

Editorial

By the time our fabulous delivery team push this newsletter through your letter box, we may be blessed by some late summer sunshine before the Autumn. If we are, may I urge you to join in with some Citizen science, as suggested by Jim Baldwin in Nature Notes. A great activity for families during the August break, and so valuable. You may also be tempted into, or onto the water when the sun and warmth return. I know I will. As a holiday destination and a UNESCO Biosphere, water quality on the Isle of Wight is of huge importance and enjoying OUR seas and rivers is a right. We know of the tragic issues regarding clean water in other parts of the world, but we do not expect it here. It is a sad reality that our seas are polluted by numerous sewage spills. Please therefore come to the talk by Southern Water in October (details inside) and listen to their plans and make your views known. We can all make a difference.

In this issue, along with an introduction from our new Chair, Ed Hopper, you can read Malcolm Hector's (our previous Chair's) last Annual Report. It details what your Parish Council do and what, as a group of volunteers, we are trying to achieve. Fundamentally, we care about Fishbourne, its residents and the environment. Between us we attend Parish surgeries, meetings, (including IWALC, Sustainability Forum, training and planning) organise Clean up days, coffee mornings, distribute useful information, report damage or abuse, and respond as best we can to requests from parishioners. We may not always get things right, but we, along with numerous other volunteers on the Island, will try and do the best thing for our community. A big thank you to Malcolm for being our Chair for many years and Councillor since 2013, and to all our contributors. Please keep volunteering, you are all needed more than ever.

Sarah Talbot

Copy for the next issue of the Newsletter by 15th October 2023 at the latest. Please send to sarah.talbot44@btinternet.com

Our New Chairman

"My name is Ed Hopper and I am the new Chair of Fishbourne Parish Council, having taken over from Malcolm at our AGM earlier this year. I'd like to extend my thanks on behalf of the whole Parish Council to Malcolm for his many years of Chairmanship. I would also like to thank him personally for agreeing to remain as Vice-Chair.



Since joining the Parish Council in 2019 I've led on matters relating to Planning and have been the main liaison point with Island Roads, both of which I will carry on now I am also the Chair. I'm looking forward to speaking to and meeting residents of the parish in my new role, and would like to encourage anyone who would like to get involved with the parish or who has any matters that they would like

to discuss to get in touch by email, or by attending one of our weekly daytime surgeries or monthly evening meetings.

Recently, we had another of our regular Parish Spruce Up days, and I have worked with Island Roads around some road closures relating to the Isle of Wight Festival. I was pleased to be able to avert what could have been a major inconvenience for

a large number of people by timely communication with Island Roads.

The Parish Council is here to help so if you have any issues that you would like to raise or matters which you feel should have our attention then please do feel free to get in touch with myself, one of the other councillors or our Parish Clerk."

Ed Hopper

Firestone Coronation Party

After the dreary downpours of Coronation Day, the sun shone steadily throughout Sunday 7th May. It was delightful to be outside and even better to catch up with the neighbours who were able to attend. A party which began at 1pm was still going at 7pm as people relished the warmth of the early evening and of course the company. There was an amazing selection of delicious food, plenty of wine and a good opportunity to catch

up with neighbours both new and long-established. Finally of course, a toast was raised to their Majesties to mark their accession to the throne.

Cheryl Fontana



Fishbourne Parish Council Chairman's Annual Report May 2022/23

During the year we reviewed fourteen planning applications. At the April meeting we had a presentation by two senior planning officers who are investigating ways of improving the response with requests by local Councils to investigate possible breaches of planning rules. I hope this will lead to Fishbourne having a guaranteed response if we have any queries.

At the October meeting we co-opted Christine Woollin to the Council bringing us up to full strength. I am pleased to report that all our Councillors make significant contributions to the functioning of the Council. Our Clerk, Lindsey tendered his resignation after Christmas and Mrs Katie Riley was appointed at the March meeting. We wish Lindsey well.

In May 2022 we made a request to Wightlink to alter the lighting at the Fishbourne Terminal to reduce the light pollution to surrounding properties and on the creek. The lights are being altered now but at a fairly slow pace.

Last July we held the first coffee morning which was attended by twelve residents. This is a monthly event with the intention of reaching out to people who live alone or who appreciate a chance to meet other residents for a chat. I am grateful to Cllrs Talbot and Conyers who have spear-headed this initiative.

On the fourth of June we celebrated the Queen's Jubilee and made grants to support street parties. The Council is keen to support activities that encourage people in the Parish to meet socially.

There have been more issues with traffic queuing on Fishbourne Lane and obstructing residents' driveways and making access to their properties difficult. The Council is working with Martin Gulliver (Wightlink's Isle of Wight Port Manager) to resolve these issues. I think we have made progress but the issue is that the new larger ferries carry so many vehicles that when there is a problem the traffic build up is such that the terminal does not have the capacity to hold more than two ferries traffic. Wightlink have introduced text messaging to advise customers of any delays and revised sailing times but we can only wait and see how effective this is. A small number of customers are extremely awkward and abusive to staff when their journey plans are affected by delays.

The sea wall just past the boathouse on Fishbourne beach that was breached by strong seas, was repaired by the Isle of Wight Council, but this was effectively washed away again. The Council have confirmed that another repair will be made.

The Lower Green TRO (traffic regulation order) is moving forward and so far, has passed the review stage. Hopefully it will be installed this summer. The Parish Council are requesting this happens asap, but we are in the hands of Island Roads

Queens Green canopy. After much research we found sites for eight trees and as reported in the Parish Newsletter the trees were planted in the Spring.

We have spent some time discussing a pedestrian crossing on Fishbourne Lane as it was requested by 2 residents. We have made little progress. We need factual data to support any request made. We do need a speed watch team. Please let the Clerk know if you are willing to spend a few hours monitoring vehicle speeds.

Speeding in Firestone Copse Lane has been an issue for many years and is a danger to pedestrians. I am aware that one resident was hit by a wing mirror. We attempted to get a speed restriction imposed, but the Council judged this to be unnecessary. Sadly, until someone gets hurt its difficult to make progress.

In November we held another successful Parish 'spruce up day'. Please help keep our Parish free of rubbish.

We held a photographic competition over the winter. We are keen to encourage activities that promote awareness of our beautiful surroundings.

We joined with the Friends of Quarr Abbey to have a bench made by the carpenters at Quarr and sited down by the old abbey looking out over Spithead. The Opening ceremony was attended by Cllr Fontana on a very blustery day and gives users of the coastal path a chance to sit and admire the view.

We have, for some time been considering the Junction of Firestone Copse Road and Kite Hill, in respect of pedestrians both crossing Firestone Copse Road or walking from one road to the other. The Parish Council consider this to be a dangerous crossing and would like some footpaths installed on the inside of the grass

verges at the junction. We have requested this upgrade from Highways but they are not prepared to do it unless the Parish Council funds the works. We requested a quote, but it was in excess of £50,000! We are not happy with this situation but it's difficult to see what else we can do.

The Kings Coronation was another chance for people in the Parish to meet and I was pleased to attend both Parish parties and chat to some of you. My message is that if there is any local issue affecting you, please do come and talk to us, either at the Tuesday morning surgery (09:30 to 10:00 at the Royal Victoria Yacht Club, in the Snug or on the veranda overlooking the creek) or to one of our monthly meetings on the second Thursday each month, excepting August.

We are looking at producing a Community Information Sheet giving details of local businesses and contact details for a number of agencies that will support residents that have particular problems.

We have agreed to assist Ryde Town Council in funding a help centre in Ryde Library which will be available to any resident who has a problem that they would like to discuss with someone who can advise the best course of action.

Recently, two properties in Fishbourne Lane experienced permanent water around their houses. Southern Water after frequently denying any responsibility did, with much prodding, realise it was a foul water drain, and eventually came to fix the issue. It was a great shame that it took so long.

Finally, we had reported to us that a resident walking along the beach between Fishbourne and Binstead had been accosted by the owner of a property on the foreshore saying the beach was private and therefore not open to walkers. He was correct in that his property has riparian rights (basically ownership of the beach) and the basic tenet is that it is private property but after that the situation is far more complicated. Apparently if you are a fisherman, you have a right of passage. Anyway, a fascinating subject but I just urge all to be sensible and if you are walking there, keep to the low water area. It's not an easy walk; the coastal path is much safer. Please do be aware of the birds that feed on the beach and keep away in the migrating season so as not to disturb them.

As you can see the Council has had a very busy year!

*Malcolm Hector
Chairman, Fishbourne Parish Council*

Clerk's Corner

I am writing this report with just over 4 months under my belt now, it has been a very busy first few months, but am thoroughly enjoying the role. Since the last meeting we have a new Chairman, Cllr Ed Hopper, who was elected at the Annual Meeting of the PC in May following Cllr Malcom Hector's decision not to stand again this year. Cllr Hector continues as Vice-Chair and the Council are very grateful to all that he has contributed to Fishbourne over the years.

At the Annual Parish Meeting we welcomed Mr. Barry Smith, Wightlink's Director of Safety, Health and Environment, as our key note speaker who provided a helpful and informative session, apologising for some of the issues that have occurred, and assuring us that Wightlink want to be good neighbours and are working hard to find solutions. They have confirmed that the lights will all be upgraded by the end of the summer in time for the clocks changing and night's drawing-in, to avoid the light pollution experienced last year, and they are continuing to try and mitigate the bang-bang noise. And, Mr. Martin Gulliver has personally stated that he is happy for people to contact him directly on his mobile number 07971 396182 if traffic causes any problems and so please do take him up on this offer as the summer season builds.

A number of issues were raised at the Annual Parish Meeting including faint line markings on the exit of the ferry terminal which Island Roads have since agreed to re-paint, and some of the wooden posts on Oak Tree Green which are rotten and need replacing. The Parish Council have committed to replacing these in a joint effort with the Isle of Wight Council. We have been asked on a few occasions whether the cuttings can be collected after the grass is cut on the Green but unfortunately this can't be done, not because of cost, but because the contractor doesn't have the equipment to do so.

Speeding issues were again raised at the Annual Parish Meeting and the PC are keen to support a local Speedwatch Campaign in conjunction with the police. Please see details elsewhere in the newsletter and noticeboards and if you can volunteer and help in any way please do let us know.

The PC supported a number of parties for the King's Coronation which we hope you were able to enjoy and have recently made donations to Victim Support, IW Pride and the RVC's Open Day: Sailing for People with Disabilities.



Fishbourne's new parish notice board situated at Quarr Abbey and made by the carpentry team at Quarr.

I am pleased to say that traffic restrictions at Lower Green are in place with parking now being regularly monitored, and that two instances of flooding on Fishbourne Lane have finally been resolved after Southern Water repairs following much persistence with authorities from both residents and councillors alike.

We have recently installed a new noticeboard at Quarr Abbey and we were pleased to be able to support the team at Quarr Abbey who sourced all materials and built the board locally for us. We have increased the bin emptying service at Quarr and hope the overflowing bins seen previously during busy periods will be avoided. And a huge thank you to everyone who took part in the Spruce Up day in June, your efforts were much appreciated!

This month we are welcoming a representative from Surfers Against Sewage to highlight the problem of sewage in our seas, and to follow on from this, we have received a request from Southern Water to attend a future meeting to highlight the steps they are taking to solve the problem through their pathfinder project.

The major breach to the sea wall to the east of the boathouses has finally been repaired. We have sadly received further reports of threatening behaviour on privately owned sections of the Fishbourne to Binstead beach which the police are investigating. If you do notice any problems around the parish



Celebrating the King's Coronation on Fishbourne Circular Green

People you may need to contact on the Parish Council

Ed Hopper Chairman
Responsibility **Island Roads/Planning**
Tel: 07973 899882
E-mail: ed.hopper.fpc@gmail.com

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

Cheryl Fontana Councillor
Tel: 01983 247759
E-mail: cherylfontana1959@gmail.com

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

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/

you feel the PC can help with, please do let us know.

Meetings

The Parish Council doesn't meet in August but we continue to hold our parish surgeries every Tuesday morning between 9.30 and 10am at the Royal Victoria Yacht Club and look forward to seeing you there.

Clerk Katie Riley

Quarr Abbey and the 'Pepperpot'



July 11th, the feast of Saint Benedict is an important day in the year for any Benedictine monastery. At Quarr it is also the day on which the Friends of Quarr hold their annual general meeting. And, in addition, this year, it marked the start of three days of public talks given in the Church and in a Marquee set up on the lawn outside.

Jim Towey, a friend of Mother Teresa, was the first speaker, and he made a big impression on all who heard his quiet, humble yet authoritative testimony to the life of a saint. He was followed by a number of other speakers on a variety of topics: theological, historical, social and agricultural.

There was almost too much to take in, but something Dr. David Tomalin spoke of particularly struck me for its resonance with Quarr. He was talking on "Monastic Wight" and at the end came to discuss Saint Catherine's Oratory, that eye-catching monument known as the "Pepperpot".

It was built by Walter de Godeton, Lord of Chale, as a penance, for his part in stealing wine casks from the wreck of a French ship in 1313; and it has usually

been called a lighthouse. Dr. Tomalin is not so sure. He pointed out that it would provide next to no light for a ship struggling in heavy seas around Atherfield Ledge. And, significantly, the "light" Lord Walter was required to construct admits of another meaning.

There are many comparable towers in Normandy and Aquitaine, built at the same time, and mostly far from the sea. They are "Lanterns des morts", "Lanterns of the dead". Like a candle lit in a church they are signs of prayer for the deceased. Was the "Pepperpot" just such a memorial, served by priests living in an adjoining oratory?

Six centuries later, when Dom Paul Bellot was completing his work on the new Quarr Abbey, he recalled the "Pepperpot". The gable on the cloister-side of the guesthouse is surmounted by a miniature "Pepperpot" in brick. Is Dom Bellot telling us something about his Abbey?

Certainly it is a place of prayer, and for all who traverse the tempestuous seas of this present life, not just for the dead. And it should be a light which offers hope to all who look upon it. The "Pepperpot" has eight sides and eight is the number of hope, because eight is the number of resurrection. Christ died on a Friday, the sixth day of the week. He rested in the grave on the Sabbath, the seventh day. But he rose from the dead on the day after, the eighth day. Because he dies no more, this eighth day, is a day without end, the eternal day of a new creation, a hope for us all.

Br. Duncan Smith



Community Speedwatch Vacancies for Fishbourne

Community Speedwatch is coordinated by Hampshire Police in partnership with your local council and other agencies.

We are looking for volunteers aged over 17 to join the team to help deal with the issues of vehicles speeding in the local communities.

If you are interested and can spare a few hours a month, please contact Fishbourne Parish Council or send an email to Citizens in Policing Coordinator, Holly Deacon. holly.deacon.17798@hampshire.police.uk

More information is available about Community Speedwatch on the Hampshire Constabulary website.



Fishbourne Inn August 2023 programme

August sees the return of our popular live music on the patio Sundays! Local artists performing between 2pm and 4pm each Sunday and in September we have the return of our annual "Cask Ale" weekend on 15th – 17th September where there will be a large range of ales available outside along with live music each day.

**THE FISHBOURNE
LAZY SUMMER
LIVE MUSIC SUNDAYS**

August Schedule

- Sunday 6th - Ben Stubbs
- Sunday 13th - Bethan Jones
- Sunday 20th - Greg Barnes
- Sunday 27th - Ollie Ducie

**LIVE ON THE PATIO
2pm - 4pm**

www.thefishbourne.co.uk

Quarr Abbey Gallery Forthcoming Exhibitions

Pat Clarke 27th July – 1 August

August 2023

Summer by the sea 3rd – 8th August

Triple Effect 10th – 15th August

Charlotte Hodge Thomas
17th – 22nd August

Lis Toft and Tim England
24th – 29th August

Andrew Dowden
31st August – 5th September

September 2023

Isle of Wight Art Club
7th – 12th September

Christian Beasley
14th – 19th September

Pauline Evans 21st – 26th September

Fishbourne Art Group 28th
September – 3rd October



Royal Victoria Yacht Club

It seems as if our feet haven't touched the ground in the last three months! Starting with a packed weekend for the King's Coronation and a Waszp open meeting in May, co-hosting the MOCRA nationals in June, our open day for people with disabilities in July and, as I write, final planning for hosting the RS Tera Nationals in August. This is in addition to our normal programme of racing, training and social events!

Coronation Day itself was celebrated with a bottomless brunch and the event shown on a super large TV. (I always think the sign of a successful event can be gauged by the number of cars left in the car park!)

Saturday had the best weather and the club's big lunch was enjoyed by many on the lawn. Sunday's sail past had many taking to the water in a variety of craft from cruisers to kayaks, with the 'salute' taken on the pontoon by the current and eight former commodores. This was followed by a sumptuous afternoon tea, including the loyal toast, in a packed out clubhouse.

At the end of May, we hosted a Waszp open event – these are amazing foiling dinghies, which are becoming hugely popular. The first day sadly there wasn't enough wind to race – these guys didn't want to be out on the water unless they could foil!! Sunday's weather was better and several races were held, before most of the fleet returned, under RIB escort, to the mainland.

We were delighted to be asked to co-host with Bembridge SC the MOCRA nationals at the end of June. Many of you may have seen a very crowded pontoon with around 16 multihulls on there, plus several more anchored in the Creek.

There were 21 entries, including several local club members, who had some excellent racing from the RVYC before heading off on a passage race to Bembridge (via the Nab Tower) for the remainder of the event.

We were delighted that competitors were so complimentary about our club, our facilities, location and, most of all, our friendliness. Many of them came back to us on the Friday for an overnight stay before taking part in the Round the Island race.

Our annual open day for people with disabilities was another resounding success, with over 100 guests. RVYC has held this event since 1981, when it was organised by Betty Matthews, whom some of you may remember if you've lived in Fishbourne for some years! It goes without saying that this event just couldn't happen without the time given by RVYC members – whether in their boats taking guests afloat helping choose which boat they'd like to ride in, helping with admin, drinks, life jackets and general hosting. We are just so grateful that RVYC members are so generous with their time, and the parish council for their financial support.

Coming up is our biggest event to date! The Rooster RS Tera Nationals, which RVYC is hosting from 11 to 14 August, with an entry of 120 boats! As competitors are 18 and under, there'll be parents and family members too – so around 300 people at the club each day! We are very excited about hosting this event and are delighted to have sponsorship from Away Resorts, Wightlink, Ryde School and Visit Isle of Wight.

So, just over halfway through the year, and still to come – the Squib South Coast Championships and Merrydown Regatta in September.

Useful Contacts

NHS Phone 999 (emergency only) or 111

Police Phone 999 (emergency only) or 101

Isle of Wight Council 01983 821000

Gas Emergency phone number 0800 111 999

Southern Water Emergency phone number 0330 303 0368

Island Roads Report problems (including pot holes, dog poo and fly tipping) online at <https://islandroads.com/report-it-online-fix-my-street/>

Citizens Advice Phone 0800 144 8848 or contact Cllr Diana Conyers for information and advice on wide range of issues

Living Well and Early Help Service Phone 01983 240732 for help with individual or family welfare issues

Age UK IW Phone 01983 525282 for information and support for older people

Footprint Trust Phone 01983 822282 for information and advice on energy issues

Isorropia Phone 01983 217791 for mental health support

Samaritans Phone 116123 (24 hours) for emotional support

Aspire Ryde Phone 01983 716020 for community activities and support (including free food) in case of emergencies

Isle Find It Go to <https://www.islefindit.org.uk/advice-pages/advice-directory/> for online directory of services

Diana Conyers

I must pay tribute to the team at the club who ensure everything – on and off the water – goes smoothly. Since Covid, we are a volunteer-run club (apart from hospitality, with Danny and his team a hugely successful part of our club), and we just couldn't do what we do without the commitment of our members. My job wouldn't be half as pleasurable without the support of flag officers and committee members and my gratitude goes to them all for this.

Helen Vrba Commodore

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

The Church of the Holy Cross, Binstead

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



Following all the excitement of Easter and the Coronation, we have had a very busy period at Holy Cross. By the end of term, every year group at Binstead School will have spent a morning in the church. The picture shows the prayer tree made by the children in Year 2 during their visit

while learning about sacred spaces. A week later the children in Year 1 brought their dolls for a demonstration baptism service as part of their learning about the different features in places of worship. The school programme concluded with the Leavers' Service for children in Year 6 and their parents, when the children marked an important moment in their lives as they moved from primary to secondary school, in the same way that generations of Binstead people have marked the significant moments of their lives in this ancient church.

Tea and cakes are available at the church every Sunday afternoon throughout the summer. On sunny afternoons the churchyard provides a delightful venue in which to enjoy a moment of relaxation and chat with friends and neighbours. Every month, on the second Tuesday, there is a Food, Friends and Fellowship lunch in the community centre at Havenstreet. If you would like to come, phone 872877 to book yourself in and arrange a lift if you need one. On 5th August, all the churches in the Ryde Plurality are combining to host a concert by the Phoenix Choir at 7.30pm at All

Saints' Church, Ryde – admission will be free, though there will be a retiring collection. Full details of all our activities are to be found on the website at www.holycrossbinstead.org.uk.

The process of recruiting a team vicar to serve in the Ryde group of churches is now well underway. The closing date for applications is at the end of July and interview dates are in the second half of August. If all goes to plan, we should know who is coming by the beginning of September.

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.

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



'Wildcat - Toby'

My cat-sitting website clearly states that I 'Feed your cat in your own home while you're away.' This being the Isle of Wight, of course, many have holiday homes here that they're not residing in all of the time, and so obviously wouldn't have a cat in the house. So, how did I recently get asked to cat-sit at someone's holiday home? Well, it was quite an interesting paradox, really – I was employed to visit the house of someone who doesn't live there to feed a cat who doesn't live there either. It's a weird world, isn't it?!

'Wildcat-Toby' is a stray. The owners of the holiday home have been feeding him for over a year, even though Toby point-blank refuses to step inside their door. Whenever they're in residence, Toby appears from local woodland and waits patiently outside until fed. Then he's gone. The house owners, when heading back to the mainland, always worry about Toby going hungry, and eventually decided to enlist me to feed him daily in their absence.

From my first visit, sure enough, every single time I parked in their drive, this long-haired tabby came hammering out of the trees, ate his meal at breakneck speed, then legged it back through the undergrowth.

Now, although throughout my working life I've occasionally been totally unsuitable for my chosen profession (I was fired as an electrician's apprentice due to all the explosions and near-death experiences), I do know cats. I know all their loveably selfish ways, their wonderfully stubborn natures, their charming ignorance of all instructions as a point of principle, and all the other anti-social little things they do that I'm persisting in describing as adorable. I also know that cats are the animal kingdom's biggest chancers, and the more I looked at Wildcat Toby, the more I realised...he probably wasn't a stray.

Three weeks into my feeding job, I decided to follow Toby into the trees. As any cat-owner will know, cats love being followed. Toby was livid, stopping every few yards to glare back at me as if to say, 'Get back you swine, go away!' but I carried on following, slowly at distance so as not to appear to be chasing, and sure enough, after a few minutes the trees gave way to somebody's back garden and Toby was greeted at his own back door. There are a few moments in my life when I've totally embarrassed myself and this turned out to be one of them.

'Can I help you?!' shouted Not-so-Wild-cat Toby's owner upon noticing a strange man standing at his garden fence.

'No, no,' I laughed. 'It's fine; I was just following your cat...'

I really thought I'd get the chance to say more than that. The door closed and I realised I'd just managed to make myself look like a complete lunatic.

So, do I let my clients know what Toby's up to, or allow him to carry on embezzling all those extra meals? Oh dear me, the tough decisions we have to make in the high-powered world of cat sitting...

Local author and Cat Sitter

Parish Coffee Mornings

On the first Thursday of every month at 10.30, we meet at the Royal Victoria Sailing Club for coffee and a chat and from time to time have speakers to give useful information on a variety of topics. Everyone is welcome and Diana is on hand, representing Citizens Advice, to give confidential advice to those who wish to talk to her. Come along and enjoy the company!

The next coffee morning dates for your calendar are **Thursday 3rd August, 7th September and 5th October.**

Ghoulies and Ghosties

After a happy five years in our cottage we were on the move again. Our four small boys had rapidly burgeoned into four sprawling big boys and we embarked on the onerous task of house hunting. We hunted east and west, north and south, but found nothing, and I became obsessed, and at night even dreamt of houses – but oddly just one in particular.

Tony came home tired and admitted that he too had been dreaming of houses – but just one particular house. We drew pictures of our houses, I knew inevitably they'd be identical – and of course they were, but absolutely not for us. Too grand, too big, but still unnerving. And when the estate agent sent details, we knew we were fighting a losing battle. We knew something was manoeuvring us and we were powerless to do anything about it. We told the agent, absolutely not, but he persevered, dropped the price; we said No Way; he dropped the price again; we said No Way. Then it went for auction and when told that it hadn't reached its reserve, I stupidly became tearful. I felt that whatever he did or how often we dodged, we were being wrapped up.

We gave in and met the agent and saw the dining table where the owner and her 'Butler' had obviously breakfasted on cornflakes washed down with ladles of gin and were as high as kites. The Butler tottered off to show us the house. It was beautiful; Jacobean, panelled through, but totally wrong and the antithesis of what we wanted. I had the dreadful and frightening feeling of inevitability. I knew for certain we would end up buying it. My father put it into words 'That house needs you for something; you're going to have to buy it'.

Next day the agent rang back, told us the owner felt it was the house for us and dropped the price again. Still too expensive we said and absolutely not what we wanted. Then the next day he said the house was going for auction and we breathed a sigh of relief – but our relieved mood was punctured when he reported that it hadn't sold. It all became vaguely oppressive; The price walloped down again and, in the end, against all our better judgment, we gave in and bought it.

Some days later I went to check it and whilst I was in the sitting room, I was suddenly freezing cold. There was no reason, just freezing cold on a glorious summer day, so I leapt out and sat in the garden. Once I'd got over my panic

I took a deep breath and went back. Nothing there, just a beautiful panelled sitting room basking in the sunshine.

We eventually moved in, and Tony went off to sea, anxious for me in case I was frightened on my own, just with my four boys. For a while it was fine until I got that horrid feeling that someone was staring at me. But there was nothing there, until one day when I saw the vague outline of a stranger in the hall – just misty, not totally there, so obviously just imagination. The next day the misty shape began to solidify. I was beginning to feel unnerved as each day the mistiness took on the shape of a woman. This is not a ghost, this is definitely not a ghost, I told myself, it's all just dust with the sun shining through it.

Then she would appear on the stairs at bedtime, walking ahead of me, but turning her head round. Then would vanish. I instinctively knew that one evening I would have to walk through her and was terrified. What on earth does one wear when walking through a ghost. My mother gave me a crucifix, the Bishop of Bath and Wells phoned me, calmed me, and sent me some prayers. My friends got together and said I must imagine wearing blue which is the colour of peace and healing. Others were treating it with some hilarity and were full of suggestions and decided that the ghost might be made up of droplets and would be damp. Are ghosts damp? So, I must wear the blue cloak but also a bath hat might be a good idea or if she looked fairly solid, take a mini umbrella? Another said I should supplement all these preparations by taking a good swig of a strong Horse's Neck.

And sure enough one evening when I was going up she was there at the top of the stairs oozing ill will and rancour. I looked doubtfully at my gathering of goodies for 'Walking Through Ghosts', put on my bath hat, draped myself in an imaginary blue cloak, held up my crucifix, and prayers, got my little broolly ready just in case she was really wet, and, slightly woozy from the Horse's Neck, shut my eyes and walked through her.

Then nothing. I was cold, but not damp and worryingly, although she'd been glaring at me as I walked towards her, she turned around to watch me going into the bedroom.

Tony eventually came home. There were hugs and kisses all round and

sighs of relief from me. We realised however that we needed help, so I talked to the local Prior who said that he knew why I'd come to him as he'd seen the ghost now and then for years! He suggested an exorcism, so we turned a sitting room into a chapel, with altar and candles. We got all the boys home, and the service began with prayers. Halfway through I suddenly felt enormously euphoric and knew for certain the ghost had gone. It was the most uplifting exhilarating moment and I now knew exactly why we were there. Somehow the ghost had known we could help her and she'd manoeuvred us into having the little service. We all hugged each other, including Father Prior, and trooped round the house where he scattered splashes of holy water everywhere.

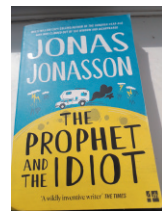
And in happiness we thanked the Prior and hoped that the ghost would now rest and forever be at peace.

Jane Pearson

Book Review

The Prophet and The Idiot

by Jonas Jonasson



If the author's name looks familiar it is because he is also the author of the best selling novel "The Hundred Year Old Man who Climbed out of the Window and Disappeared". This, his latest book, was translated from the original Swedish in 2023 and is set in the late summer of 2011. Amateur astrophysicist, Petra has completed extensive multi-step calculations and has concluded that the world will end at 23.20 on Wednesday September 7th 2011. In her effort to prepare for this eventuality she meets Johann, a master chef and Agnes, a seventy five year old who masquerades on social media as a young influencer and has made a fortune from her double life. Together they drive through Europe on the road trip to end all road trips and on the way meet Barak Obama and Ban Ki-moon to name-drop but two. As the hours run down to Armageddon, many confusions and some excellent menus are experienced. The book is imaginative, complicated, fun and definitely tickles the taste buds as wrongs are righted and new purposes found

Cheryl Fontana



Jersey Tiger

Photos: Jim Baldwin

Nature Notes

What to see this August

With all the doom and gloom in the media, including nature, I thought I would try and cheer us all up highlighting two species of day-flying moth who are on the increase and August is the best month for seeing them.

Jersey Tiger has been one of the great moth success stories in recent years. The first confirmed sighting on the Isle of Wight (there had been a previous reference of one in 1877) was reported by Sir Edward Poulton in his St Helens garden in 1935. At the time, the Jersey Tiger was extremely rare in England and confined to the Channel Islands as its most northerly range. It was not recorded again on the Island until 1991 when Sam Knill-Jones found one during the day on Tennyson Down.

Occasional reports followed and it has been recorded annually since 1999. We now receive 100-200 sightings a year plus records of the caterpillars indicating that the Jersey Tiger is breeding on the Island.

The influx ties in with the national picture. Jersey Tiger has spread eastwards after originally colonising south-west England and is now being seen in larger numbers in Hampshire, Sussex and Kent. It has further colonised London and the surrounding counties and can also be found in Norfolk.

Jersey Tiger is a very distinctive moth which can be found on warm days nectaring on flowers such as buddleia. You may be lucky to see it briefly open

its wings to show the lovely orange-red of the hindwings which warns a predator that it does not taste very pleasant!

The other moth which is being seen in increasing numbers across the Island is the Humming-bird Hawk-moth. Although there is no evidence yet of it breeding here, we do have records of adults hibernating on the Island and being seen on warm days in early spring.

The Humming-bird Hawk-moth is seen during the day and in early evening enjoying the range of nectar-rich plants available. Amazingly, it beats its wings around 80 times per second to produce the precision to hover above the flower, like a Humming-bird, and dip its long proboscis into the flower head.

Spotting a Humming-bird Hawk-moth is thought to be a good omen with apparently a small swarm seen flying over the Channel on D-Day in 1944.

I am particularly keen to receive sightings of both of these species.

All I need is the date, location and ideally a photo if possible which can be emailed to myself at wightmoths@gmail.com.

There is still time to take part in Butterfly Conservation's Big Butterfly Count which runs until 6th August. It only takes 15 minutes to cover a count which can be done anywhere so you can cover multiple counts if you so wish.

Last year, Butterfly Conservation received around 100,000 counts so it would be great if there could be more this year. The count is particularly important this year as after last year's heatwave, it was noted that some of the foodplants for butterflies and moths had withered and died. Therefore, this could have had a detrimental effect on the caterpillars, resulting in fewer butterflies emerging this year. The previous droughts in the 1970's and in 1995 saw a serious decline for some species the following year. In some cases, it took a decade for populations to recover.

To take part in the Big Butterfly Count, please use the link <https://bigbutterflycount.butterfly-conservation.org/>

We begin to see more activity amongst waterbirds and waders in Wootton Creek and the Mill Pond in August and September. The wader migration season will then be in full swing, so birds will be stopping off to feed before continuing their journeys south. Some non-breeding birds will also return to their wintering grounds here. Keep a watch on the Mill Pond during these two months for Osprey, as they often stop off for a few days and feed on fish to build themselves up for the long and hazardous journey to Africa.

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

Jim Baldwin



Humming-bird Hawk-moth

Photos: Jim Baldwin