

Thursday, 18th October, Optional Day activities.

By Sue Wagstaff

The day started bright and early with a summons from the fire alarm. With the hotel having 18 floors, we were lucky, only having to descend 9. At the bottom, we were greeted by smiling firemen and news that there wasn't a problem. Had someone burnt the toast?

We went by bus to visit the Mattatuck Museum at Waterbury, CT, a trip which had been organized by Ted Gallagher and the Museum Curator, Cynthia Rozney.

The Museum had graciously laid on a breakfast buffet



Peggy and Fred Sutor with Chet Creutzburg at the Mark Twain house.



Dennis Berard with a large Aesop's Fables platter at the Sunday show and sale.



Transferware from the Mattatuck Museum in Waterbury, CT.

and after a welcome we were divided into small groups to look at the collections of Historic Blue and Liverpool, which normally reside in the basement but had been brought out especially for us. We believe that these treasures will shortly be going on public display.

You can see from the photographs, how interesting the china is, but special interest was shown in the four medallions platter and two small Enoch Wood plates with shell border—one with The Capitol and the other with The White House.

An extremely large pearlware jug, decorated with the Defense of Stonington is superb and was examined closely, to see whether or not bat printing had been used as well as transfer printing. I believe the jury is still out.

When not viewing the ceramics, we were able to look at the collection of paintings by Connecticut artists and also an exhibition about Waterbury in World War II, something that brought back memories to many of us 'older members.' Rationing was still going on in the UK in the 1950s!

After an excellent lunch at Dreschers, a well known German restaurant in Waterbury, we returned to Hartford to visit the Mark Twain House, where we were again divided into small groups for a guided tour. The house was built in a leafy area of the City, next door to the residence of Harriet Beecher Stowe. It contained little or no transferware, but this was made up for by the wealth of interesting items and decorative styles it contained. I shall not try to describe it as there is a wonderful website where you can have a virtual tour: www.marktwainhouse.org/thehouse.

I read Tom Sawyer many years ago, but now having learnt so much more about the author, I want to read more Twain. Several of us were chuckling over some of his sayings*, on the way back to the hotel.

A good day.

**Editor's Note: As undoubtedly some of you are painfully aware, your editor's favorite Mark Twain quotation refers to Twain's contempt for the person who can only think up ONE way to spell a word!*

