since I was first asked to be a best man. After my first appearance, for James Proudlock on his marriage to Joanna in 1987, I was next on parade in 2006 when I performed the task for Hugh LeFanu's marriage to Sara in the comfort of our own home. I was in the hot seat again this January, to toast the marriage of Andrew Bruce to his Italian bride Barbara in London. On this occasion I had the luxury of a joint best man – Andrew Norman. We cobbled the speech together over coffee and cake at the Attenborough Nature Reserve (halfway to Nottingham), which was a suitable midway rendezvous. I suspect that 33 years on I was a little less nervous as I came to deliver our speech so that the guests enjoyed our joint ribbing of the groom. It is a task that I doubt I will do again but we all enjoyed the nuptials of this merry couple.



The happy couple



The Old Gasworks

VILLAGE ACTION

The news that the local volunteers who form the Sudbury Gasworks Restoration Trust (SGRT) have been awarded £1.4 million from the National Lottery Heritage Fund to help save the Old Gasworks and adapt it to serve the community again is a huge fillip to the village. Built in 1874 by renowned architect George Devey, it produced gas from coal which was piped to Sudbury Hall and other houses in the village until the 1930s. The Trust hopes to restore the building to its former glory to be used for a variety of community and commercial events that will ensure its long term sustainability.

For details see www.sudburygasworks.com

ON THE ROOF

The theft of the lead from the roof of Radbourne's St Andrew's Church before Christmas is upsetting especially as, from what I gather, the thieves took their bounty in broad daylight. The Church Community has launched a Facebook-based crowdfunding appeal (www.facebook.com/StAndrewsRadbourne/) and has also adorned the wall in the porch with the following poem:
*Five & Twenty lead thieves sneaking through the dark
Trouble for the Parson, Worry for the Clerk
Fiasco for the Funders, What a Hue & Cry
Be generous my darlings when the lead thieves have been by...*
Please be generous as the church needs to raise £55,000 to replace the roof with a modern steel version. It's also well worth a visit, just five minutes north of Derby.



SOMETHING NEW

Although I have been on the Estate for over 30 years there are still places and things that surprise me. On a walk around Overfields Farm at the top of the village we encountered farmer Tony Stone attending to a tree and an overgrown hedge with his chainsaw. On further inspection I chanced upon an outhouse that I had seen plenty of times but never inspected! On opening the door I discovered a 'three toilet' cubicle. Tony explained it was where the farmhands met before work to discuss plans and ablute. Interestingly, there were no partitions. How very friendly! See the photo of Francesca and her two friends posing in situ.

A FAREWELL

And finally I must end with my tribute to this magazine's outgoing editor Joy Hales. I first met her when I started this column 24 years ago and my monthly musings (I trust) have been a joy to write and a thrill to have published. Joy has been encouraging, supportive and expansive at the helm of our wonderful magazine and her knowledge and deep affection for our county will be much missed. I wish her all the best for the future.