



Welcome to Combwich

Otter Tales

Published with the generous support of Otterhampton Parish Council

Inside this issue

Page 1

Corona Virus

Page 2

Parish Council Offcuts

Page 3

OPRA & 1st Combwich
Brownies

Page 4

OPRA & Otter Wheels

Page 5

Village Shop and for your amusement

Page 6

St Peter's Church New Curate

Page 7

Profile - Richard Stirling

Page 8

End of Otterhampton Scrub Hub

Page 9

What's it like to be a Junior Gig Club
Member?

All Life on Earth - Helen Jowett

Page 10

Otterhampton Village Hall

Page 11

Harbour View Bar

Spare a Thought for the Young

Get your Jam, Marmalade and Chutney

Page 12

Personal Tribute to the NHS

Rach's Garden Poem

Page 13

New Look at the Anchor

Page 14

Springtime Birds in Steart

Page 15

Springtime Birds in Steart

Page 16

EDF Combwich Wharf Update



Lockdown is easing but the Covid 19 virus is still with us ready to strike again should we drop our guard. Our thanks to NHS staff, the emergency services and essential workers who are still putting their lives on the line to protect the rest of us. We are eternally grateful. Thanks also to friends and

neighbours who are going out of their way to help us during this crisis.

Spare a thought too for those who live in densely populated urban areas with little or no outside space to exercise or play with their children, or the elderly isolated from their families. We should be grateful for the wonderful countryside we in this parish are able to enjoy as spring turns to summer.



Stay Safe

Otterhampton Parish Council

Snippets from your Parish Council during May and June 2020

Covid-19

The parish council has been really impressed and humbled by the efforts of the community to take care of one another during this period. Many people have simply done what comes naturally amongst their friends and neighbours; shopping, gardening, providing care and an 'ear' with no need of thanks or reward. May's Otter Tales featured thanks and appreciation to the NHS and frontline workers and their efforts have continued unstintingly. Mention again of the fantastic effort and output of the Otterhampton Scrubs Hub, the Village Shop, the Anchor Inn for its takeaway service and to Claire Luce and her staff at the School working tirelessly to provide continual learning opportunities for our children, both online and at the School for eligible pupils, opening on 1 June for the extended year groups. Thank you all.



Aly Prowse

Clerk to the Parish Council

Somerset Chairman's Award for Community Services

We would like to announce that this year, we have nominated Robert Wright for this award. The citation (limited to 100 words) is as follows:

“Robert has earned this award for his community spirit and hard work over many years; none more so that during the recent period of lockdown. His family owns and runs our village shop and if we took it for granted before, we certainly value it now. Rob has stepped up since his father was forced to shield and he has worked tirelessly with his mother to keep the shop open and to deliver to the vulnerable. His knowledge of the shop's stock and friendly demeanour have been a lifeline to many. His parents and the community are proud of him.

A restriction of 100 words makes it difficult to include all of Rob's attributes including his contribution to OPRA (especially his role as 'Sommelier' at the senior citizens Christmas Dinner!) and the Pantomime Society over many years. Jane too deserves our sincere recognition and appreciation as does Peter for the 22 years providing this very valuable village facility. Many of us are using the local shop more now and let's hope we do not forget our gratitude when things become more "normal" again. **Use it or lose it** may mean more now than it did before.

The same applies to The Anchor and our thanks go to Matt and Charlene as well and we're all looking forward to supporting the pub when it reopens and will surely continue to support the excellent takeaway provision. We also very much look forward to the Village Hall re-opening so that it can resume provision of facilities enabling the community to come together and meet up once again. Our thanks to the Village Hall Committee. It was difficult to close the facility and we appreciate that re-opening will be so much more involved.

Dog Poo

During the lockdown period many more people have been exercising outdoors, especially with their dogs. Since the relaxation of the lockdown rules we have noticed a surge of visitors to the parish and a surge in dog poo - everywhere. It is not just visitors who allow their dogs to foul the pavements and other areas; unfortunately, some of our residents are also guilty. We provide dog bags and four dog bins that are emptied twice a week to make it as easy and as convenient as possible for dog owners to clear up after their dogs - so there is absolutely no excuse - and shame on those who continue not to.



Play Area

We hope that by the time the newsletter has been printed, the play area will have successfully reopened in accordance with strict Government guidelines. Users of the play area must comply with Covid-19 Secure guidelines to help avoid risks of transmission. Anyone using playgrounds should take particular care to wash their hands after use and avoid touching their face. Children should be supervised carefully to maintain good hygiene and **MUST NOT** use the play area (including the outdoor gym equipment) if they have any signs or symptoms of coronavirus. Appropriate guidance notices will be placed at the play area. We respectfully ask you to comply with safety guidelines at all times.

New Defibrillators

Grant funding was awarded from the Hinkley Point C Community Fund for two defibrillators (£4000 including supply and fit). These will be purchased under a lease arrangement, renewable every four years (new defibrillators, maintenance, replacement pads and batteries). The grant award will pay for the first 4 years, thereafter the cost will be met via the parish precept (funds set aside each annum). BT approved our request to retain the BT phone box which will accommodate the replacement defibrillator. The other defibrillator will be installed on the outer wall at the Anchor Inn, courtesy of Matt and Charlene. Unfortunately, due to the Covid-19 crisis the installation of the defibrillators will be delayed.



Annual Accounts and Audit to 31.3.20

Draft accounts and the unaudited annual audit have been placed on the Combwich.org.uk website and the parish noticeboards.

Parish Council Meetings

At time of going to press we plan to hold our first online parish council meeting on Thursday 2 July with a limited agenda. This will be to approve the annual audit to 31.3.20, to discuss the re-opening of the play area and to agree the date and time of the next meeting (subject of course to the latest Government guidelines whether it be a virtual or physical meeting). District councillors and members of the public will be notified and invited to participate. Please look out for meeting notifications on notice boards and the website.



Contact for Clerk (Aly Prowse) otterhamptonpcclerk@gmail.com or Tel 01278 652426

1st COMBWICH BROWNIES

We have been communicating with our girls by email for the past 3/4 months, giving them ideas for activities and encouraging them to do some badges. Now the official school summer holiday is approaching we have decided to start having some zoom meetings. We hope we will be able to try out some fun activities and maybe achieve a few badges. It will be really good to see how all the girls have managed during the lock down and to hear their news.

As far as going back to physical meetings, that still seems to be a very distant prospect. Firstly we have to await instruction from the Guide Association and even when this does eventually come we will have to explore how we will manage to meet in accordance with social distancing. It may well be that virtual meetings carry on for some time. However we are looking forward to the challenge and even plan to do cooking and virtual sleepovers. In this way we plan to uphold the stalwart motto 'Be prepared' ! Watch this space for further news!





Otterhampton Parish Recreation Association (OPRA)

Registered Charity Number 1124017

Tina Gardener Chair



How quickly the last two months have flown by since the last newsletter. Steady progress is being made with the lifting of COVID-19 social distancing restrictions but not enough at present for OPRA to resume its normal activities. But it is great that we can meet up with friends and family albeit with restrictions.

The 100 Club draws haven't been affected and are being conducted by Zoom or similar and the results are published on the Comwich website and Comwich Post Office. Thanks to Ann and Barry for organising the draws. Please contact Ann

if you would like to join the OPRA 100 Club.

The 100 Club draw usually takes place every month at the Coffee Morning Otterhampton Village Hall and the winning numbers are displayed in the Post Office and the parish website

www.comwich.org.uk

If you want to join the 100 Club or become involved in OPRA activities please contact Ann on 652399 or any committee member.

Hopefully the first activity we can restart is our monthly walks. At present we are restricted to 6 people, but although we have been low on numbers on our latest walks, we couldn't risk larger numbers turning up, especially as there has been a noticeable increase in the number of people out walking recently.

We have not forgotten that we agreed to help organise the annual cricket match which, this year would be the Murray Lister Memorial match. If further restrictions are lifted then it may be possible to organise a match for late summer or early autumn. The common and cricket pitch is being regularly maintained in anticipation.

Dates in our diary for later in the year include Sunday 8th November for the fireworks and lantern parade and Saturday 5th December for the Seniors Christmas Dinner. Again, we do not know if these will be able to go ahead and if they can there may be various restrictions in place. But we do not want to rule anything out just yet.

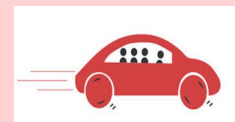
Our project to replace the pavilion with a storage container in a field next to Steart Marshes and to replace the ride-on mower has been put on hold since the pandemic. Now that restrictions are being eased and businesses are starting back up, we need to renew our efforts to agree the details of the project and get funding in place.



We must keep optimistic that we are on the road back to normal (even if it is a new normal) and we can start enjoying our clubs and activities in the village very soon.

Otter Wheels

Covid 19 update



Please note - essential journeys for medical appointments will be undertaken when no alternative transport is available

Ring 07925 154216

Volunteer drivers urgently needed, for more information ring the above number

Stay Safe

For your amusement

From Sunday Times 28.6.20

Church misprints and amusing signs:

“Will parishioners please note that the wooden box immediately inside the main door is intended for charitable, financial contributions only”. The box in question was labelled “For the sick”.

I eat peas with honey
I’ve done it all my life
It makes them taste quite funny
But it keeps them on my knife

Anon

Elephant

I think they had a pattern
When they cut out the elephant’s skin
Some places it needs letting out
And others, taking in

Anon

Bug in a jug

Curious fly, vinegar jug
Slippery edge, pickled bug

Anon

The Sea

Behold the wanders of the mighty deep
Where crabs and lobsters learn to creep
And little fishes learn to swim
And clumsy sailors tumble in

Anon

I’m glad the sky is painted blue
And the earth is painted green
With such a lot of nice fresh air
All sandwiched in between

Anon

In support of our village shop

In the village of Comwich there once was a store
That some of the locals didn’t visit any more
They sold plenty of things that people could use
Like tinned food, bread, crisps, milk and booze
But a global pandemic forced all shops to shut,
So the store got stuck in a terrible rut.
But Jane, Peter and Rob took orders by phone,
To support their customers do their shopping at home
Despite the impact of Covid-19
They now had more customers than they had ever seen
Robert started each day at the crack of dawn,
Getting goods from the Cash & Carry, stifling a yawn.
Jane was answering the phone and being cashier
Keeping to guidelines they had to adhere
So to all customers old and new
We just wanted to say a big THANK YOU!
And when the treat of this virus has faded away
Please don’t forget about us - we’re here to stay.

By Chris & Sarah Ball



**Nominated for Somerset County
Council Chairman’s Award for
Community Services**

Revd Alison Waters, Rector

St Peter's Church

I am delighted that we will be able to resume public worship at the churches of the Benefice this month. **We look forward to welcoming you to our services at St Peter's on the 1st and 3rd Sundays of the month at 11.15am.** Please be assured that every precaution has been taken to keep the congregation safe in the current difficulties. We are also excited to welcome our new Curate, Jan Church, who was licensed on 28th June. Here is a message from Jan, who will be serving at Combwich, Cannington, Steart and Stockland for the next three years.

"It is a great joy for me to be joining you in the United Benefice as a part-time Curate. Neil (my husband) and I met some of you briefly, last Autumn, when we came to the Harvest Supper at Combwich and were fed some very tasty food and had some great conversations. I'm really looking forward to being reacquainted with those I have already met and meeting many more of you.



My journey towards ordination began when I became a Christian 38 years ago. I was pregnant, at the time, with my first child so when she was born, I offered to help serve in the church creche. I had a further 3 children and as they grew, I found myself helping and leading in more ways within the church. Later I studied for a Theology and Religious studies degree at Bristol University. For the last two years, I have been doing my vocational training at St John the Baptist church in Bridgwater whilst studying at Sarum College, which has been a wonderful and fulfilling learning curve.



I have a lot of life experience, serving as a Police Officer, a Care Assistant, a Samaritan, an RE Teacher and Senco and currently as a Dispenser in my local pharmacy. I have also had a breakdown, cancer and been divorced and remarried, and I think these painful life experiences have kept my feet firmly grounded and helped me walk with others facing difficult times. I am a lover of people, a lover of the church, and a lover of the world and God's creation. I am looking

forward to working alongside Revd Alison and serving all of you in the different and unique communities that form the Benefice.

Jan Church

Rocking with Rosie

The superbly skilled Bill Johnson has made good use of lockdown to craft a fabulous rocking horse for Seth and Layla. They have named the beautiful grey Rosie, and we are delighted to welcome her to The Rectory, where she has been well fed on plastic carrots and real sugar lumps. Thank you so much Bill! *Revd Alison*



Richard Stirling - Profile

Richard has in recent years become well known in Comwich mainly due to his roles with Otter Wheels both as a driver and as Chair of the management committee. But he started life in 1949 in Yorkshire the son of an ex regular army officer. At the age of two the family moved to a 10-acre small holding on the Essex, Suffolk border. During this time his father commuted to London, working in personnel.

His education involved seven different schools starting in a village primary school where he had problems learning to read (these days he may have been diagnosed as dyslexic) and ending up at the prestigious state maintained Church of England Blues School in Wells for the last two terms of his secondary schooling.

The next stage was to the Weston-Super-Mare Technical College where he studied hotel and catering enabling him to secure a job as trainee manager with Fortts Hotel, Bath. The establishment had three restaurants and two function rooms plus outside catering. He learnt a great deal during this time and fondly remembers helping to provide a tea for 3,000 guests at Millfield School, the marquee was so big it had 14 central poles.

From there he moved to the Greyhound Hotel in Broadmead Bristol as reception manager. Then in 1972 his parents bought a small hotel in Burford, Oxfordshire called the "Winter's Tale". It was during this time that he met his wife to be Wendy on a blind date and where their daughters Samantha and Georgina were born. The hotel was sold in 1979 to someone who won one third of the purchase prices betting on a horse!



In 1980 he joined the AA as a hotel inspector, though it was more than just hotels as it covered guest houses, self-catering, and cross channel ferries. A fascinating job. Whilst in that role he appeared in the Channel Four programme "An Inspector Calls". In 2002 joined Halsway Manor as manager though only staying for six months before returning to the AA in his previous role.

Vivary Park. Due to family circumstances this was sold, and they moved to Green Acres, Comwich in 2016. The house needed a good amount of updating and with a large garden, there is always something to do. Throughout this time, Wendy has run her own business, working with an interior designer in UK and Europe. Daughter Samantha works at Hinkley Point, at one time Georgina was Comwich's PCSO, but now works at Brymore.

At the age of 58 he took early retirement whilst at that time living in the centre of Taunton in a house with three separate self-contained flats where he provided bed and breakfast. Three years later this was sold, and he purchased a house which needed renovating but had the advantage of backing on to

For a while he had a zero-hour contract with an Estate Agent in Taunton providing escorted viewings of houses in the area. Richard also enjoys car boot sales and auctions, always on the look out for bargains, occasionally selling some of his finds, unfortunately several sales have been cancelled this year.

In addition to his current roles with Otter Wheels Richard is a front of house volunteer (until covid-19 struck) at the McMillan Theatre in Bridgwater. He is also a director of the Taunton Flower Show.



The End of the Scrubs Hub

The Otterhampton Scrubs Hub project has now come to an end as demand for protective wear slowed, which of course is a good thing although it's a little sad that the sewing project is over. Our team of 21 sewing stars produced a total of 518 items during the six weeks the project was running, some of whom were still working and had children to home school.



To mark the occasion, the very talented Jan Cashin, made a beautifully embroidered memento for each member of the team, which was a lovely surprise for us all and now hangs proudly on many a sewing machine in the village.

The prize for most items sewn has to go to Sara Gazzard who made a staggering 100 hats with ties and 22 scrubs caps!

Whilst we don't know exactly where each and every piece has been sent to, we've been advised that over 14,000 items have been distributed to Musgrove Park Hospital, Yeovil District Hospital and Somerset's community hospitals and mental health units, plus most of the Somerset GP practices, children's homes, many residential care homes across the county, the Wellesley private hospital, dental and pharmacy services and a wide range of individuals who are self-employed carers and locum GPs.

Almost all of the materials purchased with project donations have been used up but the remaining few items have been given to the local craft group. The only thing we haven't been able to use is the Perspex, which was kindly donated by Alan Waters. We just couldn't find anyone who could utilise it for NHS/care worker use, so it's now been donated to the school.



Otterhampton Scrubs Hub

MADE SO FAR

- 49 Scrubs Sets
- 221 Hats with ties
- 62 Scrubs Caps
- 109 Headbands
- 73 Ear Savers
- 4 Masks

TOTAL: 518 ITEMS

This is not quite the end however! A commemorative project has been set up by the Taunton group and we have all been invited to produce a sewn or embroidered square to be added to a big tapestry that will be presented to one of the hospitals.

It's been a great pleasure to be a part of a team of such lovely local lasses and has inspired me and I think a few others in the village to do more sewing. Thank you once again to all who were involved and to everyone who supported the project.

Regards
Lynne Carter



To keep up to date with all that is happening in the parish check the village noticeboards, log on to our own website, www.combwich.org.uk or visit "All Things Combwich" and the "Combwich, Steart and Otterhampton Memories" Facebook Groups

What is it like to be a Junior member of the Combwich Boat club, gig section? *By Sophie Austin (age 15)*

To me, being a part of the Combwich gig section of the Combwich Boat club has been a really positive thing. As this is one of the only local sport activities where I can go and socialize, but at the same time stay active, I find it very beneficial for both my physical and mental health.

I love to be outside, but along with school work and just not wanting to do anything- something I think every teenager does- knowing that I can go out for a reason, socialize and feel good about myself after it, I find that I'm always looking forward to going for a row, even when its early in the morning!

I like the aspect that there are all different ages, and all different abilities. This makes you feel like you are no longer the youngest, but just part of the little gig community.



One thing that I always want to do more of, is the Regattas and races. I have personally only done one but when I did, the excitement and exhilaration that I felt was amazing! Just the thought of it on the way there and the thought that I was going to be part of this junior crew, who were going to race against other juniors, was unreal. Even though everyone secretly wanted to win, we still came 3rd! Combwich's first podium! It all felt so nice to have been part of that team.

Although the rowing is always amazing, coming back to the boat house to be welcomed by some crumpets, or sometimes bacon and sausages, is always so nice, especially when it's been cold outside!

Another thing I love about being part of this little community, is that I don't feel under any pressure to commit to every weekend. Many of the Saturdays, I have school and so very often can't attend Saturday's rowing, and sometimes the time just is tooooooo early, I like my lie-ins!

As a junior, I feel that the Combwich gig section could go on to do so many more amazing things, I'm hoping to carry it on after lockdown, even with my GCSE's because it's such a nice and enjoyable way to just forget about school and other things. I can just relax and socialize with the relationships I've gained.

All life on earth..... *Submitted by Helen Jowett*

All life on earth is governed by the sun and the moon. As the earth moves spinning round the sun, life waxes and wanes, with days and seasons. Her gravitational pull controls the tides and her waxing and waning seems to affect our physical lives and behaviour.

For people living in towns and cities, these effects are smothered or diverted by all the other enormous pressures of modern life. Return to the country where the full moon is the brightest thing in the night sky, and not just a wishy washy disc behind the metallic purple glow of the city lights – and she again becomes dominant.

Walked upon, driven upon and orbited, photographed and carried away piecemeal in plastic bags. In fact, generally scratched and tickled by inquisitive mankind, the moon remains aloof, beautiful and powerful.

To live by tidal water is to be aware of the power of the moon because the rhythm of the tides directly affects coastal life in all its forms. The movements of the sea birds and waders as they fly in to feed on mudflats and saltmarsh : the passage of fish within the water, the passage of boats upon it : the onset of sea breezes : the actions of fishermen, or wildflower, or bait digger or cockle man : the sound of water when the tide is in and the moving of sunlight or moonlight upon it: the stillness of the mudflats, and the gleam of them full of reflections bright and dark by day and night.

From "Book of Sea and Power"

OTTERHAMPTON VILLAGE HALL

News from the Otterhampton Village Hall Committee



THE PAST



THE PRESENT



THE FUTURE

COVID-19: OPENING OF THE VILLAGE HALL – at long last!

The Government lifted some restrictions regarding village halls from Monday 6th July 2020. This allows small groups to use the Hall facilities. User groups are being informed and will be in touch with their members.

It is very important however that everyone visiting the Hall adheres to strict cleaning procedures. Although the Hall will be cleaned regularly we cannot afford, or expect, cleaning to take place before and after every event. The onus must be on individual groups to clean the area they use before and after their event. Antibacterial gels are available throughout the Hall. Handwashes and paper towels in the kitchen and WCs. Antibacterial sprays are in every room and must be used to clean tables, chairs, door handles, light switches etc that have been touched for.

UPDATE ON FINANCES

The Hall has been closed since 23rd March so has not received any income from booking but of course we still have bills to pay:- insurance, utilities, broadband etc. Things could have been very tight but our Treasurer, Pete Cashin successfully negotiated reductions with utilities companies and we were successful in our application to Sedgemoor District Council for the Government's Retail, Hospitality and Leisure Grant.

But we do need your help to raise more funds. If you shop online you can support Otterhampton Village Hall CIO on *#easyfundraising*. When you sign up as a supporter, 4,000 shops and sites will donate their money to the Hall every time you shop online. This includes big brands like John Lewis & Partners, Argos, ASOS, Expedia, eBay, M&S, insurance, IT, holiday companies and many more! It will not cost you <https://www.easyfundraising.org.uk/causes/otterhamptonvillagehallcio> and you can download an app to make shopping on line easier.

Amazon run a similar scheme. Visit <https://smile.amazon.co.uk/ch/1186747-0> to register.

So please have a look at the sites and use it when you are shopping online. Every 1p counts and will be spent on maintaining the Hall and the refurbishment.

THE VILLAGE HALL REFURBISHMENT

Following delays due to the Covid-19 restrictions our bid for funding will be considered by the OPPT Committee and Parish Council and will go to the Hinkley C Community Fund for consideration in July. Once we have their decision, we will apply for additional funding from a variety of other organisations ready for a start in Spring 2020.

COMBWICH FUN DAY **sometime in 2020!**

Otterhampton Village Hall is still hoping to arrange our 3rd Combwich Fun Day when restrictions are raised. We all need something to celebrate and look forward to! More information as the date gets closer, but we can still arrange some races and games, bar and BBQ. For those of you having a good sort out, there will be tables to hire for a small cost, so keep sorting and saving .

Please contact Amber 01278 652111 if you have any questions; looking forward to a celebration with you all in our wonderful community.



The Harbour View Bar Committee is looking to open the Bar at the end of July/early August although numbers will be restricted in line with Government advice. Watch out for boards announcing the opening, and we look forward to seeing you for a catch up and a glass or two!

The Committee is still looking for 2 new members to join the team. We generally meet once a month and are always looking for fresh ideas to increase membership and promote the Bar. A positive attitude is a must!

If you would like to help either call Steve Lang on 07875149826 or 01278 324426 or put your name and contact details in the letter box (please mark for HVB).

The current Committee members are:

Steve Lang (Chair), Marie Beckley (Secretary), Bruce Barton (Treasurer)

Spare a thought for the young!

By Rachel Perrett

On the 23rd March 2020, I returned home from a day at work, my words to Gary (my husband) were "I cannot watch the news and hear the words 'COVID-19' again!" My sister rang later that evening and said, have you seen the news about the lockdown? I suggest that you collect Simon (our eldest son) straight away!



So, we drove to Egham in Surrey the next day to fetch him home, that was the end of four years at University. Back home to Somerset, leaving his independent life, friends, his course not finished and facing 'lockdown' with Mum & Dad in the West Country!

They say that out of every difficult situation, something good can be found. We have had precious time with our son, that we may never have had. We have enjoyed meals together (many Simon has cooked), played lots of board games (we forgot we had) and probably drunk too much wine together. He has cycled and played golf with his Dad and has food shopped every week for my sister & us.

Being a nurse puts me in close contact with people and I have sometimes been stressed about catching coronavirus, even here he has kept me 'grounded' and told me not to worry. We of course have had our ups & downs, as any family and we have greatly missed our other son (Luke) who has been with his girlfriend and family supporting them.

Simon has now completed his exams on-line in our dining room, not at all what he had planned. Like many thousands of young people, he has sacrificed a lot and faces an uncertain future.

Lets, spare a thought for the young!

Jam, Marmalade & Chutney

Missing Comwich Market? At least your favourite jam, marmalade and chutney is still available for regular customers.

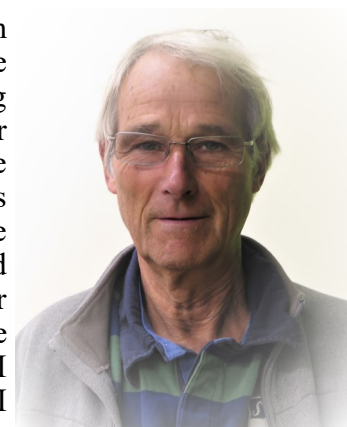
Ring 01278 652687



A Personal Tribute to a service starved of resources - aka the NHS

By John Berry

Linda and I returned to the UK on March 4th for a planned short holiday with our daughter and son-in-law and our three delightful granddaughters. We little realised that our visit would be extended from two weeks to something approaching five months. And in my case an unexpected close encounter with mortality. On April .. , a sunny warm day, we set off for a picnic. We had the family dogs along as well. We walked over to Otterhampton, across fields littered with spring flowers and stopped to eat our sandwiches a couple of stones throws from the ancient church. Having eaten my fill, I stood up and walked a few paces towards the Old Vicarage, with the (very) big dog on her lead. At the top of a short stony slope, my left foot encountered an immovable object. I stumbled forward, the dog took fright and leaped away and I followed, losing my balance completely. I fell heavily, striking my head. I remember thinking, just before the impact - this is going to hurt. It did. I lay winded for a while, the family fussing around me.



Four days or so later, after an interval in which I felt increasingly out of touch, I woke with no clear memory of where or even who I was. The next recollection had me waking in Southmead Hospital. A nurse appears and explains that I've had an emergency operation for a sub-dural haematoma and I'm about to go for a CT scan. She says the worst is over and I'm going to be all right. Two guys appear and load me onto a trolley. I'm whisked through a bewildering maze of corridors, lifts and rooms full of medics in white. My new friends say, "Here we are man, see you soon." I process through a giant humming machine, trolley and all. When I next wake, I'm back in the room where I started. The nurse is back and says, "You may want to sleep now." I gratefully accept the suggestion, together with some paracetamol. Next time I open my eyes I'm connected to a polythene sac, into which blood is draining. The nurse is back. She says, "Okay – you're good." She has a Spanish accent. My consultant arrives – Mr Charambeledis. He says the operation went well. I should be discharged in a few days.

In all I spent seventy two hours on Ward 22A. I was looked after by staff who came from Bangladesh, Ireland, India, Spain, Portugal, France, Cyprus and the UK. All them working together. No heroes, just dedicated professionals who deserve so much more than the pittance that so many of them are paid.

Rach's Garden Poem

I look at my garden made from love and toil
Then to my plants rising up from the soil
The apples and pears, how they grow so free
To the beautiful berries of the Rowan tree

I stand here, in my midnight garden
Almost like a wildlife warden
What's that? A crack? Might be the hedgy!
So many slugs, thank goodness he's not a veggie...

My garden is plagued with many pests
Especially those slugs in those pith helmet vests!
Slowly they climb to commit their crime
Savaging my beautiful vine

Gardening should be a pleasure
Destruction of which we should not measure
But to find plants devoid of life
Brings nothing but stress and strife!

When I look into my lovely creation
At night with a torch, see total invasion
From slugs and snails, weevils and grubs
The bastards are determined to ruin my tubs

This poem was written by Rachelle Woodall, who sadly passed away on 4th June. Rach will be greatly missed by all her family, friends and neighbours. We thank Steve and Gemma for giving permission for this poem to be printed.

Maxim welcomes you to Maxim's @ The Anchor!

With Over 10 years experience behind me from head chef at a tapas cocktail bar in Birmingham, head chef at a 38 bedroom hotel in Castle Bromwich and then previous head chef from Wild Rocket taking them from 21st to 7th on Trip Advisor within 12 months, I decided to take the leap and follow my dream and go on my own and set up Maxim's.

After 6 months at the Red tile where Maxims began, I then decided to open boom tingz burgers in Weston and then BOOM 2 days later COVID-19! I could have easily given up there and then but I didn't want to ruin my name and chuck the last 6 months of my life down the drain!

After searching for alternative "TEMPORARY" premises to work from, a message and a meeting set up with Matthew and Charlene for later that day, Maxims was back up and trading! After getting to know Matthew and Charlene and how well we worked together, we started talking about the future and the renovation plans for the bar and restaurant!

Having been brought in on this from day one, it was clear to me that what was meant to be a temporary place for me wasn't going to happen and I wanted to work with Matthew, Charlene and the staff at the Anchor to take it to the next level!

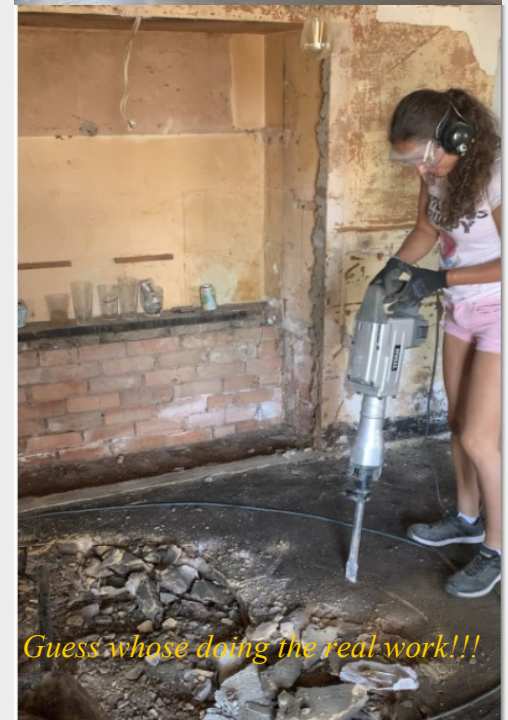
While takeaway isn't my forte, we've adapted and carried on through these tough times and will have a new menu out over the next week! It will be more takeaway-based to start with due to COVID-19 restrictions but slowly adding more dishes as time goes by and eventually finishing with Maxims fish and grill kitchen @ The Anchor.

We have a few weeks left to finish the renovations so please keep a look out on social media and a flyer through your door with what's happening next! Here are a few pics to show you the extent of the work and changes being made, but to see the rest please pop in for a drink and a nibble from our new bar and menu.

All the best,

Maxim, Matthew, Charlene and all the staff @ The Anchor

PS Also serving fish and chips, pizzas and burgers wed - Saturday nights, Maxims roast on a Sunday and pizzas Sun - Tue evenings



Springtime Birds in Steart ... plus a Fox

Phillip Edwards



Male Blackbird: familiar to all; this male was raising the alarm on a stoat in the grass below.



Cetti's Warbler: skulking and rarely seen, this has a short but loud explosive song.



Common Chiffchaff: once upon a time a migrant, this species now tends to over winter in and is one of the first birds to begin singing in the spring.



Common Whitethroat: common in the brambles along the coast path, this male was one of the first to arrive back from sub-Saharan Africa.



Grey Plover: a common in winter at Steart, they head to the High Arctic to breed.. Two birds on left are in winter plumage, two on right in summer dress.



Lesser Whitethroat: more skulking and less numerous than its relative. In 2020 it appeared in unusually large numbers across Somerset



Marsh Harrier: a male in flight over the coastal reedbed. A success story of UK conservation they are now fairly common and widespread.



Meadow Pipit: common in Steart in winter when the resident population is bolstered by continental immigrants ; this bird was nesting out on Steart Point.



Reed Bunting. Breeds in the reeds, this male displaying by flicking its white outer tail feathers while singing.



Reed Warbler: sub-Saharan migrant, this species is easy to hear but harder to see as it gives its endless grating song from the base of the reed beds.



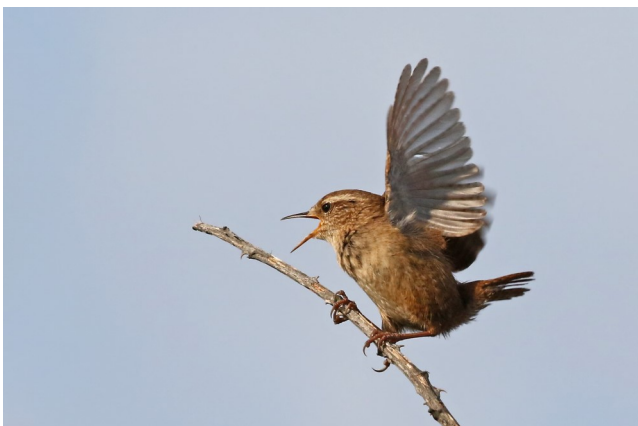
Sedge Warbler: sounds similar to Reed Warbler but has a higher pitched more strident song with lots of mimicry and is usually easier to see.



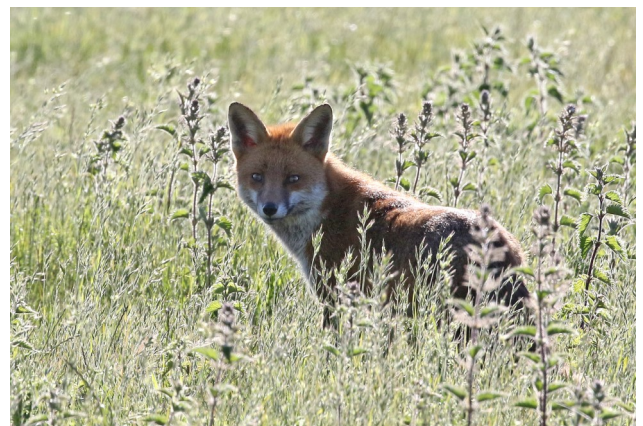
Swallow: also familiar to everybody. This pair was mating on the weathervane on our barn and snapped through the bedroom window.



Wheatear: this species is one of the first summer migrants to arrive in the UK with birds present from mid-March onwards. A male (left) and female (right) shown - but from different days and not a pair. They start passing through Steart heading for the uplands where they breed.



Wren: again familiar to all, but perhaps male's full display while singing is not often seen.



Red Fox: one of the most widely distributed mammals on the planet And wonderful to have breeding in the garden

Combs Wharf Refurbishment – June 2020 Update



1 Combs Wharf – June 2020 Update | Community Relations | NOT PROTECTIVELY MARKED* © Copyright 2019 NNB Generation Company (HPC) Limited. All rights reserved.



Ongoing activities on the wharf for June

- Build of temporary retaining wall, for support during demolition works
- Works to the berth bed to allow construction activities
- Erection of permanent fencing to reduce noise impact on residents
- Maintenance dredge
- Review of site security – seeking views of the community via the Parish Council

In May we donated PPE supplies to local primary schools, including Otterhampton. The teachers we spoke to said they were finding new ways to engage their smaller classes. So with support from Sedgemoor Tree Services and Greenslades, we also donated pop up greenhouses along with gardening tools, seeds etc so the children could spend time outside growing plants.

Find out the latest news from the project in Plugged in, available on our website [here](#).

If you have any questions regarding these works, please get in touch by telephone on 0333 009 7070 or email us on hinkley-enquiries@edf-energy.com.



2 Combs Wharf – June 2020 Update | Community Relations | NOT PROTECTIVELY MARKED* © Copyright 2019 NNB Generation Company (HPC) Limited. All rights reserved.



Otter Tales

Articles for publication to Barry Leathwood (editor) Tel: 652399, email: barry.leathwood@btinternet.com
Events to Aly Prowse, Tel: 652426 email: otterhamptonpcclerk@gmail.com
Distribution. Bob Birkenhead Tel: 653127, email: birkenhead.bob@gmail.com

Published with the generous support of Otterhampton Parish Council

Whilst every effort is made to ensure the accuracy of information published in Otter Tales, some of the views expressed are those of individuals