



Here's some trivia to start this month's Report: What animal-named river is a tributary of the Thames that crosses the North Downs between Dorking and Leatherhead, in Surrey?

The biggest and best event so far this year for Capital has been our post-Christmas bash held in January at the Best Western, Royal Chase Hotel in Shaftesbury. Nice and local, only 110-odd miles from London.

Our theme this year was 'Festivals' which is why the weekend was called CapFest 23. We had 62 festival goers all ready to party from the Friday afternoon in the Half Moon Pub, just across the road from the hotel. Yetti had spoken previously to the governor of the pub saying that maybe there would be about 25 of us in the afternoon. It's always best to warn a pub of any invasion and he said he would reserve a part of the restaurant for us. When Yetti arrived and he saw the governor, he exclaimed, "You said about 25! There must be at least 40 here now." Let the party begin, sprung to mind.

A carvery meal was served on Friday evening and it was definitely a proper carvery. Four roast meats and 11 different vegetables plus roast potatoes, Yorkshire puds, stuffing, pigs in blankets, pork crackling, gravy and lots of sauces to go with the turkey, gammon, beef and pork. You could also go up for seconds if you wanted more and/or had room. This is not forgetting the starters and desserts the diners had as well.

Usually Friday night is a quiet night, yeah, right. Sara brought her Shuffle board which was well used with monies going to charity.



Shuffle Board Game ▲

There was a lot of catching up to do and a few beers to drink until the bar shut at midnight. Then it reopened for night-time drinking. Last man standing was Rocky.

On Saturday, people did their own thing - walking into town to see where the famous Hovis Hill advert was filmed. Monkey World was down the road and we were all surprised they let Phil out..... Peggy was hoping that they wouldn't.

Gold Hill, to give it its correct name, is a steep cobbled hill in Shaftesbury. It has been used as a setting for film and television including the 1967 film version of Thomas Hardy's *Far from the Madding Crowd* and the 1973 *Boy on Bike* TV advert for Hovis bread, directed by Ridley Scott. For this reason, the hill is still sometimes referred to as "Hovis Hill". The Two Ronnies spoofed the advert in a sketch filmed in 1978, also at Gold Hill.



As always, everyone made a great effort with dressing up.



▲ Party Time In Shaftesbury

◀ Far Out, Brother



◀ Cool Man

After another lovely 3-course meal, it was time to party. The DJ got the music just right, eventually, and the rest is a bit of a blur, man. We thought the hotel and staff were great - they let us do what we wanted and they joined in as well. Yetti even got the two DJs and some of the staff out on the dance floor.

The event would not have happened without Wayne, Ingrid and Dani who made the fantastic fancy dress prizes and the Cap Fest 23 tickets. The prizes were worthy of an art installation of their own.



Some would argue that Crocs were not the preferred footwear in the '70s, wellingtons were (Crocs were introduced in 2002) but people would

certainly have been wearing them at later festivals. The prize for Grooviest Chick went to Annie Easter and Grooviest Dude was Mo Green. Well done to them.



CapFest Trophy Winners ▶

Thanks also go to Al, Kerrie and Chloe for liaising with the hotel, and for sorting all the rooms, table plans and everyone's menus out. Also to Ginny for her work on the hall and table decorations and for providing the bags of drugs (sweets really). Plus, a thank you to everyone who helped decorate the hall and then take it all down again and clear up at the end of the evening. All Yetti did, apparently, was shout out on Saturday night. Peace and Love was all around, man.

A big thank you for all the raffle prizes that people donated (we had over 100) and to the girls for selling the tickets and to one and all for buying them.

What can we do next year to top that?

Oh, almost forgot, the lost keys panic on Sunday, so over to Ginny for her story!!

The car keys had been in and out of my handbag all weekend but come Sunday morning, they were nowhere to be found. We checked all our bags of stuff in the bedroom.... no keys - checked all the drawers, under the bed/furniture - no joy. Rechecked all the bags again (including wash bags!), still no keys. We then checked the car, as Ray had put two bags of raffle/hall stuff in on Saturday night but it was locked up tight and no keys could be seen on the floor. Ray said he definitely gave them back to me in the hall when we were clearing up. So, we then checked the hall plus we got all the tablecloths out of the laundry bags to check if the keys were caught up in them. The rubbish bags were all checked as well. Despite staff and everyone looking, no keys were found.

Ray then got onto the AA but I needed Key Cover, which they were happy to quote for. However, they do not come out on Sundays for lost keys so it would have to be Monday! Ray then liaised with an emergency key company and was awaiting a call back to confirm if they could attend. In the meantime, we decided to do another check of all our bags and..... drum roll..... Kerrie found my keys inside one of my purple boots worn on Saturday night! The boots had been packed away in the corner of the bedroom - they had tissue stuffed inside them, tissue all around them, were packed in their shoebox and then put into a shoe bag! They had not been anywhere near my handbag so how had the keys got into one of them?

After thinking about it, I realised that I had sat down towards the end of the hall clear up and had said my feet were aching a bit in the high heels. A friendly voice said to take them off which I did and I put them next to my handbag. We think that when Ray gave me my keys, I chucked them into my handbag but they must have missed and gone into one of my boots instead. The boots then got carried upstairs and were all wrapped up without the damn keys falling out. The moral of the story is to never listen to a friendly voice telling you it's okay to take your boots off and if you do listen, remember to shake the boots out at night. I blame Ingrid!

Many thanks to everyone who helped look for the keys and/or came up with ways to possibly get us home. I don't blame Inks, really.

Ginny was brave enough to re-count her lost keys saga at February Mole Night. We then had a show of hands of who carries a spare set of keys in their (hand)bag should the main set be lost.

Not many people it seems. Keys may be hidden somewhere on the Gold Wing but spare car keys? There's another moral of the story here.

Johnny and I were away on a skiing holiday in Switzerland so were not able to join in the fun. Once again, my thanks go to Yetti for sending in a report of activities and to Ginny for her addendum. Many of you will remember SAP Tours and BAR Holidays - those times a few years back when we gathered in Switzerland in August/September to tour the Alps and famous Passes and gain experience of riding around hair-pin bends and into the clouds on our Gold Wings. Together with the William Tell overture as a rallying call, Jeremy - Jed - Halpern led us around his neck-of-the-woods in Switzerland and also into Italy, finishing at the end of the day back at the camp site for supper and a drink or two. Our two ski resorts were in the vicinity of Jed's home in Saxon, in the Rhône valley near Martigny in the Valais canton, so we dared to phone him up and see if he was still living there. It was at least ten years since our summer holidays with him. His partner Cristelle answered and then we spoke to Jed. They invited us to stay in their chalet for three days so we extended our holiday and were able to ski in another resort as well as sample the local toboggan run that was behind their home. It was terrific hospitality and we caught up with 'old times' looking at all the photographs displayed on the walls - Vic, Paddy, Andy, Geoff, Owen and others. We returned the favour by leaving our British emergency food rations for Jed and Cristelle to consume - Heston's pear and fig mince pies, traditional mince pies, birthday cake, crumpets, porridge and wine. Johnny and I had already polished off the bottle of sherry so we had to make do with PG Tips tea.

Here's a souvenir photo.



Nineteen people attended the February Mole Night - must be a record number for some time - and we enjoyed sweet birthday snacks from 'Doughnut Dave' whilst Wayne recalled his 'Silver Monster' days and it was suggested that Joe should be painted in edible silver so that Margaret could lick it off. (Don't ask).

Dani was one of the lucky winners of our monthly raffle. Her winning chocolates should have seen her through St Valentine's Day and onto Easter but maybe not.



Our congratulations go to Trish who celebrated her 80th birthday in February, and to Dave who reached a sprightly 70 and Amber, a young tremendous 20.

If you answered 'The River Mole' to the above question, then you are a potential University Challenge contestant. It's still amazing where we manage to pop up.

That's all for this month.

Miss (Helen) Whiplash