

Puerto Pollensa, Mallorca

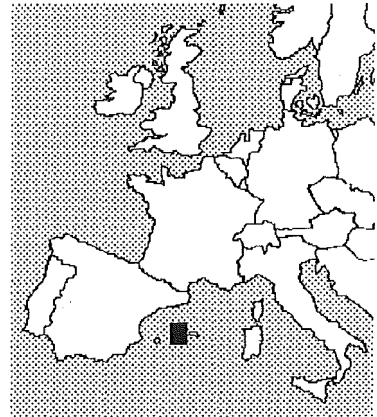
22 / 29 April, 1995

This account covers all the main routes undertaken during the meet and should give a good impression of how the week developed. However the party had no intention of keeping together the whole time and as a consequence perhaps some of the activities have been missed out.

Organisation was the minimum that would unite the group into joint activity, **if** that was what they required. All but one couple were in the same apartment block and so it was easy to go next door and find out what was happening or to have multi-patty conversations from the balconies. Each evening at at seven a joint informal meeting was held in the reception lounge to sort out transport for the following day, which then led into groups forming for visits to restaurants. Some cooked for themselves in their apartments instead. In the morning at a time decided the previous evening, patties would meet-up in the reception lounge before starting for the day's venues.

Shopping for supplies was easy with small self-service stores nearby open when we returned from walks and refrigerators in the apartments.

Car hire could be organised locally on a daily basis **if** required. Hire cars generated one or two misfortunes: one member parked in the wrong place overnight and had his vehicle impounded resulting in a hefty penalty, another found his car one morning with a smashed window.



We were all indebted to the member and guest who had a knowledge of Spanish.

During the first few days telescopic ski poles were in evidence as walking aids but later on it seemed they were used less often.

None of the party were in their first flush of youth, some were into their second (or perhaps even third) blooming, but what a flourish!

Evening meals were easy to find from 800 pesetas (approximately £4), for the menu of the day including wine, to what ever level of extravagance one wished to pay.

Sunday.

In the afternoon all the patty started an easy walk along the Boquer Valley. Some people diverted on to short cuts, and others extended it to Cala San Vicente but all marvelled at the serrated edge of Serra del Cavall Bernat on the north-western side of the valley. Ornithologists with their telescopes and cameras set up on tripods, were all along the route. The YRC's main sightings were of a Blue Rock Thrush at Calla Boquer and a Hoopoe just outside the town.

In the valley one or two rock climbers were on the crags and the sight of them incited some members to clamber up house sized boulders which lay on the edge of the track.

Back at base the first member into our private swimming pool reported that it was warmer than Loch Laggan. Three others followed his example and found it refreshing. Honour satisfied, the showers were found to be nice and hot.

Monday,

Gerry Lee had intended to lead a walk to the Puig Roig, but a change had to be made because of restricted access,

The revised walk started at the Ermita de la Victoria. Six people went by car to the start, the remainder chose to travel 20 minutes by bus to Alcudia and walk about 5 kilometres via the Mal Pas coast road. Wild gladioli were prominent in the fields, as were the carob trees. The Ermita had a cool restaurant with terrace and a sea view. Whilst four of the driving group set off for the Atalaya de Alcudia, the walkers from Alcudia made a break on the terrace for beer, or orange drink, which was made from fresh oranges. The main group intended to ascend the Pefia Roja but as has happened before in the YRC, the conversation was so interesting that no one saw the route.

When the main group finally decided that they had lost the track, they met the four returning from the Atalaya and it was decided that the main party would visit the Atalaya also, and then carry on to the Playa Baix. After the Atalaya and the views there was a lunch stop on a limestone outcrop looking over the sea. A steep hillside was then descended on a well graded

path in a series of zigzags to the Coll Baix. On the descent it was possible to look down several hundred feet into the brilliant blue waters of the bay and see, under the water, the white bubbles created by the waves on the beach being dragged swiftly out to sea by the strong undertow,

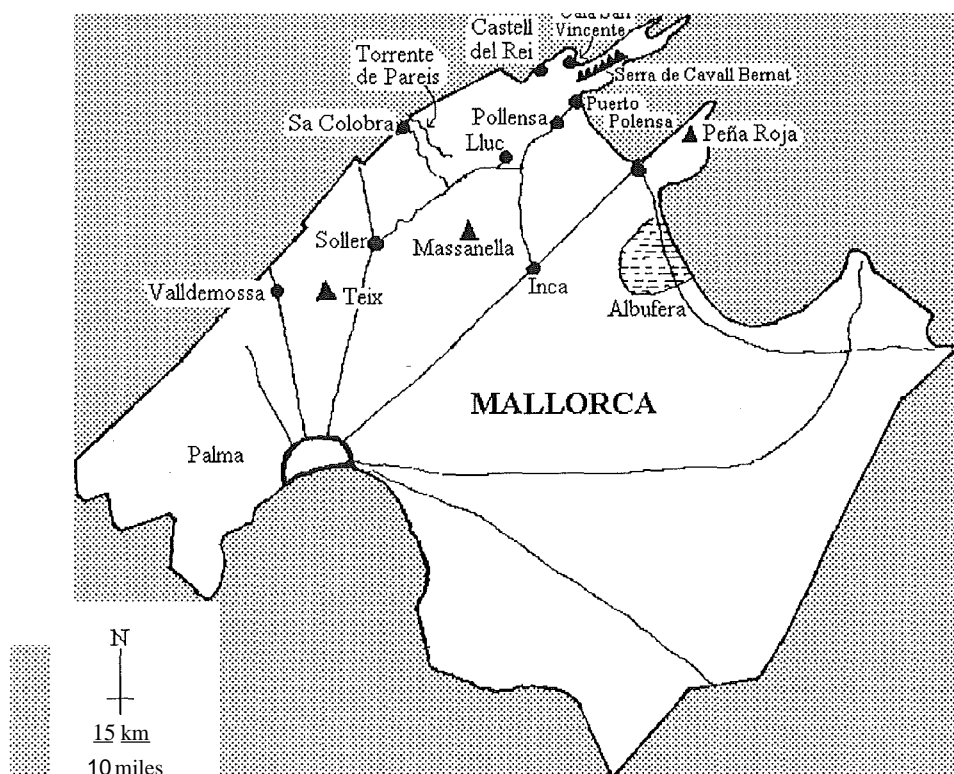
From the shelter at Coll Baix, all of the party but one made their way down to the beach under most unstable looking cliffs,

The lone lady made her way back along the return route the others were to follow on their way back to Alcudia. Neither the lone lady nor the others had foreseen a fork in the road and true to that well known law, one party took one road and the followers the other. This led to the lady being rescued by a group of Germans met earlier, on the Atalaya. Contact was again made when the lady's husband was spotted from the Germans' bus,

The rest of us had a pleasant walk back to Alcudia to wait for the bus to Puerto Pollensa, admiring the honeysuckle, broom and poppies flowering by the roadside.

The car party drove to Formentor and found swimming conditions warmer than in the pool.

Bill Todd and Juliet White drove to Mirador de Ses Barques encountering hundreds of cyclists on the way. They had trouble locking the car and after attempting improvements, found that now they could not shut the door. By the time phone contact with the hire car firm had been made, from Soller, Bill and Juliet were short of time to complete the objective of Sa Costere. It was an interesting walk with lots of flora, fauna and rock formations. On



return, calling at Balitz de Baix farm for orange juice led to a lift back to the car in the farmer's Land Rover.

Tuesday.

The objective of a majority of the group was the ascent of Teix followed by the Archduke's Walk, with short cuts if required. Car transport was shared to Valldemossa and after coffee the group set off. It was quite chilly in the cold wind and there was concern whether or not clothing was adequate. People were seen wearing gloves later. As we left Valldemossa interesting terrace formations were seen cut into the hillsides for agriculture, and there was a good view above the town roofs, of the monastery .

At the shelter where we stopped for lunch there was a large party of Germans with whom we indulged in mutual language practise.

The summit of Teix (1064 metres) was reached after a plateau followed by a short steep scramble on the limestone. The conditions were cold, a strong damp wind was blowing with mist in the distance. Most people were wearing jackets. During our eating, photography and banter, it was noticed that yet another party of Germans all had little cards and the leader was stamping them on the summit with the official rubber stamp. Not wishing the YRC to be outdone I asked in my best German, and obtained, the summit stamp in the front of my copy of 'Walking in Mallorca'!

The line of ascent was retraced a short distance to start on the Archduke's Walk. The weather brightened and the sun came out giving us glorious vertiginous views over the sea some 400 metres below for the rest of the walk. It was generally a good path,

on the edge of high cliffs with appalling drops in places. Not the place to turn ones ankle! The paths were constructed under the direction of Archduke Ludwig Salvator of Hapsburgo-Lorenca last century. Artifacts such as stone seats or mined buildings made focal points, a thrush-hunters bread oven was seen, as was evidence of past charcoal burning. It was a walk which allowed one to appreciate the meaning of Mediterranean blue and aquamarine green. Return to Valldemossa was via a clearing in the woods with a central well with numerous tracks radiating, care had to be taken to follow the correct one.

Some of the party shortened the walk and fitted in Chopin's quarters in the monastery at Valldemossa, where he composed the Raindrop Prelude.

It was a splendid day out with memories of views across the island, of Manessella and Puig Roig, of thousand year old olive trees, holly oaks and moss covered pine trees. Rosemary was growing everywhere with bluer blooms than at home; miniature cyclamen, stonecrop and other alpins were around, as was Yorkshire humour. 'Shrouds have no pockets' was one gem heard. One member was so moved by it all as to recite what he could remember of 'The Ballad of Idwal Slabs'!

Thanks to Alan Brown and Clifford Cobb should be recorded, for leading us to such a fine day out.

A second party under the guidance of John Barton including some of the ladies went to Valldemossa to view the splendours of the ancient town.

Wednesday.

The ascent of Massanella (1367 metres) from Coll de Batella was the aim for Wednesday. Gerry Lee was to lead the party. The walk started about 150 metres along the road, from where we parked the cars opposite Col de Sabtaia restaurant and led through woodland gaining height quickly. The path became indistinct at one point as it was possible to climb anywhere between the trees on stony ground. The track was quickly found again and at a height of about 800 metres a marker stone directed us on rough paths to the top. A bit of rough going on limestone with a final steep ascent over bare rock took us to the top. On the way up, there were magnificent views over most of the island to the south. In the near distance superb mountain formations were seen like plugs of rock surrounded by 300 metre high vertical cliffs with vegetation on the tops.

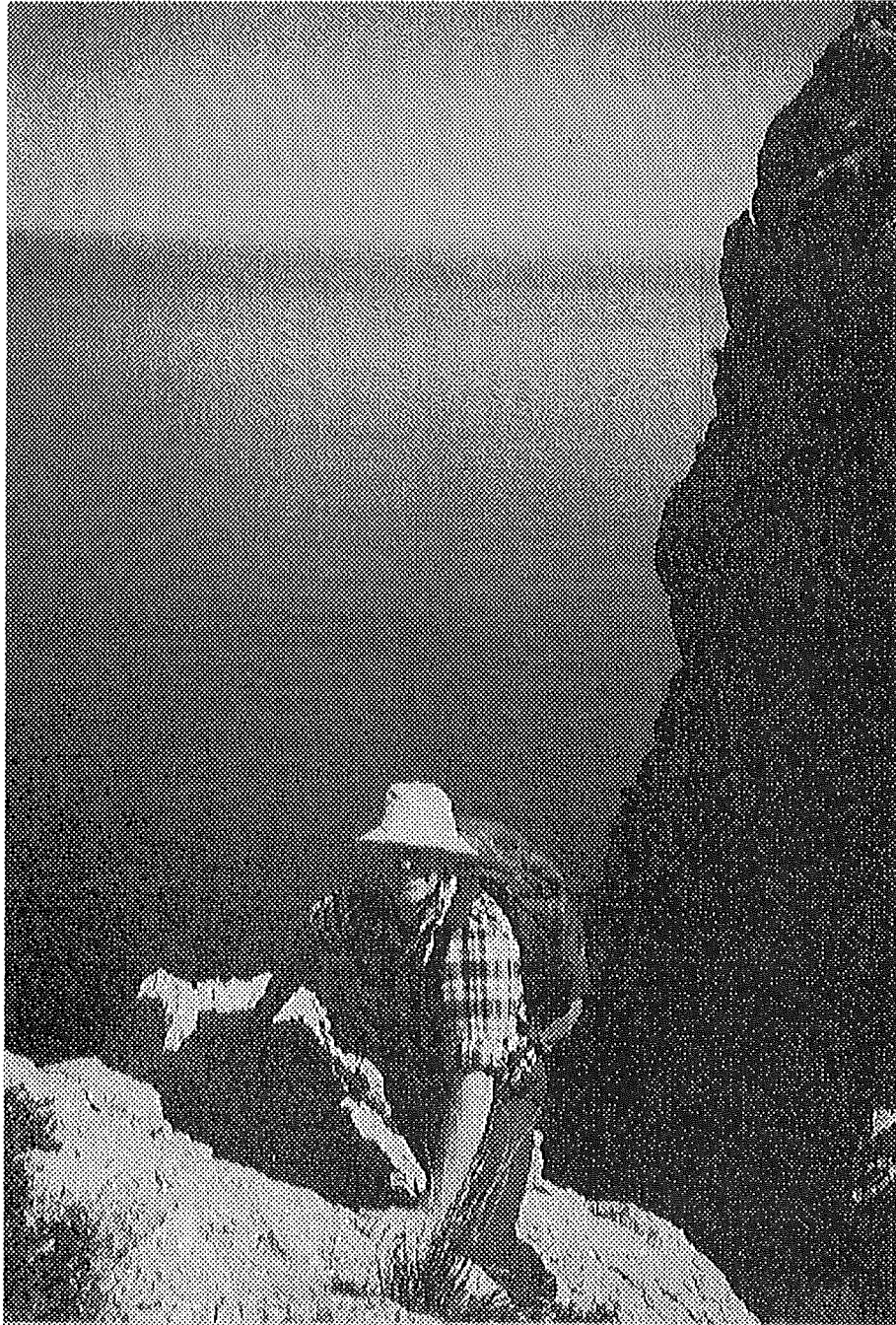
To one side of and just below the summit was a deep pothole with typically fluted sides. At times it has been used to store snow.

The weather was generally brighter and warmer than the previous day.

Lunch was eaten just down from the summit sheltered from the wind where there was a good view and the return was by a different route to the 800 metre point.

On the way down an interesting well was investigated bringing out all the YRC's potholing instincts. It was signed Font de S'Avenc and a twisting flight of steps led down into the rock for about ten metres to a cavern with three water basins constructed to catch the trickle. A high aven rose behind the water supply. Flash photography was brought into use.

JelfHooper on the Cavall Bemat (photo Bill Todd)



High on the mountain, setterwort (stinking hellibore) was identified, other saxifrage and cyclamen were seen, and blackbeny and ivy at the spnng.

Wednesday evening was the time set for a meal with a difference.

A party of eleven made their way to Martin's Bar. The speciality was leg

of lamb roasted whole. Prior to the lamb the party was served with five successive starters, meat balls in sauce; chopped liver and potato frit Mallorquin; mixed vegetables cooked in fennel with other herbs; mussels, and finally battered courgettes. With great ceremony the legs of lamb were brought to the end of the table, the knife sharpened and Martin calved the lamb and sewed the party. Dishes of

fresh fruit were placed on the table for desert.

Coffee followed and when we thought that it was over a delicious ice cold liqueur made from green apples was presented, compliments of Martin.

Thursday.

A bright sunny day. There was a divergence of ideas. One group drove to the Albufera for birdwatching and their list is given at the end of this report. One couple visited Soller. Another pair drove to Valldemossa to visit Chopin's quarters which they had missed on a previous visit, whilst one lady enjoyed the local scene and was fascinated by the way palm tree trunks were trimmed. I had always believed that the trees grew naturally with a smooth round trunk exhibiting the pattern of triangles where the leaves had grown, but on our return from the Cavall Bernat ridge we too had seen the trimming and shaping operation.

Seven of us decided to traverse the Serra del Cavall Bernat between the sea and the Boquer valley and for me it was one of the highlights of the week which I would have been loath to miss. Because I have not experienced rock ridges for many years I found the exposure awesome, my companions had no such qualms and to see how the older members moved on that ridge was a good recommendation for a life in the YRC and encouragement for the others.

The group was: Alan and Angie Linford, Clifford Cobb, Alan Brown, Bill Todd, Arthur Craven and me.

After a short walk from Puerto Pollensa along the Boquer Valley the route went up the side of the ridge over broken ground to the coll in the ridge about half way to the seaward

end, at the foot of the most prominent tower. The length of the ridge we tackled is approximately one kilometre.

On reaching the coli, without pause Alan Brown, closely followed by Clifford and the others shot up the tower on the edge of the ridge with a vertical drop of 352 metres into the Cala San Vicente. The limestone was exceedingly rough with a spiky surface, rougher than gabro, except at the two most exposed places where it was smooth with few holds; so I was told. I took a ledge route on the Boquer Valley side of the tower which led diagonally upwards.

The next section of the ridge is so thin that a window has been formed through the rock, over the top of which the party walked. The guide book recommended doing that and then climbing down at the end and reversing direction at a lower level to reach the point where one could see the view of Cala San Vincente through the window. After watching the first member climbing down with a good view of the sea between his legs, I and one other returned and found another route on the face, which enabled us to arrive below the window before the main party. An estimate of the window size is eight metres wide by five metres high. The view from there over the bay is stupendous and one by one people climbed to the photography position. Various routes were next used to regain the ridge which involved either awkward short climbs down or awkward little traverses but the group reformed and had a magnificent view of the tower from the other side. On a branch of a scrubby tree high on the cliff face above us, an Osprey was perched,

although its chicks could be heard calling for food, we did not see it fly.

It was the warmest day and the hot sun on the rock was nicely bearable. After scrambling further on the ridge a halt was called for lunch on a flat yellow horizontal slab. It was a perfect viewing platform over the bay towards Alcudia. As we ate, sea planes flew over head and landed skimming over the blue water, leaving a long white wake before mounting onto dry land at the dock.

There was a second small window at the top of the ridge in rocks which overhung the sea and looked somewhat unstable.

At one point on the ridge we could look directly at our swimming pool and pick out the individual balconies of our apartments.

Towards the final tower was a highly exposed part where I remember Angie walking as if on a tight rope. It was the same shape and slightly narrower than a ridge tile on a house roof for about two metres.

On the final tower we sat and soaked in the sunshine and the view whilst planning the best route down to the Puerto Pollensa - Calla San Vicente track. An improvised flag left by previous walkers was re-erected on the summit.

The walk back was hot and dusty and the first group of four decided on cool beer by the pool side interspersed with refreshing plunges. The final three found a bar selling beer by the pint and after completing a round, arrived back with happy smiles on their faces.

For the remainder of our stay the flag could be seen from our apartment balcony.

Fliday.

Cars were again organised; a minor exercise in logistics as the walkers were to start at Sa Calobra on the coast, and finish at Esdorca, inland. By road the two points were connected by 13 kilometres of continuous hairpin bends, reminiscent of Norway's Stalheim Gorge but not quite so steep and much longer. Thanks are due to Ian Crowther for leading this.

From the bay car park we went through a rock tunnel under the 300 metre high cliffs into the gorge of the Torrent de Pareis where it meets the open sea. There was no water running down the route of the Torrent and we started on flat level sand walking inland. The gorge is narrow with consistently high (300 metres), unbreachable cliffs for the whole of its length with the width blocked by boulder chokes and rock outcrops at intervals. It made me think of potholing but without a roof. At one time I was reminded of the main cavern of Reyfad. The limestone here was a complete contrast to the unweathered spiked surface of the Serra del Cavall Bernat, in the gorge the surfaces were water worn and smooth.

I cannot remember all the individual scrambles and climbs. There was the one which required long legs to span the walls of the chimney with no real holds. Another, where a large smooth egg-shaped chock stone had to be surmounted with the holds always two inches beyond my reach; the one where after a scramble one had to crawl upwards through a hole, after

removing ones rucksack, I remember following Alan Brown in jumping across a one metre gap from the top of a smooth boulder two to three metres high to land on an inclined holdless slab slightly higher. Ian produced belay slings and line at one point, and some of the party were assisted by strategically given, pulls or pushes. It was great fun and easily the most strenuous day of the week.

The end came when a path was found, coming down on the left which we had to go up to the road. After the height gained in the gorge in the previous four hours, it was felt that we could not be far below the road. In fact it took just over one hour of continuous ascent on a well graded zigzagging path to reach the road and a cool drink in the restaurant.

Saturday.

The last day. We were not to be collected for transfer to the airport until 5 p.m. and so most people took the chance of walking through the Ternelles valley to the Castell del Rei, a route which is only open on Saturdays. The bus was taken to Pollensa and the walk started between gardens with their own water reservoirs, gradually climbing to the estate entrance with a guard on the gate. Height was gained imperceptibly, on a good dirt road which wound through the trees, until the Castell del Rei was seen above us and 491 metres above the sea. Access to the castle was not possible as it is being restored. During our lunch break on the edge of the cliffs in the near distance two black vultures appeared. They were in view long enough for those with glasses to have a good look at them and close enough for those without to see them clearly.

A bus was caught back to Puerto Pollensa earlier than originally intended with the idea of having large ice creams on the front at Hotel Mirador. A temporary split in the party was made when thirst got the better of some members and shandies were ordered and the others went in search of the ice creams.

A very successful meet leaving happy memories and renewed friendships.

IH.H

Flowers, Shrubs **and** Trees:

We are indebted to Betty Cobb for compiling this list of a small selection of the very large range of flowers to be found on the island. The Common names are given beside the Latin ones. The book used for identification was "The Flowers of Britain and Europe." by Oleg Polunin.

Acanthus mollis	Acanthus (Bear's breech)
Allium ursinum	Ransomes
Anchusa officinalis	Alkenet
Asphodelus aestivus	Asphodel
Borage officinalis	Borage
Carpobrotus	Carpobrotus (Red
acinaciform	Hottentot)
Centranthus ruber	Red valerian
Cistus monspeliensis	Narrow leaved cistus
Citrus limon	Lemon tree
Citrus sinensis	Orange tree
Convolvulus	Bindweed
Erinacea anthyllis	Hedgehog broom
Geranium sanguineum	Cranesbill
Gladiolus segetum	Field gladiolus
Hieracium pilosella	Mouse-eared
	hawkweed
Ipomoea hederacea	Morning glory
Knautia arvensis	Scabious
Papaver Rhoeas	Corn Poppy
Reseda lutea	Mignonette

Ornithology:

Cliff Large, with Cathie's assistance produced the bird list. He writes:
"In June Parker's book, 'Walking in Mallorca' she states that 'Even those with a minimum interest in birds are likely to find this interest stimulated by the number and variety of birds to be seen on nearly every walk.' This was true on some of the lower walks but on high hills hardly any birds were seen. One of the suggested days out was a visit to the Albufera, a large wetland nature reserve with bird hides. It was an excuse for a lazier day after a few days walking but only three of the party made the visit. It proved very interesting with many different birds present.

The most spectacular bird sighting was left to the last day at Castell del Rei. Whilst having lunch a pair of black vultures were soaring around the cliff tops about a quarter of a mile away.

The birds listed have been split into two groups; those seen on walks and those seen in The Albufera. Most were personal observations, Some in the second group were seen by others in the party. Some of the common birds found at home have been omitted from this list."

Sightings on walks:

Black Vulture	Hoopoe
Black Wheatear	House Martin
Blackcap	Marmora's Warbler
Blue Rock Thrush	Osprey
Chiffchaff	Rock Sparrow
Crag Martin	Shag
Crossbill	Stonechat
Goldfinch	Swallow

The Albufera sightings:

Black-winged Stilt	Pochard
Cetti's Warbler	Purple Gallinule
Common Sandpiper	Purple Heron
Coot	Red-crested Pochard
Curlew	Reed Warbler
Gadwall	Ringed Plover
Great Tit	Sandpiper
Greenfinch	Sardinian Warbler
Harrier	Serin
House Sparrow	Shoveller
Kentish Plover	Spoonbill
Little Egret	Spotted Redshank
Little Grebe	Squacco heron
Mallard Marsh	White-headed Duck
Moorhen	Yellow Wagtail

Logistics:

The party flew from Manchester to Palma and stayed in self catering apartments which were definitely above the standard of the usual Club Hut!

The guide books used were:

"Walking in Mallorca" by June Parker,
"Landscapes of Mallorca" by Valerie Crespi-Green.

Attendance:

Dennis and Joan Armstrong
John and Irene Barton
Alan Brown
Clifford and Betty Cobb
Arthur Craven
Ian and Dorothy Crowther
Mike and Marcia Godden
Jeff Hooper
Ian and Una Laing
Cliff and Kathy Large
Gerry and Margaret Lee
Alan and Angie Linford
Bill Todd and Juliet White