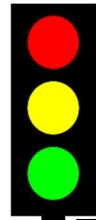


BENDLOWE'S BUGLE

MAY 2021



21st June 2021

Are we
there yet
Boris?



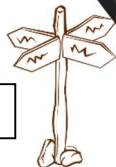
17th May



12th April



29th March



8th March



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Thank you to all those listed above who have given their time & energy to ensure that May 2021 Bendlowe's Bugle is another packed and varied issue – It is very much appreciated.

Everyone has made a difference!

SAUDI ARABIA

BY: STEWART PENNEY

In the 1990s, I spent almost two years living and working in Saudi Arabia as Technical Manager for a start-up security division of a local company. While Saudi was a very interesting place to be, I have to qualify that with the proviso that it was not always an entirely pleasant experience.

At that time the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia was a closed country. Entry visas were only granted to people on business or who had accepted an offer of employment in the Kingdom. No tourists were permitted.

The country had only relatively recently modernised, when oil production started in the 1940s, but prior to that, little had changed for centuries. The country had only finally unified, by force, from a collection of independent kingdoms in 1932 and, as there was no existing industry, its development was entirely dependent on foreign companies. At the time I went there, this situation had not changed very much. The country was ruled exclusively by the royal family, which numbered several thousand “princes” of various ranks and authorities. There was no internal economy as such as all revenue came from oil and the country exported nothing apart from oil. Everything in Saudi Arabia was dependent on oil revenue filtering down from the government. When I lived there, there were significant numbers of foreign workers (or “ex-pats” as they are generally called) in residence; I believe the figure was around 30% of the population. All companies had to be majority-owned by Saudi nationals, so the Saudis headed the companies and for local branches of American and European companies the ex-pats provided the middle management. Ex-pats fell into two distinct groups: - so called “2nd world”, mainly American and European managers, and then “3rd world”; labourers, construction workers, domestic staff etc., mainly from Pakistan, India & Bangladesh. More skilled workers, such as technicians, tended to be mostly from the Philippines.

Back then, it was a very repressive society, although I understand that it has become slightly more relaxed in the last few years. But in the 1990s, foreign workers were completely under the control of their employer with virtually no rights, and were not even able to quit or leave without permission. On arrival, their passport would be confiscated by the employer and even if someone managed to get hold of their passport it was of no use to them, since to be allowed out of the country, a passport had to have a one-time exit visa stamped in it and only the employer could apply for that visa.

So why would anyone want to work there? A bit of a no-brainer! For 2nd worlders, salaries were high, then roughly twice the UK equivalent. There was no income tax and accommodation and medical insurance was invariably provided. Larger foreign companies would have “compounds”, which were like large walled and gated housing developments. Smaller local companies would provide apartments. I lived in an

apartment which was part of my company's head office building, and I shared with my associate manager, also from UK. My family did not accompany me, for reasons which will become apparent. This was a severe wrench, but as I had been made redundant and there was a deep recession in UK at that time, any job offer had to be considered!

Codes of behaviour there were strict and especially affected women. I lived in the capital Riyadh, which is in an area dominated by the Wahabi, a particularly strict sect of Islam. Women, particularly foreign women, could not be out in public alone but had to be with other women or a male "chaperone" who had to be a family member. Women were not allowed to drive. When out, they had to be fully covered in a loose-fitting gown called an *abbaya* – no body contours, hair, wrists, legs or ankles could be shown. These social rules were enforced by the *Mutaween*, the religious police - essentially untrained, frequently violent, zealots who would apply their own rule interpretation on a whim.

For wives who lived on the company compounds, life was almost normal as the compounds were virtually self-sufficient so it was not particularly necessary to go out, but as I was going to be in an isolated apartment, my family would effectively have been prisoners in there. So, I had to go alone.

The *Mutaween* patrolled everywhere, particularly the shopping centres. Practise or display or symbols of any religion other than Islam was forbidden. (Christmas always had to be referred to as Xmas!) Alcohol was totally forbidden. Selling or being found under the influence in public could result in a flogging, and although this was rare for 2nd worlders, it did occasionally happen for serious or persistent breaches.

However, the country itself was stunning, from two aspects. In the cities, because they were all new and built with money no object, the architecture was fabulous with wide boulevard style streets.



A government building



A typical lobby of a company building

Outside the cities, there was the desert. If your taste is for rugged countryside (mine is!) you would not be disappointed. Riyadh is on a 2000ft high plateau, so the terrain is mountainous scrub land.



Just outside Riyadh are the abandoned remains of the old capital of that part of the country – Diriyah.

The entire city, including the royal palace and the city walls, is built of mud bricks. Many of the heavy wooden doors are ornately decorated



Typical house



City Walls



Royal Palace

We frequently drove out into the desert to “get away from it all”. The peace and quiet was wonderfully relaxing after the city, as there were no people or wildlife apart from the occasional wandering camel. At night the sky is superb as you don’t have to go far from the city to escape the light pollution. However, by far the most interesting desert trip I made was with a friend to drive the route of the Hijaz railway.

This railway was built around the turn of the 20th century by the Ottoman Turks to connect Damascus to Mecca. Hejaz was a kingdom in the west of what is now Saudi Arabia, and was at that time part of the Ottoman Empire. The railway was to provide transport to the Red Sea ports and also to Mecca for the Hajj pilgrimage, which all Moslems are supposed to make once in their lifetime. The railway was also to supply the occupying troops.

However, after the defeat of the Ottoman Empire in the First World War, the railway fell into disuse and the tracks were removed, but the stations, embankment and bridges remain and with a well-equipped 4 X 4 it is possible to drive over long stretches of the route.



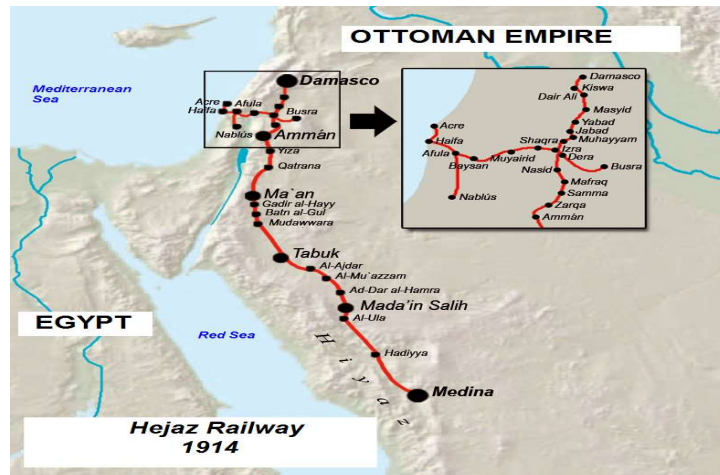
Raised embankment

Bridge over a dried up *wadi* (river bed)

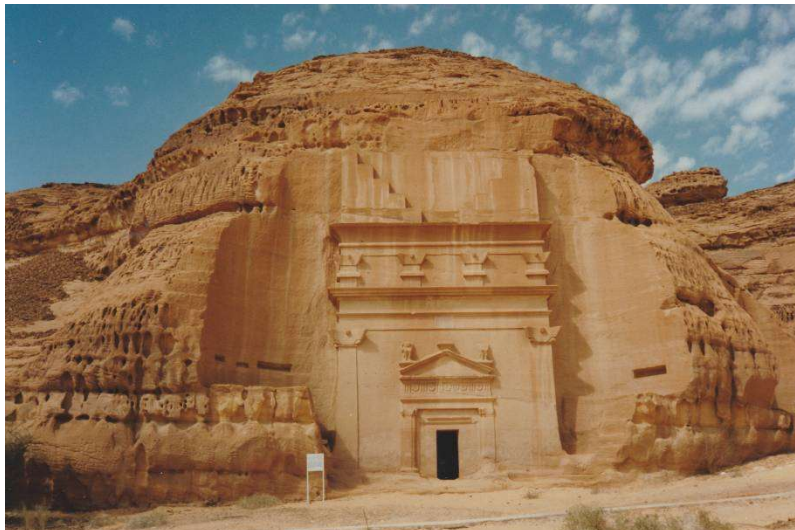


Station building

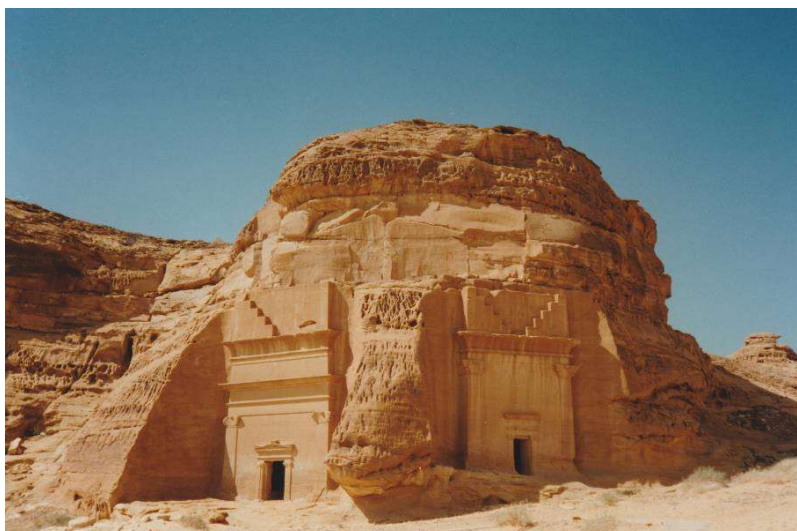
We started at Madain Salih and over the course of 3 days, sleeping one in the Land Rover and one on the roof rack, drove about 120 miles down the route of the track to near Medina. Medina is forbidden to non-Muslims so we had to go round it to get home.



Madain Salih is the site of large collection of Nabathean temples and burial sites. The Nabatheans were the same people who built the well-known site of Petra in Jordan and Madain Salih was their second city. They flourished around the time of Christ, controlling the trade routes from the northern Middle East to the Red Sea ports and latterly, the pilgrim route to Mecca,



Burial Chambers





Inside the burial chambers

The other interesting thing about the route will be familiar to anyone who has seen the film “Lawrence of Arabia”, with its depiction of attacks on a railway, because this is the actual railway that Lawrence and his Arab allies were attacking. Every so often we came across evidence of those attacks, the dryness of the desert having preserved them, even after 80 years.



To summarise my time in Saudi Arabia, it was a mixture of social interest and curiosity, but with a feeling of always “looking over one’s shoulder”.

In the end I left, as the world recession of the 1990’s affected Saudi Arabia as well when the oil price slumped. Business tailed off completely and I hadn’t been paid for 4 months. However, I managed to get an exit visa, nominally for a holiday break I was owed. ***I never went back!***

REMINISCING THE RE-THATCHING OF MY SHALFORD COTTAGE MANY A YEAR AGO NOW

BY: MARGARET SPARKS



Sitting here, reminiscing about my beautiful cottage, I started to recall another time (30 years go) when I was quietly sitting mesmerised by the skill of thatcher Stephen Williams perched on the ridge of the cottage roof “embroidering” with split hazel sticks admiring not only his dexterity but the physical endurance allied to his craft. Up and down a ladder many times a day carrying a “Yelm” (the traditional name for a bundle of straw), pounding with a bat, pegging, trimming, then finishing with a hairnet of wire, is exhausting.

Stephen, twenty years a thatcher, began learning the trade at the age of sixteen with an experienced thatcher. It was six years before he was allowed on a job alone. Now self-employed, he could thatch four or five houses a year were the work available and depending on the size of the roof, of course. It is a lonely job so Stephen listens to BBC radio while he works. His use of a headset really endeared him to me as I worked in the garden, preferring my entertainment to come from birdsong all around me. But it was tempting to call up to him “let me in on the joke” as he chuckled to himself way up on the roof at a favourite programme.

He became a thatcher more through a challenge than anything else. Seeing a newly-thatched roof of a relative, he thought he could do it too. “Some of my family scoffed at me and said I wouldn’t last a month so I decided to prove them wrong”, Stephen said.

Working very long hours, often in appalling weather conditions (he does not mind rain but dreads high winds), Stephen is a dedicated and skilful thatcher, one of only twenty-three in the county of Essex. But at the moment, he is somewhat dispirited as work is harder to come by than it was a few years ago when many Thatchers had a waiting list of customers who were prepared to wait perhaps up to two years for their services. He attributes the decline in work now to those boom years, paradoxically, so it is not surprising, he points out, that there is not enough work to go around. It appears that many people had their present roof patched up instead of a new one. Bearing in mind the cost of the job and the present recession such economy is easily understood. Stephen also commented that Thatchers from Devon were coming to Essex to look for work, hardly helping the situation, while Essex Thatchers were roving farther afield to Suffolk in search of jobs, which are easier to come by in that county at the moment.

It is apparent then that the 50,000 or so thatched cottages in Britain will never lack attention. There are some 504 thatching ‘companies’ consisting perhaps of one to four men in each, a figure up by 158 from the 1972 total. Thatching still makes the tourist

reach for his camera. A lovely golden roof when first thatched is a sight to behold though it begins to darken after about six months.

Working on my small Shalford cottage in 1991, Stephen began at the rear by removing about ten inches of old straw from half the roof, leaving a foot or so of old straw beneath which he thought was the original layer, about 450 years old. This layer is held to the rafters inside by coarse tarred rope. Nowadays, should a whole new thatch be needed then steel hooks are used to attach the straw to the rafters.

Having removed the old straw Stephen began to lay new helms, working from eaves to ridge and from the right. This layer was pegged down, the next layer overlapping it somewhat like tiles until the ridge was reached. As an extra-thick layer so that it cannot hold the rain, the ridge received its criss-cross pattern of sticks before being trimmed in a scallop pattern worked out on a piece of paper or sometimes with a calculator. Additional borders of split hazel sticks were made on the roofs sides and eaves after overhanging straw was cut away with long knives, and finally the whole roof was covered with wire to exclude vermin and birds.

Stephen well remembers when a roof was ninety-percent wired and rats got in. Trying to exit in various places they caused enormous damage. By the time he had cleaned up from the night before and set traps he thinks he lost about ten percent of the income from that particular job. To discourage rats he removes his ladders now from the roof at the end of the day.

He works with long-straw, traditional to Essex and indeed everywhere else before wheat reed, or combed wheat straw, came into fashion one hundred years ago. Long-straw goes through the threshing machine completely, straw as well as grain, and when on the roof has a shaggier look than combed wheat straw. Here, sheaves of straw are put through a comber, not a threshing machine, which literally combs off the side shoots and takes out the grain, leaving the finished stalk of wheat looking almost like water reed. Indeed, many people find it difficult to tell the difference. Water reed itself is not traditional to Essex but lasts longer, about sixty years, than does wheat reed or long-straw. To thatch in anything other than the original material means planning permission must be sought if the building is listed.

I was astonished to learn that the roof of my cottage required about two tons of wheat straw grown on three acres of land. Stephen grows his own straw, threshing it in the traditional method used basically between 1890 to 1950. The short-cropped straw left by today's combines is useless for thatching, a craft whose tools and methods have little changed over the centuries.

There are so many local names for thatching tools and materials that Stephen can talk to a thatcher from a nearby area and not always understand his terms of reference. For instance, what Stephen calls pegs (the sticks to hold down or decorate the thatch) are sometimes known as broaches, loggers, or spars according to size or use. About 4,500 pegs were used on my Tudor cottage. Its roof took over two months to thatch and should last twenty to twenty-five years. A credit to his skill, Stephen is modest to say that anyone can do it. The cottage was one of his achievements to be inspected and judged by the Essex and Hertfordshire Master Thatchers' Association to whom Stephen applied for membership and was accepted.

A dedicated family man, it is evident that though his family comes first his job is more than just a means of making money. “Though thatching is not a particularly lucrative job these days”, he told me, “even if I were a millionaire, I would still thatch a couple of houses a year. I can’t imagine not doing it”.

And my testimony to Stephen? Anyone who can not only thatch a roof but handle huge rolls of wire in such a way to exclude sparrows now and hopefully until the next re-thatch is a hero in my eyes!

THE NIGHT SKIES OF SHALFORD

BY: DAVID PAUL

I’ve had a passion for Astronomy since I was 9 years old, ever since I watched the Apollo 11 moon landing in 1969 on a black and white TV. One of the positive outcomes of the last 12 months is ‘very few Planes in the sky’, that’s perfect for Astronomers. So, I’m happy to share some of the telescope pictures that I’ve taken of weird and wacky galaxies and nebula. There is nothing more humbling than standing beneath the night skies, looking up at the heavens. It puts our crazy world into perspective.

First, let’s see if you can guess how many stars are in the Universe? There are approximately 10 billion galaxies in the visible Universe and each galaxy has an average of 100 billion stars. So that means there are 1,000,000,000,000,000,000 (1 billion trillion) stars out there – **WOW!** Surely there must be other life out there beyond the Earth.

The Whirlpool Galaxy (M51) - 2 galaxies joined by a bridge, 23 million light years away



The Crab Nebula (M1) - the remains of a star that exploded in the year 1054



The Running Man Nebula (NGC 1977)



The Cocoon Nebula (IC 5146)



Whale and the Pup (NGC 4631)



2 joined Galaxies like a question mark (ARP 273)



M13 Globular Cluster – 100,000 stars



The Owl Nebular (M94) – Exploded Star



The Crescent Nebula (NGC 6888)



The Bubble Nebula (NGC 7635)



Three Spiral Galaxies in Leo the Lion (M66, M65, NGC2903)

The Dumbbell Nebula (M27) – exploded star



Edge-on Spiral Galaxy (NGC 4565)



2 joined Galaxies like a Swan (ARP 84)



The Sunflower Galaxy (M63)



Spiral Galaxy NGC 7331 and 'The Fleas'



Spiral Galaxy (M99)



Comet 21P Giacobini-Zinner



The Eskimo Nebula (NGC 2392)



HIGH MEMORIES – AND A PILGRIMAGE ON MOUNT KAILASH, TIBET

BY: DIDI CROOK

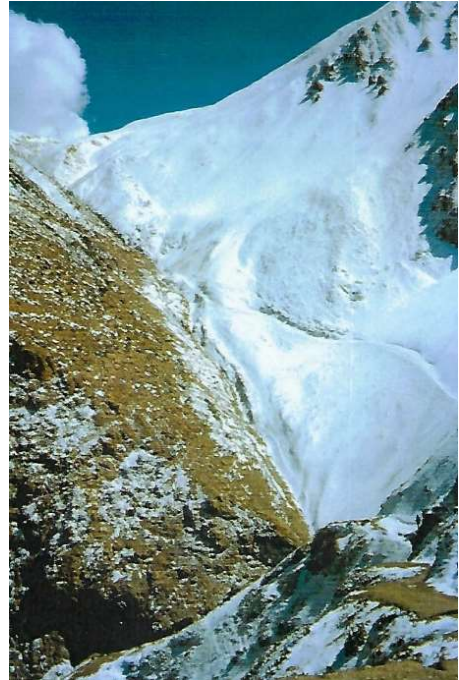
A gully through steep rocks
 just a horse-width wide –
on the left
 a sharp drop
thousands of feet below
 the tumultuous pale green river thrashes –
 carving up the Himalaya.

A vertical wall of rocks
 blocks any move to the other side –
I can only climb up
 one foot in front of the other
Sharp angled
 so to accommodate
 the steep slope.

Heavy breathing
 heart beating
 head throbbing
Slight nausea at that altitude,
counting each step
 before a short rest
 leaning into the slope.

This
 the only road out of India
 into Tibet,
had existed before Time,
until modernity brought a helicopter
and finally, a gravel-built road
 around hair-raising bends
out of India to Ladakh, then Tibet.
Lorries and New Trade
 begin to dissipate traditional ways
destroying the old time
 and equilibrium.

A group of mountain tents
 glow yellow in the evening light –
Smells of cooking
 enter my senses,
Sherpas working so hard
while I lay exhausted on my sleeping bag,
so grateful for the rest
 and the tent above my head.



Snow covered paths



Didi trekking en
route to Mt Kailash

Later, well fed and content,
 to deep sleep
only to awaken with tight headache
and un-coordinated walking
 as my bladder needs a hidden place
 out in the dark.

Early morning light
 the sun arising –
Splash my face with water
 light air caressing my face,
I gaze out across the valley
 guessing the upward route
 towards the distant snow
 and glistening white peaks.

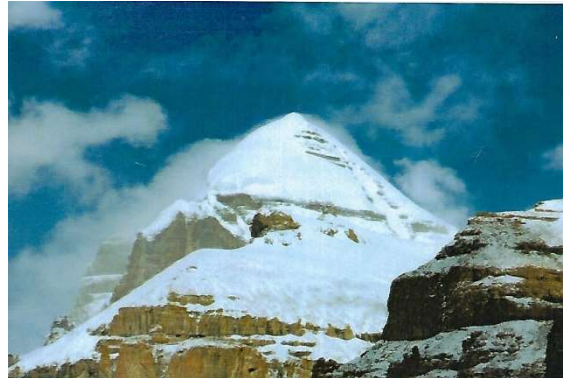
Long tiring days
 sometimes to go three thousand feet down
only to rise again five thousand feet up –
the Rock and Roll
 of the Himalaya passage to Tibet.

Many moons and suns later
 high at seventeen thousand feet
 we leave camp to pilgrimage
around the far-off Holy Mount Kailash
within the Kingdom of Tibet.

A cavalcade of huge yaks
 now bearing our tents
 in lieu of Sherpas
their long hairs touching the snow
 as they pass,
Greetings to Tibetan families
 and an Indian yogi –
we all trek the mountain
where four holy rivers rise
 to cross over Asia.

At the highest pass
 our purpose is
to leave our old selves and past deeds
with the prayer flags blowing in the winds,
 and descending,
 begin our lives again
 with a clear soul.

Mount Kailash
 knows
the spiritual challenge
 is not an easy route in life.
Before long
 snow begins to fall
and we trudge on



Mt Kailash, Tibet - The Summit



Ceremony of Prayer Flags

ever climbing higher
'till a full blizzard blows.

Seeking safe footing
I find myself
stepping into the footprints
of my brother
walking in front.

We "call-in" that day
and camp early for the night
Sleeping in warm sleeping bags
adding scarves around our heads
under snow-covered tents
minus many degrees below zero.

Such a memory
those days and nights –
an ultimate shared challenge
bringing support and joy
of real companionship
and Care.

Returning from Tibet
over that ancient route,
a Buddhist monastery
stood near the border.
The monk spoke of life –
"A pilgrimage is not about
how well you did it,
but
what you learn
by doing it."

That last night
on the Tibetan plateau
I stood
staring
at the dark skies
studded with light.

Suddenly
the whole Heavens
were moving –

Wherever I looked
the sky was covered
with never-ending shooting stars.



My Brother, John Crook
trekking



Yaks – en route

There's this other Chinese Disease

Symptoms include: Constant body weakness & ache, lack of sleep, lack of energy, lethargy & weariness, memory loss, hair loss and skin sagging.
It's called:-

Yung No Mo



LIFE AT GOSFIELD SCHOOL

1980 TO 1984

BY: SIMON BREEZE



I attended Gosfield School from September 1980 until June 1984. The world was a different place then in many ways, especially in social expectations and behaviours. My father was in the British Army. At that time the Army would pay the school fees under the premise that, moving a child around with his father constantly would disrupt their education. My father was in the REME (Royal Electrical & Mechanical Engineers) corps and this meant a move would take place every 3 to 4 years. We were stationed in Germany as part of the British Army on the Rhine (BAOR). This meant I attended British Forces Education Schools (BFES) and my last school as such was John Buchan Middle School in Paderborn.

At 12 years old, I had the option of attending Kings School in Gutersloh or boarding school. I say option, as I don't recall being that involved in the decision-making process!

Somehow, I ended up being trailed around the grounds and interior of Gosfield School. Set in a fine old manor house just outside the village of Gosfield, I am sure the fact that my dad's father lived in Shalford at that time, only a few miles away, influenced the choice of school for me.

I do recall my father and Peter Pinegar, the Headmaster then, being in deep conversation and I trailed around behind them with my mother. In no time at all I was in the school outfitters, Townrow in Braintree. I was soon kitted out with the school uniform, cricket whites, rugby tops, and my trunk and tuck box! I still have my tuck box.

My Old Tuck Box



Once school started it soon became apparent, I was living in a different world. Shared dormitories with up to 12 youngsters, minimal personal space and community living were the order of the day. It quickly became obvious that the school day-to-day running was left to the prefects, who were in their final year, and the teachers simply taught us. I can still vividly remember my first teacher. I was in form Junior B and

my teacher was Mr (Robert) Galligon, a well-respected teacher from Ireland who had been at the school for a long time. My most vivid memories include his amazing hand drawn, in coloured chalk, maps of the world and his good aim with the board rubber!!

I mated up with another new starter called Liam. We had been to similar postings including the Middle East (Kuwait) so this gave us a common theme. Making friends was not so easy initially, as then I was a quiet and reserved child. I was happy with my head in a book or, in later years, experimenting with old radios and other electrical devices.

The school operated on a regimented regime which I can still recall now. We were woken with an old brass hand bell by a prefect at 7.00 am. Ablutions were until 7.40 am followed by breakfast until 08.20 am. We then had 20 minutes to prepare for the day and carry out any chores we were designated. I was, for example, the electricity monitor one year. Register, taken in the classroom was from 08.40 am till 08.50 am followed by assembly which was held in the dining hall daily for 20 minutes.



New Kitchen Press Release

Lessons followed and these took place, with a break in between, until dinner at 12.40 pm. Dinners, and all meals, took place in the dining hall too. Large tables were laid out and, as with all aspects of life at Gosfield, there was a hierarchy with each table having a table leader. During my time there a new kitchen was built on to the side of the dining room. This meant the food did not have to be cooked in a separate room and wheeled into the dining room and the new kitchen was certainly state of the art back then! School meals were typical for the time, lumpy custard, thick gravy and plenty of mash! I do recall having to use the tea urn to defrost our 1/3rd pint milk bottles in winter too!

Meal times were often lively affairs, when we would all be together in the one room.

Remembering there were only about 110 to 120 boarders the school environment was close knit. At weekends the only difference was that we were woken at 7.30 am and always had boiled eggs for

breakfast.

Directly after dinner, we had to go to our dormitories and were not allowed to leave our bed as this was classed as reading time for 30 minutes. This rule was strictly monitored by the prefects and if we did not adhere to it, we were suitably chastised.

In the summer time we resumed lessons for the afternoon and there were sports every day of the week at the end of the day, much to my displeasure, as I was not a sportsman in any discipline nor in any shape or form! In the winter months sports took place after the reading period.

I do recall that cross country took place every Wednesday and I still cannot fathom out why they felt it was a good idea to serve Liver followed by semolina pudding immediately before this delightful sporting event!



My Dormitory named Warwick

Free time was limited during my time at school. We had one-hour free time during the week every evening. This was from 7.00 to 8.00 pm. However, the school operated a reward and penalty system called 'Stars & Stripes'. In essence if one accrued 6 stripes, usually for bad behaviour, then that one hour resulted in detention. Detention usually consisted of us writing out the times tables or working out the cube roots of a number or other such delightful exercises! Stars were a vital commodity as the accrual of Stars enabled one to gain either house or school colours. This meant a pass out on a Saturday afternoon to either the village (Gosfield) or Halstead.

After supper we had to attend prep classes. Depending on age, bed time was between 7.30 pm and 8.50 pm with lights out at 9.20 pm. Saturday mornings was dedicated to more prep and letter writing to parents. This was something I never particularly relished; what was I to say to my mother at that age. 'I am fine, I hope you are too' was the sum of my efforts at that time!



Graffiti on the pews

Sundays meant the wearing of a white shirt, rather than grey, and then after breakfast and the usual chores a hike in a long snake line to Gosfield Church! The reverend at that time was Peter Ford and the boarders occupied the back pews. These were embedded over the years with various forms of graffiti and memories. They have recently been removed from the church and replaced! I certainly learnt, by rote, the Sunday service using the small red service book!



Removal & Replacement of the pews

The school prided itself on being a scouting school and scouting was a large part of its activities and ethos. The scout hut was down the side of the school, now long gone, and we would meet weekly. There were several activities that I enjoyed as a scout, namely the night hikes through the Essex countryside we would partake in and every year the attendance of the County Show near Chelmsford. At the show, we were put to use either serving teas, leading cattle around rings and other such duties.



Opening of the New Scout Hut

My life at Gosfield taught me many things, not all directly related to educational matters. I was not the best student at that time, I was a late developer, but it taught me life skills. How to overcome problems, the joys of community living, friendship and independence.



Prize Giving

PHOTOGRAPHY - ONE STEP UP FROM THE HAPPY SNAPPER!

BY: GRAHAM BRACE



Langur Monkey

We are far removed from the days of the old Brownie 127, when you pointed in the right direction and hoped for the best, and the best was never that good. Remember the film cameras with 24 or 36 shots; waiting tentatively 10 days for Boots to develop them? Then the big moment, when you quickly flick through to see how many have heads and feet cut off, too dark, too light, and maybe only half a dozen that you could show your friends and family.

Now we have digital cameras, and even mobile phones that are infinitely better than those early cameras. There are numerous mini pocket cameras, bridge cameras, single lens reflex cameras and now mirrorless cameras. A lot of the more expensive ones will have interchangeable lenses. Lenses that will show the glint in a tiger's eye from a 100 yds away!

Whilst I am a serious wildlife photographer, I know that the best mobile phones can take terrific shots and the detail will be very good. So, why buy one of those very expensive cameras with huge lenses attached, and they can cost £10 – £15,000 for such a package, when the mobile phone or pocket camera will do the same? For everyday 'happy snapping' it is true, but tell me why do all those professional photographers you see on the news have that fancy equipment, if a mobile phone would do?

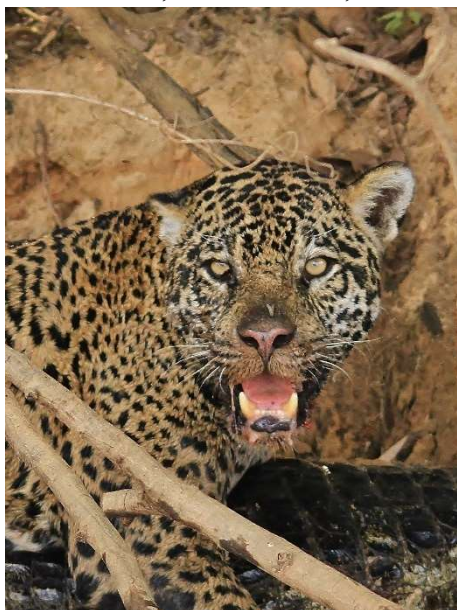


Bengal Tigress

It's simply horses for courses. If you want to get a really sharp image of an animal in the middle of a forest in poor light, or that bird in a tree 50 yds. away, you need the right equipment.... and know how to use it. Any of those cameras I mentioned earlier with interchangeable lenses will do the trick. For wildlife a wide-angle lens, say 24 -105 mm plus a minimum 100 – 300 mm or 100 – 400 mm telephoto zoom lenses are the ideal for close up and far away shots. Buy the best lenses you can afford to start with and

gradually buy better cameras as you progress. It is the quality of the lens that is really important.

As intimated, you can spend a fortune, but it is not necessary. Even the so-called entry level cameras have functions on them that even the very experienced photographers do not use! So, to start with, and this is not going to be a tutorial, just a few hints....



Brazilian Jaguar

First and foremost, consider the light. Early morning and late afternoon are generally the best times for most wildlife, and you will have subtle tones of colour and shadows. The harsh light around midday can leave your images 'burnt out' and lifeless. So, planning your trip runs in parallel with the timing. Then, just get out there and practice, practice, using the automatic settings on your camera. You will get far better results than you ever did with your old Brownie, as modern digitals are so sophisticated.

As soon as you have learnt to handle the camera and got used to the simple functions, start to experiment with the manual settings. Apart from the simplest 'point-and-shoot' types, all cameras have the 3 basic options, **1. Fully manual, 2. Aperture priority and 3. Shutter priority**. Combine one of these with **ISO control**, and you are well on the way to consistently better images (photos). This is not the forum for in depth studies into the plusses and minuses of the various functions of your camera, but for most wildlife, I tend to use **Aperture priority (the 'f' 'number') and automatic ISO**. The aperture is normally set wide open to maximise the light and put the surrounding landscape out of focus. You normally want the animal in sharp focus to stand out from the background. The camera then sets the shutter speed. If you use a low 'f' number, e.g. F4, the shutter speed will be faster, which is exactly what you want to catch an animal that is likely to move. The ISO (formerly ASA for films), i.e. the camera's sensitivity to light, can be set from 50 – 6400 (or much higher on the more expensive cameras). The low number is for very bright conditions and the higher the number the faster the shutter speed you will get on the **Aperture priority** setting. Some of



Red Squirrel

you will remember films where flexibility was limited to ASA 100,200 and 400. In truth, on a clear day, with automatic camera settings, this is how your camera would

respond anyway. But, if you set your ISO only at automatic, it will take into account sudden cloudy weather, dappled light in say a forest, or general poor light conditions, i.e. flexibility.

The other important factors to consider are focusing and metering (light metering). Digital cameras will give you different options for both. For a single animal, I use **‘centre point focus’** and **‘partial or centre point metering’**. This ensures that your camera focuses on the animal’s eye or beak and the light it picks up in the metering is from the same precise area, and will give you a sharp and well exposed shot. If you are taking a group animal shot, use the **‘multi-point focus’** option and **‘centre weighted or evaluative metering’**.



This is the way my wife and I use our cameras on our extensive wildlife trips. These tips are by no means full proof, or totally inclusive. There is much more to learn, but please try to use some of the sophistication that is built into all cameras nowadays. It **will** take you up a level from those “happy snapping days”.

Serpent Eagle

My apologies if all that was unnecessarily technical, but these are the basics of good wildlife photography. It is good if you can link up with a more experienced photographer as that is the best way to learn. I would be happy to advise on what equipment to purchase or how to go about using it. Please get in touch.
Grahambrace1946@gmail.com



LOCAL WILDLIFE
PHOTO TAKEN BY:
GRAHAM BRACE

MUNTJAC DEER

POEM
BY: CAROL HUSSEY



LOST

Where did I leave my glasses?
I had them not long ago,
I think I removed them to answer the door...
But where are they now.....I don't know.

I'll retrace my steps, that seems a plan,
now think, and rack the brain,
where was I when the doorbell rang...?
Retrieving washing from the rain.

No, wait a tick, I'd finished that,
I was back indoors I'm sure,
I phoned a friend for a little chat
And then another, and then one more!

I'll have to go from room to room
and search on every ledge.
I've checked all around the kitchen
even looked inside the fridge!

Not in the sitting room, or where we eat,
and definitely not in the hall,
I've done a check on every seat,
so, they're not downstairs at all.

Better try my luck upstairs,
in the box room, not a sign,
there are glasses in the bathroom
but sadly, they're not mine.

Last resort..... the bedroom,
on the table beside the bed?
But joy oh joy as I pass the mirror
I see them....On My Head!

**OUR PETANQUE TERRAIN AT
SHALFORD VILLAGE HALL
IS ON ITS WAY**



7TH April 2021



8TH April 2021



9TH April 2021

**Just waiting for benches and delivery of top
surface which will be in approximately 3
weeks**

ST. ANDREW'S CHURCH, SHALFORD

FLOWER ARRANGERS

BY: HEATHER SMITH and GILLIAN ASKEW



The Church has a dedicated group of ladies who keep the Church looking inviting with their flower arrangements.

Every Easter the Church is decorated with lilies which are dedicated to "Loved Ones lost". Donations for the lilies are collected by Heather Smith and a list of those to be remembered is displayed at the Church. Everyone

is invited to participate and a reminder is shown in the Parish magazine a month before the event.



The arrangers are all volunteers and this year they are Diana Forrow, Adrienne Poulson, Sue Heavers, Heather Smith, Jan Meddle, Sue



Martin, Gillian Askew and Hazel Hull. We have other volunteers who were unable to join us this time.

We are always keen for volunteers (ladies and gents) to join the group whether you are

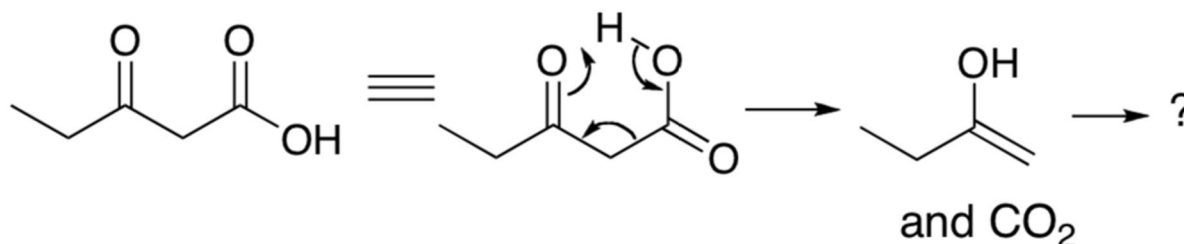


experienced or just an interested enthusiast. Help and/ or teaching can be given. You are welcome to join us when we are at the Church to see what we do without obligation. There is no regular commitment. Any commitment is voluntary and entirely your choice to fit your social and working lifestyle. For more information, please ring Heather on 01371 851378.



TALES FROM THE COLLEGE

BY: VIC GOODEY



I spent some six years teaching and managing in a College of further education and I went on to work in freelance as a Lecturer and Manager.

Some of my experiences were amusing; some were tragic most were frustrating! I shall attempt to engage you with a selection.

All college seasons have a routine. Recruitment and Selection begins at the end of the previous year. Students graduating to year two or year three of their course or those moving to the next level in their qualification are, normally, easily identified and enrolled onto their appropriate programme. The fun always starts with the year one enrolment process.

Early on in September, we were summoned to attend enrolment and sign up the learners for their desired courses. At that time the only entry requirement was the ability to *breathe!*

The procedure went something like this:

“Next! Name? What course are you interested in?”

Attach a sticker, showing the course name and code, to an enrolment form and send the candidate on their way to the Finance Department where they would be assessed for their status and the appropriate fees *extracted*.

The directions to get to the finance team were; “go back to the corridor and turn left, follow the yellow footprints - that will take you down one floor level and into the main hall. Wait your turn and present this form to the member of staff who will ask you a series of questions, have your identification documents with you”.

Sitting next to another manager repeating this information over and over again to potential Painting and Decorating, Carpentry and Joinery; Electrical and Engineering; Plumbing and Gas engineer students gets a bit monotonous, to say the least. Until I heard him say to a young man “take this form go through the door; one cross

each”. What? Did I hear correctly? No! the young man didn’t bat an eyelid and walked out to go to the finance team. The next candidate was given the standard instruction. I must have imagined it. Then! “take this form go through the door; one cross each”. “Matt”? I said “What are you doing? “Don’t worry” he said “they’ve all heard the instruction so many times they’re as bored as we are and not listening anyway”. I can’t watch “The Life of Brian” without waiting for that line. “Thanks Matt!”.



In theory, when the stickers ran out the course would be full. However, not all candidates went to the Finance Department. Some couldn’t be bothered; others didn’t qualify for financial support and couldn’t afford the course fees; and some couldn’t afford the enrolment fees.

This meant that more stickers had to be produced when the Senior Management team became aware of the shortfall in recruitment numbers. Panic ensued; as people who were turned away earlier because the stickers ran out and the course was “closed” got angry when they found others who turned up days later got places.

Day one of the programmes, always exciting, the professional teaching gurus will tell you to use “ice breakers” to get the learners to settle in and get to know each other. This is a great idea when you are talking about a Group of Managers on a Personnel Development jolly. Not so great when dealing with a group of young adults who don’t want to be there!

My particular favourites are the apprentices on day-release programmes from their employers. In most cases these young people are motivated and eager; with the backing of an established employer who has been around the block a few times. At the college these employers are gold dust as any student-related issues were often sorted out with a phone call. However, some employers seem to think that day-release at college was optional in the apprentice programme and gave us very little support. These learners were sometimes disruptive, difficult to motivate and downright abusive.



When completing the induction class, I would ask “Do you have any questions?”. Invariably, one of my *cherubs* would ask “What time do we go home?” I would reply “Well you can go home now if you like, you are an adult with a mind of your own, there’s the door please close it on your way out”.

There would be a pause and, sometimes, a satisfying *gasp* of astonishment from the group.

Cherub, “But you will “grass me up” (tell my boss) that I left!”

Me, “Oh yes, I’ll be on that phone before you reach the front of the College. If you had been listening during the induction you would have heard me say that I write and send individual learner reports to your employers after every session and a review report every six weeks”

I usually had their attention for a while after that. Bless them.

My favourite learners were evening class students, self-motivated, always asking questions and wanting to do well. Except for the day-release apprentices on a ten-hour day with the most stupid subject, “Social Studies or Liberal Studies”. Why this was included was always a mystery to me, it wasn’t much better when the Government insisted that we teach our learners “Key Skills” developed by academics to “help overcome the shortfall of achievement in mainstream education of English and Mathematics.



Many employers blur the lines of academic achievement when recruiting their apprentices and expect the colleges to “pick up the slack”. When discussing an apprentice student’s lack of progression an employer would often admit that they took the apprentice on as a “favour to an aunt, uncle, friend or neighbour etc.”

Further education is about expectation, learners attend college for a variety of reasons and managing expectations is part and parcel of the Lecturer’s role.

One student was brought to my attention because he was not attending, and letters were sent out warning him that non-attendance would result in his removal from the register. I received a call from his mother asking for a meeting. When we got together, his mother did all the talking. Finally, I asked Kevin why he would not attend and he admitted that he found the maths difficult and, as he would fail anyway what was the point?

I asked him to consider switching to a basic maths class and, as he was still young enough, re-enrol the following academic year. Mum was pleased, Kevin agreed but his body language told a different story. I offered another deal, go back to working the markets where he had been seen by his tutor animated and excited, happily dealing with customers measuring and cutting curtaining fabric and completely engrossed. Nothing like the sullen, dejected student in the classroom. If it didn’t work out in the markets he could come back and we would work something out. Kevin was delighted although surprised. Mum was crestfallen and confused, “What markets, where, when?”

I asked Kevin why he had enrolled on an Electrical Installation Course his response was “Mum and Dad wanted me to get a trade”. I pointed out that a career in retail can be as rewarding as the building trades. Mum wanted what was best for Kevin without finding out what Kevin wanted. There were tears and emotions ran high but I maintained a stiff upper lip, just!



Kevin never came back, but I hope he succeeded. He certainly deserved to.

Expectations became my mantra. I redesigned my recruitment and selection procedures and set up entry tests and interviews with a structure to ensure that the right

student got on the right programme and where desire in the potential student was not matched by academic skills and knowledge a referral to the college basic skills team often gave me a better candidate at the next enrolment.

I was not popular with other Managers and my Head of Department accused me of discrimination. However, when I explained why I was doing it and that I would improve the School of Building services statistics I received his full backing. I have to say that my Head of School was always supportive and gave me a lot of leeway.

It is interesting to note that a good number of candidates who provided evidence of GCSE Grade C failed our entry test and some that had never sat their GCSE passed.

At one of our selection sessions, a colleague told me that one of our test papers had not been returned. As the test had been used several times, I brought forward a replacement test that I had prepared.

A week later I was accosted by the Manager of another Department who told me that she couldn't understand why several of her proteges had all failed our entry test. I took great pleasure in telling her that they had, indeed, answered many of the questions correctly, it was just a shame that they had not been for the correct test paper! As I said earlier, I was not always popular.

I am proud of my time in education, we changed lives and had a lot of job satisfaction. I made friends whose company I cherish. I have a great deal of respect for most of the people with whom I worked and I learnt so many things myself in just helping others to learn. I realised how far I had come when teaching a group of teenage men in North London. I was working with them on communication skills and trying to convince them that they should try to moderate their accent. "When at a job interview try to speak slower, cut out slang terms and remember with whom you are speaking".

One learner looked at me sideways and said "See, look Sir it's alright for you 'cause you talk posh, innit!"

I had to laugh and informed my young protege that if he would care to join my brothers and me in the Flying Scud, Rathbone Street, Canning Town on a Saturday night my natural style of speaking would, probably, leave him mystified within minutes!

Part of my role of Manager was to handle everything that took my Lecturers away from the students, therefore when asked to provide a member of staff for a "Tutorial Entitlement Group" I volunteered myself. The Chairman was not happy as he wanted teaching staff on his committee. I pointed out that I am a qualified teacher and have taught a class myself.

Part of the Group remit was to develop a new tutorial recording form that would be completed by Tutors at every Student tutorial with a top copy for the Student File a yellow copy for the employer or parent and a pink copy for the Student.

After many exhausting hours and meetings, we ended up with an agreed format and content ready for final approval; only to find that the Head of Department who Chaired the meeting had already ordered thousands of copies to be printed of which we had samples. At the Time we had 12,000 Students and each student had at least three Tutorials per year.



I leafed through my sample and asked if all the printed copies had been delivered. With a self-satisfied look on his face, he informed the Group that we needn't worry, he had proof read them himself before placing the order.

I asked him to clarify some wording on the form and he looked annoyed, I pressed on and read from the bottom of the page:-



“Top White original for the Student File. The Yellow Carbonated copy to go to the employer or parent. The Pink Carbonated copy to go to the Student.”

I asked “Isn't carbonated something to do with fizzy water surely a better word would be carbonized?” I pressed on “how many copies did you order? Did I forget to mention that he was the Head of Department for Media Studies? As I said earlier, I was not always popular with everyone.”

PAPER CUTTING - SENT IN BY: MEL FRAY

High school reunion

Have you ever been guilty of looking at someone your own age and thinking, “Surely I can't look that old?” You'll love this one.

My name is Alice Smith and I was sitting in the waiting room for my first appointment with a new dentist. I noticed his DDS diploma, which showed his full name.

Suddenly, I remembered a tall, handsome, dark-haired boy with the same name who had been in my high school class some 40-odd years ago. Could this be the same guy that I had a secret crush on, way back then?

Upon seeing him,

however, I quickly discarded any such thought. This balding, gray-haired man with the deeply lined face was way too old to have been my classmate.

After he examined my teeth, I asked him if he had attended Morgan Park High School.

“Yes. Yes, I did. I'm a Mustang,” he beamed with pride.

“When did you graduate?” I asked.

He answered, “In 1959. Why do you ask?”

“You were in my class!” I exclaimed.

He looked at me closely. Then, that ugly, old, bald wrinkled, fat, gray, decrepit son-of-a-gun asked, “What did you teach?”

POEM BY: SHEILA BUSH

Looking forward...



We seem to be emerging from the doom
& gloom,
Everyone singing a happier tune.
Looking forward to going places
Cannot wait to pack our cases.

So, don't be down - get rid of that
frown,
Think of the holidays coming around,
A paddle in the sea or basking in the
sun
And kicking “Covid” out the door from
here to “kingdom come”.

OR

Better still let's all meet,
Once again at “Meet & Greet”.
Seeing old friends - meeting new,
I would love that - Wouldn't You ???

POLICE INVESTIGATION OF A MURDER

BY: PETER WHENT



Murder is the most awful, evil and horrible crime. Not only does someone lose their life but the immediate family and relatives suffer the loss of a loved one. For the community, it increases their fear of crime and lessens their sense of security and wellbeing.

In my 32 years' police experience, I have been the Senior Investigating Officer (S I O) in more than 20 cases of Murder and over 20 suspicious deaths.

In the United Kingdom, there were 809 homicide cases in 2019 but only 365 new millionaire winners in the National Lottery, showing you have more chance of being killed than of winning the lottery!

Every homicide attracts considerable media and public interest, particularly in the vicinity where it occurred. It has been suggested that we are all capable of killing in certain circumstances, such as, protecting our child. Anyone convicted of Murder can only be given the mandatory sentence of Life Imprisonment.

When the police first attend such an incident, the scene is taped off and secured, with police officers guarding the scene. This is to ensure that no one enters the scene without police consent and that there is no possibility of someone later claiming that evidence of them was put in the scene after the police took control.

A Senior Investigating Officer (S I O), usually a Detective Superintendent, is then appointed to lead the enquiry, with a locally-based Detective Chief Inspector or Detective Inspector as their Deputy.

The investigation must be impartial and independent, which means not swayed by the media, the government or other interested party.

The first hour is considered to be a 'golden hour', putting in as much effort as possible, creates the most likely chance of early detection. At that stage the offender(s) may not be too far away! Twenty-four hours later, it is probable that the offender(s) will have washed, changed their clothes and appearance and possibly left the area.



Just about everyone must have seen the Crime Scene Investigation TV programmes and probably understands the importance of specialised crime scene investigators to find clues and forensic evidence. They will search for and record all potential clues, which may include fingerprints, blood, hair, footprints, tyre marks, D N A swabs etc. It may be necessary for a Forensic Pathologist

and other forensic experts to be called to the scene.

I recall a Forensic Biologist being called to a scene to interpret blood patterns. The victim had been struck with a hammer. As there were three trails of blood on the wall, the Biologist said he had been struck at least four times. This was because from the first blow there would be no blood trail, but the next three blows would deposit blood from the hammer onto the wall.

At the same time the victim has to be identified. This can be achieved in a number of ways: viewing the body, taking and comparing fingerprints, dental records, D N A examination or other method(s). Whilst the new technique D N A is very successful, it takes a few days to be conclusive, whereas physical identification or fingerprint comparison can be immediately conclusive.

In a suspicious death enquiry at Bocking, the skeletal remains were identified by video super-imposition. That is the comparing of the photograph of a person, with the skull showing it as a match.

The S I O will have a ‘helicopter’ view and manages all aspects of the Investigation, holding daily briefings with all officers in the enquiry. This ensures they are all up to date with the thrust of the enquiry, and allows an opportunity for officers to put forward any lines of enquiry, and nominate any possible suspects.

A ‘helicopter’ view facilitates management of the whole investigation into the Incident, including:

- The computerised Home Office Large Major Enquiry System (HOLMES)
- The family via the Family Liaison Officer
- The house-to-house enquiry team
- The Scenes of Crime Officers
- CID and Uniform Officers conducting enquiries
- Updating the Media

Plus, many other requirements. These may include armed officers, or a diving team, all dependent upon the needs of the Investigation. It is intense and the S I O and some other officers can expect to work 18 hours a day, for at least the first three days.



The S I O will ensure the family and other relatives of the deceased are notified. I have done this on many occasions. Always sad and challenging! In one case, a man who killed his wife one evening then went to the police and confessed. It was established that the eight-year-old daughter was staying locally with grand-parents and I went to give them the worst news possible! I

needed to know she was safe and well.

The child was asleep in bed and would awake next day without a mother and her father in prison. Her grandmother agreed I could see her granddaughter and led me to the bedroom where she was in bed, apparently asleep.

Commenting how lovely she looked, I stroked her hair and gently pulled it, without her grandmother seeing me do it, to make sure she stirred but did not wake. I was then satisfied she was safe and well. This sensitive side of policing is not seen on Television!

The Investigators will build an Offender Profile from witnesses, which may read like: the suspect is male, white skinned, aged between 18 and 30, has a scar on his right hand, a tattoo on his neck, and to that will be added any blood group or D N A identified at the scene.

The aim is to feed as many names of possible suspects into the computer, including those who resemble the offender, those who have committed similar crimes and those whose details have been given to the police - perhaps anonymously.

All suspects are then traced and interviewed to see if they fit the profile. If they do not, they will be eliminated. If they do, they will be further investigated. This process takes the time in a long-running investigation, and may last for months. Once any suspect fits the profile, a much more intense scrutiny will follow, which may result in a case file being submitted to the Crown Prosecuting Solicitor to consider prosecution.

In television programmes, the case seems to end at the arrest of the suspect. In real life, there is a need to obtain sufficient evidence to lay before a Jury to confirm the suspect is guilty “beyond reasonable doubt”.

The evidence will come from; clues at the scene, from the post-mortem by the Forensic Pathologist, from forensic expert witnesses. The suspect will be interviewed but nowadays many say nothing with their solicitor beside them.

There is always a need to establish the motive of the crime. Was it financial gain, a volatile family relationship or extra-marital relationship, a business connection, a contract killing (i.e. drug related), or perhaps a stranger attack!

People often ask me whether I have been affected by the things I have seen, because I have seen man's inhumanity to man! They also want to know of my worst case.

To protect myself from being overwhelmed, I was able to place a psychological shield between myself and the circumstances of the death. I never personalised it and focused on asking myself 'what clues are there for me to see?' and 'what is the deceased telling me?'. That said, my wife noticed that I was very quiet at the end of the day, not wanting to talk! After the death of a child, as I retired for the night, I would often just stand at the bedroom door of my two daughters, just looking at them, whilst they were asleep, just reassuring myself they were okay!

The worst case was the saddest of all: A mentally-ill mother had killed her four young children all under the age of five. It meant attending the scenes, one child in each room and attending four post-mortems.

I will always remember their four little white coffins! It is usual for the S I O to go to the funeral, which I and other staff did. It was very touching on entering the church to be given a small envelope which contained a prayer, a sweet and a 10p piece. This was because the family were foreign, and this was their culture. The sweet represented sustenance for attending, the 10p for payment for my journey, and the prayer, that we could all say, silently.

Murder is the ultimate and most serious crime! It requires a huge response by the police. Fortunately, I do not have nightmares, and am gratified to have used my investigative skills and the expertise of my staff to have brought some of those responsible to justice.

LIGHT-HEARTED ODES

SENT IN BY: SHEILA BUSH



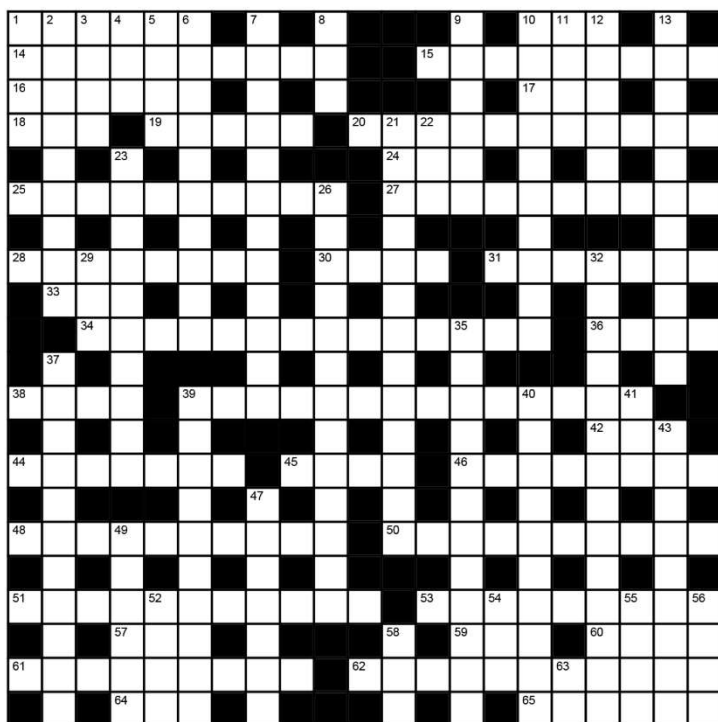
There was a young man from
Dalglish
Who always walked in his sleep.
He walked such a long way - his
feet wore away,
Now he rides everywhere in a
jeep!



There was a young man from
Aldgate,
Was never on time, always late.
One day he was on time,
everything was fine,
But, unfortunately, he had the
wrong date...

CROSSWORD BY: ROBERT BURROWS

Bendlowe 10



Across

- 1 Stone picture (6)
10 Mineral spring (3)
14 Tossed too far (10)
15 Evergreen shrubs (9)
16 Get comfortable (6)
17 Young animal (3)
18 Abbreviation of time (3)
19 Indigenous Scandinavian dwellers (5)
20 Pertain to an ideology (11)
24 Irish organisation (3)
25 German space for living (10)
27 Give up personal wishes (4-6)
28 Medicinal plants (8)
30 Part of (4)
31 Disqualify legally (7)
33 Body of water (3)
34 Semi-starved (14)
36 Suspend (4)
38 Unmarried lady (4)
39 Material for jewellery or coins (8,6)
42 Sixth note in musical scale

(3)

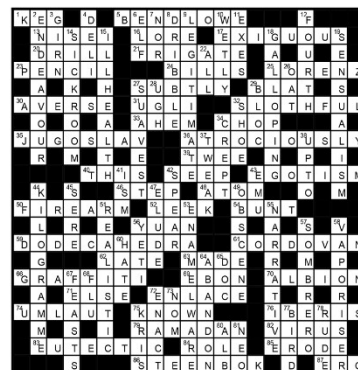
- 44 Time of sitting (7)
45 Clenched hand (4)
46 More gloomy (8)
48 Stone coffins (10)
50 Hypothetical form (4,6)
51 American civil war battle site (11)
53 Hears a radio program (7,2)
57 Rubbish (3)
59 Horse command (3)
60 Art style (4)
61 Intestine inflammation (9)
62 Laundry lady (11)
64 Mythical bird (3)
65 Mental deterioration (6)

Down

- 1 Dance to rock music (4)
2 Unrealistic claims (9)
3 Groups (4)
4 Human creativity (3)
5 Contraction (2,2)

- 6 Miserly person (10)
7 Yield to will of others (12)
8 Explosive (3)
9 Brazilian municipality (6)
10 Renewed energy to continue (6,4)
11 Fill a gap (4)
12 Original Roman name for Britain (6)
13 Glide through the air pulled by speedboat (11)
21 Cleared up (13)
22 Division of time (3)
23 Philosophers (10)
26 Induce male characteristics (13)
29 Monetary unit of Romania (3)
32 Leg connector (8,6)
35 Nearly there (4,8)
37 Clock (4,7)
39 Containing a phosphate (10)
40 Records readings and transmits to another place (10)
41 An early Doric character (3)
43 Pertaining to heresy (9)
47 Brief and to the point (7)
49 Sailing vessel (6)
52 Tropical herb (4)
54 Observe (3)
55 To some degree (4)
56 Not any (4)
58 Feline (3)
63 Plural of I (2)

Solution Bendlowe 9



YOU'RE NOT WELCOME – BORIS SAID SO!

BY: VIC GOODEY

We had this little visitor which came in uninvited and in light of the Covid regulations, I ejected him from our property. I don't think he wanted to go because when I let him out, he hung around long enough for me to fiddle and faff about with my new camera and take his picture.

We hadn't been formally introduced, so I don't know his given name, although, I made some up for him while he was with us (some not for publication). However, I have researched his family which turns out to be "Old World Field Mouse". Rather classy I thought! I hope he enjoyed the hunt but does not return for round two!



**The older you get
the more you realize how
precious life is. You have
no desire for drama, conflict
or stress. You just want good
friends, a cozy home, food
on the table, and people
who make you happy.**

BENDLOWE'S WEBSITE

Just a short note to say welcome and
thank you to the first Sponsors of our
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HarperLees
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www.bendlowe.co.uk

**LOCAL WILDLIFE
PHOTO TAKEN BY:
GRAHAM BRACE**

BROWN HARE



MY GRANDFATHER ARTHUR PURKISS

1874 - 1978

BY: ANGELA CANHAM



My Grandfather started writing a journal of his life when he was 98. He filled three exercise books which are in my keeping. I thought you all might be interested in some of the social history. Health & Safety was obviously not a priority. This is as he wrote it:-

I was born on the 18th day of December 1874 at Colchester Road, Halstead, Essex. My mother's name was Charlotte and my father Samuel. He was a Cooper like his forefathers for hundreds of years. Coopers are men who make barrels and casks to hold beer and spirits. They also made milk pails from ash trees. Lovely white wood for the milk which was sold to the housewife by the milkman who wore a yoke on his shoulders with two hooks each carrying a pail. He had two measures – one pint and one-and-a-half pint – and his customers had to bring their mugs and basins to the door.

As a child, I loved my hoop and stick, spinning tops, kites, playing cherry stones and breaking ginger beer bottles to get the marble out. I started school aged 4 1/2. My school Mistress, Miss Allington, thought nothing of giving you a good slap on your head. The school Master, Mr Tom Fisher, always had his cane in his hand and he whacked us! I left school at 14 and father said "You will be trained as a Cooper." So, my work life started at Adams Brewery with him, 6 a.m. until 6 p.m. for 3 shillings and 6 pence per week. I made and repaired casks of all sizes in English Oak. I made one to hold 4 pints as we were allowed 3 pints of beer per day. So, it was put in this barrel every morning. I was the only boy in the brewery. There were 40 men and they had to wear white jackets and red caps. I had only been there three weeks when the young Master said "You have got to be sworn in today." He took me



This now stands in my fireplace

to a cement table – laid me down on my back. He had a sharp bushy beard which he rubbed as hard as he could over my smooth face. The other employees roared with laughter. I worked on a six-foot plane preparing the 1 ¼” oak staves to make the new barrels.

At 16, I was improving at the trade and when Mrs Adams’ knives and forks got broken, I had to repair them with oak handles with copper rivets. I remember making four casks for the late Sir Fortasque Flannery of Wethersfield Manor. The workshop was bitterly cold and I got chilblains through cold feet. I told the Master and he said “I will cure that”. The next day, there was a red-hot fire burning under the malt kiln. He took me up to the cement floor where wet barley was drying. He said “Walk up and down with bare feet for half-an-hour”. When I came downstairs, he was waiting with a bunch of holly with which he whacked my feet. Blood was spraying out all over the place. My feet were sore for weeks, but it stopped the chilblains!

On 5th November, the shop fronts on Halstead Hill were covered with heavy tarpaulins and they rolled lighted barrels down the hill!



My Grandfather Arthur Purkiss with his wife Maud and their three eldest of six children Stanley, Frank and Connie

By the time the war started my Grandfather had a general shop and was working for Pearl Assurance Company, so he was made a Special Constable. He remembers being Sworn in with other businessmen of the town by the Magistrate and being issued with white armlets and a baton. On the day my mother was born 10th January 1915 her older sister was in charge of the rest of the family and she forgot to draw the back bedroom blind which showed a light. Mr Eddie Frost, another Special Constable spotted it. My Grandfather was summoned to court where he pleaded guilty. He was fined £5-10-0. It made headlines in the paper.

These are just a small part of his journal. He had so many tales to tell. He led a very active life and enjoyed the company of all my friends. He celebrated his latter birthdays at

The George, Shalford, with the Bowler Hatters and Joan and Les Burton. When they lit the 100 candles on his cake, it looked like a bonfire! At his big family party for his 100th, he danced. He was quite a character!

I forgot to mention he loved his music and was at one time leader of the Halstead Town Band. He played his violin right up until the end (aged 103). Unfortunately, by that time his hearing wasn't good enough to tune it properly. In fact, one Shalford resident once said “You would think he would be better than that at his age!”.

**IN LOVING MEMORY OF
DAVID FRENCH & JEANNE WAKEFIELD**



The printing of this issue of Bendlowe's Bugle has kindly been funded by Amanda French in loving memory of her husband David French and mother Mrs Jeanne Wakefield who both passed away March 2020. Mandy's loyal companion Lassie aged 19 also passed away this month. So *Lassie, now you have joined David, snuggle up and keep him warm as you did when you were both alive.*

I am sure you all join me in both thanking Mandy and offering her our sympathy and condolences for the loss of two beloved members of her family within such a short time.



**CONGRATULATIONS
TO SIMON BREEZE**

ARTICLE: MY LISTER ENGINES

Below is part of an email I received from Simon Breeze. He was extremely chuffed as an article he had written had been accepted by a national magazine.

..... *"This must have been the case as Doreen suggested I write an article about the research I have done! I felt confident enough to do this thanks to the support received from Alice Cox from the recent articles I have written for Bendlowe's Bugle. Never having written an article for a national journal I was pleased that my draft copy required minimal revisions for it to be accepted, so thank you to The Bugle!"*



Mrs Red

**LOCAL WILDLIFE
PHOTO TAKEN BY:
GRAHAM BRACE**

WHITE ROSES FOR HOPE

BY: MEL FRAY



On Thursday 1st April we collected 50 absolutely gorgeous huge white 'Avalanche' Roses from one of our Shalford neighbours Neil Birks. Not only did he agree to supply them but after hearing the story behind Bendlowe's and how we have tried to stay in



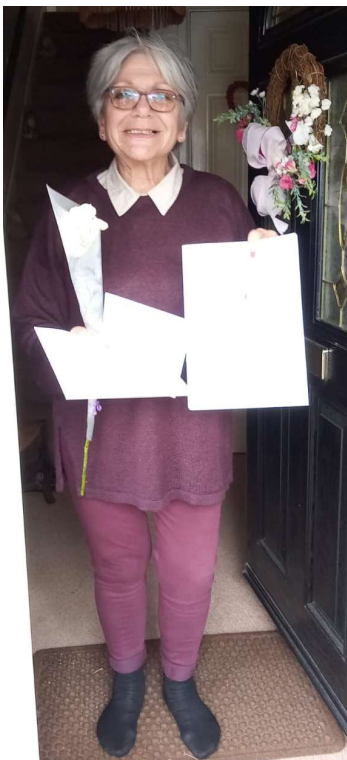
contact with our regular Meet and Greeters in these sad and lonely Covid times, he agreed to donate them for which we are extremely grateful. Neil also agreed to write a most interesting article about his Shalford story. We hope that you have already read it in the Bendlowe's April bugle edition.

Neil's website is www.nbroses.co.uk contact email info@nbroses.co.uk if you want to



look at what he does and support him. We, the Bendlowe's ladies, spent some time wrapping them; some in a gorgeous dark green paper also supplied by Neil, which accentuated the white of the petals and some in various reusable/recycled wrappings and ribbons saved by Marianna and Mel. We do like to be as sustainable as we can.





On Friday morning (not too early; it was Easter Friday after all) we divided into twos; Marianna and Sally and then Alice and Mel, and off we went to deliver the roses and a beautiful card designed by Alice and printed by Applied Image Ltd, email support@appliedimage.co.uk (a great local company) and chat with our supporters on their doorsteps.

Well, the look on people's faces was just amazing, all those beautiful smiles we have missed. We definitely achieved what we set out to do; to show you all that we haven't forgotten you, to catch up for a chat, even a quick look around a couple of gardens;

as awful as Covid is, it has given many the time to spend beautifying their own green spaces.

After a long and lovely morning, then Sally and Mel drove out to live a little further away in delight to see us for a chat and

We are now in the Government's little more freedom. We can meet so missed. We can support our opening and we can even have a just need to go slowly, to stay on track. So, fingers crossed that resume and The Hut visit to this year.



we returned home for lunch and see some of our supporters who Bardfield and Rayne. Again, such receive our gifts.

Stage 2 plan whereby we have a up with others; family and friends local businesses that are slowly little holiday in this country. We safe and pray that the plan stays our Friday Meet and Greets can Felixstowe can definitely happen

PROPOSED VISIT TO THE HUT, FELIXSTOWE PROMENADE

WEDNESDAY, 18TH AUGUST, 2021

It is hoped that we will be able to enjoy a day trip out to Felixstowe seaside – subject to Covid – £15 including Fish & Chips. If you would like to book a place; please contact me (Alice) as soon as possible (07850 264518 or 01371 851146).

RICHARD WEBB WITH STORY NO. 4

This is about an organist/organ tonal designer named Ralph Downes who has sadly passed on now. Back in 1985 at the grand age of 81, he used to travel by train from London to Gloucester Cathedral and stay for a few days. He worked with Andrew Stevens and myself on the tonal finishing of the Gloucester organ. Andrew and I had



been cleaning the pipes (all 3,000 of them), cleaning each rank of pipes in their sections, one at a time. Mr Downes had a lot to do with the tonal side of the organ back in the seventies. (Left photo of me at the organ).

Andrew and I stayed at a public house next to the Cathedral. We did a lot of tonal work in the evenings when things were quiet. He used to call in to the pub during our evening meal. We

used to say "Would you care to join us?" He replied "Thank you, but no, I have my banana and piece of cheese." He said that every time we asked which we found quite amusing!

He was a very interesting gentleman and a brilliant organist. He had played organs in many countries. He was organist at The Brompton Oratory in London for around fifty years.

Back in the seventies, he designed the organ in the Royal Festival Hall in London. It was finished in 1953 – see photo. The Hall was opened in 1951 and was televised. They installed a John Compton 'Electrone', a three manual organ which filled the gap until the 'Harrison' pipe organ was ready in 1953. Mr Downes invited Andrew and I to his final recital at the Royal Festival Hall. It was very exciting but he went on to play two more recitals after that at the same Hall.

Going back to the opening in 1951, the programme included 'Serenade to Music' by Ralph Vaughan Williams which he conducted himself. This is one of my favourite pieces amongst others by him, e.g. The Fen Country, Norfolk Rhapsody plus



all his nine symphonies, Songs of Travel and The Lark Ascending which has just been voted top tune three years running on Classic FM.

Ralph Vaughan Williams used to come down to Thaxted to visit his friend Gustav Holst the composer. It is said that they used to walk the lanes around Thaxted talking about their music. They both played the very old ‘Lincoln’ organ in the church there which was restored a few years ago. As some of you may know, Gustav Holst lived on the main street of Thaxted.

I hope some of our readers are interested in the music side of things, as regards to organ music, there is so much more than J. S. Bach, Widor, or the ‘Trumpet Voluntary’!

When I was much younger, I was included in a car load to go to the Royal Opera House to see ‘Pilgrim’s Progress’ by John Bunyan as I liked the music of Ralph Vaughan Williams who wrote the music, so it was a treat for me. I was in the company of Marjory Ffrangcon-Davies who was an opera singer. I used to go to her cottage just outside of Finchingfield and accompany her singing. Her sister was Gwen Ffrangcon-Davies, the actress. The Vicar drove the car – Rev Robert Dand. That was about 1951 – a long time ago now!!

THE IMPORTANCE OF COMMUNITY SUPPORT FOR PEOPLE AFFECTED BY DEMENTIA BY: MARK NEVILLE



“Our Dementia Friendly Community Coordinator role is to support organisations, businesses, Health and education providers and communities to have a better understanding of the impact of dementia and how to adjust their services to the needs of people affected by dementia and work together to create Dementia Friendly Communities”.

Dementia Action Week (17th May – 23rd May 2021) - Led by Alzheimer’s Society, Dementia Action Week is a national event that sees the public coming together to take action to improve the lives of people affected by dementia.

Did you know that it is estimated that one in three of us will develop dementia at some point in our lifetime? Dementias, there are about 100 different types, affect people in different ways, although some impacts of dementia are more common. People may experience one or more of the following: memory problems, mobility difficulties, general understanding and/or behavioural changes.

The thought of living with dementia can be frightening, but a key Alzheimer's Society message is that it is possible to live well with dementia. However, to live well a person needs the appropriate support at the correct time. The person also needs to continue to be an active member of their community and for their dementia to be understood by those around them.

Imagine that you have been diagnosed with dementia; initially the impact of the dementia may not be significant, your memory may be slightly impaired, or you may experience some slight confusion. Though, as the dementia progresses you may experience more noticeable difficulties. You may find it more difficult to physically get to your local shops, GP or place of worship or you may be concerned about how other people are going to react to you. You may find difficulty with tasks you've done for many years such as using a debit card or you may find it difficult to remember what to do and when to do it.

At a time when friends and family could be important to your mental and physical wellbeing you may find yourself not being understood as they do not understand your dementia and how it affects you. However, with the understanding of your friends and family and a degree of flexibility you are far more likely to continue to live well. For example, if you are a person of faith, can you be supported to get to your place of worship or attend virtually? Or can you be supported by a friend/fellow worshipper to help remind you to attend? Perhaps your fellow worshippers have attended, either physically or virtually, a dementia awareness session, which has enabled them to understand the dementia and how they might support you through your illness? These often-small actions can be crucial in ensuring that a person effected by dementia is able to maintain an active place in society.

Community groups, charities, Health and social care, retailers, local government and other organisations throughout Essex are working hard to see how they can best support people affected by dementia to ensure that the person with dementia is able to continue to access their community and remain an active and valued part of their 'Dementia Friendly' community.

You can help people affected by dementia by finding out more about what dementia is and how to support people in your community living with this disease by creating 'Dementia Friendly' communities. *"Dementia Friendly" communities are those in which both those with dementia and those who are caring for them, have the best possible opportunities to live beyond the diagnosis. This includes having opportunities to enjoy good times despite the difficulties they face and being supported to cope when times become tough."*

To discuss any aspect of dementia please call the Alzheimer's Society Dementia Connect service on 0333 150 3456 or email dementia.connect@alzheimers.org.uk.

If you are an organisation or business who wishes to know more, please contact one of the Essex Alzheimer's Society's Dementia Friendly Communities Coordinators (DFCCs). To contact Mark Neville (DFCC - Mid and South Essex) or Rosalva Johnston (DFCC – North East and West Essex) please email dementia.connect@alzheimers.org.uk.

Mark Neville Alzheimer's Society's Dementia Friendly Communities Coordinator (Mid and South Essex).

ROGATION 2021

BY: REVD CANON JANET NICHOLLS



One of the delights of my role as Agricultural Chaplain is to lead the church's Agricultural Festivals throughout the Diocese of Chelmsford. There are four main Agricultural Festivals: Plough Sunday, Rogation, Lammass and Harvest. This cycle of festivals follows the shape of the agricultural year and provides the opportunity for us to pause to reflect on the agricultural land around us and the food it provides for us. Of recent times, the festivals have attracted a renewed interest as more of us evaluate how our lifestyles impact on the future of our planet and all who inhabit it.

Rogation Sunday falls on 9th May this year. Traditionally, church congregations would have taken to the parish footpaths for the day. In a practice known as 'Beating the Bounds', they walked in procession, observing the growth of the emerging crops in the fields and praying God's blessing as they went. The crops would become the food that would sustain them through the winter. The term 'Rogation' comes from the Latin, 'Rogare', meaning, 'to ask'. Asking God's blessing on the land and the crops was more than invoking a good luck charm. It was about affirming respect for the great gift of creation and deepening the connections between how they worked the land to produce their life-sustaining food. Historically, 'Beating the Bounds' also served to settle boundary disputes! Thankfully, such adjudication no longer falls to the parish priest!

One of the good things to emerge in the last year has been a renewed interest in walking our village footpaths. The 'stay at home' message combined with the encouragement to take daily exercise has encouraged many of us to explore new routes and paths. Lots of people have found refreshment in this renewed connection to the land, nature and the food being grown in the fields around them.

These connections are at the heart of Rogationtide. Rogation affirms the intertwining of God's creative spirit on the land, those who work it and those whose lives are sustained by the food it produces.

This year we are likely to be in Step 2 of the Government's roadmap on Rogation Sunday, limiting activities to groups of six people. I won't be able to lead big Rogation walks. Rogation Sunday will be celebrated in churches and churchyards though. Despite the restrictions, it will seem more pertinent than ever.

As we begin to emerge from lockdown, Rogationtide might provide a gentle nudge to pause on a favourite walk to give thanks for the nurture and solace provided by the countryside during the pandemic. At its best, Rogation connects us to everything local. It's also a time for remembering all the businesses and community groups that strengthen our village community. They provide such lifelines for us. This Rogationtide, I give thanks for them all and pray God's blessing on those who run them with such commitment to us.

TUK TUK TRAVELS

BY: ANDREW HULL



Just over 11 years ago I persuaded two old school mates to join me on what could be considered a rather ambitious trip. We intended to drive a three-wheeled Indian-made 150cc tuk from Pokhara in Nepal to Cochin in Southern India, some 3000km as the crow flies. A trip which was ‘organised’ in the very loosest of terms. Someone had sorted the paperwork and provided the tuk tuks, a starting line party and a

finish line party and that was it! The bit in the middle they said was up to you, no set route, no back up. Just 30 other teams of 2 or 3 people from all over the world all thinking this was the greatest idea ever!

Myself and one of my teammates arrived in Pokhara a few days before our New Year’s Day start line date to make sure our tuk had wheels and an engine but also to explore the area. Pokhara is a beautiful city which sits on the shores of Phewa Lake and the famous Annapurna Range, which is the home to three out of the ten highest peaks in the world. It is well and truly in the Himalayas. I had heard via a friend that there was a guy (originally from Dagenham) who was now living in Pokhara and was running a business involving paragliding, but paragliding with a difference.

Paragliding, for those of you who don’t know, basically involves running off the side of mountains attached to an already open parachute in the hope it inflates and you don’t fall to your death! This guy had combined his world-class abilities at paragliding with his passion for birds of prey and had created what he called “parahawking”! He had reared and trained his own Himalayan vultures and so, as you flew attached to the instructor and the paraglider, you were also joined by a Himalayan vulture (he had named him Kevin). This amazing bird flew between myself flying on one paraglider to my friend who was flying on another, each time enticed to land on our gloved hand by a call from a whistle and a bit of meat we had ready as a reward. It was a truly unique experience, flying ourselves over such beautiful scenery whilst this amazing bird flew majestically between us and the even larger wild birds of prey circled above us all probably wondering what the hell Kevin was doing!

Back to the race, our remaining team mate arrived on New Year’s Eve, just in time for the rather raucous and drunken launch party. We all partied away, ready to hit the road and the pure unknown the next day. We woke early the next day only to be told that there was a national strike in Nepal and everything was grounded, we now only had 13 days to travel at least 3000km rather than the 14 days we anticipated. This didn’t overly matter at the time as we had no real idea which route we would take anyway!

Putting humour to one side, there was a very serious side to this adventure. Myself and my teammates took the fundraising we did very seriously in the weeks before the adventure. Some of you reading this may even remember the display I had on the till at

the village shop. The nominated charity we raised money for is called MAITI Nepal. This charity fights a very dark underbelly of Nepal. It seems that the trafficking of young girls from Nepal into India is all too common. These young girls are normally kidnapped from their own villages and trafficked into India, normally by people well known to them and then sold into the horrific, dark world of child prostitution, child labour and darkest of all, the flesh trade. Maiti Nepal at the time was the vision of one lady who was known to regularly stand at the border crossings with India, literally saving young girls by going onto buses and rescuing them from their kidnappers and either returning them to their family or back to a refuge she had created in Kathmandu. I am very proud to say that with the help of some Shalford villagers my team raised almost £15,000. The amazing lady who ran Maiti Nepal, Anuradha Koirala, later that year actually won CNN Hero of the Year and was hailed the Mother Theresa of Nepal. A grant from the US Government of 500,000 dollars followed that year and the charity has gone from strength to strength saving countless young girls from a lifetime of misery.

When we finally left Pokhara on the 2nd Jan, a day behind schedule, it became apparent that the 'organisers' really did mean it when they said you were on your own. I remember quite clearly one team's engine going bang! with a big puff of smoke half a mile from the start line, "fix it yourself!" they were told. Those next two days as we headed down the foothills of the Himalayas to the border with India and the huge plains of the subcontinent, we were struck by the beauty of the country; a jaw-dropping mixture of mountain passes, electric green vegetation and idyllic looking villages. How could a place so beautiful be capable of such darkness in the form of child sex trafficking? I thought. Since this trip I have seen on television, two comedians doing this route in a Toyota Landcruiser on the series "World's Most Dangerous Roads". Well, it is dangerous. On one stretch, we were tootling noisily along a steep mountain pass (by this point our exhaust pipe had fallen off) and I turned round to look back at the route we had just traversed to see it suddenly engulfed by a sudden landslide. A sobering moment. Luckily myself and my teammates are not big photographers; as a pause earlier on that route could have been terminal!

After a couple of days, we arrived at the Indian border and instantly noticed the difference. The huge number of lorries belching out fumes, it was also strangely freezing! We had been dropping altitude for two days so we were expecting it to get warmer not colder! The massive increase in rubbish was also very noticeable. Nepal was relatively litter free, India on first impressions - noticeably not!

Upon driving in India, we soon realised we really were on dangerous roads. A mostly Hindu population who believe in reincarnation and that a better life possibly awaits, coupled with a belief that a wandering cow in the road is more sacred than three people in a tuk tuk makes for a dangerous combination! This is made even worse by the fact it also appeared that Indian MOT standards are considerably lower than the UKs and that the only qualification it seemed you needed to drive was to use the horn as much as possible. Lights it seems, are optional, especially at night, indicators don't exist, even dual carriageways seem to suddenly become two way at any point and can be used at any time in any direction by random goat herders. However, there is one

rule you must obey when driving a tuk tuk: might is right! If it's bigger than you, get out of the way!

We had decided upon entering India, to head North towards Agra to see the Taj Mahal. On the way there we passed through many small non-touristy industrial towns. The level of pollution and rubbish was staggering as was the level of poverty we saw. As we headed more towards the tourist destination of the Taj Mahal the cleaner the area became. This was a recurring theme as we travelled across the vast bulk of India; small towns off the tourist track suffer badly from pollution and litter. It mostly seems to be collected in huge piles outside the town and burnt. The Taj Mahal however really is a thing of beauty, an oasis of calm in some ways.

We rumbled on westwards on our three-wheeled steed, aiming to head for just south of Mumbai before heading down the coast through Goa and through Kerala. However, two of us had realised that team mate number 3 hadn't really said much at all for the last day or two. Now Doug is well known for being tough, someone who had a rare form of brain cancer a few years earlier and had to have a large chunk of his skull removed whilst he had chemotherapy and radiotherapy. Not once did he complain, he worked the entire time, went to the pub and even his consultant commented on his superman abilities to not feel sick or pain. A man of steel. So, when Doug goes mute you know there is a serious problem! When questioned Doug made the ridiculous confession that he had tried out one of his chlorine water purification pills on some tap water from a hotel a few nights before. They didn't work! To cut a long story short, we decided we would cheat a little (we called it improvising) and we would try and catch a train (with tuk tuk) and head to Goa, a more westernised area popular with package holidays where Doug could recuperate and we could have a well-deserved break. As a spur of the moment decision we arrived at the train station, negotiated getting our tuk tuk in cargo and we settled into the cramped conditions of 3rd class rail travel, Indian style. Doug took it upon himself to get in his sleeping bag and sleep next to the toilet compartment on the train for easy access. Not wanting to give too much information to you but this is probably the worst place I've ever seen anyone try and rest! An Indian toilet in 3rd class is a hole directly on the tracks and let's just say it had lots of proof that many people aren't good at aiming!

Train travel in India is eye-opening, and you get to speak to fascinating people. We spent a few hours speaking to two young Tibetan refugees who, as teenagers, were told to leave their village immediately by their parents as Chinese forces were approaching and for their own safety they were told to leave as their parents stayed. A heart-breaking story and it made me realise how we seem to know so little about Tibet and Chinese occupation and out of all I have read since, none is good. One thing of particular notice on Indian train travel was it seemed the norm that upon finishing eating or drinking you just throw whatever is left out the window, plastic and all. During the 300 miles we were on that train there was a pile of rubbish about 4 foot high the entire length of the journey! It is no surprise to learn that scientists think the



Ganges is one of the dirtiest rivers in the world. Scientists believe that 10 river systems carry 90 percent of the plastic that ends up in the ocean. 8 of these rivers are in Asia, the Yangtze, Indus, Yellow, Hai Ho, Ganges, Pearl, Amur, Mekong. The other two rivers are in Africa, the Nile and the Niger.

To make another long story short, we had to change trains and it became apparent that train

number 2 wouldn't take our tuk tuk, no matter how much we tried (it seems bribery is the only way to get things done), so we made the fatal decision of putting our tuk tuk on a lorry whilst we got a train to be reunited with it in 2 days' time as we made up some ground and had a bit of R and R in Goa! Safe to say the tuk tuk didn't turn up in 2 days! In fact, it turned up in 8 days by which time my teammates had to be reunited with their desks back in London and I let my guard down and succumbed to the infamous Delhi belly where I lost about 4 days of my life and about 2 stone I couldn't afford to lose! Before I became ill, I did manage to go to the famous 'silent disco' on the gorgeous Palolem beach on the tropical Goan coast which was actually owned by the brother of the guy doing the parahawking in Nepal! Anyone would think they were keen to leave Dagenham!

Anyway, I had the absolute pleasure of driving the last 1000km on my own down through Goa and into the densely-populated state of Kerala, famous for its backwaters. My God though, the driving is mad, buses and lorries think nothing of overtaking on blind hills, blind corners, think of the most unsuitable place to overtake and it happens. I almost got wiped-out twice by buses! However, it is the speed with which they drive through such heavily pedestrianised areas which amazed me, I would often follow behind in the slipstream of a bus as they literally carved a way through the crowds, often missing people by inches with no intention of slowing down. I read that 150 THOUSAND people a year are killed on India's roads, a large percentage involving the buses, I am sure. Over 25 thousand deaths a year are caused by trains. A conservative estimate, no doubt, and probably a symptom of India's poor ability to publish accurate statistics, a point being played out now as the Country is gripped by a second deadly wave of Coronavirus. The Covid chaos unfolding in India is extremely sad to watch, but a Country so full of life, vitality, energy, vibrancy will bounce back I'm sure, and soon be open again to the rest of the world, for those brave enough to go!

FINAL ARTICLES FOR BENDLOWE'S BUGLE



Next month will be our 14th and final Bendlowe's Bugle – June 2021. Let's make it the biggest and best yet - if that's possible! I can't wait to receive your articles. Please send to alicecox53@btinternet.com



LAVENDER AND GIN ICE CREAM

SENT IN BY: CAROL HUSSEY

5 tablespoons Gin
1 tablespoon fresh (or dried) lavender flowers
6 egg yolks
¼ pint clear honey (lavender if you can get it, otherwise any good flower honey will do)
½ pint double cream

1. Warm the Gin slightly in a small saucepan and then pour over the lavender in a small bowl.
2. Cover with cling film and leave to infuse for 1 hour.
3. Strain off the flavoured Gin through a sieve, pressing the Lavender flowers against the sieve with back of spoon to extract all the flavour. Discard the flowers.
4. You should end up with about 3 tablespoons of strongly flavoured Gin. If it is a little under, top up with a little plain Gin.
5. In a large bowl beat the egg yolks with a whisk until very light and fluffy.
6. In a small saucepan heat the honey gently until just boiling. Pour the hot honey in a thin steady stream over the egg yolks, whisking constantly. Keep whisking vigorously until the mixture has cooled and the yolks have increased in volume (this should take about 2 – 3 minutes with electric whisk)
7. Add the flavoured Gin and stir to combine.
8. Whip the cream to soft peaks. Carefully fold into the egg yolk mixture, blending well.
9. Freeze for at least 8 hours – Remove from the freezer 5- 10 minutes before serving.

(Don't forget, any leftover dried lavender flowers can be sewn into dinky little sachets for your drawers just be careful, how you sit down)

PS: Carol emailed me after sending this recipe in:-

Carol: "Made a batch of the Gin & Lavender ice cream, used the leftover egg whites for meringues. Had a taste session - tough job - someone had to do it - I stepped up!"

Alice: "Where's Mine?"

Carol: "I think that you are *far too young* for alcoholic ice cream!"

Alice: *I always liked Carol! But, then again, perhaps she'd had a bit too much Gin & Lavender ice cream!*

THE STORY OF MY LIFE AS BEST AS I CAN REMEMBER

BY: MICHAEL B SMITH (SMUDGER)



I was born on 14th January 1939, the year that Britain and France declared war on Germany. The first couple of years of my childhood were fairly uneventful until 1941 when my father passed away from blood poisoning. I didn't learn about this till later on in my life. As I got older my mother told me how she had to go out at 6 am every morning to do two or more paper rounds to supplement her small widow's pension. As I got older things became harder for all of us – with three growing boys to feed and clothe – but we knew nothing of these hardships at the time.

I have been led to believe that soon after my sixth birthday, my mother met a soldier and they married.

As things settled down, he proved to be a very good man and he treated us three boys as his own. I hated school as I was a slow learner (lazy). Many of the teachers could not be bothered with me and many times I was sent to stand outside the Headmaster's Office. If he came out, he would ask what I wanted and I would tell him. He would tell me to wait there and when the bell went for change of lesson, he would come out and tell me to go to my next class if I was lucky and if it was something I liked, that was great. This carried on almost until I left school. When I went to talk to someone about what I wanted to do when I left school, I had no idea.

I became a butcher's boy which I enjoyed as I earned £2 9 shillings and a penny until the Christmas of that year. I worked from 6 am until about 7 pm. After three weeks, I had enough and left. The following Monday, I started in the local Brick Field where the wages were about £6 a week. After a few months, I got a job piecework digging clay for making bricks. I did this for a number of years until 1963 when we were told the field was going to close due to the high cost of hand-made bricks. Few people wanted hand-made bricks. By this time, I was married with three children. I was



concerned as I knew that I could not do this type of work until I was 65. Therefore, I decided that I needed a job with security and applied to join the London Fire Brigade.

I was accepted and started my training on 10th February 1964. All us new recruits went into a classroom and filled out all our personal details, next of kin, etc. The



Officer in Charge countersigned the form and from that moment on we were Firefighters (not firemen – they worked on the footplate of trains). After 16 weeks training the Instructor told us where we were to be posted. My face dropped – I was being posted less than a mile from my home. The Station was one of the quietest in the London Fire Brigade!

I reported for duty the following Monday.

After six months you were allowed to apply for a transfer. I applied immediately and ten days later my application was REFUSED. I think that, in the following few years, I must have put in at least ten transfer requests all to no avail.

Some calls had their funny side. One time we were ordered on to another station's ground for further assistance. We pulled up outside a television shop. This was an area with many ethnic people. The new lad got off the machine and asked one of the lads from the local station, "Are they coloured?" referring to the owners. The chap replied, "No, they're all black and white", referring to the TV's. Typical of Fire Brigade humour!! (*and social history of that era*)

Footnote: I did my whole service at this one station, apart from when sent on "out-duty" (where another station did not have enough men. Stations with spare men would "fill in". As I wanted to learn all I could, I applied for more qualifications, MD(driver), BA (breathing apparatus) ET (heavy rescue).

Photos: The four photos are of myself and another member of my Watch in a competition that took place once a year between all the Stations in the London Fire Brigade from 1950's to 1980's. It required a team of two men to run out two lengths of hose and connect the two lengths together. One man would run back to the start to connect it to a hydrant whilst the other would put a nozzle on (branch) and run the hose to its full length. The man at the hydrant would turn on the water. The man at the nozzle would knock a target, remove the nozzle, undo the hose, drain it and then roll it up, run back to the start and place all equipment in a marked-out square. Both would run back to the finish and stand to attention. I cannot remember the best finish time but I do not think it was much more than four minutes.



CORONAVIRUS LETTER TO HUMANITY

SENT IN BY: CAROL HUSSEY

WRITTEN BY: VIVIENNE R REICH

The earth whispered but you did not hear.
The earth spoke but you did not listen.
The earth screamed but you turned her off.

And so, I was born...

I was not born to punish you...
I was born to awaken you...

The earth cried out for help...

Massive flooding. But you didn't listen.
Burning fires. But you didn't listen.
Strong hurricanes. But you didn't listen.
Terrifying tornadoes. But you didn't listen.

You still don't listen to the earth when:
Ocean animals are dying due to pollution in the
waters.

Glaciers melting at an alarming rate.
Severe drought.

You didn't listen to how much negativity the
earth is receiving.

Non – stop wars
Non – stop greed.

You just kept going on with your life..
No matter how much hate there was..
No matter how many killings daily..
It was more important to get that latest iPhone
than worry about
What the earth was trying to tell you.

But now I am here

And I've made the world stop in its tracks
I've made YOU finally listen.
I've made you take refuge.
I've made you stop thinking about materialistic
things..
Now you are like the earth

You are only worried about YOUR survival.

How does that feel?

I give you fever....as the fires burn on earth.
I give you respiratory issues...as pollution
fills the earth air.
I give you weakness as the earth weakens
every day.

I took away your comforts
Your outings
The things you would use to forget about the
planet and its pain.

And I made the world stop..

And now...
China has better air quality... Skies are clear
blue because the factories are not
Spewing pollution into the earth's air.
The water in Venice is clean and dolphins
are being seen. Because the gondola boats
that pollute the water are not being used.

YOU are having to take time to reflect on
what is important in your life.
Again, I am not here to punish you.... I am
here to awaken you....

When all this is over and I am gone...Please
remember these moments...

Listen to the earth
Listen to your soul,
Stop polluting the earth
Stop fighting among each other
Stop caring about materialistic things
And start loving your neighbours
Start caring about the earth and its creatures
Because next time I may come back even
stronger.....

Signed: *Coronavirus*



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It's good to take part

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