



Cripplegate Ward Club

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20th January, 2022

Dear Cripplegate Ward Club Member,

This is the January newsletter. I hope this finds you and yours well and that you had a good Christmas break. My wife and I again found ourselves alone at Christmas as our daughter and her family were unable to visit as planned as I had gone down with Covid. My Covid was almost certainly the Omicron variant as I had very mild symptoms, a little coughing for a day and a half and a runny nose for three days. It was milder than my usual cold but then I haven't had a cold for quite a long time. It does seem as though we are getting back to something more like normal and I am glad to say that we have been able now to hold in-person events since July and on the whole, they have been well attended.

This week we had our visit to the Museum of Brands in west London which we had originally planned for June last year and had to call off at short notice. I'm glad that we were able to make it and everyone on the trip, all of them except for Carmen and myself making their first visit to the museum, thoroughly enjoyed it. The museum was founded by Robert Opie who has been collecting branding and packaging since the 1960s. It is in his genes: his parents were Peter and Iona Opie, the renowned collectors of children's literature, playground song and folklore. Roger says, "every room of the house was full of books or bookshelves, and I would talk endlessly to my father about the philosophy of collecting, about the dos and don'ts." His father told him that if he was going to collect Matchbox cars, he had to be careful not to 'overplay' with them, but keep them in mint condition, in the box, and note down what he'd paid.

Young Robert started with stamps, coins and stones. "Every child has a collecting instinct – especially boys, who seem to exhibit a hunter-gatherer need to collect" he says.

Aged five, he won first prize for a Coronation scrapbook in 1953; at school, he ran the philatelic Society. But he wanted something different – "Opies are very much about doing things people had not done before – and it was at Inverness railway station that the 16-year-old Opie had his epiphany. Snacking on a packet of Munchies and a box of McVitie and Price's Ginger Nuts it dawned on him that no one was telling the evolving story of packaging. He took to it with obsessive gusto, saving packaging at university, and later combining the pursuit with a job in market research.

His collection fast expanded and by 1975 it had its own hugely successful exhibition at the V&A – 'The Pack Age'. This was very well attended, and Robert observed the strong interaction visitors had

with packaging, identifying items from their younger days. In 1984, he opened a museum in Gloucester. It moved to Notting Hill in 2005 and then six years ago it moved to the light-filled building in Ladbroke Grove that used to be the London Lighthouse.

The museum has very much more than packaging. There is a time tunnel going back to Victorian times which tells the social history of Britain with reference to royalty, changes in mores and fashion, introduction of machines that were designed to replace domestic servants, as well as the history of many of our best loved brands of food & drink, magazines and newspapers, music and film, toys and games and much, much more. Roger has over 500,000 items only a fraction of which can be on display at any one time so this is not a museum that you can say I've been there and seen it. Every time I go, I see new things.

After our tour we walked a short distance to The Elgin pub where we had a most enjoyable three-course lunch in a private room.

We have one more event in my year as Master and that is the rearranged visit to the College of Arms in February. It is fully booked with a waiting list as the College is quite strict on numbers.

Steven Tamcken, our 2nd Assistant has decided to step down owing to other commitments. This means that when we elect the Assistants at the AGM in March there will only be three as it currently stands instead of the usual six. When the Committee makes recommendations to the AGM regarding promotion to office of Members of the Club the seniority of Members and the services rendered to the Club or Ward by Members are considered.

As I come towards the end of a memorable year, I cannot help thinking about the passing of time. Here are some quotations about growing old:

"Grow old along with me!
The best is yet to be, the last of life,
For which the first was made." Robert Browning

"If the young only knew; if the old only could." French proverb

"To me, old age is always 15 years older than I am." Bernard Baruch.

"Middle Age is when you have a choice of two temptations and choose the one that will get you home earlier." Anon.

"I have everything now I had 20 years ago – except it's all lower." Gypsy Rose Lee

"A woman's guess is much more accurate than a man's certainty." Rudyard Kipling

"Women, as they grow older, rely more and more on cosmetics. Men, as they grow older, rely more and more on a sense of humour." George Jean Nathan

"Even the wisest men make fools of themselves about women, and even the most foolish women are wise about men." Theodore Reik

"Don't worry about avoiding temptation. As you grow older it will avoid you." Joey Adams

"If you want to be loved, be lovable." Ovid

"What I wouldn't give to be 70 again." Oliver Wendell Holmes attributed at age 92, upon seeing a pretty girl struggle with her skirts in the wind.

"There is something sadder than growing old – remaining a child." Cesare Pavese

"Life has got to be lived – that's all there is to it. At 70, I would say the advantage is that you take life more calmly. You know that 'this, too shall pass!' Eleanor Roosevelt

"Happy the man who gains sagacity in youth, but thrice happy he who retains the fervour of youth in age." DagabertRunes

"Old meat makes good soup." Italian proverb

"...the only difference between a man of forty and one of seventy is thirty years of experience."
Maurice Chevalier

"Twenty-nine is a wonderful age for a man to be – and for a woman to stay."

"What a married couple should save for their old age is each other."

"Why do people make such a fuss about growing old? All it takes is a little time."

"The best thing about old age is you only have to go through it once."

Keep safe and cheerful

David