

## THE FEAST

Were you aware that 25<sup>th</sup> July is the day on which is held the 'great feast of St James' (Patron Saint of Pilgrims)?

It is perhaps appropriate that on that date in 2009 the Nutley Bowling Club enjoyed its own feast when nearly 70 members, family and friends made the pilgrimage to Picketts Hatch for what is fast becoming an annual barbecue.

Dining alfresco today is an idyllic experience and light years away from yesteryear when memories of sitting on the hard ground on a lumpy blanket and contemplating the reality of sharing one's fayre (perhaps a pint and a packet of crisps) with all manner of creepy crawlies left something to be desired. No such fear of that with our always charming hosts, May and John Follett, in command who ensured that our every need was catered for.

Since the weather had been so unpredictable in the lead up to the event, John showed good forward planning in putting the Barn at our disposal. This was attractively arranged with tables for six set out around a dance floor which came into its own at a later stage. A very cosy and congenial atmosphere indeed. I can assure you there was no malice of forethought in having it in the barn despite the associated idiom "He couldn't hit the side of a barn door" (all you bowlers stand up and be counted – I am already at attention).

A free drink on arrival helped to set the party mood, Mike Evans and Ian Clark doing sterling work behind the bar with Tony Smith and June Lambert once again instrumental in running a very successful raffle.

It could be said that proper food is country food – uncomplicated, simple and tasty and so it proved. On arrival, the sight of the pit master Joe Quinn, complete with apron, slaving over a hot stove, was a reassuring sight with the promise of many delightful treats in store. There was plenty for everyone with the victuals comprising sausages, chicken, spare ribs, onions, baked potatoes, cheese and a variety of salads designed to ensure that nobody went hungry. How anyone could find room for the choice of desserts which followed is amazing!

July 25 was also significant in the life of Judith Parson whose birthday it was! This was celebrated in the traditional way with an enthusiastic if hardly harmonious rendering of "Happy Birthday. Then came a surprise from mine hosts as John staggered into the barn carrying the most enormous chocolate cake (everybody had a piece eventually) decorated with eight candles twinkling away in the half light. Why 8 you may ask? (I ain't telling!!!!) It was very nice to know that some members of her family, who had travelled all the way from St Albans, were there to share the occasion with her. We were also glad to have their company.

The other highlight of the evening was an original and witty tribute to members of our infamous Tuesday Club from Patricia Sidwell which read as follows:-

*A TRIBUTE TO*

*THE LAST OF THE SUMMER WINERS CLUB*

*THERE'S A SMALL WEE LANE  
IN THE HEART OF NUTLEY VILL.  
AND A SMALL WEE GATE  
THROUGH WHICH TO PASS  
AND STRUGGLE UP THE HILL.*

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*AND THERE UNFOLDS BEFORE YOUR EYES  
A SIGHT – FIT FOR A QUEEN  
IT IS OF COURSE – THE WONDROUS SWARD  
OF NUTLEY BOWLING GREEN.*

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*EACH TUESDAY MORN – AT CRACK OF DAWN  
THERE MEETS THE FAITHFUL FEW  
TO SPIKE AND MOW – TO TILL AND HOE  
AND SWEEP AWAY THE DEW*

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*THEY WIELD THE PAINT BRUSH,  
MIX CEMENT – LAY PAVING SLABS – AND MORE  
'TIS NOT BEYOND THEM – SO I'VE HEARD  
TO LAY A CONCRETE FLOOR*

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*THEN IT'S TIME FOR TEA AND BICCIES –  
A MOAN – A TALE OR TWO –  
THEN “BACK TO WORK ME HEARTIES”  
TO SLACK WOULD NEVER DO.*

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*THE CLUB, IT IS THEIR PRIDE AND JOY –  
QUITE RIGHTLY SO OF COURSE –  
WORKING, PLAYING, MAKING FRIENDS –*

*AND ALL OF THIS BECAUSE –*

*THAT ALL WHO PLAY – MAY ENJOY THEIR DAY  
UPON THAT GREEN SO FINE ----  
BUT ---- LET'S NOT FORGET WHO KEEPS IT SO –  
THAT LITTLE GANG THAT YOU ALL KNOW –*

*THE LAST OF THE SUMMER WINE !*

I'm sure it will not be very long before this is reproduced and hung in a place of honour in the pavilion and deservedly so. Well done Patricia but I am glad you did not identify 'compo'!!!

Perhaps the abiding memory of the evening is of the mellifluous chatter of people having a good time. At the end of an evening feeling tired but happy gives a sense that life is pretty good somehow.

Thanks are due to lots of people, too many to mention, who nevertheless worked hard behind the scenes and made a major contribution to what was another magical and successful evening. Well done – everyone!

But above all else a very special thank you should go to our ever gracious hosts, May and John, who took a major role in planning and organising the event, at a time when neither are in the best of health. It says much for their commitment and strength of character in insisting that the event went ahead as planned. Get well soon.

R J Gaylard

27 July 2009