



Newsletter

Editorial

Sadly Summer seemed to end as the children broke up from school! Autumn is now here and Winter on the way.

Gardens are beginning to change and rest, and as we move into November Remembrance Sunday is on the horizon. With the world feeling more unstable than ever, perhaps now is a good time for peaceful reflection.

This could be an opportunity to consider what we might be able to do to change something for the better.

The Garden of Remembrance will be under the Fishbourne Oak as usual, if you wish to place a cross for loved ones lost in past wars.

We also remember Jane Pearson in this edition, her remarkable life, and her hilarious contributions to this newsletter. She will be greatly missed.

Another remarkable woman was Hilary Spurgeon, Canon of Portsmouth Cathedral and reader at the Holy Cross among many other things. Hers was a life of service which she pursued even from her hospital bed. Known to many here in Fishbourne she too is a sad loss to the community.

We have news this month too, of a Fishbourne family representing the UK on the world stage, so look out for this and be inspired. I know I am. There is so much local talent!

Don't forget our monthly coffee mornings (the first Thursday at the RVYC), and let a member of the Parish council know if you need a lift.

As I have said many times, let's really enjoy where we are so lucky to live, and get out and appreciate the natural world. Not only will it help us keep fit in body and mind, but we might see a great opportunity to help someone in our special community.

Last but not least, this newsletter would not exist without those who contribute on a regular basis. A huge thank you to all of you.

Sarah Talbot

Lucy's Inspiring Story

My name is Lucy Scholes and I am 27 years old. I moved to Fishbourne at the age of 2, with my sister Kate. My parents Helen and Martin still live here. I have worked at BAE Systems in Portsmouth Dockyard for 8 years and am currently employed as an instructor to Mechanical Fitter Apprentices. I am working towards a degree in engineering. Last year I passed my HNC in engineering with distinction and I have just started my HND. I attend CEECAM in East Cowes one day a week for study.

I have always enjoyed sport, representing the Isle of Wight at cricket and football and regionally and nationally at trampolining. I played football at the Island Games in Gotland in 2017.

When I was young, I developed a hearing deficiency. I have had multiple operations both here and in France but I have not found a solution. I will keep exploring though. Participating in

sport was my way of coping.

Recently I saw an advertisement for players to represent England at the deaf football world cup and I saw this has my next challenge. I travelled to Derby on 3 occasions, paying my way for travel and accommodation to attend selection camps. In August I learnt that I had been selected to represent England in the 4th World Deaf Football Championships Malaysia 2023. The event took place in Kuala Lumpur from 21 September to 8 October 2023. To play football for my country was a dream come true!

I have now returned and have had one of the most wonderful experiences of my life, meeting men's and ladies football teams from all over the world. The England ladies qualified for the knockout stages, and we played the eventual winners, USA, in the semi-finals. We were then drawn against

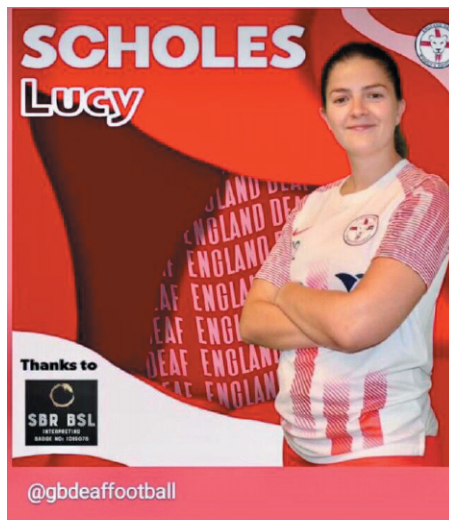
Continued on next page



The English Deaf Ladies Football Team. Lucy is far left

Lucy's Inspiring Story

Continued from previous page



Poland in the 3rd and 4th place play off, but sadly we lost this match. I am hoping to get selected to represent England again in the European Championships in Turkey, 2024 and then The Deaflympics in Tokyo, Japan in 2025.

I am very grateful to BAE Systems for their support and for allowing me time off work to travel to such a prestigious event, and to One Leisure who supported me by donating a gym membership which helped me with my fitness. It's so important for me to get as fit as possible to have a chance of a place in the squad. Wightlink ferries also allowed me discount off their standard travel fare. The ladies football team had to find their own sponsorship to fund the trip and each player had to pay the cost of travelling

to trials and training. In the future I may start a just giving page to assist with my expenses, so that I can reach the Deaflympics in 2025.

This spectacular team event brought so many deaf sports men and women together. We all had a common interest in football, and we were all able to communicate with ease using many different sign languages. I learned so much during my time in Malaysia, including how important sign language is! It would be great if all children could learn sign language at school. Playing football without any form of hearing aid during the matches allowed all players to be on a level playing field and took some getting used to! I also made some new special friends for life.

Lucy Scholes

Clerk's Corner

The clean-up day held in July went well and thank you to everyone who volunteered their time to help. We are going to align future clean up dates with the start of spring and autumn and so the next day planned will be March 2024, date to be confirmed nearer the time.

We welcomed Chani, the Regional Representative for Surfers Against Sewage on the Isle of Wight to July's meeting who provided a passionate and informative session, highlighting the issue of sewage in our seas and what can be done both as individuals and larger stakeholders to reduce sewage discharges. Southern Water followed this in October with a talk from Laura Moran, Pathfinder Project Manager (West), about the latest phase of their pathfinder programme being delivered in Fishbourne aimed at reducing the use of storm overflows and improving water quality. As a parish council we have resolved, when responding to any new planning applications in the future to request that sustainable drainage is considered.

The 6th June 2024 will mark the 80th anniversary of D-Day and towns and parishes up and down the country are being asked to light beacons and organise community celebrations to mark this day in history. The Parish Council would like to support anyone wishing to organise an event for Fishbourne and so please let us know about any ideas you might have.

We have been pleased to see PCSO Steve Hull and Environment Officer, Sophia Hellyer, at our recent meetings

and hope that they will be able to provide a regular update on issues affecting our parish. Sophia continues to have a positive presence and has recently responded to dog fouling issues reported to her and a spate of graffiti which sadly, both our notice board and planter on Kite Hill, fell victim to. If you spot anything out of keeping please let us know.

The parish council have identified policing priorities for PCSO Steve Hull, and following reports of uninvited callers to residents on Fishbourne Lane, unwanted door knocking and speeding have been agreed as priorities for Fishbourne. The vehicle activated speed board has been checked and is in good working order on Fishbourne Lane, and PCSO Steve Hull is keen to set up a Neighbourhood Watch Scheme to tackle the problem of uninvited callers. We have 'no cold calling' window stickers available, and we regularly receive advice on the latest scams which we post on our website. If you would like a sticker or any of the advice leaflets on our website printed, please let us know.

Thank you to Mr Chris Reed and residents for organising a meeting with Wightlink in September regarding St Faith's extreme 'Bang-Bang' noise and monitoring reports carried out by the Isle of Wight Council. I understand a constructive meeting was held and though the reports had concluded the noise was not a statutory nuisance giving the Isle of Wight Council limited power to take action, Wightlink have agreed to install a 24-hour noise monitoring system, the data from which will be independently monitored by the Isle of Wight Council's Regulatory Officer, Daniel Power

and the Bang-Bang Gang. Wightlink are also making progress through their maintenance programme which will see St Faith being the first to be refitted with new shins.

The problem of light pollution experienced last year looks to have been resolved. All the lighting has now been replaced and I understand there has been some positive feedback from residents who have witnessed the improvement. Traffic build up continues to be a problem at times when a ferry is out of action though, Friday 29th September was reported as a day of chaos for residents on Fishbourne Lane, and we still receive reports of vehicles arriving early and parking illegally around the terminal. Though outside Wightlink's jurisdiction Martin Gulliver will speak to offending customers and ask them to move on if he is informed, and freight companies will be contacted, and so please do let him know (07971 396182). He advises us to report all incidents to the police together with the registration of the offending vehicle.

Despite restrictions now in place at Lower Green we have had to ask Parking Enforcement to monitor here too especially early in the mornings. Parking contraventions need to be reported online <https://iow.gov.uk/transport-and-parking/parking/general-parking/report-a-contravention/> or out of hours via 01983 821105 and Parking Enforcement Officers will attend if resources are available to do so.

If you notice any problems around the parish you feel the parish council can help with, please do speak to a councillor or email the clerk fishbournepc@btinternet.com.

Katie Riley

Royal Victoria Yacht Club

Another very busy summer for RVYC with three major open events. The exciting foiling dinghy, the Waszp, held an open event back in May, followed by the MOCRA nationals, which we co-hosted with Bembridge SC. Then in August, we hosted the RS Tera nationals. With over 200 entries in three fleets, this was the largest-ever Tera nationals. This was a hugely successful event for the club (and probably the largest event we've ever held), with over 300 competitors and their families descending on the club. The amount of support we had from members on and off the water was astounding and we are very grateful for their enthusiasm during the event.

From mark laying, to start and finish boats, and safety cover on the water. On shore, members took part as parking marshals, slipway teams, snack bar team, radio comms, first aid and general all-round support and assistance. We could not have done this without the support of our wonderful members.

Catering for such large numbers wasn't a challenge too far for our hospitality team, who really pulled out all the stops both in food and bar service (over 2,000 pints of beer and cider consumed, together with burgers, bacon butties, fish and chips). The whole DWH team did a fantastic job of keeping everyone fed and watered and engaged with our visitors and members in their usual way.

Our pontoon has once again been very busy with visitors from around The Solent (and beyond), discovering our wonderful location and what a warm and welcoming club we are.

Now that summer is over, the club is closed on Monday and Tuesday. There is a packed programme of events coming up through the winter months and our popular Wednesday winter talks have now started. More information on all our talks and other events, including firework night on Friday 3 November, are on our website – www.rvyc.org.uk. Do check the calendar for the latest news on events. Wednesday is also pie night and Sunday roasts are also back. Booking ahead is strongly advised and there's more information on the website about booking.

Helen Vbra (Commodore)



RVYC Winter Talks 2023/2024

All talks start at 1930. If you want to eat beforehand food starts at 1800. Please book ahead by e mailing catering@rvyc.org.uk

October 25th *Charlotte Goswell*
Birds of the Solent

November 1st *Tim Wander*
Ghosts of Northwood House

November 8th *Martin Thomas*
In the Footsteps of Shackleton

November 15th *David Gladman*
Submarines of the Solent?

November 22nd *Dr Eluzai Hakim*
'A pill for every ill' !!!!

November 29th *Alex Penstone*
Arctic Convoys

December 6th *Stephen Egerton-Read*
White tailed eagles

December 13th *Jane from Eurovines*
Call My Bluff



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

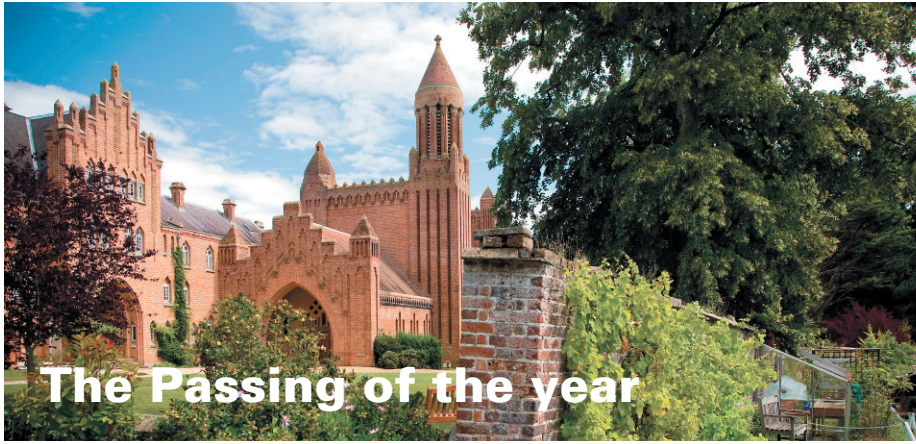
Christine Woolin **Councillor**
Tel: 07703 730320
E-mail: chriswoolinfpc@gmail.com

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/

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 Passing of the year

In many ways the summer of 2023 was an encouraging time for the community at Quarr. On June 24, the Solemnity of St. John the Baptist, we had the joy of seeing Brother Matthew making his simple vows as a monk. In three years time, please God, he will make his solemn and perpetual vows.

In August we celebrated ten years since the arrival of Father Abbot, first as our Prior Administrator in 2013, before his election as Abbot three years later. Also in August we were able to welcome John, from Donegal in Ireland, into our novitiate as a new postulant.

And we are yet looking forward to further causes of celebration. On November 13 we have a double silver jubilee of ordination to the priesthood marked in the diary. In 1998 Fathers Gregory and Nicholas became priests under the hands of Bishop Crispian Hollis, then Bishop of Portsmouth.

Father Gregory is the nearest we have to a veteran monk. He was born on March 12, 1945, or 12345 as he likes to say. He entered Quarr in 1964 under the new Abbot, Aelred Sillem, and so

soon reaches his sixty years at Quarr. He studied agriculture at Newport Technical College and worked for many years with our dairy herd and in the kitchen garden. When ordained to the priesthood he instituted an annual harvest service for the Island farming community while still managing to keep our drainage ditches in good order.

Father Nicholas is a more recent recruit entering Quarr in 1984. After his ordination to the priesthood, his most important work has been as guestmaster, caring for the many retreatants who come to share our monastic life for a short space of time. This is challenging work for any priest, meeting with people of all kinds and temperaments who are often struggling to cope with difficulties of the most distressing kind.

Beyond our jubilee celebrations we look forward to a new venture. We are putting on our first Christmas Fayre from December 1-3. A marquee will host over twenty Island crafts people and food producers and also a variety of monastic products from

mainland monasteries. There will be free children's craft activities and a Christmas menu in the Teashop. For further information, please visit our website- or just come anyway.

December 3 also marks the beginning of a new Church year with the first Sunday of Advent. We start to prepare for the great Solemnity of Christmas, the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, in the flesh. With all the recent violence and horror disfiguring the Holy Land how we long for a Prince of Peace. Amen, Come Lord Jesus!

Bro. Duncan Smith

Quarr Abbey Gallery Forthcoming Exhibitions

26th- 31st October

Nervous Wreck Designs

2nd – 7th November

The Variety Pack

Pat and Jim Clarke, Tim England

Lis Toft and Maria Ward

9th – 14th November

Artisans at Quarr Abbey

16th- 21st November

A Moment in Time

Dee Cooke and Kathy Cronin.

23rd – 28th November

Martin Swan, Melanie Swan

Sally Woodford and Sarah Talbot.

30th – 5th December

The Ryde Art collective

7th – 12th December

Inspired by Wight

14th – 19th December

Christmas Market

The Gallery will be closed over Christmas and during January.

The Fishbourne

We have lots going on this Autumn/ Winter and would love to see you down at The Fishbourne Inn.

The Rugby World cup will be showing every game from the Quarter Final stage onwards.

October 28th sees us getting Spooky for Halloween. There will be pumpkin carving, fancy dress and prizes.

November 16th is the famous Beaujolais Nouveau Day, so come and celebrate with us over breakfast. There will be live music from an accordion duo, and dancing to gypsy jazz legend Cat Skellington.

Before we know it, we will be into the Christmas season. We have lots of festivities over Christmas and the New year so check our website for all the latest information.

www.thefishbourne.co.uk
Tel 01983882823

Parish Coffee Mornings

On the first Thursday of every month at 10:30 we meet at the Royal Victoria Yacht Club for a coffee and a chat and from time to time there will be speakers to give useful information on a variety of topics. Everyone is welcome. Diana Conyers will be on hand representing Citizens Advice.

Dates for your calendar are:

2nd November

7th December

4th January

Copy for the next issue of the Newsletter by 15th January 2024 at the latest. Please send to sarah.talbot44@btinternet.com



Jane Pearson – A Colourful life

Very sadly local Fishbourne resident and popular contributor Jane Pearson passed away peacefully last August. She hesitantly agreed to write a story for the Parish newsletter, when I took over a number of years ago, and was desperately looking for something lighthearted to balance out the reports, reminders and more serious articles that made up much of the news. Little did I guess that she would have us in stitches and was delighted when she was persuaded to become a regular and much-loved addition to the trusty team.

Jane's family shares below memories of their mother.

"Jane was born in Cheam just before Christmas 1935. When war came, her father left for overseas service as an RAF doctor, while the family decamped from London to South Wales. Jane often spoke of this as a formative period. One piece of music we'll hear today recalls her memories of the marvelous voices of the Welsh miners, who would emerge from their shifts below ground not knowing what new bomb damage they might find at the surface.

After the war, Jane's father took up civilian practice as a GP in Somerset. Boarding schools followed for Jane and her brother Nick. Back then this could be a grim experience, but Jane was helped by her great sense of humour, always finding the funny side of any situation. I suspect she was a bit of a handful; she used to tell the tale of having her school tie

publicly cut off after she was caught riding a cow! It was around this time that Jane discovered an interest in creative writing that she would pursue throughout her life. She was very sporty, fencing at a national level and winning the Somerset County championships as a teenager.

After school, Jane moved to Italy for a stint as a nanny, then to London to pursue a career in publishing. She loved the excitement of London, meeting new people and forming lifelong friendships. In 1957 she went to a party attended by several young Naval officers including her blind date. During the party her eye was caught by a different young Naval officer. Her date's goose was cooked and so began a romance and eventual long and happy marriage to Tony! In due course children followed. I arrived first, followed by my brothers Nick, Ben and Alex.

Jane and Tony built a partnership as strong as any I have seen, despite Tony spending periods of up to a year away on a succession of warships. Jane sustained the household during his absences, sometimes travelling with kids in tow to meet his ship at obscure foreign ports. At home, Jane developed an interest and expertise in cooking which meshed well with the entertaining that she and Tony enjoyed so much.

As Tony's Naval career progressed, we moved frequently, including to America and Greece. Jane's fortitude and organizational strengths were vital during these moves, especially in enduring the volatile Greek politics of the 1970s. Military coups d'état are terrifically exciting for small boys, but not so much for their devoted mothers! In Greece, Jane was fully involved in Tony's role as an Attaché. They became skilled political networkers at the endless stream of embassy parties and had hair-raising adventures playing cat and mouse with the Greek intelligence services! When the family returned to the UK for Tony's final seagoing command, Jane again kept things running smoothly despite the challenges of managing their four sons. Herding cats comes to mind!

A move to Surrey came after Tony left the Navy, and another move in 1987 when they bought a house in Fishbourne with frontage on Wootton Creek. It was perfect, offering the family opportunities for sailing, waterskiing and more. Here, they truly found their happy place. Tony's role as Secretary of the Island Sailing Club and briefly of the Royal London

Yacht Club, and Jane's outgoing nature helped them add to their already wide circle of friends. They repeatedly extended their home. Each time brought more room for parties, including ambitious events with guests delivered to the bottom of the garden by boat, to be greeted by musicians and marqueees.

As time passed, Jane and Tony loved nothing more than having the boys visit from our homes around the world, with the daughters in law and four grandchildren who have joined the family. Jane, ever the organiser and networker, was involved with charity and volunteer work including "cooks for charity" and fundraising at Osborne House. For years she championed an annual event at which people with disabilities enjoy a day of boating at the RVYC.

After a wonderful 30 years in Fishbourne, Tony died in 2017. Jane remained at the family home, still active and sustaining her social life with her many friends even as her own health declined over the last year or two. Her amazing neighbours, carers, doctors and nurses did all they could to maintain her quality of life. She remained alert and engaged to the very end, joining old friends for lunches, telling her funny stories and writing newsletter articles.

So, that's Mum's story. But she was so much more than the sum of her experiences. Quite the athlete as a young woman, enjoying active pursuits like sailing, skiing and waterskiing. A writer, an organizer, an engaging hostess, an accomplished cook and a world traveller. Jane's life was full of adventure, from family expeditions in odd situations, to cheating the intelligence services of foreign nations.

Finally, what a storyteller! Self-deprecating with a sublime sense of the ridiculous. Jane could weave engaging, hilarious yarns. Whether telling a story in person, presenting her experiences from a stage, or publishing in parish newsletters, Jane always knew how to hold an audience."

Charles concluded the eulogy with an extract from 'Sheepy Shenanigans' which you may remember from last year. A fitting way to finish, leaving everyone with a smile.

On a personal note, thank you Jane for your many contributions to the newsletter, for your solid support and for making so many of us laugh out loud. You are greatly missed.

Sarah Talbot

The Church of the Holy Cross, Binstead

(in plurality with St Peter's Havenstreet, All Saints Ryde and St John's Ryde)



Hilary Spurgeon

Since the last newsletter, we have sadly marked the passing of two stalwarts of both the community and the church, Jane Pearson and Hilary Spurgeon, and we have received the good news that the Bishop has appointed the Revd David Morgan

to serve as team vicar in the Ryde Plurality.

Many residents of Fishbourne will have been at the well-attended funeral of Jane Pearson in Holy Cross Church on 30th August. Jane was well known in the parish for her gifted and zany story telling in the newsletter, for her generous hospitality to her neighbours, for her support for the RVYC's Sailability programme and for her mischievous sense of humour. She will be greatly missed. Hilary was a genuine 'caulkhead' who was involved in an enormous number of different aspects of Island life, through which she supported and encouraged a huge number of people. She was a Canon of Portsmouth Cathedral, a recipient of the Queen's Maundy Money and a pillar of the churches in Binstead and Havenstreet where she served for many years as a Reader and, among many other things, organised the work of the pastoral team. Her funeral took place on 15th September in All Saints' Church, that being the only church in the plurality large enough to accommodate the congregation. A choir from the Cathedral came over to sing at her service. She too will be sorely missed by many people.

At last, after a long period without

a full-time priest in our parishes, we can look forward to the arrival of David Morgan, hopefully before Christmas, to take up post as a team vicar in the Ryde churches. He is the first of a team that will be working in our churches, eventually consisting of a team rector and two team vicars, as well as full-time lay support workers who will provide expertise in administration and youth work, in particular. We are expecting that this will be accompanied by a significant grant from the national church to enable mission and revival in our area, including the provision of both traditional and contemporary worship and music in our services.

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, especially over the Christmas period when we will be celebrating with carol and crib services as well as at the traditional midnight mass. Full details of all these services, as always, will be posted on our website – www.holycrossbinstead.org.uk.

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

George and Mildred

Continuing our Confessions of a Cat-sitter series, from a local author, columnist...and cat-sitter.

There's been a bit of friction between two cats in my care recently. This pair have been thrown together by pure chance because, having had Mainland houses to themselves for many years, their owners moved to the Island together . . . and therefore, so did George and Millie, the tabby and Persian respectively of our story. Apart from a happy naming coincidence (who could have predicted George & Mildred?) things haven't been totally harmonious.

I suppose when previously single members of any species – cat, human or otherwise – accustomed to their own space move in together, there has to be a period of adaptation. Whether that involves sofas, beds or litter trays (though hopefully not litter trays in the case of humans), inevitably, at some point, something one does will upset the other, and a domestic ensues.

In the case of George and Mildred, this 'something' was that George ate Mildred's bed. Guaranteed to cause friction that I suppose – eating someone's bed. If somebody ate my bed, I'm pretty sure I'd struggle not to at least bring the subject up. Of course, eating beds isn't normal cat behaviour, but George has 'previous' in this respect – he's never owned a cat bed for more than a week, always clawing them to pieces and, in part at least, digesting them. And so it was that when Mildred moved in, within a few days, her bed had vanished. George had eaten it.

There followed a period of sulking. As Persian cats have just about the most miserable faces on earth (the exception being my octogenarian father's), it's not easy to surmise whether they're sulking or not, but Mildred's overall behaviour suggested she wasn't at all happy with George, who was oblivious to her displeasure of course, having a typically catlike level of empathy only slightly higher than a house-brick.

But when Mildred started hissing every time she saw him, George slowly began to realise that either he'd become a pantomime baddie, or there

was a spot of bother. This became more apparent when she took to slapping him round the face whenever he walked past her. In fact, the whole atmosphere became totally toxic by the time I began looking after them a few weeks back.

All this was explained to me in a note, the day I took over their care, so that was nice. I was clearly going to have my work cut out here. But then things took an unexpected turn for the better or worse, depending on whether you're George, or me. Mildred hadn't met me before, and as is possibly the case with many people meeting me for the first time, she took an instantly aggressive dislike.

So livid did Mildred become when I showed my face that she seemed to forget George was a problem at all. In fact, George and Mildred seemed to come to some sort of truce, as long as George showed no objection to Mildred slashing my ankles.

My wife had to eventually take over, so as not to annoy Mildred, but, happily, not before the cats became quite comfortable in each other's company. I've heard, though, that Mildred's getting a new bed soon. Round Two, perhaps?

Local author and Cat Sitter

The Primrose Story

Field Marshall Erwin Rommel and I have very little in common, with one glaring exception. We both believe that time spent in reconnaissance is seldom wasted.

So it was that in February and March Sue and I scoured the local press and shop windows, with their myriad advertisements, looking for transport. Late March found us in a large garage near Ryde. There we surveyed a clutch of vehicles - mostly cars, some very old, all very interesting. At the back was a beautiful, single-decker bus. It gleamed, haughty and proud with baleful headlights, low to the ground - and painted overall in an iridescent yellow. She was called Primrose and was 84 years old.

We had been looking for a vehicle to take our wedding party from Fishbourne to Ventnor and back. We had found her. Our reconnaissance had been fruitful and the time certainly not wasted.

The wedding party duly assembled on the given day and off we went. The bride, curiously, had decided to drive herself and her sister separately - something to do with a large hat and makeup and creases in the wedding dress.

By the time Primrose had got to the outskirts of Ventnor, I had got used to the noisy grinding of gears, crashing, rumbling noises and the double-declutching manoeuvres of, shall I call him George, the wonderfully peak-capped driver. He was superb, efficient and apparently quite untroubled by the huffing and puffing of dear Primrose. He knew his girl and they had been out together many times. A partnership.

The slopes down to the Royal Hotel were taken carefully and comfortably

and the old girl (Primrose, not the bride) clanked her way to a stop outside the hotel, with a hiss.

George was happy and parked Primrose and looked forward to a few hours in Ventnor, while Sue and I got married and Primrose cooled down.

Four hours later, we all, including this time my new wife and sister-in-law, climbed aboard and off we set. The first couple of hills were successfully navigated but there are a lot of steep hills leaving Ventnor. One particularly vicious bend caused George some grief and much hauling of the gear stick and grinding of metal and Primrose, not the sleekest girl in the garage, struggled to get up and round the corner. Approaching cars stopped out of respect, I suppose - or out of fear for themselves as the crawling, spluttering yellow peril struggled towards them.

At the top, George was looking anxious. Primrose faltered and came to a halt. 'Water' said George. ' She needs water'. There had been the faintest hint of smoke coming from the bonnet. So we stopped and so did the queue of cars behind us, who had patiently watched the old lady make the climb and who had decided not to overtake but watch to see how things developed.

We passengers, meanwhile, were sitting tight (some tighter than others) and just beginning to wonder.

Primrose, now watered, coughed back into life and went another 200m before the first, real, unmistakable cloud of smoke became obvious. That was outside. Quite quickly, the smoke came inside and filled the front of the bus and Primrose gave a final cough and stopped. We were being kippeded

and George and the wedding party disembarked, some more quickly than others.

Imagine the scene. Somewhere between Herringford and Arreton, 20 well dressed, well fed and like Primrose, well watered people were stranded on the side of the road. Clearly a wedding group, in trouble and without transport.

As the smoke billowed, mobile phones came into play, taxi companies were consulted, fruitlessly.

So the beautiful bride and my (very pretty) niece, got to the side of the road and started thumbing. Kind drivers stopped and took two or three passengers back to Fishbourne.

Sue and I were getting hitched all right.

A Doctor stopped and explained he had just delivered a baby in Arreton. So he, too, had a reason to remember the day. Our own saviour was a teacher on her way to Newport. One young man in his fancy car was actually travelling in the opposite direction but seeing two very attractive women looking for help and perhaps wondering whether there might be some dividend, screeched to a halt, did a U turn and stopped with a smile. He, no doubt, was disappointed when three burly, boozy men emerged from the throng and jumped aboard.

So all was well that ended well. Everyone got back to Fishbourne, possibly sooner than Primrose would have done had she not suffered her mechanical arrest.

As for Primrose, she was last seen, the next day, being transported back to Ryde.

So an enterprise which started with high expectations ended, sadly, on a low loader.

Chris Reed. June 2023

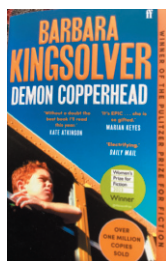
Book Review

Demon Copperhead

by Barbara Kingsolver

This novel is a complex reimagining of the story of David Copperfield.

The Victorian backdrop of poverty and endemic violence is transposed to the Appalachians of Western Virginia and Tennessee with David Copperfield becoming Barbara Kingsolver's eponymous hero Demon Copperhead. His bereaved mother is now a teenage



drug user who is housed in a trailer beside the Peggot family. Demon is a victim of poverty, addiction, abuse and neglect; a boy who has to grow up far too quickly and who is consistently let down by agencies which are supposed to protect him.

The story largely follows the structure of Dickens's novel but the updated plot allows Kingsolver to dissect issues which affect modern-day America, particularly the unscrupulous big pharma companies with their stranglehold over the lives of millions of Americans and the scandalous opioid crisis that has been caused particularly amongst the poor and disadvantaged.

Demon says, "The wonder is that you could start life with nothing, end with nothing and lose so much in between", but he remains resolutely determined to get through whatever tribulations life presents him.

This is not an easy read, but it is a brave and incisive look at the huge social problems which blight the lives of generations of Americans in a society which ignores the widespread despair brought about by poverty and lack of opportunity. This novel earned Kingsolver a Pulitzer prize, she simply lets the child tell the story and it works.

Cheryl Fontana



Red Admiral

Photos: John Way

Nature Notes

What to see – Summer into Autumn

Since the last newsletter, the Big Butterfly Count took place between 14th July to 6th August. Despite the weather not being ideal during the count, which ran from 14th July to 6th August, 123,206 counts were submitted by 84,790 "citizen scientists" (i.e you) in England. The top five butterflies recorded were as follows:

1. Red Admiral (an increase of 360% in comparison to the 2022 count)
2. Gatekeeper
3. Large White
4. Small White
5. Meadow Brown

Looking at the Isle of Wight's contribution to the data, 832 counts were submitted by 636 "citizen scientists" which is an increase on the 2022 count and a brilliant result. A big thank you to everyone who took part. The Island's top five were the same as the national results except that Meadow Brown was third, followed by Large and Small White. It was a close finish at the top with Red Admiral edging out Gatekeeper by 35 butterflies!

It certainly has been a Red Admiral summer with the most records for several years. There was also a large number reported in the early autumn as Red Admirals flew south and congregated on our coastline as they prepared for their return passage across the Channel. A percentage of them will remain on the Island to overwinter and will be seen on sunny winter days in sheltered locations. As a celebration of this enigmatic butterfly, I have included this lovely photo sent to

me by Fishbourne resident John Way.

I would also like to take this opportunity to thank those of you who have sent me your Jersey Tiger moth and Humming-bird Hawk-moth sightings and photos, all much appreciated.

As we move into the winter months (where has the time gone!), we can enjoy the waterbirds who have arrived from far and wide to spend the winter along the northern shores and estuaries of the Isle of Wight.

One of my personal favourites is the Curlew, the largest wader in the UK. Their evocative bubbling call echoing across the shoreline between Fishbourne and Quarr, or on the Old Mill Pond at low tide, on a still winters' morning is a joy to behold.

They can also be seen at high water when they roost on the shingle bank alongside Oystercatchers behind the Fishbourne car ferry terminal, an important roost site for wading birds. Curlew can also be seen at times in the fields to the east of the Old Mill Pond probing for earthworms in the grassland.

It is interesting how Curlew have

changed their roosting sites in recent years. King's Quay had been the long-established roost site with maximum counts of over 100 birds in winter but since the winter of 2018/19, they appear to have switched to the above two sites. There are several possible reasons for this change. Curlew, being a large bird, tends to prefer a roost site in close proximity to its feeding ground. With the Old Mill Pond becoming inter-tidal in recent years, the birds are possibly spending more time in that area and the creek than previously. Therefore, the shingle bank is only a short flight as are the fields adjoining the Old Mill Pond.

Curlew enjoy a varied diet thanks to their long probing bill and can be seen along the shoreline in winter consuming anything from lugworms to small crabs, as seen in this photo.

Although the UK's breeding population of Curlew has seen an alarming decline which has resulted in them being included on the UK Red List (indicating potential extinction as a breeding bird in the UK), there is a large influx from the continent in the winter with some birds on the Island having travelled from as far as Poland. We know this for a fact from colour-ringed and satellite-tagged birds which have overwintered on the Island.

Take care, enjoy nature during the coming months and I wish you all a Happy Christmas and look forward to writing more about nature in 2024.

Jim Baldwin



Curlews

Photos: Jim Baldwin