



Rotary Club of Farnham

Newsheet July 2023

Talk by Paul Fry



Paul's talk was entitled Food Myths and was largely based on a book called "Spoon Fed – Why almost everything we've been told about food is wrong" by Dr Tim Spector, a leading nutritional scientist.

Paul also added his own observations. The inspiration for the talk wasn't only the book but also how our own lunch orders have changed over the years with fish and fruit salads going from a tiny minority to a majority of orders. Are these changes perhaps based on misunderstandings? Paul gave an example of a National Trust café where a traditional pasty had fewer calories than a vegetarian pasty which in turn had fewer calories than a vegan pasty. Also official nutritional data show that 100g of salmon has more calories (206) than 100g of lean beef (187). In fact, of course, in both cases it is the carbohydrates such as potatoes, rice and pasta we surround our protein elements with that contribute most calories to a dish.

Turning to the book Paul chose to summarise a few key chapters:

- Doctors and particularly GPs have barely a few hours training in nutrition and are poorly qualified to advise patients;
- National Nutritional Guidelines and diet plans are not helpful as how a body reacts to different foods is genuinely personal and numerous – twin studies have supported this.

- Although governments focus on "calories", Dr Tim Spector regards this as very weak. The science behind calories is fragile and doesn't take account of how calories are used in different ways by the body. One example was that a snack size helping of mixed nuts contains 142 calories whereas a small KitKat contains just 106. The nutritional value and risks of each are vastly different but try explaining that to a 10 year old! Also cooking can change calorific values. 100g of minced beef served as Steak Tartare has fewer calories than being served as a medium rare burger which would have fewer calories than a well-done burger.
- Fish. Tom Spector pointed out that fish are not as healthy as believed especially when reading how, for example, farmed salmon, are usually pumped full of antibiotics, growth stimulants and colourings. Paul used his own fishing knowledge to expand on this, pointing out that salmon farms have a circa 25% mortality rate and cause substantial environmental damage. All the sea bass and sea bream we buy in supermarkets is farmed in the Mediterranean and Greek Islands and, increasingly, a lot of 'white fish' is farmed for example cod from Chile. Even fishmongers and mobile vans are actually selling largely farmed fish but there is no obligation to label it as such. Price is often a good indicator as a whole wild sea bass can cost around £45 whereas a farmed one will cost around £11. Similar differences apply to all fish. Mackerel and sardines are still wild and most tinned fish is wild. Alaskan Sockeye smoked salmon (often branded "Leap") is wild, sustainable, relatively and in season but it has a distinctive taste which some, including Paul, don't like.

More information about salmon farming can be found here:

<https://time.com/6199237/is-farmed-salmon-healthy-sustainable/#>

<https://www.compassioninfoodbusiness.com/our-news/2021/03/new-report-highlights-welfare-and-environmental-issues-in-scottish-salmon-farming>

- A sustainable meat is venison which is lean and full of vitamins. Deer are a major problem to farmers and need to be culled in larger numbers meaning that it is a sustainable and environmentally helpful

meat. Unfortunately butchers and restaurants price it as a premium meat whereas when bought direct from a game specialist - <https://www.wildandgame.co.uk> it is cheaper than beef or lamb.

- Exercise and wine (drink multiple varieties of red wine for gut bacteria) were also covered and the titles of other chapters
- Paul concluded by returning to the calorie count in our lunch order. Even the generously sized fruit salads had fewer calories than a “brownie “. That is until the ice cream is added when the fruit salad races into the lead!

Talk by Geoff Redwood from Bees Abroad



The purpose of Bees Abroad is to alleviate poverty in low income countries through training individuals in groups on how to keep bees. In this way they help to increase the income of individuals and communities for such things as medicines, school fees and livestock. It was founded in 1999 by a bee keeper near Coventry, with 3-4 families involved. Most of the countries supported are in Africa – eg Cameroon, Ghana, Malawi, Nigeria, Sierra Leone, Tanzania, Uganda, Kenya, Rwanda, and Libya, but they also do some work in Nepal and India.

So why bee-keeping? Well, there is a market for the honey, as generally yields are small – 8 kg/hive compared to 20 kg/hive say in UK, which means that a lot is imported. So there is a ready market for the honey and related products. Also there are a lot of positives attached to bee-keeping in Africa:

- Doesn't take a lot of time.
- low cost.
- Doesn't need much land.
- Increases crop yields. Many of the communities are growing coffee and cotton, whose yields increase through the increased pollination.
- Also, it provides a positive addition to the local diet and provides medicine - propolis, which is used by the bees to seal cracks and openings, is antibacterial and antimicrobial.
- It can also be sold.

Another positive is that the whole process is environmentally benign.

The communities they work with have no or little electricity, lack safe drinking water, have houses built of non-durable materials and they suffer hunger seasons as they cannot store their crop, as they get eaten, destroyed or they end up selling them all. They also have large families – 4-5 children.

The charity's approach is to work at minimal cost. They work with local non-government organisations or equivalent, who take the lead in delivering the training. This also helps the local economy as they get paid for delivering it. They train the trainers.

The training, which comprises of more than one session, includes:

- Theory: life cycle of the bees, hives and working as a community group.
- Practical: where hives already exist they might be made of logs, raffia, jerry cans. They work, but are made in such a way that in accessing the honey the colony is destroyed. The hives used in the UK and other parts of the world are too expensive so they promote another type – a trough or box with bars from which the combs hang. These are made by the community and can be made from wood, wattle and daub or similar materials and cost about £30-40 as opposed to hundreds of pounds each. Similarly, they make the protective suits, which in the UK would cost £100-250, from local materials such as maize sacks and mosquito nets, which cost pennies. An advantage of all of this is that the communities have an investment in all of their equipment which to the same extent they would not have if it was bought 'off the shelf'.
- Also covered is hive inspection and foraging, harvesting – when to – and honey extraction – they use gravity rather than a centrifuge which would be expensive, how to package hygienically and attractively and how to make use of the by-products – wax for lip balm, soap and candles, and

- business and marketing skills. In addition to training they provide modest tangible support in the form of eg smokers, strainers, hive tools, gloves, starter hives, manuals, support for local internet connection.

Geoff explained that the making and siting of the apiary is important. They are placed in copses for shade with the hives hung from posts, which are treated against termites. They have also to guard against other pests invading the nests – mice, snakes, ants, bee eaters, honey badgers, lizards. A fence surrounds the copse to protect the hives from livestock, which if they get in can be killed by the bees, which are particularly aggressive in Africa.

In order to gain a colony, they 'bait' with catcher boxes.

Geoff pointed out they have to manage expectations as some imagine they will be able to export to the UK or produce bee venom and so make a fortune.

He was warmly thanks for his talk.

For those interested in knowing more the website is: <https://beesabroad.org.uk>.

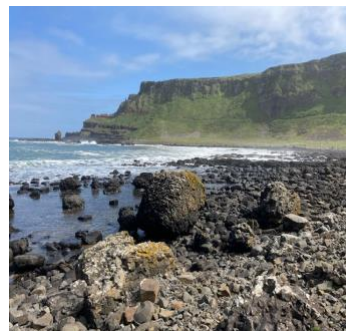




Talk by Roger Jude on trip around the coast of the UK

Roger had recently cruised along the coasts of Ireland, Scotland and England, starting at the Giant's Causeway in County Antrim, where some 50m years ago lava flows covered the County and the Scottish Islands, cooling to form basalt rock. The slow cooling process created the polygonal shapes we see now. During the Ice Age (3 millions years duration) the area was covered by a mighty glacier which scraped away rock and soils and when it retreated around 1 million years later, the Giant's Causeway was revealed. When you approach the site, the first thing you see is Giant's Bay (below). You then walk down and see 30-foot-high 'organ' pipes – hexagonal columns formed 40-50m years ago.

For many years it was only known by the locals but from the 17th Century descriptions and accounts were coming to the attention of others,



including The Royal Society, with Sir Thomas Molyneux, a member of the Dublin Philosophical Society, bringing the Causeway to the world's attention and Susanne Drury's early 1700 painting of it enabling all to see what it looked like. In 1971 The National Trust acquired the Giants Causeway site in 1961 and in 1986 it was designated a World Heritage Site by UNESCO. It has also been recognised as: A National Nature Reserve; An Area of outstanding Natural Beauty; A Special Area of Conservation, and an area of Special Scientific Interest.

with thatched rooves, which are kept on with ropes at the end of which are large stones.



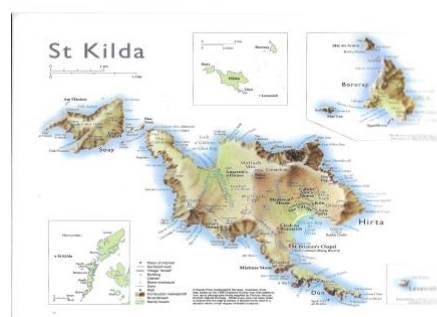
Nearby is Calanais Broch – a building about 10m high built in the iron/bronze age. It is not known whether it was built for offensive or defensive reasons. At the close-by fishing village there are what are called 'blackhouses', with thatched rooves, which are kept on with ropes at the end of which are large stones.

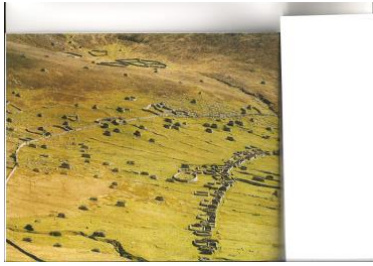
They then moved on to Lewis and Harris, which he had imagined were two islands, but are in fact one, with Lewis in the north and Harris in the south. In Lewis they saw the standing stones, in the centre of which is a central 3m high stone. The structure was built around 5,000 years ago when farming began to be more important and basic farming communities began to be established and it is thought to have been a lunar calendar. There are 12 other sites around Calanais with such stones. It is situated on land belonging to Sir James Matheson, the founder of Jardine Matheson, (which is still a major global conglomerate). The first scientific excavation was in 1980 and until the 19th century the stones were 5ft. deep in accumulated peat.

Human remains have been found here so it is believed to have been used as a burial site.

Nearby is Calanais Broch (below) – a building about 10m high built in the iron/bronze age. It is not known whether it was built for offensive or defensive reasons. At the close-by fishing village there are what are called 'blackhouses',

Then on to St Kilda, which is isolated archipelago of 3 main islands 40 miles W-NW of South Ulst which was initially inhabited about 4,000 years ago until 1930, when the remaining 36 villages left at their request. It is a Dual UNESCO World Heritage Site (natural and cultural). Those that used to live there lived on the local birds – gannets, puffins and fulmers, which they dried and stored in stone buildings throughout the winter. They landed in Hirta, where they saw the deserted village.





The last stop was Tresco, Isles of Scilly, which Roger said was very much worth a visit. The gardens there are very beautiful as are the beaches, the sand of which is white weathered granite.



Were surprised to find that MoD were settled on the island.

The next stop was Isle of Man, where they saw a Viking ship burial in Castletown.



Talk by David Wylde on the Proposed St James Conservation Area

A group of local people within the town, one of which is David Wylde, with the support of the Farnham Society, are exploring whether the community would support the designation of an area adjacent to the south side of Farnham Park as a conservation area.

The buildings in this area, over two centuries, have a fascinating tale to tell:-

18th century housing in East Street.

Late 19th Century housing

Zingari Terrace East Street 1850s.

FARNHAM

The Avenue

Coopers Terrace

The extent of the proposed conservation area

Post Victorian housing High Park Road

St James path and church

Stoke Hills C 1920

David explained how this area – known as St James – is special:

- It has easy access to Farnham Park
- It is often free of vehicles since Park Row was made one-way
- The area spans many architectural periods, covering more than two centuries (see photos above).

He identified the possible ground for proposing the St James Conservation area:

- Its differing architectural styles
- Its natural features and landscape
- Its heritage buildings

- For additional control over development

He explained that conservation area designations introduce a general control over the demolition of unlisted buildings and provides a basis for planning policies, the objective of which is to conserve any aspects of character or appearance, including landscape and public spaces that define an area's special interest.

The volunteer steering group formed to explore this includes, in addition to David Wylde, Michael Blower, Darren Collins, George Hesse, Malcolm Lelliott and Fiona Payne, with three of them living in the proposed area.

Events

Farnham Carnival Saturday 24th June

a day of fun was had by many on Saturday July - the Farnham Carnival, supported by the Lions, back at something like full strength following the difficult COVID years with the theme of 'Wonderful World of Books'. Volunteers from the Rotary Clubs of both Farnham and Weyside were there to help with marshalling - Ann Foster and Norma Corkish from our club and about four from Weyside.

The floats were very impressive and it was clear that all those involved in taking them round the town were thoroughly enjoying themselves.





Events Through August

Wine Tasting with Dinner Thursday August 3rd at 6.30 at home of Michael Conoley.
Booking required.

Lunchtime Talks Through August

Thursday 10th August Business Meeting

Thursday 17th August Michael Conoley on local planning

Thursday 24th August Norma Corkish (see website for further details)

Thursday 31st August District Governor

If, as a Friend, you are interested in coming along to any of the talks and for lunch (£20) please email lunches@rotaryfarnham.co.uk on the Monday before, saying whether you'd like, fish, meat or vegetarian, pudding or fresh fruit. We start gathering at The Bush, Farnham from 12.30 for lunch at 1.00 and the talk at 2.00, finishing at 2.30 pm.