

February WINE & WISDOM EVENING

Reported by Jeremy Cope

Wine lent the evening a happy conviviality - thanks Mike think that Clive, Jill and Andrew deserve our particular thanks. They run the event with such good humour and choose questions best suited to our strengths rather than our weaknesses.

Numbers attending were, as always, very good with 14 tables.

Euchre is a card game - John Turnpenny got that one right for our team.

And the winners were Enigma by a lizard called skink

Notable result. Enigma and Gay Gordons tied first. Settled with the loser the first to fail with the correct answer. What a skunk!

Dingbats. Terry who is a new member came up with some inspired guesses. He is a computer expert and is, inter alia, involved with dyslexic software. A link perhaps?

Wisdom. Our general knowledge was really not too bad this year but did Clive flatter us? See I above.

I thought that the food was good again this year with the bread spot on. Thanks as always to Joan and her helpers.

Second was also a tie with Jeany (my lot) and Dover Ducks with Sceptics third.

Dingbats. Here is a good one. ie Cexcept Answer i before e except after c

Odd but Edward is not a good name for a king - two out of eight never made it to their coronations.

May we please have another evening like this next year

March TALES OF AN EXCISE OFFICER

A talk by Derek Leach

Reported by Jack Woolford

"It was Uncle Fred's fault. He said it was a good job" said our Chairman, explaining why at age 18, with a serious girlfriend and faced with National Service, he chose to become a Customs Officer rather than go to university. Uncle Fred had been a Chief Petty Officer, RN, who had professionally admired the turnout and anti-smuggling skills of the (then) Waterguard who had no doubt rummaged his ships from time to time. Unable to take the Officer exam until nineteen and a half, after 'A' levels Derek sat and passed the Civil Service Executive Exam before National Service. Wishing to serve in the RAF (rather than be seasick in the Navy or killed in the Army) the only vacancies were as linguists and, armed with O-level German and A-level French, he was accepted only to find he would spend his two years learning Chinese in the Outer Hebrides, where the suicide rate was rather high.

He managed to avoid this and was trained as a teleprinter operator, following which he was posted to the Air Ministry Whitehall on shift work and commuted from home with a living allowance. His sole flight was an hour in a rickety old Anson immediately before demobilization.

Taking up his post in Customs HQ in 1959, he was not popular when he immediately asked for two days off the following week to take the Officers' exam. Being successful, six months later he was posted to 'Waiting Room' to await the next training course. First he was given three weeks amending leave with a box of sixty odd instruction manuals to update. Then followed a series of dogsbody tasks, including holding the tape for a Surveyor