

The Queen's Green Canopy

The Queen's Green Canopy is a tree planting initiative created to mark Her Majesty's Platinum Jubilee in 2022 which invites everyone across the UK to plant trees. Following the death of Queen Elizabeth, the initiative has been extended to the end of March 2023 to give people the opportunity to plant trees in memorium to honour The Queen. We are delighted that we have managed to plant eight new trees in various locations across the parish. Firestone Glade has acquired four Prunus trees which in time should flower with a variety of pink and white flowers, providing colour and shelter for wildlife. Residents were delighted to receive the new trees which were planted by a small band of volunteers in somewhat windy weather. The other trees have been planted at the Wightlink terminal and at the entrance to the Royal Victoria Yacht Club where they will be enjoyed by residents and visitors alike.

Cheryl Fontana



Thanks to Nigel and Malcolm in particular for their arboricultural expertise and skilled spadework!



Editorial



It is Spring once again. The birds know it, the flowers and trees know it. The lambs and calves at Quarr know it, as they gambol joyfully about despite the wind and rain. Even our bees are out collecting pollen at every opportunity.

New life is emerging everywhere, all the time, all at once! The weather, however, is feeling less Spring like and is a reminder, as if we need it, that we are seeing ever more clearly the effects of Climate change on our beautiful and bountiful planet. We can all do our bit to help, but we must hope our leaders will step up before we lose it all.

We have lots to celebrate however! In this edition you can read plenty of positive news. An introduction to our new clerk Mrs Katie Riley, some new local authors reviewed. We learn how Fishbourne resident Simon Howes triumphed in his bid to row across the Atlantic, and what we are doing to celebrate the new King's coronation.

We have so many talented people living here, and the Parish Council are so grateful for all contributions to the Newsletter, and to all those residents who give up their time to help out in all sorts of ways.

Please do contact us if you have a story to tell, or a picture to share. It is your newsletter, and there to inform, amuse and enjoy.

Please note following dates for your diary

Parish coffee morning at RVYC (1st Thursday of every month) 4th May, 1st June, 6th July

Spruce Up Day 24th June

With every good wish for the future

Sarah Talbot



Copy for the next issue of the Newsletter by 16th July 2023 at the latest. Please send to sarah.talbot44@btinternet.com



A rather 'weather-worn' RVYC ensign flutters over the South Atlantic!

Congratulations Simon *an epic achievement*

Simon Howes of Fishbourne, arrived in St Lucia last month having successfully rowed across the Atlantic. His first attempt sadly ended when he seriously injured himself and had to abandon his challenge. In his own words, Simon describes his truly amazing feat:

I rowed Solo and unassisted from Puerto Rico Marina in Gran Canaria, a Spanish Island in the Canaries to Rodney Bay Marina in St. Lucia to help save the Red Squirrels from extinction and for their preservation, by raising money for the local Charity (see update from Charity below).

The exact distance I rowed was 2,898.2 Nautical miles which is 3,335.24 Statute miles.

The crossing took 72 days, 1 hour and 45 minutes. The previous record time for any Solo unassisted rower was held by an Englishman in 1997 being 116 days.

Thus I was able to break the record by over 43 days to become the fastest person in history to row from Europe to St. Lucia.

I am now the third oldest person in history to row across any ocean, Solo and unassisted.

I self-funded the row in its entirety with all the expenses involved and have received no corporate sponsorship.

The Isle of Wight Red Squirrel Trust have now raised a total of £87,983.21, towards the goal of £100,000 for the Woodland project from supporters of Atlantic Rower. This figure includes on-line and off-line donations, Gift Aid and a pledge.

The Just Giving Page is still live and donations gratefully received.

<https://www.justgiving.com/fundraising/atlantic-rower>

Other useful facts and stats

I rowed approximately 1,600,000 oar strokes, drank 8 litres of water daily and ate approx. 5,000 calories of food daily, this being made up of dehydrated food, Mars bars, Snickers bars, Kit Kat's etc.

The temperature in the cabin was regularly over 45 degrees Celsius or 110 Fahrenheit.

I suffered from sleep deprivation.

I suffered several 'critical incidents', this meant that well before the half way mark the bar was dry aboard Atlantic Rower!

I had several very close encounters with oil tankers and cargo freighters, my boat was saved from destruction by my AIS system and being able to call ships using a VHF radio, normally in high seas, Atlantic Rower was almost invisible in the swell, being only 8m long and only 3m high.

I cleaned the hull of the rowing boat twice during the voyage in water over 6 miles deep to remove barnacles, being attached to the boat by a 15 foot harness and being in the water for over an hour each time.

I was surrounded by Portuguese men of war (lethal jelly fish) while rowing off Mauritania and decided not to go swimming!

I suffered two knock-downs in 35-40 foot waves (when the boat overturns by about 175 degrees, then slowly uprights itself). One knock-down broke an oar in half, the other smashed the plastic deck hatches causing 37% of my food to be saturated and the boat to list for three days until I was able to pump out the sea water.

I suffered one frenzied prolonged shark attack near the end of the voyage, at night, on the rear of the boat.

I had an extraordinary encounter with four Sperm Whales, two of them came right alongside the boat, presumably because they heard the oars in the water. This might sound a bit scary, but it wasn't, they had just come to have a look and they didn't actually swim under the boat (thank The Lord)!

I was literally escorted by several Dorado (fish!) for almost 600 miles of the voyage, with the fishes living and swimming along under the hull.

A Tropic bird practised landing and take-offs from the forward solar panel of the boat.

An albatross came by daily and I nicknamed him Albert!

Flying fish landed on the boat almost every night. Several times hitting me in the face and on the body! The flying fish were most spectacular when practising formation flying over the rowing deck!

I had an amazing surprise when I eventually touched land in The Rodney Bay Marina in St. Lucia at 05.45 on Wednesday 29th. March, having been at sea for 72 days and not seen a soul during this time, my wife and family were there to greet me! That was a wonderful moment.

Simon Howes

The IOW Red Squirrel Trust

An update from Chair Miss Helen Butler, BSc, MBE:

The Trust continues to look for woodland to purchase to help conserve our nationally important population of native red squirrels. The trustees have been touched at the amazing amount of support shown to Simon Howes and his goal of rowing the Atlantic single-handedly to raise funds for The IOW Red Squirrel Trust. We are very grateful to all of the very generous supporters who have contributed to help us get nearer to achieving our goal. Woodland appears to be a very popular buy at present and there is fierce competition for any well-located woods that come on the market, so we need all the help we can get.

Having a base where people can visit the charity and learn about red squirrels is expected of us and we fall short at present.

If we can secure woodland (or land), a hide and a small meeting room for educational and scientific use would help us fulfil our charitable aims.

Residents of Firestone Cose Rd and Firestone Glade

Join us outside 16 Firestone Glade from 1pm, Sunday 7th May to celebrate the Coronation of

His Majesty Charles III and Queen Consort Camilla

Bring food to share, a bottle, seating or a rug.

For more info contact Cheryl Fontana, 16 Firestone Glade
cherylfontana1959@gmail.com
Tel. 07910849302





Katie Riley: New Clerk to Fishbourne Parish.

I would like to introduce myself as the new Clerk and Responsible Finance Officer for Fishbourne Parish Council and am very much looking forward to getting to know the parish and perhaps meeting you at either the Tuesday morning Parish Council surgery (09.30–10am) or a monthly Parish Council meeting (2nd Thursday of each month) both held at the RVYC.

I moved to the Island 18 years ago from Gloucestershire to continue my career as a careers adviser and enjoyed working in all the Island secondary schools. I now live in Gurnard with my husband and 9-year-old son. I started clerking shortly after having our son and found it complemented family life so well. My first position was with Chale Parish Council, then Gurnard, and more recently Northwood which I will continue to do in addition to this new role.

Clerk's Corner

I have lots to learn and to get to grips with. In my short time so far, residents have brought a number of concerns to the attention of the council including flooding to properties on Fishbourne Lane, vandalism to the boat shed on the beach, concerns

about Wightlink and what they can do this year to mitigate traffic problems on Fishbourne Lane, and queries around access along the Fishbourne to Binstead beach, some of which is privately owned. We have also received details of events being planned for the Kings Coronation.

The Parish Council have recently donated £500 to support Ryde Help Centre for the benefit of Fishbourne residents. The Centre is open 3 days per week, Monday, Tuesday, and Friday (9am – 5pm) and offers a bespoke advice service replicating the Isle Help service delivered from Newport Help Centre in partnership with Citizens Advice IW. Please make contact with the service if you feel they can help you.

I have had the pleasure of meeting our local Environment Officer Sophia Hellyer who frequently patrols the area and can respond to issues such as littering, graffiti and dog fouling – if there are issues you feel she might be able to assist with please make contact. Similarly, I am looking forward to meeting local PCSO Steve Hull who many of you will know already.

The next clean-up day has been arranged for 24th June. All equipment is available to borrow on the day including litter pickers and high vis jackets. If you feel you can help, the idea is to do whatever you feel needs doing in your area, be it cleaning signs, cutting back overgrown vegetation etc. Councillors have been busy planting, including a number of trees around the parish for the Queen's Green Canopy, an initiative that began in May 2021 in honour of the Platinum Jubilee of Queen Elizabeth II in 2022. The Isle of Wight Best Kept Village Awards will be touring the Island's parishes from the 1st May and so you never know, Fishbourne could be in the running for the Island's Best Kept Village 2023!

People you may need to contact on the Parish Council

Malcolm Hector **Chairman**
Responsibility **Wightlink/Planning**
Tel: 652024
E-mail: malcolm.hector@gmail.com

Diana Conyers **Councillor**
Responsibility **IWALC and Citizens Advice** Tel: 01983 717517
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Cheryl Fontana **Councillor**
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E-mail: cherylfontana1959@gmail.com

Ed Hopper **Councillor**
Responsibility **Island Roads**
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Sarah Talbot **Councillor**
Responsibility **Newsletter/ Environment and Sustainability Forum, WCFA** Tel: 882655
E-mail: sarah.talbot44@btinternet.com

Christine Woolin **Councillor**
Tel: 07703 730320
E-mail: chriswoolinfpc@gmail.com

Katie Riley **Clerk to the Council**
Tel: 07772950343
E-mail: fishbournepc@btinternet.com

Ian Dore **IOW Ward Councillor**
E-mail: Ian.Dore@iow.gov.uk

Please note: the web address is www.fishbourneiow.org.uk
It may also be accessed through the Isle of Wight website using the link www.iwight.com/parishcouncils/

Do join us for the Clean-up Day. 24th June 10am – 12 noon. Complimentary drink and sandwich afterwards



THE KING'S CORONATION WEEKEND
SATURDAY 6th May

LARGE TV SCREEN to watch the coronation

CLASSIC CAR DISPLAY by Vectis Historic Vehicle Club - 2pm - 5pm

BRASS BAND - On the patio 3pm - 4pm

BARBER SHOP SINGERS - Quaynote Quartet 6.30pm - 7.00pm

SUNDAY 7th May

FISHBOURNE STREET PARTY on the green - from 2pm

Live Music with BEN STUBBS 7pm to 9pm in the bar area



Tel 01983 882823

Local Author

It is always fun to discover a new author and particularly pleasing when that author lives in the parish. Joyce Warden-Lee and her husband have lived in Fishbourne for a number of years and have retired from busy careers in the clothing trade. Joyce has written and published two books and I borrowed one of them, "Sara", after a conversation we had in January. "Sara" is the rags-to-riches story of an enterprising and industrious young woman which is set in London and later in rural Cornwall. The lonely

Sara overcomes adversity in many forms and goes on to forge strong and fulfilling friendships and to create a loving family around her. The notion of class and entitlement runs through the book, as Sara achieves success seemingly beyond her station in life. Her hard work, common sense and good heart are the qualities which ultimately matter most and her social mobility is largely based on them.

If you are interested in reading Joyce's books, contact me on 07910849302 for more information.

Cheryl Fontana

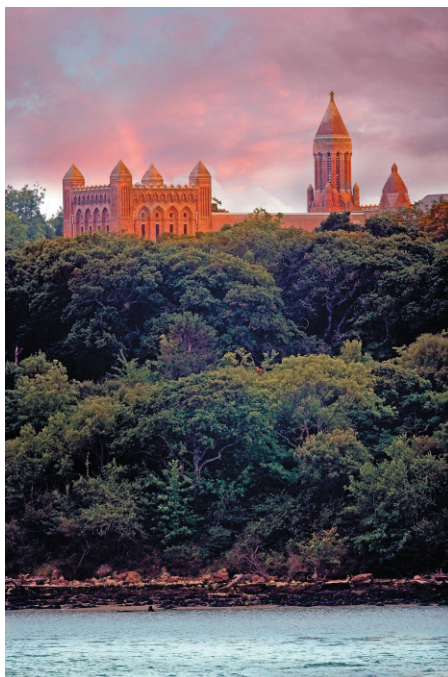


Photo: Hudson Media

Quarr Abbey

Visitors, Volunteers and Friends.

The Easter weekend was a busy time at Quarr. The art gallery had well over a hundred visitors a day, and they were buying paintings too. No footfall figures are available for the teashop but we can presume they were higher. Alas, for artists! Our work can never compete with coffee and cake!

Attendance at church services was impressive also. The Maundy Thursday evening mass of the Lord's Supper is not so popular, but the Good Friday Liturgy is always well

attended. It might seem strange that the focus on suffering and a painful death should attract, but it does; there are even some who come every Good Friday, but not on Easter Sunday. Perhaps the austere truth attracts, perhaps the extraordinary love which gives itself to the limit and beyond, perhaps again, the silence of God who refuses all easy comfort in the face of suffering, but rather chooses to suffer himself, alongside us, and for us.

The Easter Vigil on the Saturday night is a very quiet celebration. This is a shame. The holy fire, the darkened church slowly filling with candlelight expresses the mystery of resurrection in a way that no words can, but perhaps the long readings that follow prove daunting.

The Easter day mass is the most popular of the services. This year over one hundred and fifty worshippers squeezed in; it was standing room only. There is no need to account for the attraction of Easter. It is the great festival of hope, and hope is, as all know, not a common commodity. But we need to remind ourselves of the hope on offer. The destruction of death itself! The restoration of life, and eternal life in God! It is always shocking, and rather humbling to be faced with what we believe.

The yearly celebration of Easter is the very heart of our monastic life, and a season when we renew our gratitude for all who make it possible. As a small community we are dependent upon employees, volunteers and friends to keep Quarr going. The Friends of Quarr are especially in mind at present. Dr. Rebecca Ashton who, as

first Chair of the Friends oversaw the launch of the organization in 2013, has retired. Over ten years of dedicated service her achievements have been many. Among the most visible are the restored wall to the tea-garden and the resurfaced courtyard and paths around the Church. We owe her a great debt of thanks.

But now a successor has been appointed. Fishbourne resident, Dr. Dominic Fontana is the new Chairman, and his wife, Fishbourne Councillor Cheryl, is eager to give him every assistance. We look forward to working with them for the future of Quarr.

Br Duncan Smith

Quarr Abbey Gallery Forthcoming Exhibitions

Sophia Flowers 27th April – 2nd May

Lyndy Moles 4th – 9th May

Kaleidoscope 11th – 16th May

Crafty Artists 18th – 23rd May

Martin Swan 25th – 30th May

Jeanne Mills-Holland 1st – 6th June

Anne Axford 8th – 13th June

The Variety Pack 15th – 20th June

Lynne Alden 22nd – 27th June

Charlotte Hodge Thomas 29th June – 4th July

Andrew Dowden 6th – 11th July

Island Art Society 13th – 18th July

Christine Beasley 20th – 25th July

Pat Clarke 27th July – 1st August

Unveiling of a new bench in Quarr Lane, Monday 5th March

On Monday 5th March a group gathered beside the beautiful new bench overlooking the ruins of the old Abbey at Quarr. The new bench is a project jointly funded by the Friends of Quarr and the Fishbourne Parish Council and replaces the one which had previously stood there some years ago. Dr Rebecca Ashton, Chair of the Friends of Quarr, welcomed those who had come to celebrate the new addition to the lane and to express the hope that it would be used and appreciated by those who are drawn to the Abbey, particularly those who stop to view the remains of the original twelfth century monastic foundation.

Abbot Xavier Perrin spoke of the Two Abbeys Project which connects the life of the modern day community with that of Quarr's medieval predecessors through the adherence to the Rule of St Benedict. An essential part of the Two Abbeys Project is to preserve the buildings, both of the modern abbey and its ancient ruins and to protect the history, archaeology and the spirituality of the whole site. The new bench, with its views over the ruins and out to the Solent and beyond, is perfectly placed on the public footpath for a spot of quiet contemplation, or simply to rest weary legs after a long wander.



This is your Newsletter! Are you happy with the content? Do you find the articles interesting or informative? Please let us know what you would like to see in the Newsletter. Contact: sarah.talbot44@btinternet.com



Royal Victoria Yacht Club

It's been a very busy 'quiet' season at RYYC. Our Wednesday winter talks have been very well supported, with around 60 members coming along each week. Subjects ranged from beavers and dinosaurs to Bolsheviks and Romanovs on the island, not to mention 'rum, sodomy and the lash'!

Our fitting-out supper in March was sold-out and this was followed by our individual awards presentation, at which we recognised members' contribution to club life, both on and off the water.

Our on-the-water activities are now underway with weekend racing and cadets getting out on the

water on Fridays and adult sailing on Wednesday evenings (tides permitting!).

We have a very exciting sailing season ahead of us, with four open events scheduled! The first of these is a Waspz open meeting at the end of May. In case you've not heard of them, these are very high-performance foiling dinghies – no doubt giving some exciting racing and thrills and spills too. Following this, in June, is the MOCRA nationals, which we're co-hosting with Bembridge SC.

Our biggest one is the RS Tera Nationals, which we're hosting from 11 to 14 August. Entries have been

capped at 120. We're thrilled that entries are now closed and there's a waiting list. This is going to be an extremely busy time for the club, but one which we're super-excited to host. Our last open event is the Squib Southern Championships in September. And that's the summer gone in a flash. (As I write this, we're being lashed by Storm Noa with storm force winds and torrential rain, so the sooner the summer arrives, the better!).

Following January's AGM, there's a new team in post at the club. Helen Vrba is Commodore, taking over from Chris Rickman (whose three-year tenure included the pandemic and a royal visit!). Jane Barrett Bellingham is Vice-Commodore, while still Rear-Commodore Sailing role until a volunteer is appointed. Lindsey Hood is our new Rear-Commodore House, Cathy Kerr has taken on the Hon Secretary position from Carol McDonnell who devoted 11 years to the role, and Tracy Rickman has started her final year as Hon Treasurer.

You can check the website and our Facebook page for more news.

I look forward to seeing you around the club in the coming weeks – our garden furniture is optimistically in place on the lawn, so let's hope for some sunshine to enjoy our lovely surroundings.

Helen Vrba

Book Review

A Red Sky

by Jo Cooper;
Jo Cooper Books,
2022.

Jo Cooper lives in Binstead. She is an author and historian and secretary of the Historic Ryde Society.

A Red Sky is her second book. It tells the story of two children from different families who are evacuated from Portsmouth to the Isle of Wight during the Second World War. They stay with neighbouring host families near the Holy Cross Church in Binstead. The story itself is fictional but it is based on carefully researched historical data and, although a few names have been changed, local residents will recognise the places described. It is written through the eyes of the two children and intended primarily for younger readers. However, adults will also enjoy it – particularly if, like me, you know the area. Jo is an excellent writer. She



captures both the perspective of the children and the wider historical and geographical context with equal skill.

Copies can be purchased online or from the Museum of Ryde in the Royal Victoria Arcade in Union Street. If you buy it from the Museum, you might like to have a browse around the Museum at the same time.

Ryde Help Centre

At its March meeting, the Parish Council agreed to contribute £500 towards the costs of keeping the Help Centre in Ryde Library open in the coming financial year. What is the Ryde Help Centre and why did we decide to support it?

The Help Centre is run by the Isle of Wight Council. It is a place where residents with issues or problems related to the Council's services that cannot be resolved by phone or online can meet a member of staff in person. It is open three days a week (Monday, Tuesday and Friday) and, although residents are advised to make an appointment, urgent drop-in cases can usually be seen. It is very well used,

particularly (but not only) for concerns related to housing benefit and council tax. The Help Centre staff work closely with a Citizens Advice adviser, who is also there on Mondays and Fridays.

So why are we helping to fund it? As most readers will know, the Isle of Wight Council has had to make many cuts to its services in the last few years and parish and town councils have often had to come to the rescue. In this case, Ryde Town Council was told that, unless they could contribute to the costs, the Help Centre would have to close. Ryde Town Council agreed to provide the required £16,000 but suggested that neighbouring parish councils also be asked to help. Fishbourne Parish Council agreed to make a small contribution, based on our population, on the grounds that it is an important service that at least some of our residents are likely to use. We made a similar decision last year, when we agreed to help fund *Aspire Ryde*, a voluntary organisation that provides many valuable services in the local community.

Diana Conyers

'Funfair Island'

Diverging from cats slightly this issue, well, completely actually, I thought this might be of local interest.

Long before moving to the island, I heard something on a radio-phone-in show that sent a shiver down my spine. The caller recalled, as a small child, being aboard a Portsmouth-to-Isle of Wight night-ferry in the early 1970's. Out at sea, he remembered the ferry stopping at an island mid-Solent. This island was a wondrous place, a child's dream in fact – the entire place covered in nothing but a huge, colourful funfair. He begged his parents to be allowed to stay, but they refused, and a few minutes later the ferry continued on its way through the dark sea, while a small child stared at the receding sight of *Funfair Island*.

There are, of course, no islands between Portsmouth and the Isle of Wight. You'd have noticed. Years later, the caller said he went back to Portsmouth and was stunned to discover this fact. I stared at the radio in disbelief because, when I was a small child in the early 1970's, I too stared in wonder at a funfair island

from an Isle of Wight ferry. I'd always assumed I'd dreamt it because I know Portsmouth well, and never saw it again, but...now, somebody else was making the same claim! Did this Shangri-La, this Fiddler's Green, really exist, somewhere out there in the sea? Was it perhaps something only small children could see? When I asked my parents about it years later, they had no idea what I was talking about (but then they rarely do).

The reason I know Portsmouth well, by the way, is that my father grew up there. Never one of life's luckiest people, he began life living at the seaside, right next to the beach, only for Portsmouth to abruptly become one of the most heavily bombed cities in the world and his beach got covered in barbed wire. Meanwhile the Luftwaffe bombed his family shed and his go-kart rocketed through next-door's window. As I say, not one of life's luckiest...

So back to the radio show and the phantom funfair island. As the caller continued his story, one of the mysteries of my life was suddenly solved. Funfair Island *did* exist and... still exists. The caller explained that after asking many questions over

many years, he finally discovered the answer – the ferry from Portsmouth Harbour, which today obviously heads straight over to Ryde, apparently used to take a small detour; after leaving the harbour, it made its way to a second Portsmouth pick-up point – Clarence Pier, which of course, is entirely covered in a brightly-lit funfair. For a small child on a boat, it would indeed have appeared to be a 'Funfair Island.' Just in case the caller had this all wrong, and after inconclusive Google searches, I finally spoke to an expert at Isle of Wight Steam Railway, who confirmed that, between 1970-1979, the ferry did sometimes call at Clarence Pier.

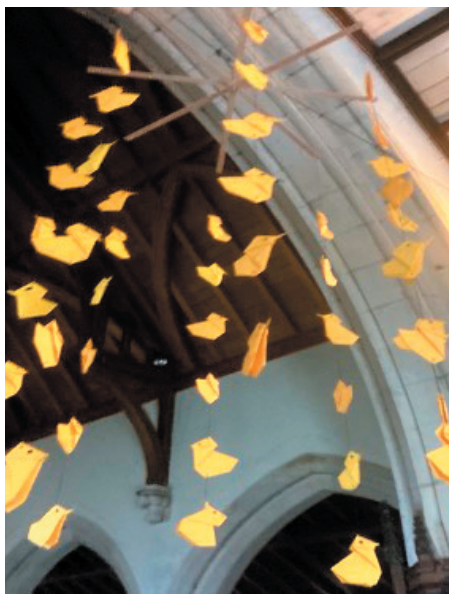
The radio-caller was right – and it's just as well some people delve a little more thoroughly into mysteries than I do. Otherwise, I'd have spent my first year in Fishbourne bothering locals with questions about a vanished island in the Solent.

Actually, I didn't diverge from cats completely. The ferries now serving that route must be the Fastcats, so there you go. Tenuous at best...

*From our local columnist,
author and cat sitter*

The Church of the Holy Cross, Binstead

(in plurality with St Peter's Havenstreet and St Mark's and St Edmund's Wootton)



What a joy it was to celebrate Easter this year with busy churches and a full Easter programme of services. Holy Cross church was decked with flowers on Easter Day, with an Easter garden at the back of the church and the mobile (pictured) raised high over the chancel. Many thanks to the Year

5 pupils of Binstead school who made the origami Easter chicks, symbols of new life, for the mobile during a morning that they spent in the church.

We are also rejoicing that the process has started to recruit a team vicar to serve in the Ryde group of churches. We are told that the post will be advertised before the end of April and that it is anticipated that the person appointed will be able to take up office in the early autumn. They will be the first of the new team of clergy who will serve in our parishes over the coming years. As we have been without a priest at Binstead and entirely reliant on voluntary help for three years, this news is more than welcome.

We are now looking forward to celebrating the coronation of King Charles. All the services in church will have a celebratory note over the coronation weekend. On the Sunday afternoon there will be special tea parties – one for adults and one for children with games and activities. Over the weekend there will also be an exhibition in the church of crowns that are being made by pupils at Binstead School for the Great Coronation Crown Competition. Surely the official Royal Regalia will have nothing to compare with what the children of Binstead can produce. And, no doubt, at some

point in the proceedings, church bells throughout the country will be required to ring out in celebration.

Do please remember that Holy Cross Church is open every day for visitors and for those who are seeking a quiet place in which to reflect or pray. And, of course, you can be assured of a very warm welcome at any of our services or other events, full details of which are to be found on our website at www.holycrossbinstead.org.uk.

Rodney Fox (Reader in the parishes of Binstead, Havenstreet and Ryde)

To all Fishbourne Parish Businesses

The Parish Council would like to list all business in the Parish so that local residents could be aware of the services that can be provided locally. If you would like your business listed please contact Katie Riley the clerk (fishbournepc@btinternet.com) who will record the necessary details on our behalf.

The completed details will then be compiled and the information distributed with the Parish newsletter.

These Boots were made for Walking

At last, The Navy was coming home after nearly a year in the Far East, but our excitement turned to Stygian gloom as the ship turned left instead of right and went skittering round the oceans before coming home. Meanwhile a new appointment had arrived for Tony which meant another year would be gobbled up. He was to take the 6-month American Staff Course in Virginia and then to head up the Trials for the new Phantom. And, as he suddenly realised that he hadn't a clue how to fly it, he had to dash down to Quay West for lessons.

Pretty funny sort of marriage this was turning out to be, I grumped, months and months away – though come to think about it, the warning clues had been there, especially since he never turned up for our wedding. Perhaps it hadn't been the best move to pick April 1st. When finally the groom and chums flew back, we grabbed them, fixed new date and to make doubly sure – had not one but two vicars – before realising that both of them had terrible stammers, so all these years Tony and I have never been quite sure whether we were legit or not.

Another year on his own for the American trip was too much. All guns blazing Tony talked to MOD who conceded, new plans were made, dates were tweaked the job became accompanied, our house let, cars tucked up, and off we flew., greeted in New York by most of Tony's exuberant squadron who carted us off to a lavish nightclub to celebrate. Entertainment was a trifle mind boggling; big swinging baskets were suspended from beams, each one containing delectable girls without a stitch on, who performed acrobatics and ever more suggestive dances as they sipped drinks through straws. Our eyes glazed over as we watched, but we did scoff the best steaks we'd ever had.

Then away to Norfolk Va. But another spanner was suddenly thrown into the works when MOD suddenly announced they'd changed the rules; Tony was to go solo for the next six months, and the children and I had to fly home forthwith.

We put our feet down: absolutely not. we'd been parted far too long already dates and meetings were already arranged. I was the official secretary I said, so indispensable. Too bad they said, if you don't come home we'll cut your Overseas Allowance; cut it then we said, seething, and fled

down the length of America to Quay West for flying lessons, chased by a confetti cloud of furious messages and admonitions from London. The Americans were wonderful, realised we were on our financial uppers, found a villa for us with a pool, gave dinner parties, picnics, and even taught me how to water ski in the Gulf of Mexico – and when they told me that the water was teeming with barracuda with big snappy teeth, I became expert.

Then flying to the west coast. We discovered that children under 3 could go free, so trained our youngest not to give the game away, though when he got no lunch, he was furious and very shouty, but the crew just gave understanding smiles as we squished him down and they gave him bananas. Tony's job there was to catch up again with his newly formed squadron who were making their mark by teaching the Americans aerial warfare – and who promptly christened them the Top Gun team. And after all our adventures, MOD made amends by sending us home in lavish style on the QE2.

We didn't like the goldfish bowl of married quarters, so went house hunting and found the most delectable Tudor cottage near Yeovilton. We rang and knocked, the top half of the front door swung open and there stood our 'host'. A long brown face, enormous eyes with luscious long lashes and white teeth bared in greeting. That's a horse I said in astonishment – Yup, said Tony, it's come to show us around. The horse flashed a toothy grin, shuffled, swished its tail, and disappeared through the hall. Up popped the owner explaining the paddock could only be reached through the house, but the horse loved people and there was always a rush to the front door when the bell rang.

I wondered why this enchanting house was being sold. Too small, she said, it's a squash; the children need their own rooms now, so we've had to put Granny in the fireplace, and she's getting very stroppy. We peered in. Sure enough, there was Granny in the inglenook looking very cross, perched on a trestle bed, wearing a sheepskin coat, and a deerstalker hat, incongruously embellished with a couple of daffodils. Overhead was a huge umbrella to stop her being drenched.

The plague window had been opened up, big Tudor salt crevices were wired

for lamps and, we reckoned, she had everything handy that she needed.

The cottage was super; turfed out Granny and the horse, and hey presto, all was fine until we too ran out of space.

Should you want it, my next little article is very different, so I'll give you a taster. The move was frightening, we were forced to buy a house far too big, far too grand, far too expensive, and we felt powerless as though we were being manipulated by the house – or something. It got to the stage when we finally sought help from our vicar.

The assembled cast:

The Bishop of Bath and Wells
Father Oliver, the Dominican prior from the BBC
The local Vicar

Stage effects

Sitting room converted into a chapel
Table into an altar
Holy Water
Candles blessed
Whole family (plus dog) participating

Reason

A full blown exorcism

Jane Pearson



SUNDAY 7TH MAY FROM
From 2pm

To celebrate the Coronation of King Charles & Camilla. Fishbourne residents will be holding a 'Picnic' at Oak Tree Green.

Bring your own picnic tables & chairs.



Nature Notes

What to see this May

After a rather unsettled April, it is hoped that May onwards will be kinder and offer some more seasonal weather. It has been a tough time for the early nesting birds and I have noticed, while covering the Isle of Wight Rook Survey, that some rooks have rebuilt their nests lower down in the trees. Country folklore states if they build their nests high in the trees, you can look forward to a fine summer, but built low in the branches and a summer of wind and rain lies ahead. We will wait and see.

Butterfly Conservation Hampshire & Isle of Wight Branch has recently released its 2022 annual butterfly report for the two counties. This always makes interesting reading to see how each species has fared. Butterfly Conservation members in the Isle of Wight receive a hard copy free as part of their subscription while it is also available online at: <https://www.hantsiowbutterflies.org.uk/webpage.php?name=annualreports>

Forty-one species of butterfly were recorded on the Isle of Wight in 2022. This included three rare species; Long-tailed Blue and Large Tortoiseshell, which are considered to be immigrant

species from continental Europe, and a Purple Emperor. The latter species is the most intriguing as it is the first confirmed record for the Isle of Wight. It was seen and photographed at the APS Salads nursery in Macketts Lane, Bathingbourne by one of the employees. It was a female showing some wear which tied in with their flight time. The big question is where it originated from and are there small populations on the Island which we are unaware of. We only have a small number of dedicated butterfly recorders, but we will be devoting

some time to the area this coming year for any further sightings of the magnificent Purple Emperor.

The report also underlines how the Isle of Wight is under-recorded for its butterflies. For example, only 5% of the Brimstone butterfly records for Hants and the IW in 2022 referred to the island. Therefore, the annual report considered Brimstone to be less common over here. I would have expected it to be 10% of the sightings.

It would be great if we could get more people to record their butterfly sightings when they are out and about. You can also include photos which helps to confirm ID. There is an online recording system called iRecord which can be used as either an app on your mobile phone or on your PC/laptop.

To register for iRecord on the PC or laptop, the link is: <https://irecord.org.uk/>

To download the iRecord app to your phone, the link is: <https://irecord.org.uk/app>

I am happy to support with any queries over using iRecord or ID queries of species.

The annual report also identified that only nine households on the Island took part in the Butterfly Conservation Garden Butterfly Survey in 2022. Please consider taking part in this valuable survey. It only requires you to

ID the butterfly and enter online or via the app. Further details for taking part at <https://gardenbutterfliesurvey.org/>.

Finally, I am always happy to receive any photos and sightings of dragonflies, butterflies and moths if you would prefer to email them to me.

For dragonflies, my email address is wightdragonflies@gmail.com

For butterflies and moths, my email address is wightmoths@gmail.com

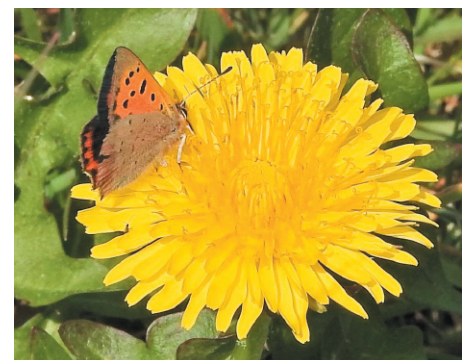
Finally, have you tried FIT? I hasten to add that this is nothing to do with fitness classes! FIT is an acronym for Flower-Insect Timed counts and the survey helps us to monitor pollinators.

Each FIT survey requires up to 15 minutes of your time (10 minutes covering the survey and five minutes for taking photos) counting the number of insects which visit a particular plant from the list provided. There is no limit to the number of FIT surveys undertaken during the summer months, the more the better. The data gleaned is invaluable to assess insect populations. For further details, please use this link; <https://ukpoms.org.uk/fit-counts>.

An example of the importance of the humble dandelion. Small Copper butterfly nectaring on the flower and a Hairy Shieldbug enjoying the seeds of the flower on the seed "clock".

Take care and I hope you enjoy the rest of the spring and early summer.

Jim Baldwin



Photos: Jim Baldwin