£2.00

Friends Housing Magazine 2017

Hello everyone,

Welcome to a new 2017 magazine – another mixed bag of people's memories and thoughts.

We are just recovering from the heatwave, for me a welcome coolness after the sapping heat. Now we need the rain!

We have had our usual run of activities. One of the highlights was on May 1st, when we were invaded by a lot of colourful Morris Dancers who took it in turn to perform energetic dances, then Eileen's son entertained us with tales about his woodworking and commission for the Queen. Howard's daughter told us about her bee keeping – all togged up in her bee keeping suit – rather hot I suspect.

Recently, a troupe of ballet dancers came over from Chepstow. They managed to dance in the dining room – excerpts from a wide range of ballets, with an impressively quick change of lovely costumes. The residents were buzzing about it afterwards.

Karen has just finished putting together a lovely selection of photographs of people living here – when young and now. She will be putting up the penants soon for all to see.

Cheese and wine one evening, with relatives invited, was a great success – the weather perfect, company convivial, the garden looking lovely.

Thank you, everyone who has given to make this an interesting magazine and our girls in the office who have beavered away at typing it all up.

A bientôt,

Alison

A True Bee Story

By Anne Oliver

When I was a little girl we would go for holidays to a cottage in North Wales. It was down a steep and very narrow lane, just wide enough for one car. At the bottom we would unload the car and Mother would drive it up again to park in the village square.

Beyond the cottage a stream ran across the lane from the hill to the right and over a waterfall to the left. On the other side was a small farm where a boy called Oswald lived. He was an only child, a bit older than I was and had no others to play with, so he was pleased when we came to stay. He would show us how to build dams to make pools and where the stepping stones were to cross over the stream and then we could

scramble up the steep hill to a lovely flat meadow. I suppose Mother had never thought we'd cross over so had not forbidden it, but it did feel like a bit of an adventure and when mother called us from the cottage door that it was time to come in we'd hurry back. All went well until one terrible day when my brother Christopher, who was about 4 or 5 years old, tripped and fell into a bee's nest and they, being very angry, swarmed round him and got tangled in his curly hair and stung him all over his face and head. He was yelling with pain. Oswald rushed back to the farm shouting for help and I was shrieking for Mother to come to our rescue. She heard at once, but not knowing about crossing the stream kept calling back "Where are you?" After what seemed ages but probably only minutes, she found us, took Christopher in her arms and carried him back to the garden. She left him there, ran all the way up to the square where there was a telephone and spoke to her brother who was a doctor. He told her that Christopher at such a young age would possibly die of shock and so much bee poison, but if he lived he would be one of the few people who would never get rheumatism. He did live but was very ill for a long time, but even as an old man never complained of any rheumatism.

Stamps

By Ron Parsons

I'm a collector of most things but most of all stamps, which my father started - when he passed away I took over. It starts with a 2½d Blue and carries on to the present day. Sir Rowland Hill, originator of the penny postal system, was secretary to the Postmaster General 1846 – 54, then chief secretary to the Postmaster in which the penny black was worth thousands.

I'm also a collector of view cards.

Brain Teaser

The Art Group on a Tuesday afternoon often starts rather chaotically and then settles into a lovely peaceful concentration of work. Towards the end it often turns into a chat and discussion and last week one of our group looked up from reading and article to ask:

"What is a lobotomist?"

Someone piped up:

"Someone giving blood?"

Another:

"Making a hole in something – the ear?"

And a third:

"Well, there was a woman who became obsessed with playing the piano – so she had to have a lobotomy, which was an operation on the brain."

Comment from her next door neighbour:

"Why didn't they just remove the piano?" !

Pat enters the room, just hearing the end of the story asking:

"Did someone have an operation on their bottom?"

- Collapse of the whole group into uproarious laughter.

Times spent at Broadoak Park School

By Mary Johnson

At some time in my life I was head of a school for children with physical and learning disabilities. I was supported by a really good deputy teacher. Each class had a teacher and an assistant. We also had a special care unit where children were often cared for individually, as their disabilities needed this.

We had small 'buses which brought and took them home and every afternoon I went out to speak to the driver and the assistants on the buses: it included some time spent sending messages to their parents. I always saw the children onto the buses and strapped them in safely; they covered the whole of the city of Coventry.

Now, I believe, these children go to a normal school, where they have a special class. It's a good thing that they join in with normal children, with singing and storytelling and lunch, so they can understand them more and recognise their problems.

One child *did* go to a normal school and everyone was so pleased.

Growing up in Sheffield
By Pat Thorpe

Once upon a time there was a little girl who lived in a village called Stannington, she was nearly six years old. Before that she had lived in Baltic Road in Attercliffe with her Father and Mother.

It was 1917 at the end of the War in which her Father, though he was only 16, had signed up. He was always brave. We lodged in a house with an old woman. I remember it was very hot, with a big range with an oven on one side and a place for water on the other. We made toast on a toasting fork in front of the fire – one got one's face roasted at the same time! I had measles there. We lived in the old Manor House - everything was very basic - the only water we had was a cold tap in the scullery. Father had been given 'training' in car engines and after had a shop with another man in Eccleston in a suburb of Sheffield.

It was a terrible war – with horses being shot and soldiers being horribly injured. We knew someone in the village who walked with one crutch as he had lost most of his leg. He was very bitter and never came to terms with it.

The village had only basic shops and my Mother used to go down to Malin Bridge and to a small suburb of Sheffield called Hillsboro' – now famous for a football pitch. It is known as the terrible place due to a panic as many, many people were killed and injured as the gates were locked.

Whilst living in the East end of Sheffield I went to a private school run by two maiden ladies – as I remember all we did was to be given cards on which were pictures of the Saints and given candies!

Whilst I was in Attercliffe I had measles and a Doctor was fetched and I did not like him and kept going to one side and then another of a double bed! I had a little friend who went to a special school as her eyesight was very poor.

After the war there were a lot of women married to older men as so very many young men were killed in the war.

Memories of being a Nurse

By Olive Clements

I started training as a nurse when I was 18 at the Royal Victoria Hospital in Belfast, in Northern Ireland. I did 3 month rotations working in different areas of nursing.

I worked along with Professor Pantridge who invented the portable defibrillator - a machine which is now a common sight in our towns and public places. It is used to give a shock to the heart of someone in cardiac arrest. The first one was installed in a Belfast ambulance in 1965, weighed 150lbs and was operated from car batteries. Nowadays they are much lighter.

The Sister in one of my wards was over 80 years old and had a cat which followed her in the hospital on her rounds. The nurses were expected to save some scraps from their meals to feed the cat.

I lived in Nurses Accommodation during this time. You were only allowed out late one night per week. Sometimes I had to crawl back in through the bathroom window, hopefully unnoticed as I didn't have a pass to be out that night.

I went on to do 1 year of Health Visiting, before deciding to do midwifery. I spent 9 months in Ayrshire training as a midwife, delivering babies and looking after premature ones. One baby weighed only 2lbs. Then I injured my back and had to have surgery which left me in a cast for 3 months and I was off work for 9 months. I couldn't go

back to midwifery because of my back, so I returned to Health Visiting in Belfast. I spent a lot of time visiting schools, checking the children's eyes and ears and in some cases washing children who weren't being looked after properly at home.

During the Troubles, which started in the late 60's, there was one particularly bad week where a lot of houses were being burnt down and the Army were being attacked. I volunteered to run a clinic for injured people in this area. A young teenage girl with burns on her knees came to be treated and I asked her what had happened. She said she had burnt them while making petrol bombs which she had been throwing at the Army. I had to get on with my job and treat her regardless of what she had been doing. It was an eye opening experience.

Ditties
By Garry Jones

Hebe likes our goldfish,
She'd like them both on toast,
But Hebe says that kippers
Is the fish she likes the most!

Mary likes her music,
She often sits and plays,
While others come to listen,
And while away their days!

Olive likes an early lunch,
On that we all agree,
And if you give her half a chance,
She'll have an early tea!

We have a rocket Ronnie,
He knows all the tricks,
And putting all the reds down,
Is where he gets his kicks!

Now Frank he was a cricketer,
He's scored some runs we hear,
But what he likes more these days,
Is to watch and have a beer!

Well Beryl likes a peppermint,
Of this you can be sure,
So if you want a Murray mint,
She lives on the first floor!

Pat travels with her cushion,
It's always by her side,
And if her cushion goes astray,
Look out and woe betide!

Pat T she likes to exercise,
Doing laps around the house,
But you won't hear her behind you,
She's as quiet as a mouse!

Planting the Raspberries

By Angela Vaitilingam

If we are lucky, when we are young, we will find things of great beauty and interest, like flowers, birds and trees. We will be suitably impressed and may go out of our way to see them again. But, I find, when we grow old, these things attain more importance and may arouse in us a great deal of wonder and emotion.

My grandson has recently got himself an allotment and keeps busy on it for much of his spare time. He has not had the plot for long, so when I paid a visit I was surprised at how much work he has already done…There are lots of vegetables sprouting away and even a small pond under construction in the corner. There are scarlet poppies and other wild flowers.

Greenhouses I find are now a little out of fashion and have been mostly replaced by polytunnels. The one on this allotment already has strawberries growing and a large amount of frogs hopping around. I guess they will be pleased when the pond is finished!

I spent the day there with my grandson last week and helped him plant some raspberries. In the past such a day would have been fun, but "nothing to write home about". Now I am in my eighties the experience was magic!

Allotments, I find, are very friendly places! There are usually other workers digging away and giving you a smile in passing. Several people have given my grandson a few plants here and there, together with tips on cultivation.

We find ourselves increasingly limited in what we are able to do as we get older. But each day is new and can be filled with joy of one kind or another. Maybe we can no longer climb a mountain, attend a great concert or dance an exotic dance, but there are

lots of experiences of equal value. All my life I have expected that everything will be perfect some time in the rosy future, when I have sorted everything out! But it is a bit late now, and I have finally realised that the present moment is all we have. There is perfection to be found in doing many things. Like planting the raspberries or finding the wildflowers.

A Cornish Childhood

By Jean Casey

I was brought up in a Cornish village. It was not one of the pretty picturesque villages, which are now popular holiday resorts but an inland working village centred round the Delabole slate quarry where my father worked. The sea was not too far away and we often walked or cycled to bathe in the wild sea of the Atlantic coast of North Cornwall. When I was a child we went to Trebarwith which had an easy path down to the beach which had a cafe and the 'Horsepool', a natural swimming pool. In my teens we would cycle to Tregardock which had a steep rocky descent. Neither beach was accessible at high tide.

I was born in 1921 but not in Cornwall however, and the couple I knew as my parents were not my biological parents, but this I did not find out until after I was married. All of my relations and also most people in the village must have known that I was adopted but no-one ever told me. In retrospect this may help to explain my rather unusual upbringing, as my parents, my father in particular, were very protective of me. Another factor may have been because I was ill as a child, just after I had started primary school. I don't know what it was or how seriously I was ill but the doctor told my father

to keep me away from school for a while, presumably to avoid catching any of the usual childhood ailments whilst I was recuperating. My father took him at his word and I never went to school again. I don't know how my father managed to arrange this but he paid my mother's eldest maiden sister Aunt Nell to teach me reading and arithmetic. She became like a second mother to me and would take me out on walks which helped me learn about the countryside and nature though I missed out on history and geography. I would have liked to have gone to school and remember asking if I could go but my father was always very evasive and I believe that he did not value school education, although he was clever himself and wished he could have furthered his education rather than becoming a worker in the slate quarry. My mother never seemed to have an opinion or any say in the matter. I was very keen to learn and reading became one of my favourite pastimes as because I did not attend school, I had a lot of time on my hands and few friends. Books were difficult to come by but my father acquired a set of encyclopaedias through the newspaper and I read these as well as school stories such as those by Angela Brazil.

My father seemed to prefer me not to mix with other children maybe because of the fear of infection and also because he thought that some of the village children were common. Not that we were anything special! I did, however, have a good friend Winnie who lived a few houses away. I was determined to play with her, we went for walks and often played ball in the street; there was very little traffic in those days. We remained friends until her death 15 years ago.

One place where we did meet people was at the local Methodist church where we attended services at least twice every Sunday. I was not allowed to go the Sunday School but when I was older I went to the youth club which was a good place to meet other young people and where they provided social events, we put on plays etc. I was not allowed out to play on Sundays and no work was done. Looking back it seems very strange but that was how our lives were and I accepted it.

My grandfather worked at the quarry as a slate splitter which was a job requiring great skill and my father also followed this trade. In 1910 over 500 men worked there to produce a vast number of slates which were exported all over the world and has now left a huge hole in the ground at Delabole. My father was not a strong man; he found the work hard and died aged 64 from a lung disease caused by the slate dust. Besides providing employment the slate quarry brought another benefit - electricity came to our village much earlier than the surrounding area because power was needed for the quarry and the surplus lit our homes. Besides working in the quarry many men had a few animals and farmed in a small way. My grandfather kept a few animals, my father didn't but I kept chickens in our garden. I had about 20 and sold the eggs to the egg man who came around the houses buying and selling eggs.

We moved house several times around the village when I was young but the house I remember most was a semi-detached bungalow with a large garden. My mother had a coal fired copper which boiled water to do the washing and coal was also used on the small built-in range which had a hob as well as an oven. My mother was a good cook and made pasties every week containing meat and potato. She also made saffron buns which were bright yellow because of the amount of saffron she used. As well as cooking and housework, my mother made many of our clothes as did many women in those days. She worked as a dressmaker before she was married but gave up after that.

The highlight of the week was a visit 'Cosy's' the local purpose built cinema run by

Mr 'Cosy' Wills where the programme changed weekly and consisted of two films and sometimes some adverts. ‘Buses even ran to pick up people from outlying areas to go to the cinemas and sometimes there would be afternoon showings.

In 1939 everyone was registered as war became increasingly likely and when men began to be called up for service, along with several other young women, I went to fill their places in the local Co-Op department store. There were about 20 shops in the village including two butchers, two papershops, a bakers and shoe menders but the Co-Op was by far the largest shop with about 10 staff and I worked in the grocery department and enjoyed being out of the house and meeting people. Some customers would send in orders which would be delivered by van and others came into the shop. Butter, margarine and bacon were packaged up in the shop but everything else came already packaged. They also had a drapery department which sold material and sewing items as well as ready-made clothes. Although there was a changing room it was the custom for people to take clothes home 'on approval' to try them on and it is quite likely that some people wore them and then took them back. You would need to be careful doing that in a small village! We worked 5 1/2 days a week with early closing on Thursday afternoon. Bigger shops were to be found at Wadebridge where we would go using one of the farming relations’ pony and trap before the advent of the ‘bus service.

In 1941 single women over 20 were called up for war work. The choice was to sign up with the army, airforce or navy, to work on the land, or to do industrial work. My father had been a conscientious objector in WW1 so the Services were not really an option and living in the countryside I had seen at first-hand how hard working on the land was so that left factory work and leaving home .... and freedom!

The Cadbury Story

By Patricia Clements

I have worked at Cadbury for 20 years, originally at the Frys factory in Keynsham and more recently at the main Cadbury factory in Bournville in Birmingham. This is a short history of the famous chocolate company that was started by a Quaker family.

In 1824 a young Quaker called John Cadbury opened a shop in Birmingham selling mainly tea and coffee as well as some cocoa and drinking chocolate. By 1842 he was selling 16 sorts of drinking chocolate and 11 cocoas. Chocolate for eating was a novelty at the time, it would have been very different to the chocolate we enjoy nowadays and would not have been very nice to eat.

Bristol-based Frys made the first bar of chocolate in 1847, similar to what we recognise today. It was made from a mix of cocoa powder, sugar and a little melted cocoa butter. This made a chocolate that could be moulded.

In the 1860's, John Cadbury's son, George Cadbury, spent 4 years trying to improve the recipe for eating chocolate eventually using fresh milk rather than powdered milk. He also produced a new process for pressing cocoa butter from the cocoa beans to produce a much more palatable cocoa essence.

Georges' brother, Richard, was very artistic and used designs from his own paintings to decorate the boxes that some of the chocolates were sold in. He often used his own children as models or painted flowers and scenes from his holidays. Elaborate chocolate boxes were very popular with the late Victorians and continued to be popular until the 2nd World War.

The Cadbury brothers were pioneers in industrial relations and employee welfare setting standards. Small rewards were given for punctuality and Cadbury was the first firm to introduce the Saturday half day holiday and closing the factory on Bank Holidays. Young employees were encouraged to attend night school. Sports facilities were provided, including male and female swimming pools. The factory had facilities which were unheard of in Victorian times such as heated dressing rooms, kitchens for heating up food and separate gardens for men and women.

George Cadbury was interested in improving living conditions for his workers and in 1895 bought 120 acres near the factory where he built houses for his key workers. You can still see these houses in Bournville today.

The first Cadbury Easter Egg appeared in 1875, made with dark chocolate.

Dairy Milk was launched in 1905 - it was an attempt to make a more milky chocolate as the original chocolate had been coarse, dry and not sweet.

Milk Tray arrived in 1915, made famous by the Milk Tray man commercials. Over 8 million boxes are sold every year.

In 24 hours, the Cadbury factory in Bournville can make –

1.2 million Cadbury Crème Eggs

Over 1 million Wispa bars

5.5 million bars of Dairy Milk

Over 400 million Chocolate Buttons

Patricia in a chocolate factory in Austria:

To Our Children, Grown Up

By Angela Vaitilingam

It was Mum who gave the hugs
And gave out all the mugs
Of tea
To friends and family,
And made the cake, for goodness sake,
When birthdays came around.

A mother valued then,
When problems came, or when
She planned a trip,
Or filled the stockings, dressed the tree,
When Christmas came again.

You thought **she** had the answers
To heartaches and disasters!
But now **you're** cool and smart
And update with the state of art.

And now Mum's old, her ways are set.
She's not sure if she's linked up
To the internet!
If yesterday was Sunday? Can she get
Her pension on a Monday?
Or take herself out shopping in The Mall?

What can **you** do when Mother
Forgets her passwords?
Burns the food?
Or sometimes is extremely rude
To people she adores?

Such a windstorm
In our story
Joy and misery and glory
When it comes towards the end
We are alone.

Growing up in London

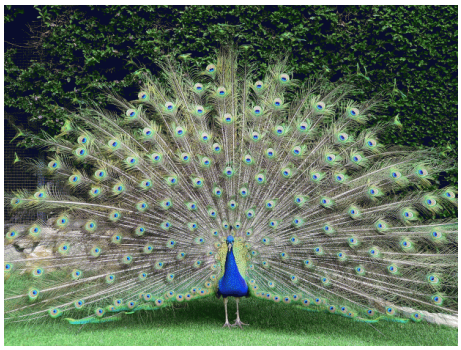
By Betty West

LONDON - *The Woolwich Ferry*

I was born at No. 712 Woolwich Road, London, close to the Woolwich Ferry in January 1921. Trips on the Woolwich Ferry at that time were quite a treat by us kids. My father was a grocer and my earliest recollection was watching him cutting up pats of butter with special wooden plats and carving ham for the dinner break for the girls who worked at Siemens Factory across the road. There was a pub just a few doors along and Father would go and get beer in a jug, hand it to my mother who would drink straight out of the jug, with obvious enjoyment!

There were 5 children, but Joan and I were much younger than the other 3, and with only 2 years between us we were quite inseparable. Sundays we were packed off to Sunday School for the parents to have a much needed rest. I don't remember much about how we were taught, but that must have sown the seed to keep us attending Church thereafter….however, I can just remember being in a little 'show' and I was dressed up in yellow crêpe paper as "Little Miss Moon" and I can still remember the song I had to sing solo:

Little Miss Moon up on high
Like a yellow lamp in the sky
You are shining and beaming
While I lie dreaming asleep in my bed
Hush-a-bye ♬♪♫



Sometimes Father would take me to the park to feed the deer and any other animals there. He was a real country man, had only come to London as times were hard on the land, and he really loved animals. We would stand for ages waiting for the peacocks to spread their tails. Great thrill when this happened.

We had large family gatherings at Christmas: aunts, uncles, cousins came to 712 for Christmas and Boxing Day. Wonderful food, I remember, and everyone making their own entertainment. Men seemed to enjoy playing cards, but ladies congregated in another room to chat. Everyone seemed so happy. At night if there weren't enough beds, the men had to sleep on the floor: nobody seemed to complain; in fact a great

joke was made of it. How times have changed!

Summer times, Joan and I were taken on holiday by various aunts and uncles. Bournemouth seemed to be a favourite seaside resort. My favourite auntie Maud took us to the afternoon tea dances at the hotels, not to dance; we loved watching the dances and listening to the bands. It was naughty auntie Maud who gave me my first cigarette. Other holiday trips with obliging aunts included punting on the river at Bedford, pulling up under the trees and having picnics by the boats. It was blissful!

When I was about 8, for some reason unknown to me, we moved to Peckham - still with the shop, but somehow altogether a different life. Milk was delivered by horse and cart. Dad would go out and gives knobs of sugar to the horse. One day he didn't! And would you believe that horse stepped onto the pavement and knocked on the door to remind him!

We had a beautiful, large, black cat which was allowed to sit in the window with the eggs until one day a customer complained an egg was empty and it was discovered that clever Fluff punctured the eggs and sucked out the yolks. Thereafter, Fluff was barred from that area.

We attended a little mission Church at the end of the road where we had magic lantern services on Sundays and kids would be so keen they would be queueing outside waiting for the door to open. We had a lot of fun in groups there. I learned to play badminton.

At Peckham, I got a scholarship to Honor Oak Park School, a brand new school with playing fields for hockey and tennis courts and we made many new friends, one of whom, Alma, I still correspond with today at Christmas and Birthdays.

Working in India

By Cherry Harris

I was 52 when I first went abroad. The second time was as a volunteer to work at Seva Nilayam in South India, for a year. This was a medical practice to give simple care to the local populace in a country area where there was no doctor or hospital for miles. Dora (English, like me) had got it going some years previously. Simple buildings, a deep large well so that we never ran out of water in even the worst drought, simple electricity to light the rooms and local people to work there including one or two with special knowledge to deal with widespread leprosy and T.B. We did not have a doctor and I, as I had told Dora, by letter, was a trained nurse, but psychiatric with only a little general experience. However, very helpful books were being published to help people in similar situations to mine, to diagnose symptoms. I had the use of one.

Our patients mostly walked (even for miles) to us or came by a local bus that passed sometimes. Because of the heat we started work at 7am. Because we were close to the equator I used to say to the weather "Hot, hotter or hottest!". I would see the incoming patients, with a little girl to translate for me, although I did learn some Tamil in time. There were a selection of tablets, capsules and injections I could prescribe. I remember, as we were running short, of going to Madurai (40 miles away) by "bus" to top up our supplies from a big chemist there. Much of what I bought I could only have bought in England by a doctor's prescription.

Some of the symptoms that brought patients to us were a puzzle to me. I remember a man with a big sore on his leg. I gave him antibiotics. He returned again. No better. So I took him, by bus, into Madurai where there was a big hospital and a doctor who would help us, for free. It was Osteomyelitis, something I'd never seen. He could be treated for free as an inpatient but a relative had to come in too to help him – this person slept on the floor under the patient's bed and dealt with daily needs. The nurse

or nurses of the wards seemed to do very little. I found this to my cost at a later date when I was working in Goa. I had a great pain in my belly – was taken to a small local hospital (on the back of a motorbike!) where the doctor saw me and said without preamble, "You've got a big growth there." I was put on a stretcher by four of the small local helpers (a very soiled stretcher) who lugged me upstairs to a ward. I had no helper to sleep under my bed, so I had to drag myself down the ward to the toilet. This, as in India, was a hole in the ground that one squatted over. Then one filled a small container with water to wash down the excrement. The place smelt awful!
One day the ward was filled with palliasses. One by one the women were brought in, still asleep, after having had some form of hysterectomy so they couldn't get pregnant again. The woman lying right by me still had her baby with her, it was crying, so I got myself out of bed, put the baby to the breast to feed and hobbled back to bed. The pain slowly went away – no drugs or treatment. So I left after some days.

Back to Seva Nilayam. Babies were, not infrequently, brought to us by a grandmother, the mother having died in childbirth, not uncommon. The baby would have an infection – very likely from the way the bottle would be cleaned before the bottle feed. The bottle would have been filled with sand and water, then shaken about to clean it – BUT – the sand would have been taken from the immediate ground and probably soiled with heavens knows what! We would try and persuade the use of another sort of holder for the milk.
Another time I was awakened at night by a great racket going on. Half a village had arrived to accompany a man who had been bitten by a cobra as he worked at night on his land. We

persuaded most of the people to go home except the close relatives of the bitten man. What to do about the snake bite??? Anti-venom treatment had to be kept in a fridge – this we did not have and the nearest doctor with one was miles away. So I gave the man an injection to calm him a bit – it was only diazepam or something similar but to locals an injection was magic to them. There was no more I could do and I went back to my bed. When I went to see him at early dawn he was still alive – how relieved I was! – and he was got onto the cart and taken home. Cobras only bite if they feel threatened, so if you see one, keep out of the way. Scorpions. Don't step on one of those. Keep sandals on and watch for them, as I had to when I went through the grass to see to the hens in early morning.

So the year I worked at Seva Nilayam was in many ways a wonderful time frame. Living so close to simple country life, making do the best I could at the long mornings at work. At Seva Nilayam we were vegetarian, food cooked by an Indian cook, on a fire of wood from our palm trees. The leaves of the tree provided leafy sheltered roofs. The coconuts were shredded and added to the meal, the coconut milk drunk. Nothing wasted. I walked sandalled or barefoot, travelled on the local bus (women on one side, men on the other). One never refused anyone water from one's well. In kitchen areas food had to be kept away from anything that could climb or jump to get at it. I know in Goa we tied veg up in bags on long strings, hanging from the roof. My own room only possessed a chair and a bed with a wooden shutter to close the window if necessary. When the longed-for rains did arrive in autumn if one got pouring wet, there was no need to change into dry clothing. The wet ones dried on you in no time. Because of the heat, warming bedding was not needed. I often slept on the veranda when it was cooler. I was there as part of the local life – making do with whatever one had to hand. Joining in a local event, like a wedding. In India, I never stayed in hotels or took part in what I'd call the 'tourist life'!

The Guard Dog

By Alison Ashton

When I last lived in the country I moved from Windsor to Somerset to get away from the noisy 'planes, 'squaddies' and tourists, which plagued the town.

I was introduced to a friend of some friends, who owned a large home and grounds, who needed someone to keep an eye on things and the animals, while he was away in Bristol on business. I was going to live in the lodge, next to the drive entrance, but it needed a lot of work done to make it habitable so I was installed in the main house while this was done. The dog with the house was a large wolf hound, part guard dog and very protective of his domain.

One evening I had been down to the lodge to see how work was progressing and went back to the house at dusk to have supper. However, on entering the main front door I was confronted by a large and menacing animal who bared his teeth and with a deep throated growl dared me to enter! Grrrrrrrr. I tried the usual command – to 'Go and sit *down*' in my most authoritative voice but to no avail; there was no other way into the house as the west wing was unoccupied and closed up. I had the choice of returning to the cottage to spend the cold November night – (no windows or locks – roof being repaired, no heat or furniture) – or of somehow braving THE DOG. I decided on the latter, so with fear in my heart carried on with the same tactic of command until *eventually* he slowly lowered his haunches to the floor and glared at me. Talking constantly to him I entered the enormous hall – about 20' x 30' – with massive beams and a huge inglenook fireplace. Inch by inch I crept my way round until I reached the stairs and fled to safety. I had closed the door but felt it unnecessary to lock it as it was expertly defended. So full of tension had I been that it took me some time to calm down.

In the morning the reason for the behaviour was revealed. His food for the next 6 months had been delivered that day and it was stacked in large neat piles of his dog food and biscuits ranged around the hall! No one was going to take that! Later, we became friends.

When I truly loved myself

Poem shared by Anna Naranjo

When I truly loved myself, I understood that, in any circumstance, I was in the right place at the right time. Then, I could relax. Today I know that has a name…
Self-esteem
When I truly loved myself, I could feel that my anguish and emotional distress are but signs that I go against my own truths. Today I know that is….**Authenticity**
When I truly loved myself, I stopped wishing that my life would be different, and I began to see that everything happens contributes to my growth. Today I know that is called… **Maturity**
When I truly loved myself, I began to understand why it is offensive trying to force a situation or a person only to achieve what I want, even knowing that it is not the time or that person (perhaps myself) is not prepared. Today I know that the name of that is… **Respect**
When I truly loved myself, I began to get rid of everything that was not healthy: people and situations, everything and anything that pushes me down. Initially, my reason called selfishness caused that attitude. Today I know it is called…**Self-love**
When I truly loved myself, I stopped worrying about not having free time and I gave up making big plans and mega-projects of future. Today I do what I find correct, what I like, when I want and at my own pace. Today I know that is…**Easiness**
When I truly loved myself, I gave up wanting to be always right and, with that, I was wrong far few times. So I found…**Humanity**
When I truly loved myself, I gave up on reliving the past and worrying about the future. Now, I stay in the present, which is where life happens. Today I live one day at a time. And that is called…**Fullness**
When I truly loved myself, I understood that my mind can torment and disappoint me. But when I place it to serve my heart, it is a valuable ally. And this is…**Knowing how to live!**
We should not be afraid to question ourselves…
Even planets collide and from chaos stars are born.

Beautiful Poem by Charles Chaplin – English comic actor famous during the era of silent film.

On coming to Bristol

By John Reason

I never planned to finish up in Bristol, I had always thought of it as rather a grubby place with some not very nice industries, namely coal and tobacco and from time to time, very troublesome Dockers.

The first experience was whilst serving in the RAF during the war, driving through the place, still littered with smoking rubble during the blitz – it was most certainly grubby but had taken a really dreadful hammering. The next occasion was to visit friends in Kingswood in about 1949, going for a walk and having to avoid walking on bits of coal, grit and skirting bits of old tips.

My jobs mostly had been in London but had taken me to various other places, but then, living and settled in Somerset in 1974/5 I was asked by the Managing Director to go to Bristol and look at a business that was for sale and decide if it would fit in with the empire he was building. This I did and before long found myself running another company and whatsmore living over the premises in Colston Street. This was supposed to be as a temporary measure which was just as well, as the flat above was very old and I soon found to be alive with rats. Most of the adjacent premises were likewise affected – so this was my introduction to Bristol.

It did promise, however, to be very interesting, my first time living in what was a sea port with seagulls screeching all over the place soon after dawn, and from my bedroom window, looking down vertically into the garden below of the old hospital and Priory of St. Bartholomew which later housed the Grammar School and then later the City School, where at that time plague victims or perhaps riot victims, were being disinterred and despite all the traffic thundering by on the centre – foxes could be watched with cubs playing at most times. There was historical interest all around and I discovered many gems – one such was St. Nicholas Church, which at that time was the City Museum with the Brass Rubbing in the basement – I spent quite a lot of time down on my knees in there.

So things moved on and I was able to find somewhere rather better to live, finally settling on Sneyd Park. This area had seen minimal development in the mid Victorian period – very large houses by the super rich, the people who were building the outskirts of Bristol city or who perhaps were still involved with commercial interests from the Port. By the time I went there to live, most of these enormous houses had been sold off for a variety of uses, mostly schools, science laboratories, even a TA Centre and all sorts. The area had been discovered, ripe for development and would soon become saturated, especially with flats of all descriptions. But still lots of interest – very near the Downs and the edge of the Gorge – Mariners Way – a route from the city to the harbour at Sea Mills in Roman times and very useful these days.

On walking home at times, I would find myself on 'Pitch and Pay' lane, and learned that the name was given at the time of the plague, when the country folk would come to a stile at the end of the lane – throw their produce over to the possible plague infected Bristolians and hope to receive payment by the same method.

<u>Kids say the funniest things</u>

By Karen Parkin

It never fails to amuse me how children say exactly what they are thinking—here's a classic example:

Me to my 4 year old daughter Libby whilst putting her to bed:
"Night night sweetheart, sleep tight, love you, see you in the morning..."
Libby to me:
"*Night night, now GET OUT!"*

Charming!

Living in a big Georgian House in Rugby

By Hebe Welbourn

When I was 8 we moved into a big Georgian house, similar to the big houses in Cotham, except it was built of Midlands red brick instead of Bristol stone. The reason for the move was to raise our family status to what it would have been before World War 1. That's another story, which cast a shadow over all my childhood. In order for a public school master to earn sufficient income, he had to take charge of a boarding house for boys in addition to his teaching duties. My father entered the profession too late to be in line for a boarding house, but we could take in 3-4 poor little boys who were too late to find a place immediately in one of the main houses.

The other half of our big house was occupied by Mrs Brooke, mother of the poet Rupert Brooke, who, poor lady, had been widowed just before World War 1, and lost 3 sons including her poet son, Rupert, during the war. Our half of the house was a lovely big house with a big garden, including vegetable gardens and a courtyard of garages - one of which was let to a fleet of ice cream vendor cycles - and a high wall from which I could watch the town children at play (I wasn't allowed to play with them). There was a stable yard and old stables (our garage and garden sheds) and a loft with a stage at one end where we acted plays, and a big floor where my brother had his model railway with stations which were part of a country inhabited by my various farmyard etc. toy people. We had a farm, a market, a broadcasting station and a newspaper.

You entered the house up a flight of stone steps to a big front door. On the left was the dining room overlooking the front garden. On the right was a corridor to the boys' day room which had French doors onto the garden. And down some steps you got to the kitchen and servants accommodation where I sat by the range, talked, and where I also learned to cook and iron.

On the first floor upstairs overlooking the garden we had a lovely drawing room furnished to my mother's artistic specifications with a radio (1928 – first time we had one), a cosy open fire for sending letters to Father Christmas, and the piano on which we could pick out tunes. We had a lodger, Mr Harris, who had a big room above the

dining room. He was very young and I regarded him as one of the family. He was in charge of the school observatory and showed me the moon, Mars and other planets through the telescope: wasn't I so lucky! Then there was the boys' bedroom at the back, and my brother had to share his bedroom with them in term time, which wasn't so good from his point of view. My sister, who was 8 years older than me and often away at school etc., had a big room at the back.

Then at the very top of the house were two attics. The one at the back, as I remember it, was kind of spare, or sometimes my sister slept there. I had the top front attic room, overlooking the School Close. It had bright yellow walls and blue paintwork – I loved it. There was a little door opening into a cupboard, but it wasn't just a cupboard, it was a secret passage going all round both houses (ours and Mrs Brooke's) under the eaves. And on the landing there was a trap door in the ceiling leading onto the roof. One day, my brother and sister decided to explore these exciting outlets. First we tried the passage under the eaves and peeped into Mrs Brooke's attic. Somehow I'd expected to find Rupert Brooke in there, busy writing poetry – of course I knew that really he had died during the war. In reality, the whole room was full of uninteresting looking boxes etc. Then we got onto the roof and found another little trap door just like ours. I couldn't resist tapping it with my foot, but the space was boarded over with plywood which splintered – a little piece fell onto the floor below. I don't know what happened, we never dared tell a soul!

I suddenly realise I have made no mention of bathroom or toilet: I have *no memory* of bath or toilet in this house! I have a nasty feeling this is connected with hidden fears of being alone as a little girl in this huge, rambling household.

We didn't stay in the house for long because a short time after this, my mother received a legacy from her family which enabled us to buy an architect–designed house in Rugby together with the Suffolk water mill which I have already described in a previous magazine.

When I last passed through Rugby, 7-8 years ago, I found the old red house had been demolished and replaced by a new housing estate.

Fanny

By Anne Oliver

It was in 1899 that Fanny became aware of herself as a person. There were two other people in her life. One had two names, Father and Frank, the other had only one which was Jack. The house they lived in had a staircase going up which she never climbed.

Outside there was a garden where the men grew vegetables, had a flock of hens, two cows and there were also some sheds.

Fanny had a happy life following the two men about and gradually learning the usual things. What she specially liked to do was draw, copying the pictures in the books and in this way learned what the things she had never seen, such as trees, cats and dogs, would look like.

One day one of the cows produced a calf which fascinated Fanny and for the first time in her life she had a playmate and called her Molly. But one day when she went into the shed where the calf spent the nights, she found that Molly had died. For the first time Fanny knew what sadness and tears were.

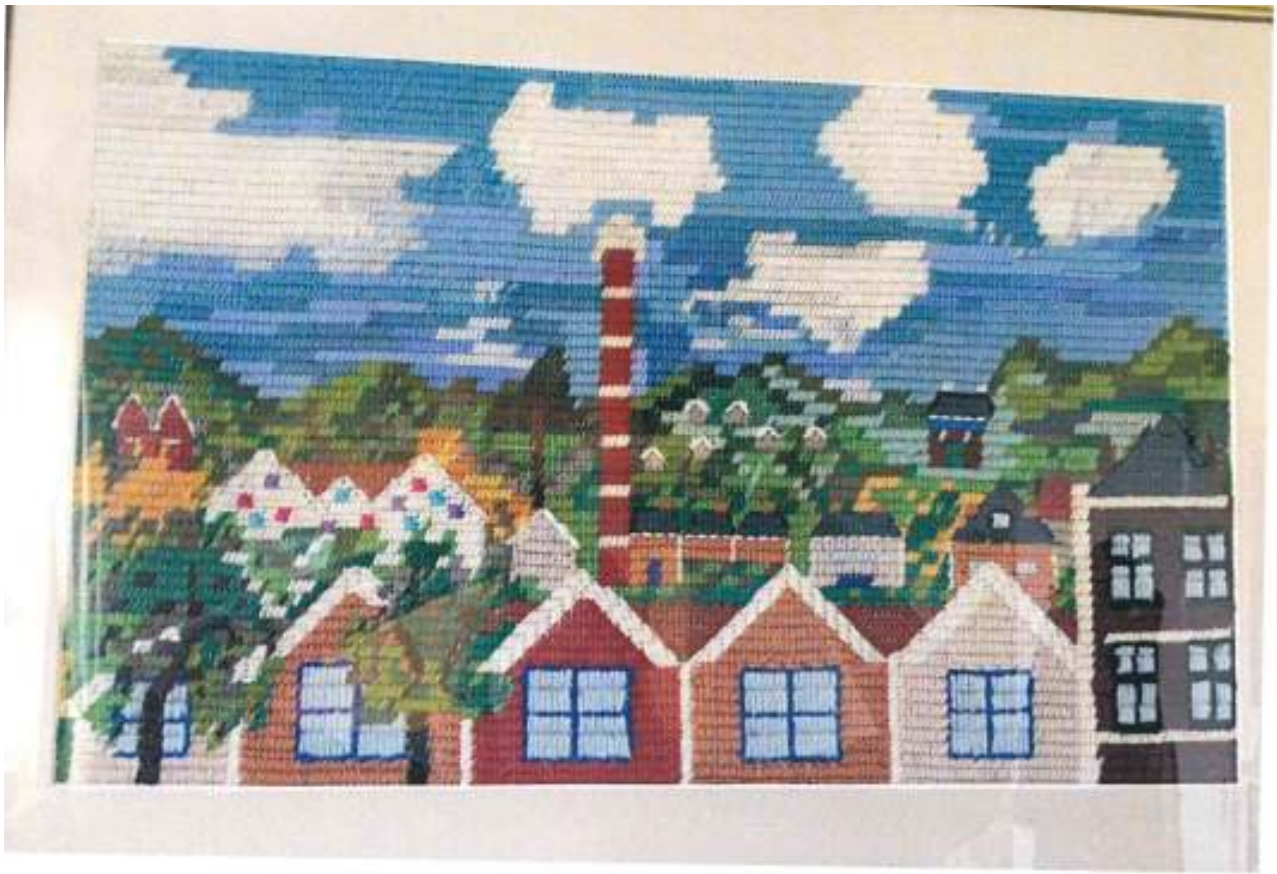
Frank had told Fanny how it was that he became her father. He had married a very pretty Japanese girl who lived with him and they had two little girls, and a few years later Fanny herself was born, making the Japanese lady her mother and the girls her sisters, and they all lived together as a family. When her sisters were old enough, her mother had taken the girls to a boarding school on the mainland, where she would leave them for a few months and come back to be with Fanny and her father, but she never returned. Her father was frantic to find out why and it was only by cabling to England that he found out that all contact with China had ceased abruptly because a bitter local war had started between China and the small Japanese community. This Japanese community had been herded into a prisoner of war camp, where they were brutally treated and starved to death. Frank had to suppose that his wife and two daughters had arrived at exactly the wrong time and ended up in the camp and died there.

Fanny and the men's life had to go on as before and it was when she was nine years old that the next tragedy occurred and Frank became seriously ill. Frank asked Fanny to come to his bedroom and listen carefully to what he had to tell her. This was that as soon as he had felt himself becoming weaker and less able to do his share of the work, he had cabled England to ask that two men be sent out urgently and were due to arrive

in a few days. He told her that he had expected to take her to England when he retired, but he was now too ill to do that, so she would go with Jack.

So it was that she took Jack's surname of Eccles, went to a boarding school, and in the holidays went to the same church as my mother and father's families and when she grew up, married my uncle. This is why I have been able to tell you this story as she used to tell it to me, never failing to add that she believed herself to be the only little girl who had ever lived with two men as her sole companions, in a lighthouse on a small island off the south coast of China.

Anne is a lover of tapestry and needlework and has several displayed in her room—this is a particularly good example and shows where she used to live in North Road.:



Amusing Experiences of a Volunteer in a Mind Charity Shop

By Mary Friend

Once upon a time when I was sitting at the till, open to customers, a young lady rushed in and asked in a loud voice, "Have you a tiara?" I looked in the back of the shop and had to disappoint us both by saying "Unfortunately we have no such thing in stock!"

Another stock asked for and in demand were once worn wedding dresses which could be tried on in the cubby hold for privacy with a mirror and a curtain.

At one stage we had a notice about breast feeding in public. I do not remember ever seeing mother and baby taking advantage of this, but there it was.

There was a friend of mine who popped in very often with a photograph carried in front of her chest of Aled Jones whom she went to hear as often as possible – she was a bit dim but went to church locally. A drunken vicar's son with yellow hair and in a sober moment once called her a 'naughty girl'. She just walked past and dismissed him.

In my early days in the shop I fitted a grey suit for a down and out who I was particularly kind to. He kept coming back to see me and was uncomfortably familiar.

Men's shoes were in mixed sizes for men of the road who had holes in their other inexpensive footwear.

Immigrants from various countries asked for sheets, blankets, towels, pillowcases and duvet covers. I bought some of these myself, white with coloured flowers on them and kept an eye open for nightgowns and pyjamas.

There were Monsoon dresses, lots of M&S jumpers, tops

and skirts, sometimes put in colour order and very popular.

A lot of stock was scanned by me for good quality presents through the year and spread over the seasons for Christmas and Birthday presents. For me, a malachite necklace for £30 half price.

We kept a bowl of jelly babies for free consumption on the desk next to the very old fashioned till. It opened fast against my belly like Baker in the television series about a grocer's shop. It never ceased to amuse me.

One auspicious customer was a TV weather forecaster who donated many ties of varied colours and textures and a bag of clothes from his wife! "You will have to buy her some more" said I and he smiled good-temperedly.

Students at graduation time came in for bow ties – we had good sales of black ties. The tie box was full of a real mixture of them at £2.00 each: quite a good way to make change.

Another piece of clothing, for some reason rather expensive at £3.00, were men's braces – especially red ones for dress suits which were often returned after the dinner was over. One of my nephews found his best fitting suit in a shop like mine.

I once bought a stick from a shop down the road and put it behind the door only to forget to take it home, so the next day it was gone, sold to a satisfied customer.

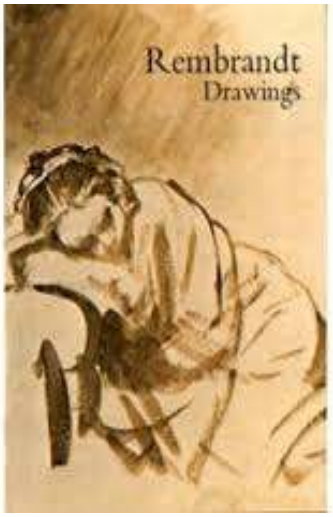
One favourite customer was a Borstal boy who lived round the corner and had been well trained by a gardener on the staff of his school. He used to come into the shop and show me his sale bargains from Sainsbury's, cheap streaky bacon in 6 packs for half price. He came in one day with a young apple tree over one shoulder to be planted in this garden near his flat. One day he stood in front of me when it was raining. I teased him and said "What can I do for you?" His reply - "Give me a good rub down!"

A little old lady came hobbling into the shop, walking gently, with heavy specs. "Have you got a magnifying glass?" I had to turn her away as we had no such thing in stock to meet her need.

Another of my favourite customers was an old resident of the local St Joseph's home. When I first stood at the desk of the shop she came with a little bundle of leaflets to convert me to the Catholic Church. Her shopping consisted of asking for old fashioned stockings and green tights for me! I was fascinated by her story – she was small and thin with amazing life experiences I hardly dare remember. St Joseph's Home was nearby and some of the sisters came into the shop to look for underwear and greet us.

There were several regular visitors, some of which I knew of old and was always pleased to see – recovered hospital friends and one man who had a tuft of hair roughly on top and asked for records. He liked big band ones and had such a large collection that the floor of his flat was in danger of falling through.

We had a lot of good books, especially art books. There was a marvellous one on the drawings of Rembrandt which was only partly complete. I once collected sheet music from jumble sales (jumble sales came before charity shops). They were fun too and not too tidy.



The valuables cupboard was wonderfully filled with all sorts of treasures - a china doll with frilly dresses, unlike the Barbie dolls which we stocked elsewhere.

We were asked for cufflinks – surprising for the time! Some of the men's shirts were with cuffs and needed links, others were coloured with names and pictures on them.

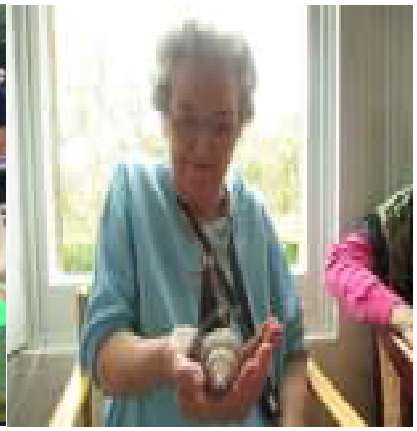
As in most shops, we kept petty cash accounts to be written out with red pens. The pen pot was often overcrowded with black pens and pencils. The red pens used to get lost and eventually I organised everybody else's habits at using pens.

Activities at Avenue House

We are so lucky at Avenue House to have such a variety of entertainers visit the residents and different activities and trips always planned. This year the residents have enjoyed fish and chips at the beach, a visit from some small creatures, a pantomime at Christmas and a performance from a local ballet group to name just a few. Here are a few snapshots of the fun we've been having.:











A visit from a local ballet group was a definite highlight—thanks to one of our care staff Naveed we have some great pictures and as you can see came with an array of beautiful costumes, and performed group as well as solo dances.

We all enjoyed them so much.

A May Day visit to Avenue House from Bristol Rag Morris

By Sue Tuckwell

May Day 2017 started with music and dancing as Morris Dancers and their accompanying musicians filled the dining room with sound and movement to welcome in the lovely month of May. Here's a bit more about the Rag Morris group who so kindly arranged this visit. We hope we see them again on May mornings to come.

Rag Morris are the Morris dance team attached to the University of Bristol and we have one of the longest continuous University connections in the country. Though some of our members are non-students or ex-students, Rag Morris are an officially recognised society of the University of Bristol Students' Union, formed in 1981.

Rag Morris has acquired its own inimitable style over the last thirty years - energetic, colourful, comic, a bit 'off-the-wall' and certainly never boring. We wear brilliantly coloured 'rag shirts' and ribboned bells. Our repertoire comes from the dances of the Cotswold Hills and the wild Welsh Borders, and we dance with sticks, hankies, bare hands and plastic chickens, to the accompaniment of fiddles, melodeons, accordions, whistles and drums. Then there's our faithful, if sometimes slightly alarming, horse called Rags who sometimes dances out with us.

The Art Group

We meet in the Craft Room on a Tuesday afternoon and have a regular gathering, with people sometimes drifting in to look or chat.

We have recently been doing various exploratory work in observation, imagination and experiment. Sometimes we have someone willing to sit and be a model for drawing – one day we had Caroline's pug dog, Megan, to join us, but she didn't stay long and we had to abandon our work! Models invited???

As Judith says, "You don't have to be especially good to enjoy drawing."

HOME

By Warsan Shire

You have to understand

That no-one puts their children in a boat

Unless the water is safer than the land

No-one burns their palms

Under trains

Beneath carriages

No-one spends days and nights

In the

Stomach of a truck

Feeding on newspaper

Unless the miles travelled

Mean something more than the journey.

No-one crawls under fences,

No-one wants to be beaten,

Pitied.

No-one chooses refugee camps,

Or strip searches where your

Body is left aching,

Or prison,

Because prison is safer

Than a city on fire

And one prison guard

In the night

Is better than a truck load

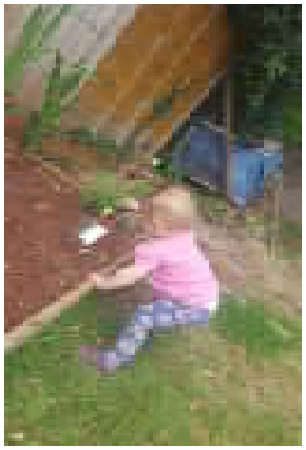
Of men who look like your father.

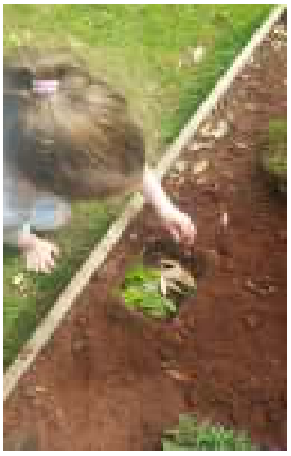
No-one could stomach it,

30 Days Wild

By Karen Parkin

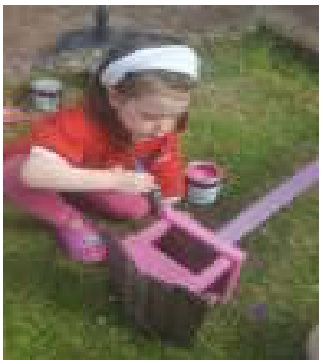
It's a great belief of mine that children should be in touch with their wild side. Loving the great outdoors, not afraid to get muddy or up close with a few creepy crawlies, and understanding the natural world around them. As such, we (me, my husband and our two daughters Libby, who's 4 and April, who's 1) had great fun getting involved in the Wildlife Trust's '30 Days Wild' initiative - the idea being that every day throughout June, you do something 'wild'. Here are just a few of the things we got up to:





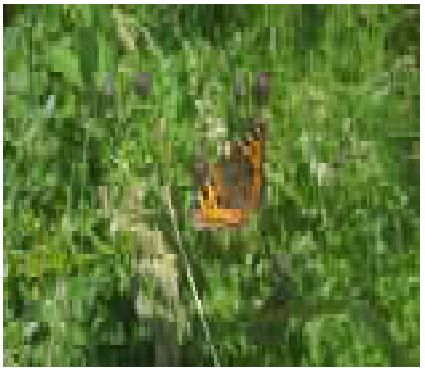
Setting a bug trap in the garden to find creepy crawlies

Wildlife spotting at Chew Valley Lake



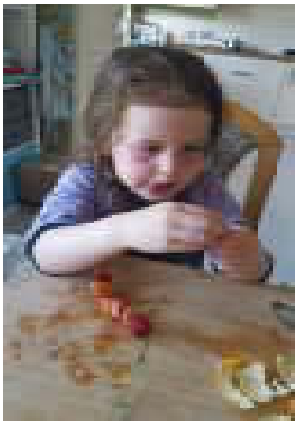
Building a new bird feeder

Tree Rubbings



Making fruit kebabs for the birds and butterflies

These pictures sum up the whole 30 days for me—fun, free, wild!



A typical conversation with my son

Darragh McCarthy aged 4 and 3/4

Darragh - Mum you know that vegetable I don't like?

Me - You mean tomato?

Darragh - No they're red and round and have seeds in the middle.

Me - Yes that is a tomato

Darragh - Absolutely excellent job for trying mum, but you absolutely wrong. It's called a Bamatoe

Me - A Bamatoe?

Darragh - Yes a Bamatoe it's red and round and has seeds in it but it defiantly not a tomato.

Me - Oh I don't think I've ever seen a Bamatoe

Darragh - Don't worry mum when I get home I will give you a gold star for really good trying.

One hour later in the supermarket.

Darragh - Look mum it's a Bamatoe!

Me - Darragh that's a tomato!

Darragh - Yes exactly what I said a Bamatoe! I hate them, they're horrible!

We got there in the end