



**FULMER NEWSLETTER**  
**December 2019 – Issue 66**  
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If anyone would like to advertise in a future issue, please contact Susie Simkins 662537 [susiemsimkins@gmail.com](mailto:susiemsimkins@gmail.com)

### **Fulmer Village Christmas Party 2019**

We're looking forward to seeing all our neighbours at the Fulmer Village Christmas Party on Saturday 14<sup>th</sup> December at 7pm in the Village Hall.

Dinner will be followed by a raffle to raise funds for The Fulmer Infant School.

This year a live band will ensure we dance the night away. We have a very limited number of tickets (price £33) which will include a welcome drink and dinner, but do get in touch if you'd like to come and we'll try to make room.

To check last minute availability contact [fulmerchristmasparty@gmail.com](mailto:fulmerchristmasparty@gmail.com) or call 07971662319.

MERRY CHRISTMAS!



# Fulmer Day – Saturday 20<sup>th</sup> June 2020

Fulmer Day 2019 was a huge success, the sun shone and we had a great turn out as usual.

The event raised circa £1,500 after costs and we made donations of £250 to each of the following local charities/good causes:

South Bucks RDA  
Peace Hospice Watford  
Carers Bucks  
Contact the Elderly

Thanks to all the volunteers who gave up their time to make the event the success it was, without them the event wouldn't take place.

Special thanks to Howard, Rachael and the team at the Black Horse for sponsoring the event and for everyone's hard work on the day.

Next year's Fulmer Day will be on Saturday 20th June 2020.

If you would like to join the committee please don't hesitate to contact me on 07894 259283 (Darren) we are always in need of new volunteers.

Finally, if you have any suggestions for next year's event please let me know.

Darren and Alan (Fulmer Day Committee)  
Darren2712@btinternet.com



## ***Welcome to the 66th issue of the Fulmer Newsletter***

We are really pleased that we have some varied and fascinating articles sent in by readers and we would love to have more. If anyone has something for a future issue - do let us know.

There are lots of festive events happening in the village from the Xmas Party on the 14 December at the Village Hall and many church services at St James' Fulmer, which are detailed on the leaflet delivered with this issue.

Our usual thanks to everyone who has contributed to this issue; to those who have helped deliver it and to our loyal and long-standing advertisers.

Wishing everyone a very Merry Christmas and Happy New Year.

Susie & Ronnie Simkins, Editors

## FULMER CHASE INFORMATION SOUGHT

We received this note from Chris Jenkins of Fulmer Chase following the last newsletter and hope someone can offer more information on the building which I think we would all enjoy hearing about.

*Thanks for another excellent issue of the newsletter - it's always a good read and must take a huge effort to put together. As a resident at Fulmer Chase I was fascinated by Eric Price's article. I wonder if the gentleman pictured in this image of Fulmer Chase dating from the 1920s was Louis Bernard Baron himself? Interestingly, one of his philanthropic ventures resulted in funding an eponymous village of convalescence homes in Eastbourne for his employees, which is still caring for people today with support of the Quakers. Which in a roundabout way makes another connection with Fulmer, as I manage the nearby Quaker village of Jordans. I'm fairly sure that the country residence was already here though as I think the building dates from 1914, although I stand to be corrected. I have a copy of an early but undated sales brochure, which shows the estate was of 255 acres with images of the rock garden and luxuriously appointed interior. Apparently, during WWII when it was commissioned as a Military Maternity Hospital, the gable end in the left of the image closest to what was then the ballroom, now Dirry Mor Cottage, was burnt down after an exuberant nurses party!*

*Perhaps if any of your readers know more about the early history of the estate they might be kind enough to share their knowledge and enlighten me.*

*Yours sincerely Chris Jenkins - estateoffice@jordansvillage.co.uk*

## FULMER PARISH COUNCIL AND DUTIES

DAVID BRACKIN	Chairman chair@fulmervillage.uk 07970 793058
PARM KHANGHURA	Deputy Chairman/planning/finance parm@connectglobalconsulting.com
CHARLIE GRAY	Conservation Volunteers; Best Kept Village Transport & Highways charleslawsongray@gmail.com
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FRANCESCA HALL- DRINKWATER	Village website; St James' Fulmer francescaatrushworths@gmail.com
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PARISH CLERK	Finance Group; Council Admin; FSCA; Notice Board; Allotments clerk@fulmervillage.uk

## OTHERS

BARBARA ZOLTOWOSKA Fulmer Village Hall Chairman  
Barbara.e.zoltowska@gsk.com

DISTRICT COUNCILLOR Malcolm Bradford  
Cllr.malcolm.bradford@southbucks.gov.uk

COUNTY COUNCILLOR Roger Reed roreed@buckscc.gov.uk

BRIAN WEILD Neighbourhood Watch; Police & Community  
Liaison weild@btinternet.com

KAREN NELMES Village Hall Lettings Secretary 07498 041253

## PERSONALIA

### Births

We congratulate:

Louise (nee Simkins) & Tom Chitty on the birth of their daughter, Coco Mabel, on 29 September, a sister for Luna Daphne and a second grandchild for Ronnie & Susie Simkins

### Deaths – Burials - Ashes

We send condolences to the families of:

John Yardley Sanders, who died on 3 November. John and Marianne have lived in Fulmer for many years and his funeral took place at St Theresa's Beaconsfield on 21 November

Jean Bushnell who died on 7 July. Her memorial service was held on 7 August.

David Christopher Lawson who died on 8 October. His thanksgiving service was held on 31 October.

### Marriages

We congratulate:

Emily and George Home Cook on their Wedding Blessing held in St James Fulmer on 25 May.

Karen and Adrien Waite on their Marriage held in St James Fulmer on 31 August. Adrien is the son of Tim and Kathryn Waite of Fulmer.

## **Jean Bushnell**

8 October 1928 – 7 July 2019

Jean was born in The Wash House in Fulmer on the 8 October 1928 where she lived with her parents Mabel and Tom Rodgers.

She had an older brother John and two sisters Yvonne and Penny. She went to Fulmer Infants School in Alderbourne Lane and to Stoke School in Stoke Poges.

After leaving school she worked at Huntley and Palmers Biscuit factory in Iver Heath with her sister Yvonne.

She met William Bushnell known as Bill at the village dance and they went on to marry at Fulmer Church on 14 August 1948. They had their wedding reception at Fulmer School and they began married life at 1 Church Row Fulmer living with Jean's parents. They then moved to Hedgerley and then eventually to Iver Heath; they had three children Yvette, Clive and Eleanor.

Jean worked at Servier Laboratories at Fulmer Hall for 27 years.

Her hobbies were making wedding cakes for all her family and friends.

Jean adored her ever-growing family, which consisted of three children, seven grandchildren and ten great grandchildren.

Jean and Bill moved back to Jean's family home in Fulmer in 2006 and she loved being back in Fulmer Village. Bill always kept the garden immaculate and Jean loved walking her dog Pru around the village where she would stop and chat to neighbours along the way. Jean attended Fulmer church where all her children and grandchildren were married and christened.

She will always be loved and missed by her family and they all have their own cherished memories to remember her by.

**Yvette Harris (her daughter)**

**Audrey Ruth Bainbridge**  
**21 November 1929 – 24 September 2019**

Audrey was born in Hull, first daughter of Dr Jim and Mrs Nora Innes. She subsequently had a sister, Sheila and a brother, John, and it was a comfortable early childhood with maids and nannies to help bring up the three children. After moving within Hull the family then located to Bournemouth but all changed with the outbreak of War and as Audrey's father decided it was unsafe for them to stay on the coast, Nora and the three children moved to Detroit to live with relatives. After a year or so, Nora decided to take the family to Bermuda where Jim could cable money to them, as it was a British colony. When they returned in 1943, the war was still on but with additional coaching the girls went to Talbot Heath Girls' School. They thrived and all three children eventually won scholarships.

Audrey left school to study sociology at Bedford College, London University with the ambition to become a hospital almoner (helping families to receive suitable after care and social and financial support). In 1952 she joined the WRAF and served in the admin section of the Force as an adjutant, then did her officer training and went straight in as a pilot officer and was sent to HQ Coastal Command. She stood out as being very capable and moved up the ranks quickly. She was posted to Changi, Singapore in the communications corp and immersed herself in the life there. In 1955/6 she took up the post as the first woman across all three services to be appointed as Aide de Camp (ADC), a very senior PA, to Sir Harry Broadhurst, commander in chief at Bomber Command.

Audrey met Reg, who had been an RAF pilot in war and who had survived 3 years in a prisoner of war camp in Burma. They married in 1958 and were posted to Cyprus. Their daughter, Clare, was born once they returned to England with Reg becoming a commanding officer at RAF Brampton in Cambridgeshire. In 1962 the family were posted to Norway for two years, returning to England where Reg had a stint with the MOD in Whitehall and after retiring from the Forces he became estate manager to Lord Portman, in Hedgerley.

Once in Hedgerley Audrey worked for Hillingdon Social Services providing home teaching for children and teenagers and locally joined the WI and Mother's Union and the Hedgerley Historical Society and immersed herself in village life. She had taken a particular interest in dyslexia and following her studies in this field she won a Churchill Fellowship to travel to Australia and New Zealand to share her knowledge. (In 1986 she wrote a book called 'Our Village' aimed at helping children with dyslexia). At home she joined the Parish Council and then in 1985 was elected to Buckinghamshire County Council representing Fulmer (incorporating Hedgerley, Wexham & Iver) and became well respected as a person who would fight for every cause she believed in (this at a time of motorways being built and gravel digging expanding). Between 1985-2001 Audrey took on many roles in BCC and she was elected Vice Chairman of the County Council for this period.

Her grandchildren Kim and Adam were born in 1995 and 1997. Reg became ill in the late 1990's and Audrey cared for him for as long as possible, he sadly died in 2000 and Audrey moved to Devon to be with her daughter, Clare and family, settling in Chagford. Her son, John, died in 2009 and this had a major impact on Audrey's health in the longer term but she was happy John's children, Jean and Mary became even closer to Clare, Kim and Adam. Talking of family it was lovely that Audrey was able to get to know Dru, now Clare's wife, and her sons William and Henry and later accepted them as part of the family.

In 2011 Audrey was diagnosed with dementia and moved to a residential home in Bridestowe until she passed away. The care she received at Springfields was exceptional. Audrey's sister, Sheila, with her partner, Judy, spent several days every year visiting there and were in touch faithfully every week by phone, postcard or letter.

On Audrey's behalf thank you to all those who have worked with her, loved her and been a part of her journey through 89 years.

**Clare Stanton**  
**(Audrey's daughter)**

## David Lawson - 1938 - 2019

David was born in Stockton-on-Tees and raised in the village of Norton with his sisters, Judith and Angela. He attended Stockton Grammar School and he formed a lifelong friendship with John Hedley (1939 to 2018) and where a love of music was instilled, by an enthusiastic music teacher. David and John both went on Crusader camps on the North York Moors and the Cleveland Hills.

David came south and trained as a teacher at Newland Park College in Chalfont St Giles, qualifying in 1960. He taught at Gayhurst School in Gerrards Cross from 1960 to 1964. He shared a flat in Gerrards Cross with John, where they became leaders of Crusader Classes first in Beaconsfield and then Gerrards Cross from 1962 to 1989. David enjoyed giving other youngsters the same opportunities to explore the Christian faith he had been given.

David attended Fulmer Church from 1960 and remembered fondly the ministries of Rex Lloyd and Bill Taylor. His love of music led him to sing with the Fulmer Church choir and with the Amersham and Chesham Bois Choral Society. He taught in two local primary schools before gaining the Headship of Fulmer County Junior School in 1969. In 1973 he moved to be Head of Holmer Green County Middle School where he worked until he retired in 1997. David then went on to serve as a School Governor at the Gerrards Cross C of E Middle School from 2003 to 2010.

David and Val were married in 1972 and set up home in Chalfont St Giles. Jonathan and Susie were born and they moved to Gerrards Cross in 1989. When the children were old enough to join the children's classes, they moved from St James, Fulmer to St James, Oxford Road. Over the years David served St James in various areas; as a PCC member, a House group leader, headed the Buildings and Fabrics committee, the Bishop's Review panel, he was part of the team which, with Nat Schluter, ran The Vine programme for several years, and manned the Welcome desk.

In his spare time, he was a steam train enthusiast, a keen walker and an avid follower of the England cricket team. His great hobby was gardening, and his knowledge of plants was encyclopaedic. David took pride in his family's achievements, welcomed his son and daughter-in-law into the family and delighted in his four grandchildren. In 2016, David and Val moved to Devon to be near to Susie and her family. David had some time to enjoy his new home and beautiful area before his health began to fail.

His Memorial Service was held in St James, Fulmer on October 31 attended by many who had loved him. He was described as a man who was "Serious about Jesus, Serious about Scripture, and who lived a life of Service to others."



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[memorial.gardens@southbucks.gov.uk](mailto:memorial.gardens@southbucks.gov.uk)  
[www.southbucks.gov.uk](http://www.southbucks.gov.uk)

### **Bell-Ringing in Fulmer**

You may have heard the church bells ringing again in Fulmer. There are 6 bells in the tower ranging from the treble weighing 3 1/4 cwt (165.11 kg) to the tenor weighing in at 7 1/2 cwt (381.02kg) and each ringing a different note. This means that by ringing in turn you either get a simple 'round' of the descending scale or a series of different patterns but not actual tunes. 6 ringers are needed to do this, one for each bell and for several years we have not had enough people. We now have a small local band of 4, assisted by 3 from other towers and an excellent teacher so we are able to ring before the morning service of the 4<sup>th</sup> Sunday (and 5<sup>th</sup> when it occurs), for special Church festivals and national and village occasions and for weddings and funerals when wanted. We are not yet skilled enough to enter the competitions arranged by the local organisation of 40 towers, the East Berks and South Bucks Branch of the Oxford Diocesan Guild of Church Bellringers.

BUT, and there is always a 'but' isn't there, 7 people for 6 bells gives us very little wriggle room for holidays, illness and other commitments and we are looking for new recruits. We are a diverse and friendly lot and while the skill and art of campanology is not acquired overnight it is a rewarding and fascinating hobby. You do not have to be strong, musical, young or a churchgoer. It is not solitary like going to the gym or for a run. So how about making it a family bonding activity with a teenage youngster or a new retirement challenge to get you out of the house among a convivial group. We practise one evening a week for 1 1/2hrs and private lessons (free) can be arranged during the day at Chalfont St. Giles church. If you are interested please e-mail me on [celiandafydd@btinternet.com](mailto:celiandafydd@btinternet.com) or phone 01494 775503

**Celia Thomas**

"We'll Meet Again, don't know Where, don't know When".

Vera Lynn

My brother, Robin Arthur, died at his home just outside Northampton on October the 17<sup>th</sup> after a short illness. A few days before he had become 94 years of age and as I was fifteen months the elder, I had been close to him during those 94 years of his life. He much enjoyed his work as the overseas director of the Northampton firm of Crockett and Jones who specialise in handcrafted boots and shoes, so that he did not retire until he was 86. He became a widower in tragic circumstances in 1986 and thereafter, though his interests were wide and took in the local Sea Cadets, power boating and so on, he followed the Victorian

work ethic of the Job being of prime importance, to which our father readily adhered in shaping his own life in the conditions following World War I in which he had served in the Coldstream Guards throughout. But for Robin Arthur, life was never dull or lacking in variety and his exploits were made of the stuff, which invites them to become legendary and told in hushed, but astonished, whispers. However, the start to Robin Arthur's life was 'bumpy' and did not run smoothly. Round about the age of one he contracted diphtheria, which in those days was considered to be near fatal, but with careful nursing he recovered against the odds. By some whim (origin unknown!) our father decreed that each of his children (there were five of us) must have their tonsils removed before they became 5 years old. The practice in those days (late 20s or early 30s) was for the kitchen table to be scrubbed and each of us laid upon it at which point a terrifying chloroform mask was placed over our face until a merciful cloud of unconsciousness spared us from seeing the rest. The operation was performed by our local GP (family doctor as they were then known). Old age seemed to have deprived him of most of his erstwhile skill and his shaky hands did not inspire confidence. How we each survived this ordeal is a matter of conjecture but each of us had to endure another operation later in life as the tonsils of each of us had taken a second life.

From then until the age of 19, Robin Arthur seemed to be fated. If any of us caught a cold and passed in on to him, his temperature would soar to 104 degrees with astonishing rapidity and he became seriously ill. But his power of recovery was also good and when fit, he was probably the strongest of us all though when it came to tree-climbing, no-one outshone our sister Mary who would have been an excellent mate for Tarzan. But for Robin, the rush to a high temperature continued relentlessly. In 1942, in his final holiday before leaving his school he went with his Air Training Corps colleagues to RAF Halton near Wendover. A contingent had just returned from the Far East and Robin caught dysentery from one of them and dismally remained bedded for the whole of that summer. Nevertheless he was deemed to be fit to join the Fleet Air Arm in the autumn. Almost immediately he became seriously ill yet again and had to have a lung drained in Haslar Hospital. This was so serious that our parents had to be informed and kept informed. And then the miracle happened ... Robin, still in a recovery state, was posted to Canada to learn to fly and one can conjecture that conditions there were so much better in recovery terms than in poor old war-torn, exhausted Britain. Almost immediately his health improved to the extent that he barely suffered a further illness for the rest of his life until this last one, which has now claimed him. Robin became a fighter pilot in the Fleet Air Arm and was based on Trincomalee in what was then Ceylon, now Sri Lanka. It was not for long because after a further four months of bitter conflict, the war in the Far East came to an abrupt halt. Even so Robin had known his moment of peril for when returning to his carrier, the Ameer, following an afternoon patrolling the Burma coast in the glare of bright sunlight, he saw his ship had two landing decks occasioned by the bright sun of the afternoon and he was facing a choice with potentially dangerous consequences. Fortunately he had chosen the right one and so he survived.

A day before what was to be known as VE day he telephoned me from his base in Gosport to say that he was due to fly to the Far East on VE plus 2. Could we meet to say farewell to each other? At the time I was stationed in Aldershot nursing a broken arm but managed to obtain a compassionate 24 hour leave of absence and, on meeting, we quickly joined the vast cheering crowds who thronged London Street. One cannot say that suddenly all was brightness and light when the night fell as the blackout still persisted but the gaiety all round one was intoxicating. Winston Churchill, the architect of our victory, appeared at the windows of the Admiralty and we cheered him; as we poured down the Mall towards Buckingham Palace the King and Queen and other members of the Royal Family appeared on the Palace Balcony and we cheered them, lustily, for they had stayed in London, with their people, throughout the Blitz and in Whitehall an open lorry-load of war prisoners returning from their captivity, looking understandably bewildered, slowly made their way through the throng and we cheered them too. London was as it had never been before.

But for Robin and I the general rejoicing was of necessity somewhat muted. The War in the Far East was still raging; the horrors of the atom bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, which brought hostilities to an abrupt end, had not yet happened and it was predicted that the

Road to Tokyo would lie through a series of small but high casualty encounters to free the heavily defended Islands which bar the way to the Japanese Mainland and Robin was due to fly out to join the bloody conflict in two days' time. As we stood bidding farewell to each other on the platform of Waterloo Station, in our hearts I do not think we thought we would meet again.

As I stood by Robin's coffin on a cold November day, I reflected that we had been there, he and I, once before separated by 74 years when we had not known the Where or the When we might meet again. I whispered a silent prayer that we would meet again, if on another shore ...

**Edward Guinness**

### **FROM OUR PARISH COUNCIL CHAIRMAN**

The first thing I must do is to pay tribute to the success of the Fulmer Conservation Volunteers in getting awarded runner-up in the Best Kept Village competition. The organisation and dedication that has gone into cleaning, repairing and maintaining each part of the village deserved one place higher, I thought! With the new flower displays, everything looked amazing for the summer and the crowds who turned out for Fulmer Day appreciated how great the village has been looking. It's a real testament to the strength of community in the village, and may it grow from strength to strength. Roll on 2020.

Promoting this sense of community and engaging with all the groups around Fulmer is an important part of the Parish Plan that I introduced in the last edition, and along that theme, the Parish Council invited the rangers of Black Park to come along to the November meeting to outline their plans and how they maintain and conserve the country park. It was a valuable opportunity to get to know our near neighbours and ask questions on subjects as far apart as squirrels and film productions! With monthly meetings, we regularly have our district and county councillors attend and Pauline announces where we have external attendees or particular themes in advance -- if a subject interests or concerns you or you have any questions or an opinion to share, then I would urge you to attend. With the colder months upon us we have moved meetings to the Cricket Pavilion but if you are unable to attend in person then I, or any of the other councillors, will happily raise points on your behalf.

The darker nights have brought with them reports of crime - particularly burglaries. This is of great concern. I would urge everyone to stay safe and take precautions when leaving your home empty. If you have particular concerns then do please come along to a Parish Council meeting when we get the neighbourhood Police officers along to ask your questions. By showing up and showing our concern, we can get the help from the Police that will keep our community safe. Furthermore, as part of our council updates, we are modernising the Neighbourhood Watch emails that Brian Weild sends out to a new platform, so now is a good time to check you are signed up to receive alerts.

Finally, next year will see some upheaval in local government. The District council (bins, planning) and the County council (roads, schools) are merging to form a new Unitary authority. There will be a lot of changes, but the Parish Council remains as it is, and we see our role through this change to lobby the new council to provide the best possible services for Fulmer, to learn how the new system works as best we can and to escalate your concerns when it does not.

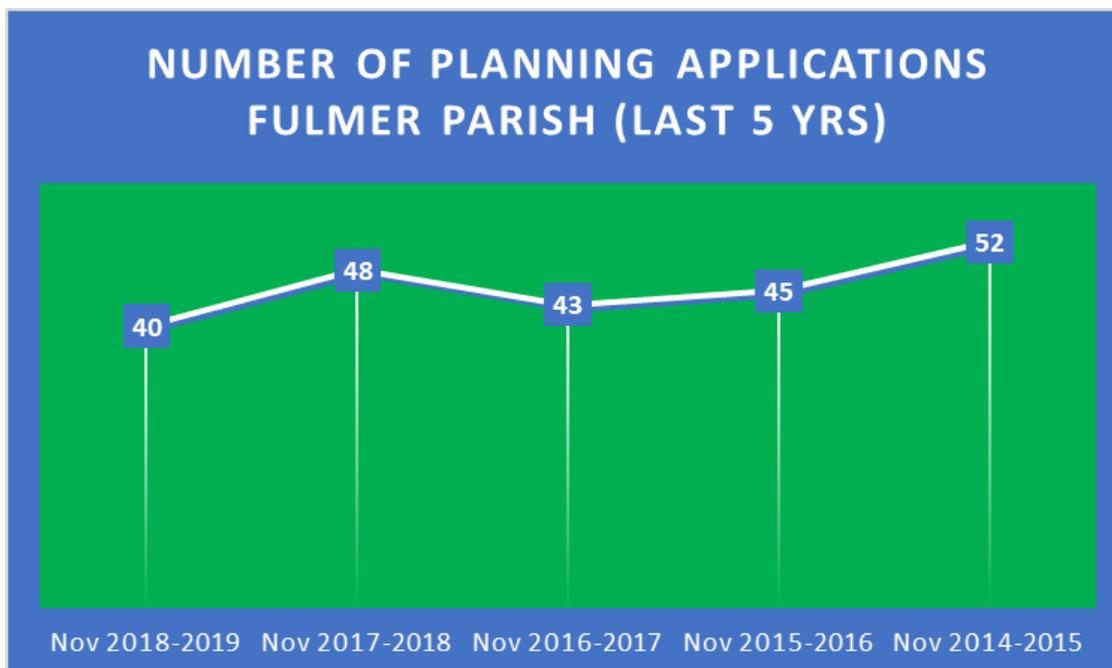
I hope everyone has an enjoyable Christmas and a wonderful New Year!

**David Brackin**

## PLANNING MATTERS IN FULMER

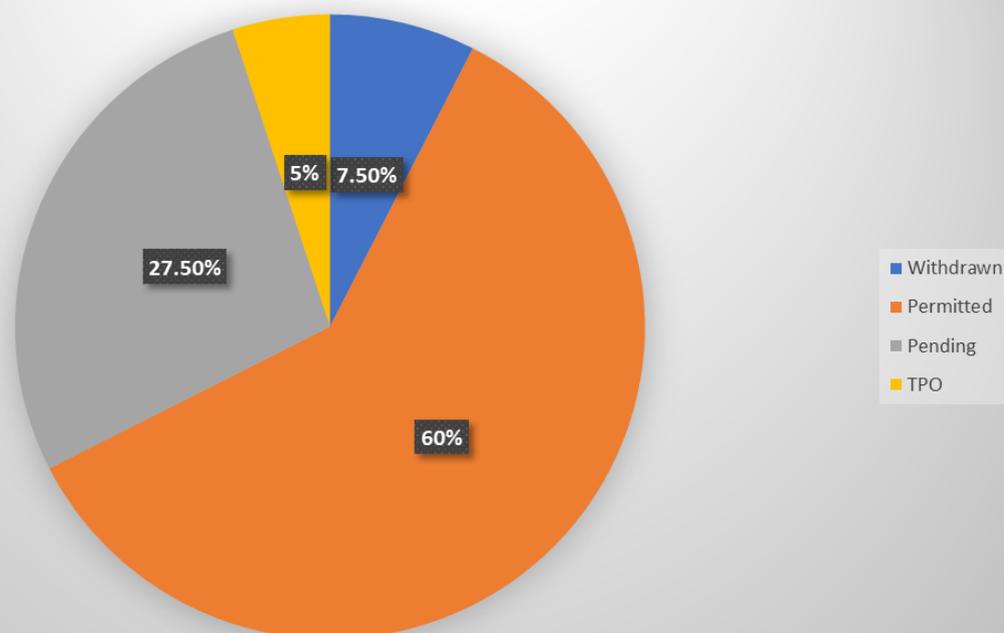
In the 12 months between November 18 2018 - November 18 2019, 40 planning applications for the Parish of Fulmer have been received and reviewed by the Parish Council – an average of just over 3 per month compared to 48 received over the same period last year. Gerrards Cross Town Council received 341 applications in the same period, or nearly 35 per month (28.4); Iver Parish Council 299 and Hedgerley Parish 40 (a 25% growth on last year). The applications have ranged from permission to fell a single tree, to the construction of completely new houses or even pools. Over the same period last year we have seen larger requests for multiple homes, some contentious. We continue to deal with some enforcement issues, working closely with the Council to protect the concerns of residents.

As is always the case, the Parish Council is given a few weeks to comment on any planning applications before the South Bucks and Chiltern District planning officers make a decision. As we move closer to a unitary body we have already seen planning teams combine. We also work with planning teams to better understand some of the decisions reached. Parish residents are welcome to attend the monthly Parish meetings to voice their thoughts and concerns on planning matters. We will continue to act as your conduit into the planning office to express your concerns and thoughts on planning matters in the Parish of Fulmer. The main priority of the Parish council in providing its views to the Planning Officers continues to be the protection of village life and prevention from overdevelopment. Our aim being to promote development which helps the Parish to continue to function as a participative community, preferring buildings for permanently resident families, over huge 'structures' that can sometimes attract temporary residents. As outlined last year we have continued to explore the Neighbourhood Plan, waiting on the Local Plan to be finalised. We have registered our desire to create plan to the local authority and currently are exploring the process and available support.



In the 12 months from November 2018, South Bucks District Council have published decisions on 40 planning applications affecting the Parish of Fulmer. The table above shows applications received over the same period in the last 5 years. The Planning team has worked hard to make decisions on some long standing applications and progress is being made. Of the 40 applications submitted, 24 were permitted most with conditions applied (60%), 11 are still pending a decision (27.5%) and 3 were withdrawn (7.5%), 2 are TPOs (5%).

## Fulmer Parish Applications Nov 2018 to Nov 2019



The Fulmer Parish Council will continue to provide commentary on Parish views with regards to planning applications and continue to support and work with Fulmer residents with regards to a number of long standing Enforcement activities working closely with both District & County Council representatives (Unitary Council moving forward). The Village continues to be very active with the number of Planning requests high for such a small community.

The Parish Council would very much like to hear from Residents of the Parish on how we work better in providing information and supporting any concerns for all planning matters.

PARM KHANGHURA – Fulmer Parish Councillor  
[parm@connectglobalconsulting.com](mailto:parm@connectglobalconsulting.com)

### **From our South Bucks District Councillor – Malcolm Bradford**

The new shadow authority for Buckinghamshire is well under way in shaping and preparing for the transition in 2020. The newly elected Councillors will take up their new positions in the Council to continue making improvements for the future. I'm sure there will be a period for the Council to settle down and meet the demands of our Community. There have been a number of consultations published on the Council website for residents to have their say and input into shaping the Council.

My own contribution is the on-going complaints in the Council, some for many years, (even before I joined in 2007), that continue today and which should be resolved or closed. They only cause frustration and anxiety in our Community if left to continue.

The new council will cover the whole of the county area and will be responsible for all the functions currently run by the four districts and the county council and starts on the 1<sup>st</sup> April 2020.

South Bucks District Council has invested and developed 34 brand new homes in Tatling End, including 14 affordable rented apartments. The properties will have shared and private

amenity space, and parking. These new homes will help the Council to house families in desperate need of housing accommodation.

The Council is pleased to report that construction works have begun on the new South Bucks Country Park in Stoke Poges. Planning permission was granted in November 2018 to develop the former golf academy on Stoke Road, into a 22-hectare country park. Once developed, the new park will provide a wide range of outdoor recreation and wellbeing facilities open all year to the public. The park will include a cycle track, mountain bike trail, children's play area, footpaths, parking and many more facilities.

Protecting the Green Belt has always been one of my passions to support. The Council has submitted its proposed local plan which will be adopted by the new Council if approved.

In the meantime, now winter is here it will present further challenges to the Council to manage our services to the standard we expect.

### **County Councillor Report**

As many will be aware, the political landscape, both locally and nationally, is in a state of significant change! The sitting MP for our constituency, Dominic Grieve, was deselected by his Conservative association, and has decided to stand in the General Election as an Independent, against a recently selected Conservative candidate. The Liberal Democrats have chosen not to oppose Dominic Grieve.

At a Local level, the County Council and the District Councils are being replaced by a countywide Unitary Authority, which will take over the functions of both County and districts. The election for this new council will be in spring 2020. It is a matter of public record that I have supported the single unitary option since it was first suggested some years ago.. I have consistently, with many others, argued against the profligacy of the majority group on South Bucks District Council in wasting tens of thousands of pounds of your council taxpayers money in paying lawyers and consultants in a futile attempt to overturn the decision for a single unitary.

You will be aware that South Bucks District Council has developed a draft Local Development Plan, which has now been submitted to the Planning Inspectorate for decision. Prior to any decision being reached, there will be a Public Enquiry. Most Parish and Town councils in South Bucks robustly oppose the District Council draft plan, which would remove massive areas from Green Belt Protection. Examples of this are 1,600 additional houses in Beaconsfield Green Belt, and an additional 1,400 houses in Iver on Green Belt.

SBDC also propose removing Green Belt protection from Denham Village, Tatling End and Higher Denham, and from a large Green Belt area adjacent to Denham roundabout for commercial development, including a large hotel complex. The significant increased traffic from these sites can only impact adversely on all of the Communities between Beaconsfield and Iver.

Politics add no value at Local level. The majority group controlling South Bucks District threatened to expel any of their members who voted against this draft local plan. One can only compare this behaviour with that I am fortunate to experience from working with Fulmer Parish Council, whose volunteer members team work tirelessly, and totally apolitically, for the common good of the Community in Fulmer.

**Roger Reed (roreed@buckscc.gov.uk)  
Buckinghamshire County Councillor  
Denham, Fulmer and Gerrards Cross East**



The Autumn Term at Fulmer Infant School got this year off to a flying start, with many exciting events and activities taking place for our pupils and the local community. A notable change for the school has been establishing a Co-Headship with two Headteachers working in partnership to lead this vibrant and outstanding school. Mrs Tracey Dowsing joined in September to work alongside Mrs Cathy Hunt, the existing Headteacher, who is cutting back on her hours. A strong teamwork approach has been established and the school continues to go from strength to strength! The school has raised significant amounts of money for charity this term and the pupils have enjoyed several 'Mufti' Days. We have raised money for the following charities; Macmillan Cancer Support, Jeans for Jeans, The Royal British Legion, Children in Need and Save the Children. A notable sum of approximately £1000 has been achieved!

Harvest Festival<sup>[1]</sup><sub>[SEP]</sub> - The school held its annual Harvest Festival and the poems, the singing, the percussion were all wonderful. Thank you to the staff for preparing the children so well, and to parents, carers and visitors who brought in produce. School staff took the produce to SHOC, a charity in Slough, which supports the homeless. It was very gratefully received. It is always a rewarding experience for the children to think about others less fortunate than themselves.

Victorian Day<sup>[1]</sup><sub>[SEP]</sub> was on 8 October, all the children in Year 1 had fun learning about what it was like to go to school in the Victorian times. The children had lots of fun dressing up in their Victorian style clothes and, as you can see, they all looked splendid! A fun time was had by all, but most believed they preferred school as it is today!



Drumming -<sup>[L]</sup><sub>[SEP]</sub> The school celebrated Black History month in October with a fabulous morning learning how to play African Djembe drums. Every child had the opportunity to experience both beat and rhythm and loved creating vibrant melodies altogether as a group. Our year 2 children showed off their skills to their parents and carers at the end of the day.

Diwali<sup>[L]</sup><sub>[SEP]</sub> - Our Reception Class teacher led an assembly on Diwali, which was celebrated by Hindus and Sikhs on 27 October. She told the story of how Ram defeated the demon king, Ravan, who had ten heads. The story symbolizes good overcoming evil. People who celebrate Diwali clean their houses, wear new clothes, light fireworks and candles and make Rangoli patterns on the floor. The festival is known as 'The Festival of Lights' and pupils in Year 1 made beautiful 'Diva' lamps for the celebrations.

Multi Skills at Dr Challoner's High School with<sup>[L]</sup><sub>[SEP]</sub> Fulmer Infant School is a wonderful sports partnership with a local secondary school, which involves their staff and older students organising a wide range of sporting challenges for pupils from partnership schools. Children in Year 1 had a wonderful trip to Dr Challoner's High school where they worked alongside pupils from other Infant and Primary schools, competing together and developing a range of different PE skills.

Pupils Visit the Environmental Centre in Iver<sup>[L]</sup><sub>[SEP]</sub> - Recently, all the pupils in Years 1 and 2 travelled by coach to spend a very exciting morning learning about mini-beasts and food at the Iver Environmental Centre. Practical learning outside with the centre's informative staff encourages children to develop their understanding of nature and apply their scientific enquiry skills. This is a great way to enhance the curriculum.

Scarecrow Day<sup>[L]</sup><sub>[SEP]</sub> - At the school we like to introduce children to a wide range of brilliant children's literature and use much loved stories to stimulate writing. This occurred last month when our Year 2 children were studying 'The Scarecrow's Wedding' by Julia Donaldson. A beautiful scarecrow was created for the classroom and pupils and staff dressed as scarecrows for the day! Naturally, as a result, the pupils were inspired to write much more creative and exciting stories!

Fulmer Infant School is a delightful establishment that caters specifically for Infant children aged 4 to 7 years. We offer small class sizes in a safe and caring environment, plus we have friendly, highly skilled staff who excel in achieving the highest possible standards. Judged 'Outstanding' by Ofsted and over subscribed by parents, this lovely little school is a real asset to the village of Fulmer.

**Cathy Hunt and Tracey Dowsing Co-Headteachers**

## Pedestrian Matters

The village shop, alas no more,  
Once owned and run by family Mawer;  
Post Office too, it served us well  
Until events caused them to sell  
Is now a home, a residence  
Elegant in stance with wall and fence,  
But oft too prone to hurt, by dense  
Car drivers' over-confidence  
They see our bendy village road  
A challenge, just like Mr Toad,  
And like him too, crash, cause alarm.  
It's feared that all too soon some harm  
Will strike a blameless passer-by.  
Beware, take care, danger is nigh  
"Look out!" when out, hold your child's hand  
To keep you both in this fair land  
And please remember, (it must be said)  
"You'll feel much better safe than dead".

KEN PETERS

### **'Tis the season to be jolly .....**

Feeling jolly can be a very elusive emotion unless you happen to be Father Christmas. Yet, we often send Christmas cards wishing the recipient 'Peace and Joy'. And joy is very fitting, particularly at this time of year when we celebrate the birth of Jesus. It was to the shepherds, ordinary people like you and me, the angel declared: *"Do not be afraid. I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all people."* Luke 2:10

Everyone loves to receive good news and it would be wonderful to hear more good news to lift our spirits. Bad news in the media, extreme weather conditions plus our own personal struggles and the stresses and strains of life can add to feeling a little less than peaceful and joyful, especially at this time of year when the nights are getting longer. Joy? Bah humbug!! But then the Christmas story exclaims: *"Today in the town of David a Saviour has been born to you; he is Christ the Lord. This will be a sign to you: You will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger."* Luke 2:11-12.

*'Suddenly a great company of the heavenly host appeared with the angel, praising God and saying: "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to men on whom his favour rests." Luke 2:13-14.*

*And Mary, she 'treasured up all these things and pondered them in her heart. The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things they had heard and seen, which were just as they had been told.'* Luke 2:19-20.

Beauty, awe and wonder comes where heaven opens and earth glimpses indescribable things, somehow not of this world; angels and heavenly beings, GOD! For a moment time stops as we place our focus on a tiny baby, the Christ child. It's a humble birth, nothing grand about it though kings travel afar to come and see for themselves that which was foretold, and they bow down and worship Jesus, the new born king. Truly wonderful things happened on that holy night: God breaking through into this *dark* world. It's a story that is true - a story that has been told for over 2000 years and will go on being told.

Come and join us this Christmas season and hear the story again, or perhaps for the very first time, and ponder in your heart those things found in the greatest story ever told and be filled with the joy of knowing that Jesus Christ is Lord and King and came to give hope to all people for eternity. At St James we have a number of Christmas services taking place and you will receive a very warm welcome. Check out the Christmas services leaflet enclosed with this newsletter for more information or check out our website: [www.saintjames.org.uk](http://www.saintjames.org.uk).

You might also like to join us at the Black Horse Pub on the 14<sup>th</sup> December at 4 pm as we sing carols together as a village community, and share in some festive mulled wine and mince pies. **'Tis the season to be jolly ....**

**Revd Jill Roth, Associate Minister - Fulmer  
St James Gerrards Cross and Fulmer**

### **St James' Fulmer.....**

Referencing my opening comments in the June issue, our new Rector, the Rev'd Matt Beeby took the Summer to understand and review all we do across our 2 sites, forming his ideas and working on the vision for 2020 and beyond. Three Vision Dinners were held at the end of September, attracting c.375 across all our congregations, outlining the vision of "Every Life Transformed. Through Jesus. For God's glory". We will do this by Reaching our Community, Growing Disciples and Resourcing the Kingdom. This will be addressed through 5 Purposes. With the Gospel of Jesus at the Centre, the areas are; **Magnification**, God worshipped & glorified, **Mission**, our Community engaged and evangelised, **Membership**, Newcomers connected and cared for, **Maturity**, our congregations established and growing and **Ministry**, everyone equipped and serving. A key new activity is the new **Prayer Central** gathering, on the first Wednesday of each month at the St James Centre, Gerrards Cross. Brochures for further reading are in St James.

Our Fulmer Ministry Team, led by Rev'd Jill Roth, have continued with work bringing the Gospel alive in St James' Church and the local Community around Fulmer. Our main infrastructure project has seen the completion of major renovations to the Porch, with the re-plastering and the beautiful new benches.

**Recap of Events** - Once again, Fiona Gray and her talented crew created and delivered a super Summer Concert in June with drinks and nibbles outside on a warm, sunny evening. Entitled "Fabulous Fulmer" this mix of songs, hymns, prayers and poems was a delight with the highlight for many the children and Robert singing, "Let's go fly a kite". On Fulmer Day with the Church full of wonderful flowers, we ran our traditional activities; Flowers, Organ playing and Bell ringing. Fulmer Infant School joined with us providing kids food and juices as well as our Breakfast Church style crafts and face painting. Our special Community Service on the Sunday with a buffet lunch was also well attended and enjoyed.

Our Harvest Supper in early October was a sell out this year. We had a tasty meal with traditional singing and celebrations offering our thanks. Our lovely Church was superbly decorated by our Flower Ladies for the Harvest Family Service. Several Fulmer children joined in singing us songs and Freya read a poem on Harvest Fruits. This was followed by a Harvest Lunch in the Village Hall for all.

In November, Breakfast Church reached its 1<sup>st</sup> anniversary! Breakfast Church is a children's service at 9.30 on the first Sunday of the month for local families and those from Fulmer Infant School and The Beehive. We offer a tasty breakfast of bacon butties, pastries and fruit, plus coffee, tea and juices with fun craft activities for families, parents and grandparents to do together. We sing songs and tell a Bible story with a prayer and blessing. It's been well attended and appreciated by many. In January we hope to have our first Breakfast Church Christening!

As usual we held our Annual Bereavement Service on the first Sunday in November for all the St James' congregations, to remember their departed loved ones. We held a special tea in Church afterwards. The **Remembrance Service** followed this year on November 10<sup>th</sup>. We erected our "There but not there" silhouette soldier Larry Brooks kindly organised for the Village last year, alongside the cross Will Wilcox had carved.

Christmas is fast approaching! Everyone is welcome to join us at our various services. Please see the full Christmas Brochure accompanying this Newsletter. In Fulmer the services are:

<b>Carols at the Black Horse Pub</b>	Saturday 14 December <b>4.00pm</b>
<b>Seasonal Advent Service</b>	Sunday 22 December <b>8.00am</b>
<b>Seasonal Advent Service</b>	Sunday 22 December <b>11.15am</b>
<b>Carols by Candlelight</b>	Sunday 22 December <b>6.00</b> for <b>6.30pm</b>
<b>Christingle Carols</b>	24 December <b>4.00pm</b>
<b>Christmas Eve Carols &amp; Holy Communion</b>	24 December <b>9.30pm</b>
<b>Christmas Day Traditional Service &amp; Holy Communion</b>	25 December <b>8.00am</b>
<b>Christmas Day Celebration Service</b>	25 December <b>11.15am</b>

We look forward to welcoming you all.

**Francesca Hall—Drinkwater  
Church Warden**



I am pleased to report that the Royal British Legion poppy appeal at the Beaconsfield Services, manned by residents from Fulmer, Wexham and Stoke Poges raised a total of £10,448

Brian Weild

## WELL DONE, FULMER AND THE CONSERVATION VOLUNTEERS!

2019 has been an excellent year for Fulmer and the Conservation Volunteers. We have grown our numbers from 4 to over 20 since the beginning of the year, welcoming volunteers of all ages and experience to help keep the village looking its best. Working our way around the roads and lanes at the start of the year, the volunteers were busy picking litter, cutting back hedges and verges, and washing signs and bush shelters before the mowing began in spring. In early summer and with entry to the Buckinghamshire Best Village Competition (BKV) at the forefront of our minds we began planting out the baskets and troughs to bring lots of colour to central Fulmer and the Recreation Ground at King George's Fields. After a lovely warm summer, we were delighted to receive the news that Fulmer had been awarded 'Runner-up' in the Gurney Cup (for Buckinghamshire villages with a population under 500), the first time since 2014 that the village had placed in the top two. We were pipped to the top spot by one point, but very proud that we had secured an additional 9 points over our entry from the previous year. All this could not be achieved without the time and devotion of the volunteers and many residents who went out of their way to make the village, the gardens, the church yard and the recreation ground look extra special this year. We were also warmly supported by Liz and Tom from Pinewood Nurseries with the flowers and plants. Next year we have sights firmly on winning the cup, so if you would like to come and help we will be publishing a schedule of works early in the new year and will be meeting on Saturday mornings once a month from the early spring.

Have a great Christmas everyone - **Charlie Gray** (FCV)

*Many congratulations to Charlie and his team for the hard work they have put in this year to keep Fulmer beautiful – and tidy! - Editors*

### VILLAGE HALL

Our current timetable of activities is as follows:

Monday	Band Practice
Tuesday	Yoga who are taking a short break and will be back soon
Wednesday	Martial Arts
Thursday	Yoga, who are taking a short break and will be back soon

We also have a ballet class who book on an ad hoc basis and, of course, the weekends are taken up with children's parties, weddings etc.

We also have long time tenants the Beehive & Honeycomb Nursery who operate from Monday to Friday, 9am - 3pm during term times.

Finally, don't forget, if you have any special events coming up and you are looking for a lovely venue at a competitive price, we are always happy to welcome you.

The rates for the hall are as follows;

Children's party, allocation of 4 hours is £70.

Adult function from 18:00-23:00 is £165

Day rate from 09:00-11:00 is £120

Please contact Karen Nelmes on 07498 041253, for further details.

**Barbara Zoltowska**

### **What you didn't know about.....your Parish Clerk**

I'm writing this at the suggestion of a Parishioner who has known me for some years now. For those who don't, she suggested that I introduce myself to the Parish in the Newsletter. For those who do know me, you can skip on to the next article. Many of you will think that being a Parish Clerk is a bureaucratic role, which in truth it can be. What makes it worth doing though is the wide variety of what has to be done. The Parish Clerk is the bookkeeper, legal counsel, communications manager, secretariat and all-round general factotum for the Council. However, you knew all that.

What you perhaps don't know about is my love of aviation. After university in 1981 I was offered the opportunity to go gliding which became love at first winch launch. Then for nearly ten years I found some way of getting to RAF Bicester from London, where I worked, on a Friday evening. I became a gliding instructor, bought a share in a glider and competed in regional gliding competitions. However, the best memories are from gliding in the mountains of Scotland at the Deeside Gliding Club, just down the road from Balmoral. The weather conditions at the end of the summer were ideal for gaining height and remain airborne for hours. I remember being at 13,500 feet on a demand fed oxygen system and seeing all three coasts of Scotland. It was minus twenty degrees though and gliders didn't have heating systems so my feet froze and had to be massaged on my return to prevent frostbite.

My gliding qualifications were converted into a Private Pilot's Licence in 1987 and since then I have flown single engine light aircraft. I have added an Instrument Rating, Night Rating and even Seaplane rating to my licence, all of which open up new and wonderful flying experiences with different challenges. Flying at night during Guy Fawkes season is especially pretty watching the fireworks from the air. Flying a float-plane down the Colorado river is also great fun. While in the US I flew over all of the five manmade dams and lakes on the Colorado River and through the South West desert where the scenery is beautiful. Think old Western movies but seeing it from the air. Colleagues from the UK always loved a trip to the Grand Canyon, followed by Furnace Creek airfield, which is 200 feet below sea level in the Death Valley National Park. From the lowest airfield in the US it was an hour to the second highest in the US at Big Bear Lake in the San Bernardino Mountains. Seeing the Niagara Falls with Lakes Erie and Ontario during a frozen November with snow is very picturesque too.

In Europe I've flown down to Fez and Marrakesh, via the Pyrenees and Balearics. On the other side of Europe, I've flown down the Croatian coast to Albania and have the high viz jacket from Tirana International Airport to prove it; given to us by the Airport staff. Now there's a different country. It was the same trip when I took off to come home with red crosses through all the screens of the glass cockpit in the aircraft, rendering the instruments unusable but the aeroplane still flyable. I've flown through the Alps and around Mont Blanc, up through the Baltics to Norway and down through Sweden.

I still fly and my Licence is still valid and through my involvement in the activity I'm now also involved in protecting the rights and privileges of General Aviation Pilots in this country. I sit on the Airfields Working Group for the All-Party Parliamentary Group for General Aviation (GA). This was the largest All-Party Parliamentary Group in the House, both cross party and cross-house. Earlier this year I was asked to sit on the panel for the Lord Kirkhope Parliamentary Inquiry in the modernisation of Lower Airspace in the UK, calling the CAA to account for its actions, or more usually, inaction where GA is concerned. I also Chair the Board of the Aircraft Owners and Pilots Association in the UK whose sole mission is to help keep GA Pilots flying despite the pressure of increasing controlled airspace and in some cases over burdensome legislation.

And I did mention I'm also your Parish Clerk. Perhaps next time, more about that as our Local Government moves towards a Unitary Authority.

**Pauline Vahey**

## Teikyo School

In 1989 Teikyo School was established just outside Fulmer Village at Fulmer Grange. On 22 November 2019 the School celebrated its 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary with its students, staff, and friends to share the vision of Dr Okinaga, the former President of Teikyo University. Teikyo School is part of the Teikyo University Group founded in 1931, a large educational organisation based in Japan that is building international networks as part of its commitment for a global perspective through education and local engagement. Dr Okinaga had a vision of an enterprise that would embrace what we have learned from the past and the present - the cultures of music, dance, the creative arts, sport, and philosophy – and this vision is embraced today by his son and current President, Mr Yoshihito Okinaga.

Teikyo is a Japanese senior high school with students aged 15 to 18, who upon graduation, may apply for university places both in Japan and here in the UK. Nearly all students' families are based in Japan and new young students quickly have to adapt to the English way of life. Over the years these students have been involved in numerous local events with the Infant School, Riding for the Disabled, The Black Horse, and most notably wearing colourful kimonos whilst dancing and dishing up traditional food at Fulmer Day.

In conjunction with teaching the Japanese curriculum, the School also runs a football academy programme, and in April 2020 will start an art iGCSE course.

Other than the full-term residential students, the School also welcomes over 250 other Japanese students annually to this part of South Buckinghamshire through its successful study abroad programmes.

Teikyo School is honoured to celebrate thirty years of harmony between its student community and Fulmer village, a relationship that we hope will continue to grow.

**Dean Simpson - Bursar**



### News from South Bucks RDA

This year the National RDA Movement Celebrates 50 years of supporting Riding and Driving for the Disabled. Yogi was ridden in the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Parade by our Acting Assistant Yard Manager, Gem, representing the South Region, at the National Championships. This was shown on Country File. A few weeks later, Helen our yard manager became a proud parent of Rosie. While Helen is on maternity leave, the group is very fortunate to have Caro Haynes, BHSI as acting stable manager. At the championships several of our riders achieved personal bests and came home with many rosettes. The group had riders placed in show jumping, dressage, countryside challenge and arts and crafts disciplines. One rider took part

in a taster 'endurance ride'. This encouraged us to hold our own starter 'endurance event'. We were blessed with sunshine and a gentle breeze when 10 riders took up the opportunity to complete a 1km ride. All learnt about how the horse has to be fit enough, checking that the horse's heart rate was okay, that they trotted up sound. The riders then had to negotiate round the course making sure that they stopped to offer their mounts a drink at the halfway point. All riders were timed. When they completed the ride; the riders then had to have their horses rechecked and the riders helped to wash them down. Many thanks go to all the volunteers who helped with stewarding, leading, timing, and health-checking.

In this celebratory year Clare Balding, published a children's novel '*The Race Horse who Learnt to Dance*' Publisher: Penguin Books Ltd, ISBN: 9780241336755 with RDA as a theme running through the story. The children from Coteford School, who ride at SBRDA on Wednesdays, chose the book to read and then wrote reviews for the RDA. Clare came to meet her reviewers in November and watch them Ride.

In November, as our part of the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebrations, we set up a Golden Ride, celebrating our current equines and those equines who helped riders achieve in the past. Riders had the opportunity to ride the course looking at Golden Rosette framed pictures of horses. Our less able riders were encouraged to find the picture of the pony that they were riding; while our more able riders were able to look for our former Paralympic Champions, Charlie Girl, who went to the Athens Paralympics representing, Brazil, and who also helped out the French and German teams when a stand in horse was needed; and the horses, who with Sophie Christensen, won gold medals for Great Britain; Lambrusco at Beijing 2008, Rio in London 2012 and Athene in Rio at 2016.

For us to continue to support riders with disability we urgently need more volunteers. If you are interested, please contact the office on enquiries@southbucksrda.org or ring 01753 662796. Volunteering is a great way to meet others, get exercise and gain skills. SBRDA is an accredited DoE centre, for those wishing to complete elements of their award.

**Theresa Drake**  
Trustee

### **Stoke Common News**

Restoring the heathland at Stoke Common has always been the primary goal of the management plan for the Common. During the common's first ten years under the ownership of the City of London, some quite dramatic changes were brought about by the clearance of areas of young woodland – very quickly heathland plants have started to re-colonise the cleared areas and wildlife has benefitted. Much of the required clearance of young woodland and scrub was carried out under the previous management plan, although there are still one or two more areas to be tackled; these are detailed in the new, ten-year plan which was published earlier this year. Already this autumn 1.45 ha of woodland on the main common has been cleared using harvesting machinery with the wood chip from the trees being sent for energy production. This is followed up by mulching the cut branches, which helps to expose the heathland seedbed in the soil and promote regeneration. Further areas were cut in mid-October along the firebreak on Vine Road and, in Autumn 2020, similar work is scheduled to be carried out on the Windmill Road firebreak and in the old quarry. However, these areas are being cut on a rotation, allowing trees and scrub to re-grow in between cutting periods. The areas cut will extend around 5 – 15m into the woodland and some smaller trees and scrub will be left. By rotational cutting, it not only helps to maintain a safe firebreak, but, because of the irregular, sinuous edge that is created, it also provides better habitat structure. This is better visually and great for the wildlife.

During the winter period, further smaller scale cutting work will be carried out by the Burnham Beeches and Friends of Stoke Common volunteers. We are always looking for more volunteers to join the gang – if you enjoy walking on, or living by the common, and have some time to do your bit to look after it for future generations, please contact the office on

01753 647358 to find out when the volunteers will next be at work. It doesn't have to be a whole day and it's amazing what you could achieve in just an hour!

Of course, the other essential element in keeping areas open is grazing and following on from the summer grazing by cattle from a local farmer, the Exmoor ponies will once again be released on West common over the winter period. Please remember they are not pets and should not be approached and certainly not fed – they will get everything they need from the vegetation on the common. Managing the common isn't just about cutting stuff down, we have commissioned artist Gina Martin to work with Stoke Poges School to create some new benches which will replace the ones that Gina created with the school over ten years ago. Gina will work with the children and use their artwork to decorate the new creations – we are looking forward to seeing what the children produce.

This lovely picture is by Dan Powell, who has created quite a few illustrations of what we hope both Stoke Common and the Beeches will look like after our management work is carried out. The image shows how the firebreak on Vine Road will appear, with a sinuous edge and a variety of heights of vegetation giving a more 'natural' look.



**Chris Morris, Senior Ranger, City of London Corporation**

## Squirrels!!

It is 15 years since we at Fulmer Plant Park stopped our Red Squirrel project, two years before the Garden Centre was closed and even now, after all these years I still get enquiries about them and never fail to be surprised how many people have never seen one, understandably not in the wild but also in captivity. I have always been interested in wildlife and in particular our indigenous species and that led us to building an aviary for Red Squirrels for visitors to see: this involvement soon moved on to implementing a breeding programme and then (naively) with thoughts that we could reintroduce them into the wild.

All of these ambitious thoughts soon hit the buffers, as after contacts with London and other zoos it soon became apparent that captive breeding was difficult and that all attempts at reintroduction had failed. Undaunted, we set about implementing a breeding programme based on what was known. We built three aviaries and began – it took 4 years with many failures and so many lessons learned before successfully raising kits to maturity. Red squirrels in the norm only have one litter a year; grey squirrels can have at least two. Our contacts with other institutions that had had involvement with this delightful little rodent were only able to provide us with small amounts of rudimentary advice. London Zoo, attempted to reintroduce it into Regents Park in the early 1900's failed but unfortunately they were very reluctant to part with any information that would be of use.

This very pretty, endearing little animal is, however, not all that it appears. It is territorial and will attack any intruder with ferocity. If a stranger went into their aviary they would remonstrate vigorously and pee all over them. In the wild they would not be content until they had drawn blood. Many think their demise was because the grey squirrel is larger, stronger and therefore there is competition for food; this is not entirely true, although their diets do overlap. The mainstay of the reds' diet is pine nuts; the grey is more of a scavenger and tends to be omnivorous. The demise of the red squirrel here in the UK is almost entirely due to the Parapox Virus Disease which is carried by the grey, who has a natural immunity to it but sadly, the red does not. The disease is taken back to the dreys and the result is total devastation.

Reintroduction of red squirrels in England & Wales successfully is very improbable at present; several attempts have been made and all but one has failed. For success to be achieved a red squirrel with resistance to the Parapox Disease would have to be bred and even then, success could not be wholly guaranteed.

The one success story is in Anglesey. In 2002 we were contacted by a young man representing a group on that island, who were endeavouring to set up a breeding programme, ultimately for reintroduction. They were in need of a red male for stud, and also for advice, fortunately we were able to provide both. After eliminating the grey squirrel from the island, together with help from the island's population to monitor feed, the reintroduction was successfully achieved – at the last count there were 600+

It is interesting to note that during the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the big estate owners, with few exceptions, systematically set about eradicating any creature that might diminish their game and farmstock. Birds like the buzzard, eagles, hawks etc and mustelids like the polecat, otter, pinemartin, etc. Excluded from these were the stoat, needed for their ermine and the fox, required for their hunting. Having devastated the natural balance of nature by removing these predators, they glibly start to introduce alien creatures that have no natural predators in this environment such as, muntjac deer and, of course, the American grey squirrel. Some of these birds and animals have made a comeback naturally, such as the buzzard, hawk, falcon and otter, others like the red kit and eagle have been reintroduced.



However, there is one mustelid that is struggling and that is the pinemartin, the natural enemy of any squirrel, its main food source. It has taken 100 years for it to begin to cross over England's northern border from its refuge in Scotland. This enigmatic, pretty animal, once hunted for its fur has many cousins such as the highly prized sable that are spread across the forested lands of the northern hemisphere. For the natural spread of our pinemartin, it will take another 500 years before we have them here in the south, with the very unlikely possibility of the grey squirrel population being controlled, other than by human intervention, to restore, at least, some of the balance.

So here is a thought – with Pinewood Studio's massive use of Black Park and Langley Park for location filming, for the world of entertainment, is there not anyone amongst the many readers of this magazine that could persuade the powers that be at the Studio that instead of laying a few paving flags outside local shops, they could fund a project for the breeding and introduction of the pinemartin into these parks. They could call it The Pinewood Pinemartin Project and they would get their outlay back from screening and publicity; Fulmer Parish Council should have the royalties and Bucks County Council will be able to boast that it is the first county in the south to have The Pinemartin!

**Eric Price**

## FULMER SPORTS & COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION

The Fulmer Fireworks and Volcanic Bonfire Night on 8 November was a great success. Many people who attended commented on how enjoyable the event was. Thank you very much to everyone who came and to the 30 volunteers who gave up their time to make the evening a success: front and back gate marshals, barrier stewards, bar staff, cake makers, first aiders, raffle tickets sellers and Bonfire builders. In particular I would like to thank Brendan, Darren, Paul and Steph who formed the Fireworks committee. Thank you all so much. With other events and organisations in the village it certainly makes Fulmer special. King George's Field is an excellent venue for hosting social, sporting and commercial events. In particular, we have accommodated parties for adults who make use of the pavilion with its licensed bar, kitchen, and space for eating and dancing. Children's parties are also popular making the most of the grounds to put up a bouncy castle or two. Marquees can be erected for larger functions such as weddings, christenings and other family gatherings. General use of the field and pavilion is available for hire during the week. The all weather pitch/courts can be hired for 5 a side football and tennis. Kettle bell classes are available for everyone to join in on a Friday morning at 8.45am.

For further information about the club, it's facilities including the Gerrards Cross and Fulmer Football Club and Fulmer Cricket Club please call me on 07879 404745 or via e-mail on [kgffbookings@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:kgffbookings@yahoo.co.uk). - **Andrew Nealon**.

### **Fulmer Cricket Club – [www.fulmercricketclub.com](http://www.fulmercricketclub.com)**

The cricket square has been put to bed for the winter so it is timely to reflect on the 2019 season and look forward to 2020. While the summer was nowhere near as hot as 2018, the cricket results were red hot. We won or drew (2 matches) 80% of our games, which is the most successful season, for many years and we were able to field sides on both Saturday and Sunday for most weekends. There were a couple of nail-biting matches, against the Commoners and Roxbourne where we won by 11 runs and 1 wicket, respectively. Our square and ground are the envy of league clubs, which visit us and, for the statisticians amongst you, there were over 10,000 runs scored at the ground. We owe a real debt of gratitude to Paul Colloff and Derrick Randall who put in loads of hours to produce a first class facility. Derrick is helped enormously by Ku, his Kubota tractor.

The annual **President's match** saw a win for the club and the presentation of a special cup provided by the Guinness family, (photo attached). Past results of the President's matches, since 1996, will be engraved on the cup. We had another excellent day and our thanks once again to Peter, Kiki, Will and family for their support and the excellent food from the farm. Sue, Emma, Sheena and Di from FCC, did a magnificent job with the preparation and presentation of the food.

We had 31 players who played 5 or more matches and 9 other players, which demonstrate the stability of the playing group.

### **Off Field activities**

Paul Colloff has done a great job with keeping the statistics up to date. They are now displayed on our website in the week following the matches. Thanks to Ben Fisher who attends each home game and manages the kitchen and bar while the match is in progress. He also does a great job with packing up at the end of the day and making sure the pavilion is properly secure before leaving. Tony King has embraced the Hon Treasurer role over the last couple of years and is very successful making sure all membership subscriptions and match payments are paid. Armando Borges does a lot of work behind the scenes as an Hon Secretary. Our skippers Tony, Mani, Paul, Derrick, Bradders and Danny J play a big role in getting out teams and managing our playing performances. The Whats App group works very well for efficient communication with our players; it is interesting to see the impact of a little element of peer pressure to extract prompt responses. Our cricket teas are well renowned, largely due to the efforts of Di, Sheena, Peter and Amanda.

## Awards for 2019

We had a very successful awards night on 18 October with the winners receiving their well-deserved cups. Sheena Kapila organised wonderful curry dishes, which were thoroughly enjoyed by the 36 in attendance.

The award winners were:

### Batting

Most runs – Mani Raza, 1,125

Highest innings – joint winners Will Voaden and Sheree with 136

Best average – Nigel Field, 158

### Bowling

Most wickets – Mani Raza, 36

Best in a match – Mani Raza, 5-25

Best bowling average – Mani Raza, 9.64

### Qualitative

Manu Kapila Award for Best Young Player – Joe Acland

Most improved – Anjana Silva

Best fielder – Danny Randall

Most valuable player – Mani Raza

Players' player – Mani Raza

Duck Cup – Sheree

Outstanding contribution – Di Jackson

Chairman's award – Tony King

Outstanding Service Award – Ben Fisher

As you can see Mani had a great year with the bat and the ball and needed a removal van to take his trophies home.

## New Players Welcome

We have excellent playing facilities and are a very friendly Club. New players, of whatever standard, are always welcome. Please refer to our website for contact details [www.fulmercricketclub.com](http://www.fulmercricketclub.com)

**2020 Season** The season will kick off with indoor cricket nets in March and early April with the first match away to Little Marlow on 24 April. Please refer to our website for updates on fixtures and other useful information.



## BORNEO

You may be relieved to hear this is the last of my articles on countries I lived in, prior to their independence, and before the advent of modern tourism and communications. Although I spent nearly two years living and fighting in this Crown Colony, nothing can compare with the experiences of another Fulmer resident, Sheena Barber, who from the age of 3 in 1942 to 6 in 1945 was a prisoner of the Japanese, firstly in Sandakan and then in the huge POW camp in Kuching. She recently returned with her daughter to conjure up childhood memories. No doubt she could produce a fascinating article (which I hope she will do), for the esteemed Fulmer Newsletter, which would far exceed my feeble attempts.

My first visit was in the late 1950's. It was a totally underdeveloped Crown Colony, peopled by a few British Colonial Administrators and Logging and Trading companies and the Dusun, Murut (headhunters), Bajau and Rungu tribes all scantily clad with many of the women bare breasted. Transport was mainly by longboat as there were very few tarmacked roads.

The British Government were considering, on Borneo's independence, forming a State comprising, Malaya, Singapore and North Borneo, to be called Malaysia. This did not well please President Soekarno of adjoining Indonesia who had the potential to cause trouble. My Regiment, having just finished fighting in the Malaysian Emergency, was tasked with visiting North Borneo to show the flag and drop a few hints in Soekarno's direction. I arrived in the east coast port of Sandakan on a Landing Ship Tank having sailed for 3 days from Singapore with our transport. The remainder of the Regiment arrived by air with an Auster aircraft and a Squadron of Gurkha Engineers, landing on the small sandy airstrip. I moved with the Auster pilot and my CO into the only decent hotel which was the equivalent of a small 2 star English country hotel, whilst the remainder of the Regiment, deployed in various small fishing villages down the glorious coral lined east coast.

Keith Wookey, the East Coast Resident and the Chief of Police (who still hung criminals) welcomed us with open arms as we clearly livened up the sleepy remote town, cut off from the remainder of Borneo. Our hearts and minds campaign included tours by our pipe band, bridge building by the Gurkha Engineers, drinking ceremonies at tribal gatherings with a particularly lethal local brew drunk with bamboo straws out of huge vats. There were no roads to speak of; much of the transport was by boat. We also indulged in other military activities and intelligence gathering. One epic journey we took was to the Gemanton Caves where the Chinese were allowed with long frightening ladders to collect the birds' nests from the caves for birds nest soup. The caves were occupied by millions of bats during the day and millions of swallows at night. The route there was through a swamp where we encountered the biggest leeches I have ever seen. It is now a major tourist attraction accessible by road! We also visited the early days of the wonderful Orang Utang Protection Camp just established and run by a Scotsman who cooked curries that were so hot that even my Gurkha soldiers could not eat them. Before leaving I crossed to Jesselton by sea or air (I have forgotten) and did the epic journey in Land Rovers, sometimes up to their axles in mud on the rough jungle tracks to the foot of Mt Kinabalu with the usual local rituals by our guide on our way up the sacred mountain. I returned to Sandakan two months later on HMS Belfast, the cruiser now moored opposite the Tower of London, on a flag showing trip, much to the surprise of Keith Wookey.

Two years later in the early 1960's, what we feared did happen and Soekarno turned nasty and I found myself and the Regiment on board the aircraft carrier HMS Albion, en route from Singapore to quell the initial rebellion in Brunei. This was quickly followed by Indonesian cross border attacks on Borneo and I ended up in the small town of Simangang, in the second division of Borneo, manning with my company, a long stretch of the Indonesian border in deep jungle attempting to intercept these cross border attacks. My HQ was based in a police post at Enkilili and my company was spread over a huge area, which took me a week to cover on foot. There were no roads and we were resupplied by air with occasional helicopter and artillery support. The men were based near the Longhouses where you could still find human shrunken skulls in the rafters, a hangover from the locals head hunting days. In deeper jungle we travelled in long boats down the many river channels. The longhouses were fascinating. Communal living on raised platforms with all the goats, pigs, ducks and

chickens living below. Occasionally one was obliged to spend the night rather than refuse their hospitality. I have spent more comfortable nights in other locations!

As in Malaya where the war was termed "The Emergency", we in our wisdom decided to call this escalating and undeclared war, "A Confrontation", for which I have never had an adequate explanation. It eventually involved a large number of British and all of the Gurkha Regiments with considerable RAF and Naval Support with Malayan, Australian and New Zealand troops also deployed. Total casualties were 114 deaths and 181 wounded of which 43 dead and 83 wounded were from the Gurkha Regiments. Some "Confrontation"! Towards the end of my first six-month first tour we gave independence to Malaya, Singapore and Borneo, Malaysia was formed and we had a flag raising ceremony in my small HQ.

My second tour (each tour was six months) I became SOTAG (Senior Officer Tawau Assault Group), based in a huge mangrove swamp on the Indonesian border right opposite the main Indonesian HQ on the Eastern coast. My initial HQ ship was so infested with rats that my Naval 2iC refused to board her and General Walter Walker the C in C gave me the Governor's Yacht. My adventures there are too numerous to recount here in what is becoming too long an article. However, I will recount one amusing incident. I was engaged to be married and the Confrontation had delayed our wedding. We wrote to each other every day but even telephoning from Tawau across to Kuching on the west coast of Borneo could be problematic. By chance I met the Norwegian Captain of an old Liberty ship that was collecting timber to transport to Japan. I ended up late one night on board and after he had sobered up the totally drunk radio operator on the bridge he got through on his radio to Stavanger in Norway and we were plugged through to my fiancée's phone in Oslo. It was the best 20 minutes and quite illegal phone call I have ever made. I was a very happy bunny that night as I made my way back in my assault craft in total darkness to my HQ ship. There were some amusing repercussions to the call from the local telephone company in Tawau. We were frequently under fire and had been called in at no notice to rescue a situation where a large Indonesian incursion through the mangrove swamp had decimated a Malayan Regiment, based in a huge logging camp at Kalabakan. It was from there that vast rafts of logs were floated down the rivers to the sea.

My third tour saw us at Lundu in the first Division where things were really hotting up. We no longer sat on the Malaysian side but actively entered Indonesia in pursuit of the Indonesians. This fact was denied for years by MOD who insisted we never crossed the border. My one lasting memory was being shipwrecked off the totally deserted coast for three days and rescued by searching helicopters as we attempted to seek a route in Log Boats from Lundu to Kuching. I have one huge conch shell as a souvenir of that episode. They lay around in profusion on the beaches.

I have never been back to Borneo but feel hugely privileged to have experienced a country, which has now changed dramatically. Reading the tourist brochures I am amazed at the development. The new hotels, the infrastructure, the sad excessive logging and the vast areas now planted with palm oil. The new roads, the native customs and boat trips now set up for tourists. In my day everything was a challenge and much of what I saw and experienced had not changed for millennia.

**JOHN SANDERS**

*We are so sad to learn of John's passing last month, but so grateful to him for his wonderful writings of bye gone times; we will miss his humour and reminiscences – Rest in Peace – Editors*



### ADVENTURES IN CALIFORNIA

In recent years I've got interested in trees. The world's tallest, oldest and biggest are in California and I spent most of September there with a group organised by the International Dendrological Society (IDS), over 30 of us. We saw the tallest trees north of San Francisco, the redwoods, and the oldest in the White Mountains just north of Death Valley, the bristlecone pines, and the biggest (by mass) in Yosemite and Sequoia National Parks, the sequoias (known as Wellingtonias in Britain where they grow to less than half the size compared with their normal habitat in California).

I already knew a bit about the redwoods and sequoias but not the bristle cones. They can live to 4000 years old. They grow in seriously hostile conditions, at altitudes above 10,000 feet, which cause them to grow exceedingly slowly. This in turn causes their wood to become particularly hard with tree rings very close together. This insulates them from most competitors and from the bugs and fungi that kill other trees. Their one enemy is lightning but even when over 80% of their bark has been burned off they still absorb enough water if the rest is intact. So they often end up looking like *Worzel Gummidge* scarecrows, waving dead arms in the air but still producing their needles and cones. One of the trees we saw looked a young one, perhaps eight feet tall; yes, said our guide, it's probably no more than 300 years old.

Further south, inland from Los Angeles, we saw two other kinds of tree, which are particular to California, both in the Mojave Desert. The Joshua tree grows in the national park of the same name. It too has a seriously unprepossessing appearance, again waving its elongated arms in the air – but live ones. It's not really a tree at all, being a succulent like a cactus, so no tree rings when felled. The other type of tree was the *Washingtonia Palm* growing in a desert oasis not far from Palm Springs. The oasis is fed by water seeping up through cracks where the tectonic plates of the San Andreas Fault grind against each other releasing water from the aquifers far below. These palms were reminiscent of the redwoods in that once inside the forest you lost the sun, silence reigned, and the effect was almost numinous, like being in a cathedral.

Health warnings. Beware bears! And the San Andreas Fault could bring on an earthquake at any time. Even more present is the threat of forest fires. We saw much evidence of the destruction they had caused in previous years but were fortunately too early for this year's. The fires are of course appalling for the inhabitants, but not for the trees; many types of cone need the heat of a fire to open them up and release their seeds, and the land will be green again within a few years.

We saw many other trees as well including many species of cedar, cypress, pine, fir, oak, several of them unique to California, all fascinating. The scenery was outstanding too, ranging from the Pacific coast including Big Sur and Pebble Beach to the extraordinary Yosemite Valley and on to the Sierra Nevada, rising as high as the Alps, with Lake Tahoe and the volcanoes of the Cascade Range in the north, and in the south the impressive wildness of the deserts.

Equally fascinating in a very different way was the human side of things. Those Californians can be as distinctive as their trees, and the anthropology was almost as interesting as the dendrology. One example will suffice. Humboldt University (two hours north of San Francisco) employs a professor who is the world expert on dating redwoods. This requires taking cores from high in the trees' canopies, often over 200 feet up. To get there, he shoots a bolt from a crossbow to get a rope over a branch. His lady assistant had a similar head for heights. In due course she agreed to marry him, but not in church. Instead they climbed neighbouring redwoods, shot a bolt plus rope across, met in the middle plus best man and registrar, and were duly married in mid-air. Some 200 feet below were their many friends and family craning their necks from the forest floor. The bride wore white with a 20 foot veil. The best man weighed 20 stone, and was our guide for most of the trip.

A whole month of trees and bus journeys and one night stays in motels and hotels threatened to feel like a long time. In the event the time passed quickly, partly because the trees and scenery were so varied but also because my fellow IDS members were such fun. We certainly had lots of time to get to know each other. In fact some thought the D in IDS stood less for Dendrological than Dining – or even Drinking.

**Nicholas Barber**

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## 1<sup>st</sup> Gerrards Cross & Fulmer Scout Group

We currently have 87 children attending each term time week, 3 Sections at our HQ in Fulmer and 2 Sections in Gerrards Cross and 12 Leaders to run the Scout, Cub and Beaver sections. In addition the Explorer section (14.5 to 18 year olds) uses our HQ most Fridays.

Our Scout section numbers are down slightly as the children in this section move onto Secondary school and the combination of increased homework and other extra-curricular activities forces them to make a decision on which one to prioritize.

However Scouting in the County is more popular than ever at the moment and we have a long waiting list for children for all our sections although we increased the number of sections 4/5 years ago.

The number of Leaders is down from last year so 3 of them are running 2 x sections a week, which is very hard work! Nevertheless all the Leaders help each other out to ensure the children have a varied and different programme compared to other non-school activities.

As usual our Fund Raising last year was at the Gerrards Cross Christmas Lights Festival in December where the girls and boys had great fun selling a vast amount of Krispy Kreme doughnuts in Station Road in a very short period of time and later in December we bag packed at Tesco GX on a Sunday morning when most of the children came, and this helped our funds considerably.

Disappointedly we may not be at this year's GX Christmas Light Festival as the Organizing Committee advised us that 'commercial food and drink traders have reported that they would not be willing to participate again this year if there is direct competition from other stalls which includes the reselling of doughnuts by the Scouts'. A shame as we participated at the first one many years ago.

We always celebrate Remembrance Day at the GX Memorial Centre Sunday Service and were there this year, it is very pleasing to see that we always have at least 20 children attending which is a great effort.

During the last 12 months all the Girls and Boys have enjoyed a large range of activities in all sections with the emphasis on camping skills and using the outdoor facilities we have at our Fulmer HQ. Even in the winter we do try and run evening activities outside as much as possible.

For some years our Scout section has dedicated one evening a term with the Teikyo School to build international understanding and it has been a great success, this term it was our turn to organize the evening, which we spent with a Treasure Hunt on Stoke Common with chips back at HQ.

So it has been another good year for our group with the Leaders and children benefitting with new experiences and ensuring the scouting ethos carries on.

Please don't forget we still need adult help from 18 - 80 years old and you don't need any scouting experience just some enthusiasm, so get out of your chair and join us as we are only 'up the hill' from the centre of the village!

Or, if you prefer we need help with admin jobs (no uniform) for a few hours a week so please contact me!

**Mark Shaw – Group Scout Leader**  
**(07788 891 232) / [scoutermark@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:scoutermark@hotmail.co.uk)**



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## HISTORY OF BLACK PARK

Black Park was first mentioned in 1202, as part of the historic Langley Estate when King John granted Richard Mountfitchet 100 deer from Windsor to stock his park. Like much of South Buckinghamshire, there was a prevalence of heathland locally, and the park today sits on land that once formed part of Fulmershe Heath. In the 18<sup>th</sup> Century it was drained and planted with Corsican pine – a variety of Black Pine - *Pinus nigra* var. *maritime*, which was grown as a timber tree, it is though the trees dark hue is likely to have given the park its name.

In the 1740's, Black Park Lake was constructed by Charles 3<sup>rd</sup> Duke of Marlborough, with an earthbank being raised at the southern end to flood an existing area of swampy land to form a lake. Further work took place on the lake in 1841 when the dam was raised to its present day height, this was to give sufficient head of water to power a turbine housed in the estate mill at Rowley Farm, sawing timber and grinding corn for the estate.

During WW1 a detachment of the Canadian Forestry Corps were based in Black Park. Large quantities of timber were felled and taken from Black Park to be used as pit props in mines and trench construction on the French Battlefields.

During WW2 Black Park was used as an ammunition dump, supplying ammunition to anti-aircraft batteries protecting West London, Northolt and the Hawker Hurricane factory and airfield in Langley. Troops were also billeted in the park prior to D-day. After 1945 Buckinghamshire County Council acquired the freehold as part of the Green Belt.

It was in late 1950's and early 1960's that saw the park begin its long association with the film and television industry, as improvements in camera technology allowed productions to be shot more easily on location. Today the park is still a popular location and has featured in several James Bond and Harry Potter feature films.

In 1970 Black Park was one of the first sites in the UK to be designated as a Country Park. In 1987 'The Great Storm' destroyed up to three thousand trees the majority of these being commercial plantations. Today you can see large areas of young Pine plantations replanted after the storm.

During the 1990's new facilities were developed including, a play area, toilets, café and the country parks office. In 1999 Black Park and all of Buckinghamshire County Councils Country Parks were made self-financed. Further development such as the Go Ape high ropes and nets courses, car park charging and extended catering offers have taken place to help achieve this.

Conservation and habitat management work is an important part of the ranger team's work and the Lowland Heath Site of Special Scientific Interest has recently been described as the best example in Buckinghamshire by Natural England. Work is now ongoing to restore sections of the historic Fulmershe Heath in the North West corner of the park, which still sits within Fulmer Parish.

Today Black Park is as busy and vibrant as ever, attracting in excess of 650,000 visitors a year, including over 600 runners every week at Parkrun! The park also offers Forest School for pre-school children and local schools and a wide range of events and activities all year. 2020 will see Black Park and Langley Park celebrating the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary as country parks. For more information on Black Park and all of Buckinghamshire's Country Parks please visit <https://countryparks.bucksc.gov.uk/black-park>

**Tim Williams, Team Leader Country Parks**

Stoke Poges, Wexham and Fulmer Horticultural Society

The Society's 126<sup>th</sup> Annual Show was held in July. In spite of the mixed weather, there were a high number of entries and a good attendance. Everyone enjoys this traditional event, popular with all ages and many come each year, some return having left the area. Our Show predates the Chelsea Flower Show and photographs of this year's event and more information about the society can be seen on our website [www.hortsoc.co.uk](http://www.hortsoc.co.uk) .

The highlight of the year was the honour of receiving the Queen's Award for Voluntary Service. This is the highest award a voluntary group can receive in the UK and has been awarded to us for 'passing horticultural knowledge and tradition from generation to generation since 1884'. The Award will be presented by HRH Princess Alexander early in the New Year at the Old Barn, Wexham Court Primary School. Dating from the 19<sup>th</sup> Century the barn has recently been restored and is the only surviving building from the original Wexham Court Estate.

Our AGM will be held on Saturday 16<sup>th</sup> November at 1.15pm followed by lunch and a talk on the Box Tree Caterpillar. The Society has been in existence for 135 years and has some 300 members but it needs younger people come forward to ensure its future. Gardening is beneficial for health, wellbeing, the community and the environment. It is vitally important and of interest for all ages and if everyone does a little no one needs to do a lot. But we do need new members on the Committee, so please get in touch with Ruth Rooley via email [ruth@rooley.com](mailto:ruth@rooley.com) or telephone (01753) 648040 if you would like more information.

Outstanding speaker for Spring Members Social Evening

The Society has secured an outstanding speaker for the Spring Members Social Evening on Wednesday 11 March 2020 at 8 pm at Stoke Poges School, Rogers Lane Stoke Poges SL2 4LN. Jim Buttress, *The People's Gardener*, will speak about the Central Royal Parks. Starting at a local nursery, Jim moved to Croydon Parks, on to the Greater London Council, and ended up with the Royal Parks in London, where he was responsible for Hyde Park, St James Park, Clarence House and Buckingham Palace. He ended his career as the Superintendent of Greenwich Park.

"His stories are always interesting and amusing. He recounts his interactions with the late Queen Mother, his life managing the Central Royal Parks and as an RHS judge. His wealth of knowledge on horticulture is boundless, which he passionately shares with his audience" – a quote from his website. Hopefully, he will bring copies of his book *The People's Gardener*. Further information about Jim can be found on his website - [jimbuttress.co.uk](http://jimbuttress.co.uk)

The school will be open from 7pm, to set up the Table Show and the finger buffet, the talk starts at 8pm. More information will be available on our website [www.hortsoc.co.uk](http://www.hortsoc.co.uk) in due course.

#### **FULMER HERITAGE IRIS PROJECT**

Thanks to the generosity of the Prowting family, substantial donations to the British Heart Foundation & Stoke Poges, Wexham & Fulmer Horticultural Society, in memory of Peter Prowting who passed away last year, have been made. Peter had a passion for growing Bearded Irises and his wonderful collection, built up over 45 years was probably the largest private collection outside a Botanical Garden. Consisting of some 3000 irises it comprised almost 70 different named varieties grown in 50 flowerbeds within a walled garden at his home in Fulmer. In order to preserve this fantastic collection it has been necessary to lift, divide and replant them all, a task which could have taken 3 years. With the help of SPWFHS, who project managed the garden restoration including counting, cataloguing, transporting, and with advice, help and encouragement of the British Iris Society (who confirmed each of the identities) together with other volunteers, the monumental task was completed in an incredible 6 months. 3000 single rhizomes have been replanted and are established showing fresh growth. Most of the surplus, probably 9000, have found new homes. The first batch was freely offered to Fulmer residents and others have been given to Fulmer Infant School, Stoke Poges Memorial Gardens, Lindengate Mental Health Charity in Wendover, and Horkesley Hall in Colchester Essex, part of the NGS gardens scheme where they have set aside a whole new area for the irises. The bulk of the remainder was offered to the public through the help of Pinewood Nurseries, Stoke Poges; Rowan Nurseries, Chalfont St Peter; Village Plants, Denham; Dorney Court Nursery, Taplow. In addition to private individuals, Cliveden House Gardens, Stoke Park Country Club, and Berkshire College of Agriculture also gratefully received rhizomes. As a result of this offering, £4000 is being donated to charity. It is wonderful to know that Peter's passion has created a legacy which has spawned new interest in irises with many people over a very wide area and that at least two of the recipients wish to recreate the collection in its entirety. We are delighted that this exquisite collection has been restored and look forward to a magnificent display of flowers in the coming years.

Jon Homan 01753 662166



**There are Fairies at the bottom of the garden**

There are fairies at the bottom of our garden. At least that's what me Dad says. We live at number one Claypit Cottages, me Dad, me Mam and our Cyril that is. That's the terrace at the end of Longbottom that overlooks the bakery and borders the common at the back. It's grand our house. Twice a day we get the smell of freshly baked bread drifting right through. I close me eyes, lift me nose in the air and breathe in the delicious aroma. Each time is as good as if there hasn't been a last time and as good as if there'll never be another. When me and Cyril get back from school we wash our hands and sit on our kitchen bench drooling whilst our Mam slices two generous chunks from a golden bloomer brought over hot and crisp from the daytime shift. Then, after tossing it from hand to hand a few times, 'cos it really is that hot, we spread it thickly with treacle from the tin and off we go. "And don't eat it too quickly," shouts me Mam as we disappear down the garden, "or you'll get the cramps." She always says this, but we never do.

We've got a long narrow garden full of weeds and brambles. Me Dad doesn't care for it much now, but we don't mind, it's still the best down the whole of Longbottom. We've got the Peters on one side, and on the other nothing, as far as the eye can see, miles and miles of nothing. At least that's what some people say about the common, but not me and Cyril. Once we found a fox and her cubs tucked away down a hole behind a rotten log, and once we met a tramp who shared his dinner with us and taught us how to tell the weather from the clouds.

Down we go, sucking any remains of treacle from our fingers, through the gate at the bottom, along the path behind Mr Peter's hencoop, over the Camel's Hump and there we are, the common. We always try to hurry as we do this 'cos Mr Peters, our next door neighbour, is a bit grumpy and is always blaming us when his chickens don't lay. Sometimes, when we've managed this tricky manoeuvre, we survive only to be faced with another. And that's avoiding Georgie Batty and the Big Bad Batty Gang. Georgie is a right pain. He thinks he's real smart 'cos he's the only lad down here whose Dad doesn't work down the bakery. He works for Georgie's slimy uncle who's got some posh stall up in the Inside Market. 'Retail Lingerie', it is, whatever that may be. Me Dad says that he's only a shop assistant, but young Georgie talks like he owns Woolworths! Mrs Peters next door goes and works for Georgie's uncle too sometimes and is always telling everyone how grand it all is. Anyway, we try and keep out of Georgie's way whenever we can, and if you want to know the truth then I'll be blowed if I won't tell you.

Well .... one day last term when school was shut 'cos it really was that cold he captured our Cyril and hung him by his coat from a Blackthorn tree! Poor Cyril was that frightened, he thrashed around with his arms and legs shouting and screaming 'til he was in a right old knot. Georgie Batty thought this was grand and threatened to light a fire underneath him and burn him at the stake!

Without further ado I decided to get some help. I hoped that with a bit of luck Mr Peters might just be cleaning out his hencoop and that he would come to the rescue. This was an

emergency! Quick as a flash I reached the other side of the encampment, ran up the Camel's Hump and stopped dead at the top. Without further ado I took an almighty leap and landed right in the middle of the hen pen. Chickens flew everywhere. What a clucking and a fussing and a feathering there was.

"What the ....." began Mr Peters, but then stopped as he saw the state I was in. I clutched me chest, desperate to catch me breath. "Calm down lad," he said. "Take it easy." Mr Peters is very big and strong and can lift both me and Cyril above his head at the same time. That's when he's in a good mood, that is. Usually he's not. "It's our Cyril." I managed to gasp at last. Georgie Batty's hung him on a tree and they're collecting sticks and things to burn him at the stake! Mr Peters just grunted, then he swung me back over the chicken fence, strode easily over it himself, and marched menacingly towards the encampment.

Meanwhile the Big Bad Batty Gang had got quite a fire built, but luckily seemed to be having trouble rubbing sticks together in an attempt to light it. I scoffed quietly to myself; our Cyril could get a good blaze going in no time at all. As it was he just hung there limply.

Mr Peters picked up a branch and started lashing about with it as his anger and his pace accelerated. By the time The Gang spotted him he was really gathering steam and I must say he was beginning to look pretty frightening.

"Be off with you, you little beggars!" he growled as he loomed nearer. It didn't need much more. Mr Peters has got quite a reputation.

"I know something you don't know, I know something you don't know!" chanted Georgie as he danced around Mr Peters' flashing branch. Mr Peters really got his dander up then, and even Georgie seemed a bit scared, which is unusual, but still he continued to chant. Just then Mr Peters caught him a sharp one, right across the cheek, and seconds later Georgie and his gang were making themselves scarce down Longbottom. "I know something you don't know. I know something you don't know!" echoed through the words. Young Cyril seemed unharmed as Mr Peters plucked him from the tree. He had a nasty rip in the back of his coat though, and our Mam was none too pleased about that, I can tell you.

Mr Peters works over at the bakery with me Dad. Same as everyone around 'ere. (Except Georgie's Dad and Uncle, that is). He's the foreman and me Dad drives the delivery van. Off they go at four o'clock every morning blowing their fingers and stamping their feet in an effort to keep them warm. That's when they're on the dayshift that is. Every other week they're on nights which they hate 'cos they have to go off at teatime and return tired and hungry just when me dad and Cyril are leaving for school. I don't like it when me Dad's on nights, he's always trying to get some kip when I come home and doesn't want to hear the latest about Georgie. Mrs Peters looks younger than me Mam, though me Mam says they went to school together. She wears bright red lipstick and has painted eyebrows and yellow hair that's usually a bit brown at the parting. Me Mam says "She's mutton dressed as lamb." Whatever that means. Sometimes we hear her and Mr Peters yelling at each other and that's when me Mam starts to sing like crazy and tells us both to run along and play. They haven't got any kids haven't the Peters, and me Mam says "That's the Problem." Whatever 'The Problem' might be. As I said, she works for Georgie's Uncle down the Inside Market and that's why me and our Cyril secretly hate her. She's always yakking. Yakking and giggling she is. It's right annoying. She's always trying to collar me Mam over the back wall and get her to come over to hear the latest gossip. I know me Mam doesn't really approve of Mrs Peters, but sometimes her curiosity gets the better of her and off she goes, smoothing her apron and pursing her lips, eager to have a little peep at whatever bit of rubbish Mrs Peters has happened to bring back from work that day. Sometimes me and Cyril try to sneak up behind them both, but as soon as Mrs Peters catches sight of us she starts giggling like mad and me Mam turns around all red and flustered and tells us both to get lost. As though we'd be interested in a handful of silk stockings! Women are daft sometimes.

If they're extra busy down at the bakery, me Mam sometimes helps me Dad with the deliveries, and we are told to go round to Mrs Peters after school for tea. We're not very keen on this arrangement, I can tell you, but as she usually brings something rather posh to eat back home with her we manage to force ourselves. She never bothers to cook does Mrs Peters, not like our Mam. Once she gave us pastry things, all wrapped up like tight little parcels with a fancy plait stuck on with large chunks of meat and vegetables inside. "Eat up those pasties," she says, "I've had my eye on those all day and was lucky enough to get the last half dozen at closing time." Actually they were very good, me and Cyril were forced to

agree later on; and just as good was the “Raspberry par-fay a la fran-say,” that she’d also managed to get at a knock down price because the cream was about to go off. Tasted all right to me. After we’ve finished just such a tea, Mrs Peters usually sits us by her brand new radiogram to listen to Henry Hall and Jack Payne. This is a proper treat I can tell you, and it’s usually at this point that we forgive her for working for Georgie’s Uncle; temporarily, that is. Anyway as soon as she’s got us settled she then disappears into her front room and sits there tapping her feet and humming along to whatever tune happens to be playing. It is usually at this point that the front doorbell rings, and we hear her jumping up to answer the door just like she’s been waiting for it. Usually it’s her boss, Georgie’s uncle, so we just turn the volume up and ignore them, ‘cos we’re not too keen on seeing HIM, I can tell you. When the programme’s finished she scurries around ‘cos it’s just about time for Mr Peters and me Dad to come home, and tells us to run along and see if me Mam’s back.

Me Mam’s the best cook in the whole wide world. Thick chewy stews with hot spicy dumplings, meat and potato pie with a crust so light that it melts in your mouth, hot-pot rich with carrots and leeks smothered in thick gravy, creamy rice puddings, jammy bakewell tarts drenched in gallons of custard, blackberry crumble and best of all, giant Yorkshire puds baked in the meat dish then served awash with raspberry vinegar. On Fridays it’s always fry-up: black pudding, tomato, sausage and eggs. Sometimes there’s liver too if me Mam’s got a bit left out of the housekeeping. Anyway on one such Friday we had both been playing on the common until we were dead-beat. We were trailing back home, our Cyril could hardly keep his eyes open, both of us looking forward to our tea, when we were compelled to stop dead in our tracks. We had just scalped a whole tribe of Redskins and were just about to go over the Camel’s Hump when we realised that we were not alone. We both stood rooted to the spot.

“It’s the Big Bad Batty Gang.” hissed Cyril. And he didn’t want to go through that experience again, I can tell you. “Oh, Arthur,” he squeaked “What’ll we do?” He clutched me arm and I could feel him trembling beside me. I was none too brave either, I can tell you, but I thought it was best not to let on to Cyril. I edged cautiously forward and strained like mad to hear what was going on. It didn’t sound like Georgie. It sounded more like a girl, and I knew Georgie would never EVER have a GIRL in his gang, so I relaxed a bit. She was laughing and giggling like she was finding something hilarious. That giggle sounded familiar somehow, but I just couldn’t place it. Cyril was still sniveling behind me so I gave him a good jab in the ribs, which seemed to silence him. “Shut up!” I hissed, “I’m trying to have a decco.” After a minute or two the giggles died down, but then came the strangest of sounds you ever did hear! I was pretty sure that there were two of them by now and could hear a puffing and a panting as would make you wonder. It got faster and faster and eventually turned into long groans. In fact it was beginning to make me feel rather peculiar in a funny sort of way. Cyril suggested that we shouldn’t hang about and that we should make a dash for it through Mr Peters’ back garden. I was forced to agree. “Oi,” said Mr Peters, as we tried to creep past his privy, “Who’s that?”

“Only me and our Arthur,” piped up Cyril.

“Shut up!” I said and tried to drag him along. Quick as a flash Mr Peters was out of his privy, hastily fastening the big brass buckle on his wide leather belt.

“What are you two beggars up to?” he said gruffly. Something told me that today was not a good day.

“Sorry Mr Peters,” blurted out Cyril, “But there’s someone in the Camel’s Hump and we was scared and thought it best to take a short cut up your gennel.”

Mr Peters then did something quite extraordinary. He seemed to take in a great gulp of air and then he held his breath until he began to shake all over. He clenched his fists and teeth and went redder and redder until all the veins on the side of his neck stood out, horrible like. I thought he was going to burst. Cyril and me just stood there transfixed: we had never witnessed a spectacle like this before. Then, as though he couldn’t hold on a second longer, he opened his mouth and began to roar; a noise so terrifying that me and Cyril just clung on to each other frozen rigid. It must have had the same effect on the chickens too, ‘cos all their normal scratchings and scurryings had stopped and they too seemed paralysed.

“Bloody tart!” he eventually managed to say. Though what that had got to do with anything God only knew. Then he was off, crashing through the undergrowth unfastening his big brass buckle as swiftly as he had just unfastened it.

Me Mam was breaking eggs into the frying pan as we tried to creep in unnoticed through the front room. She always looks tired me Mam. “Where on earth have you two been?” she exclaimed. “We were just about to send a search party out. Come over here and get washed sharpish before your Dad comes down.”

We pulled out the large orange box from under the table and both climbed onto it then began silently lathering our hands with carbolic soap. “What’s got into you two?” said me Mam, piling bacon and kidney on to three large plates. “Cat’s got your tongues?” We both just stood there, up to the elbows in hot soapy water staring out of the kitchen window and into the night beyond. We could see flashes of light like a torch darting here and there for could hear muffled voices swallowed up into the darkness. “What are you two gawping at?” Me Mam’s gaze followed mine out in the direction of the Camel’s Hump, and for a moment she seemed to freeze. Her face had gone quite pale in the gloomy kitchen light.

“Get a move on lads, them eggs’ll be like bullets if you don’t hurry up.” She clapped her hands several times behind us and then shooed us to the table flicking us all the way with her tea towel. At last me Dad came down, yawning and scratching after a good sleep. “Hello you two,” he said, tweaking my ear. “And what’s young Georgie Batty been up to today?” He sat down, tucking his handkerchief into his neck and dived into a large portion of friend onions. “We haven’t seen him today,” began our Cyril, “But we’ve seen something else.” “Oh yes,” said me Dad, piercing his eggs with a piece of bread. “And what was that our Cyril?” “Well we’ve been out on the common all evening and were just coming on home through the encampment when we heard something funny going on in the Camel’s Hump.” I tried to kick him under the table ‘cos something told me it might be better to forget the whole thing. “Oh yes.” said me Dad again.

“At first we thought it was Georgie Batty lying in wait,” continued Cyril, “So we thought it best not to go any further.”

“Quite.” said me Dad. Not a great talker is our Dad.

“So we just stood there and listened. We couldn’t see very much ‘cos it was getting pretty dark but I think there was a lady and a man hiding or something.” For the first time during his meal me Dad looked up and glanced over at me Mam who raised an eyebrow. “Get on with your tea” said me Dad to Cyril, making stabbing movements at him with his fork. “Have you seen what the time is?”

“Anyway, they were making some awful strange noises,” continued Cyril, “It was really funny and it made our Arthur feel quite peculiar like, didn’t it our Arthur?” I tried to kick him again and this time got him right on the shin. I saw me Mam raise her other eyebrow; something she’s quite good at, and then continued to stare at me plate.

“Not hungry our Arthur?” said me Dad. “Give it here then.” And before I could protest he was scraping the remains of me tea onto his plate. “Who d’you think it was Mam?” Cyril didn’t give up easily. Mr Peters seemed awful angry when we told him.” This time me Dad actually stopped eating altogether, knife and fork suspended in mid air.

“Get up them stairs and into bed young Cyril.” said me Mam, flicking at him again, this time with her apron. “It’s nothing of interest to you.” I looked at me Dad, waiting for him to speak. He slowly tore at another piece of bread and began to carefully clean his plate.

“Fairies” he said, popping the bread cleanly into his mouth.

“We’ve got fairies at the bottom of our garden.”

But I didn’t believe him.

**Susie Matthews (written aged 17)**

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