

£2.00

Friends Housing Magazine 2018



Hello everyone,

Here is our newest edition of our yearly magazine where we have contributions from people living & working here, like an extended family.

We have had our usual variety of activities, enhanced by some residents making their suggestions for these and also leading them.

Karen has also introduced a 'wish tree' where residents have expressed some of their wishes and she has been doing her best to fulfil these - although a trip to Venice sounds a bit ambitious!

The garden as ever is lovely—and we have a new pond, with, we think, happy fish, with water flowing from a fall above them.

There have been inevitable changes, with some new residents moving in this last year.

Hopefully, the weather will be kind for our Summer Tea in July, with the lovely steel band to entertain us. We are looking forward to it.

Enjoy the read, and thank you all who contributed.

Affectionately,

Alison



A Family of Teachers

By Janet Lynch

When I came to live here, in Avenue House, I had moved to Bristol to be near my daughter and her partner and their two children who all lived in Montpelier; just the other side of the Gloucester Road. This was 3 years ago, when I had lived in Cornwall for nearly 50 years. I had married a teacher and Counsellor at the local boys grammar school in Penzance.

Before moving to Cornwall, I had taught in Warmley (South Glos) for 5 years, lodging with a first cousin in Downs Park East in Westbury Park. She died about 10 years ago.

We had a Cornish surname of Roseveare – and many generations of teachers, quite a few in Monmouth. It was a great part of being welcomed at Fowey, where I was Head teacher for a short period in the 1950s before we joined the nearby “secondary modern” school in Fowey, and I worked at County Hall, on “in-service training” for teachers at various levels, including an infant school run by Harold Wilson’s formidable sister, and the teachers at a post-16 college in Redruth.

But marriage and the birth of our daughter happened in the 1970s, and this week we and her family leave for a week in France. My husband died just after he reached 70, and I took a sea trip in a cargo ship to visit a cousin in Australia who had married a geologist. Both their sons have now married “far-Easterns”, and they are all accountants in Sydney.

My father was Head of Maths at several independent schools, retiring in 1957 from Winchester College. And while he was there in 1930 or so, he taught for a year in Toronto, Canada, and that was how he and my mother met. We all went to Quaker Meetings in Cornwall, and I still go now in Horfield, Bristol.

That is enough for now, except to mention my mother’s family originally came from Scotland, from Mull, during the “Highland Clearances” in the early 1800s.

My Caravanning Memories

By Olive Clements

I enjoyed caravanning for over 40 years. Our family first had a static caravan in Co. Fermanagh at a site in a forest beside Lough Erne. We used to take our boat out on the Lough, sometimes stopping off at various islands for picnics.



Getting ready to go out on the boat



Making sandwiches in the boat



Bath time in the caravan kitchen sink

It was a big caravan so often friends would come to visit for the weekend. A favourite card game we played was Pit, a noisy bartering game and everyone would be crying with laughter during it as the 'trading' and shouting became more heated. On one occasion we were having such a great game that I completely forgot to feed my baby and we only heard her howling with hunger when we had finished the game and the noise settled down.

We decided to get a touring caravan and explored further afield, usually travelling around Scotland and England during our summer holiday.



No problem sitting out on the car deck of the ferry in those days

We joined the Caravan Club and often went to rallies which could be held in farmers fields, forest parks, anywhere that could hold up to maybe 60 or 70 caravans for the weekend. It was a nice way to visit new places, catching up with friends and enjoying lots of treasure hunts, competitions, bbqs and dances.

Caravans in the 70s and 80s didn't have all the mod cons, so we used to hang a canvas

larder off a tree which was the 'fridge'. When we stayed at sites beside farms we used to get fresh milk straight from the cows every morning. Sometimes sheep could wander into the campsite and they liked to rub their backs on the edge of the caravan to get a good scratch, rocking us inside in the process.



Early morning visit from the sheep

Lifting up the deposits the sheep left behind

There were plenty of chores to do such as hand washing the clothes, refilling the water tank, emptying the loo, but I still enjoyed the life, spending a few days in each location then moving to a new part of the country. I'm sure I've visited most cathedrals and National Trust houses in the whole of the UK.



Washing the clothes

Cooking pancakes with my sister

Enjoying the sun

In between holidays and weekends away when the caravan was parked beside our house, my husband and I liked to have our afternoon tea in it, read the paper then have a nap afterwards. It was a nice way to relax and imagine we were on our holidays again.

We continued to caravan up until recently, still driving to the south of England from Ireland. Our last few vans had electric, a fridge freezer, an oven and a shower – quite different to our first one 40 years earlier.



Happy Memories

By Pat Thorpe

Some of my happiest days have been when I was cycling in the country alone. I have been to places between Land's End to John O'Groats. I have been to the Lakes but did not care for them - I thought they were depressive – others love them.

When I was young we lived in a small village in the lovely Manor House – I can imagine it now after all these years. There was a longish cottage attached, maybe once attached to the Manor, and a tiny one leading onto the road. Opposite was a small row of houses which was called Starling Row. There was a farm building, also a forge where horses went to have new shoes, or the old ones repaired.

I went to the village school – in our winters which were snowy there was frost everywhere, including the loo!



Karen's Song

By Beryl Prestwich

Oh! What a beautiful supper
Oh! What a lovely fishcake
No more poached cod for me,
dearie

Karen the finder of slippers
Karen is out on the wake.

Southern Ireland

By Alison Ashton

Some time in the 1970s I visited Southern Ireland with a friend. We went over by boat, with the car, so that we had the chance of roaming around. I didn't drive in those days, so it was left to my friend - who at the slightest sight of a glimmer of sun would stop the car for a sunbathe! The weather was very unpredictable.

We had not booked any accommodation, so took pot luck with Bed & Breakfast places. The first we tried, the lady said "no" – but then we spied her running over the field towards us shouting "Sure – I'll put me son in the barn and you can have his room!"

Another find was in Kerry - where the landlady was away at the races in Dublin – and a young girl showed us around vast rooms which seemed to have 5 or 6 beds dotted around a jumble of furniture, like sitting rooms with beds. It was a right hotchpotch. Anyway, we stayed around and said landlady arrived full of vigour, dressed in a bold red suit – she regaled us with a variety of tales before dispatching us to one of the rooms. In the morning she escorted us round the village to view the entry in the 'Tidy Town Competition'. What an entertainer.

We had a terrifically fun holiday – 'buses full of chickens and dogs, a friendly easy going bonhomie from the driver and passengers – I loved the Irish oddity – an attitude that allowed them to be themselves rather than keeping to a bland conformity.

One day, out walking, we saw ahead of us an old crone dressed in a black cloak, who seemed to rise out of the ground ahead of us!

I did a lot of painting there – all of which I sold. I felt as though my heart belonged there.

Carol The Fox: A Short Story

by Sean Hogan

I feel very lucky to live in a city where there are so many foxes roaming freely. In my own small corner of Bristol they are a regular sight and our garden is most definitely part of their shared territory.



We moved into our ground floor flat about twenty years ago and over the years we've had a succession of foxes come and go. They visit often, accept the leftovers we leave out for them and sometimes even bring their cubs to play in our back garden. On one particular moonlit night we were woken by the sound of joyous yelping. On looking out of our bedroom window we saw two young cubs, one either end of a long string of plastic sausages and each determined to have total ownership.



Towards the end of 2016 one particular vixen became a regular visitor. She ate the food we left out for her and then waited to see if she could persuade us to come up with something else. She arrived at pretty much the same time every evening and because we eat very little meat,

we began to add dog food to our weekly shop. At about the same time we heard the American writer David Sedaris tell the story of his fox, "Carol" on the radio. It was such a great story that we named our fox "Carol" as our tribute.

In the early months of 2017 Carol showed signs of having given birth. Now she came to see us twice a day. When I got up in the morning, usually around 6.00 am, I invariably saw her curled up asleep on the lawn in front of our bedroom window. Having been fed she disappeared over the wall at the end of the garden returning again in the late afternoon or early evening. By the late summer and early autumn she appeared with two juvenile foxes, her cubs from earlier in the year. Both were clearly young, very skittish and rather nervous.



As time passed, we realised one of the cubs was male (a dog) and one a female (a vixen) and they have become regular visitors too, although we see less of the male.

Then in early spring this year, we saw that Carol's daughter was also showing signs of having given birth. Now both Carol and her daughter are to be found waiting for us in the morning, often curled up next to each other on the lawn. It would appear they both have a litter of cubs somewhere close by. We feed them



together and when they've eaten their fill they often cache what's left in their mouths and disappear with it over the rear garden wall. They continue to do this until the plates are empty. We're not sure where their den is exactly but there are long gardens backing on to ours, so there are plenty of places for them to make a den. We think they might live together in an extended family group.



Carol remains the boldest of our three foxes and is confident enough to come quite close. She once ate quite happily while I played my banjo and didn't seem to mind the music at all! We never try to touch her, nor do we want any of them to lose their healthy respect for humans. Not everyone is as fox tolerant as we are. We feel very privileged and lucky to have such beautiful and entertaining creatures literally on our doorstep. They make us smile and the day always feels better when they've been to visit us.



Writing for the Magazine

By Hebe Welbourn

I took up a pencil, writing paper etc. and began to write my usual little piece of reminiscence for the magazine. With pleasurable anticipation! I love writing, I love making an archive out of my memories of life 80 -90 years ago. I can connect with my grandparents, with their memories, connecting with history as it was after the end of the 18th century...but I have writer's block: the memories no longer flow, the words won't come, my hands hurt. It kicks into me that I am losing a bit of mind. I remember the little rhyme:

“I’m accustomed to my deafness
To my blindness I’m resigned
I can cope with my arthritis, but
I DO SO MISS MY MIND”

I’m having to accept a little loss of mind.

This realization came to me on May 8th, which is the festival day for Julian of Norwich, who has been my special friend since I discovered her book in 1988 – a year or two after my husband died. I read her book at breakfast time, she even got scorched in the toaster – every year until I had to give up about 3 years ago.

So, instead of writing a new piece, I’m sending you an old piece, which I wrote 2 or 3 years ago. The drawing dates from when I was living in a medieval house in Bristol: I had just been on a visit to Norwich and was immersed in Medieval Julian.

Julian of Norwich
By Hebe Welbourn

When I was about 9 years old, I went with my family to visit St Julian's little church in Norwich. This was before it was bombed in World War 2. At that time, it was a tiny, typical East Anglian Flint Church with a round tower. I was shown the room above the porch where she used to live, with a door for her servant to come in and out, a window that let in the light and another into the church so she could receive the sacrament and hear the prayers. Many years later, I went to live as Warden in Elsie Briggs House of Prayer. The house became like her hermitage for me.



While I was there, I made several visits to Norwich. I visited her now much restored church, the nearby Julian Centre and the All Hallows House. I was attracted by the possibility of living in some way in community, either with the sisters in charge of All Hallows or with the American Order of Julian of Norwich. My Favourite version of her book was edited and translated by a member of that Order – Father John Julian. In the event, either option was too “Churchy” for me.

On my visits to Norwich, I immersed myself in Julian's 14th century, which was a period of crisis and upheaval like our own. The church and Julian Centre are situated in Rouen Road, which in her time was an alley leading to the docks. Today Rouen Road is no longer a docklands alley; it is a sort of “edgelands” City Street, occasionally frequented by homeless, problematic people, leading past medieval warehouses currently visited by tourists to the river. Norwich was once a seaport comparable to Bristol. Even I can remember the time when the russet sails of Norfolk Wherries could be seen along the Norfolk waterways. Today there are no docks, only a footpath along the grassy riverbank where you can find a little canal once used for ferrying stone to the Cathedral, and a stone to commemorate the crushing of the 1388 Peasants' Revolt by the army of Bishop Despenser. Today, my sympathies are with the peasants. I wonder how it would have seemed to Julian.

Julian is remembered for her book, Revelations of Divine Love, based on revelations she received after a severe illness in 1373. She is often remembered for the Quotation “all shall be well and all manner of things shall be well”. We remember its use in the T.S .Elliot Quartet . These words, as popularly remembered, are incomplete. The complete quote reads “Sin is behovely, but all shall be well...” It’s a bit like the Buddha’s “First Noble Truth” – suffering is inevitable, but there is a way

I hope I have encouraged a few people to go ahead and try to get to know Julian.

Balleroy

By Mary Johnson

When I was much younger I sometimes visited Normandy with friends to a placed called Balleroy. There was quite a large hotel where we had really good meals.

My friend Edna and myself enjoyed the evening time when we dressed in our long skirts and had an orange drink before the meal.

During the day, we drove through the forest to the coast and sat on the beach and had really lovely bread rolls to eat.

It was so simple and enjoyable.

Memories of the Friary

By Mary Friend

Once upon a time there was, in Cotham Hill, a well-established eatery, well known to many of us as a place of refuge and good cooking.

Simple, plain surroundings with basic furnishings, wiped clean with no nonsense. Tables two by two and seats - favourite seats in the windows.

My favourite seat was tucked away above the stairs near the chalk menu board, clearly written with straightforward pricings. Egg & Chips, Two Eggs & Chips, Bacon, Egg & Chips onto Chill Con Carne, absolutely wonderful among the graded dishes and bargain prices.

The one man cook, speedy and brilliant from the hidden kitchen took clear orders and with his practiced waitress served up clean, balanced food to order.

I experimented with fizzy water alongside my sausage, egg & chips and found it very bad for me.

The piece-de-la-maison for pudding was very good quality ice cream from Somerset.

With happy memories of my eating place and the quality of Steve's Friary. Well known to some and much missed.



How well do you know your home?

Quiz devised by Patricia Clements

Can you identify these items which are in and around Avenue House?



1. _____

2. _____

3. _____



4. _____

5. _____

6. _____



7. _____

8. _____

9. _____



10. _____



11. _____



12. _____



13. _____



14. _____



15. _____



16. _____



17. _____

Answers on page 33

My working life

By Tom Allen

In 1946 I started work for John Lysaght , off the Feeder Road. They specialised in agricultural instruments and machines – and they continued working until the 1970s.



Then I went to work for Stothert & Pitt, who had a big factory in Bath, which was part of Lysaght. They specialised in building cranes, many of them down in the Docks in Bristol.



When the motorways were being built in the 1960s, the Bristol factory concentrated on cement work – which they dropped into container silos which they had dotted along the projected motorway. I worked at that for a couple of years.

When that job finished I went to work for a small company called FHS Dunn who were based at Speedwell. They made steel staircases and balustrades. I stayed there 12 years until I retired when I was 65.

The Rebel

By Denise Luff

When I was a child Mum was very strict – she always liked things to be ‘proper’ – so I did everything *im*proper as you can imagine. She was a good mum, but appearances mattered to her. We must have been reasonably well off, because she had a maid and someone to do the ‘rough’ work: it was normal in those days.

She was never cruel – I was never hit or anything, but she did like things ‘just so’.

I had to go to a posh school – where I was normally in trouble. I went to Wells High School, whose children came from mostly wealthy parents, but I liked it there. We had elocution lessons, which made me talk rough, in the local dialect. Then after a time I did something naughty in the school – and was expelled! I threw a Bible at one of the masters who was being deliberately rude. When my son went to the school there was a picture of me in the staff room as the naughtiest girl in the school – Mum of course was mortified, but Dad just grinned and always reassured me that “It’s alright, love.”

So they sent me to a private school in Wells . Quite often I was sent to see the Headmistress who had a great sense of fun and was often roaring with laughter. We got on well together. I don’t think Mother knew about this.

My dad was manager of the engineering works in Midsomer Norton. He was a kind man, always there to help anyone.

Midsomer Norton had a swimming pool, and the river Somer flowing through. It also had a cinema, one of the first in the area. When I got married we lived in Wells. I loved it there, especially where we lived - in the Quarry where my husband worked & my uncle owned.

Happy days...

Nursing in the 1950s

By Angela Vaitilingham

When I left school at 16 there was no Careers Guidance to help us find what we wanted to do in life. My mother thought I was going to be a great opera singer, but I had grave doubts about that!

I tried working in an office, but that was deadly boring. Then I had a wonderful summer working in a holiday camp in a beautiful part of Cornwall. This camp was based in a lovely old family mansion by the sea, which had formerly been taken over by the War Office during World War Two. At the time I went to work at the place there were still Nissan huts on the broad sweep of land in front of the house. These were used at the holiday camp as dormitories for the guests.

The three other girls with whom I worked were housed in the small hut by the entrance. We became firm friends and had a wonderful time together. The guests would join us on our days off and also the young lighthouse keeper who came over every three days when he was relieved of his duties at the lighthouse. I think I had my eye on him!

But summer unfortunately came to an end and I had to think of something else to do. One of the girls I was working with was a trained nurse and when I talked with her I decided that Nursing sounded like a good thing to do. So when I returned home I bought a copy of "The Nursing Times" and opened it randomly. With my eyes shut, I jabbed a pin down. It landed on Southampton General Hospital, so I decided to apply there to do my Nursing training.

The hospital accepted me with open arms so that is where I ended up, aged 22, to train as a nurse in 1957.

The next three years of training were really hard work. The uniform we had to wear was very similar to that of the girls in this picture. But our shoes were black and we were required to keep them very well polished! The only difference was that during our first year we had to wear "butterfly" caps, which really looked as if a butterfly had landed on our heads! I had to go to lectures, together with the other six students in my group. We were required to write essays during the first six weeks. The Sister Tutor



was very fierce and Woe Betide anyone who smoked in the dining room! (Smoking was perfectly acceptable in public places in those years, because no-one was aware of its dangers to health.) So, after our first meal, the Sister stood up and recited very quickly..."For what we have received may the Lord make us truly thankful, we do NOT smoke in the dining room, Amen."

Accommodation for us students was in a big square block standing next to the hospital. All my friends were given rooms upstairs, but my room was on the ground floor and had a window which was very useful for us all to climb in after we had a late night out without a special late pass!

When we had to go on night duty we found that the Night Sister was truly terrifying. She was in charge of the hospital which contained six large wards. We students were given charge of a whole ward very early on in our career and we waited fearfully for the frequent visits of this scary lady! She wore very soft shoes, so that we could never hear her coming and she expected us to do a Ward Round, telling her the names and diagnosis of every patient. I got really fed up with her one night and she said to me "I don't like your attitude Nurse". So I replied "Well you won't have to put up with it much longer, Sister because I am leaving in the morning!" I didn't leave of course, but that Night Sister never tried to bully me again after that incident!

I was always prone to accidents and one notable incident was when I was asked to sterilise all the thermometers which were supplied for each patient beside their bed. We used to sterilise such things by boiling in those days and I did the boiling of these thermometers without first removing their plungers. So the thermometers for the whole ward were broken...and I was not very popular!

But, on the whole, the three years we completed were fun and interesting. We did have plenty of nights off, with or without night passes, and on one of these I met my husband to be.

I guess nursing training is very different these days. I understand that it is much more academic and not so much hard physical work. But we enjoyed it most of the time and the actual daily round of caring for the patients was very rewarding. I have lots of happy memories!

Written by Neil Edbrooks' mother, just before she died in her early 30s when her children were 11 and 7

Contributed by Val Peel

What matter if we die, you and I?
We've lived, made ours
The world, the sea, the sky;
Their changing hues; the touch of waves and wind;
We've met the challenge gladly, young, strong limbed,
Laughing, exulting in the joyous fight,
Matching our youth and vigour 'gainst their might.
We've known the joy of being loved, and giving
Love in return, a cameo of living.
We've seen God in his glory on this earth
What matter if we go to this new birth
A little early? Youth or middle age
Both count for small when written on this page
Of God's eternity. We shall be there,
Shall see his face, shall meet the tender care
That has enfolded us from our first crying
breath.
How can such wondrous birth be known as
death?
We are the vanguard, you and I,
The chosen ones. We fly
The unknown heights. We lead the way.
This life is but a vapour and a day
And soon or late our loved ones too will
come,
Will follow after to our perfect homes.
And we'll be there; our Lord, and you and I.
What matter if we are the first to die?



A Hairdressing Experience

By Liz Saunders

I started work at a high class hairdresser in Whiteladies Road called Pierot. I had a 3 year apprenticeship with this job (Dad had to pay) and then I did a year of improvement, after which you were let loose on your own.

Dad suggested setting up on my own – but I said “no” – I couldn’t cope with the difficulties of staff – hairdressers had a reputation for being temperamental.

Then I met someone who was a visiting hairdresser. We discussed it for me and eventually put an advert in the Evening Post. I was inundated with calls. I then worked until I retired and loved it. All sorts of things happened and I met all sorts of people. It was a lovely idea. I originally wanted to be a vet but it was a long training of 6 years.

I was petrified at first – going into these homes of wealthy clients in the Stoke Bishop and Clifton areas. There were lots of interesting incidents.

We used to do the hair of Haile Selassie’s daughters, who lived in Bath. I learned more about people doing this job and thoroughly enjoyed it.



Some of Liz’s lovely paintings

Terry The Van

By Sean Hogan

Firstly, I would like to say a huge thank you to all at Avenue House, Kirwin House and Lansdowne House for making me feel so welcome in my new role as maintenance man.



This is a short tale about my van, Terry, named after my Dad who owned it for forty-four years before passing it on to me in late November last year. Some of you will have seen this lovely 1968 Morris Minor van and some of you will even have made nice comments about it!

Back in the summer of 1974 I was sixteen years old when my Dad (Terry) announced that he was going to buy a van. He had never owned a four-wheeled vehicle before... previously he'd had motorbikes and a three-wheeled 'bubble car'... so this was a big deal to him.

There were three ex GPO vans from which he could choose and he chose the one that seemed in the best condition. It had started life as a green GPO telephone van but at some time in late 1968 someone had decided that the official colour of telephone vans should be yellow and it had been re-sprayed. It has remained yellow for the fifty years since, if not the official GPO yellow. My Dad literally took a paintbrush to it at some point and it re-emerged in Woolworth's Daffodil Yellow, complete with brush marks.

In 1975 I joined the Royal Navy and during that summer my Dad and my younger brother Tim cut in some side windows so that when anyone rode in the back (no seats or seat belts... it was allowed in those days!), they could at least see out.

The van was my Dad's main mode of transport for the best part of forty odd years and took my parents, my two brothers and the dog on many holidays. Dad also modified it so that a ramp could be attached to allow access for his wheelbarrow. This is how he got manure

and compost from our house to his allotment. Mum refused to travel in it in the days immediately following a manure run.

When Dad got the van it was only six years old and there were quite a few of them still about on the road: red ex-Royal Mail Post Office vans and green and yellow ex-GPO telephone vans. But with the passing years fewer and fewer of these lovely vehicles survived the rigours of British winters and salt on the roads. Terry is now one of only three that remain on the road here in Bristol. That might be down to the fact that when my Dad retired from teaching he went on a welding course and regularly made all the necessary repairs to the underside himself. Those repairs are still good and strong today.

At the end of last year Dad reached the age of eighty-three, decided he didn't want to drive anymore and offered me the van. I felt hugely honoured. The van was an intrinsic part of him and his identity in my eyes. A plan was made and my son Harry and I drove the van from my parents' home in Welwyn Garden City to its new home Bristol. When I had first opened the doors of my Dad's garage I have to confess to feeling slightly disappointed. I hadn't seen the van for many years and it was showing signs of age and a little neglect. Neither of the two side doors were the same colour as the rest of the van! As some work had recently been done on the engine I was told to take it easy on the journey back to Bristol. It took five hours to cover the 300 miles and it being late November it was freezing. And, oh yes, the heater didn't work.

As with such a lot of things in life, Terry the Van comes with responsibilities. It is, after all, fifty years old and it takes a lot of love and care to keep it on the road. Fortunately, we have the Morris Minor Centre here in Bristol and Terry has become a regular visitor. The first job I had done was getting the heater fixed. Now, after six months, I have well and truly settled into owning the van and drive it at every opportunity. It is my only and much cherished mode of transport.



The Skiff

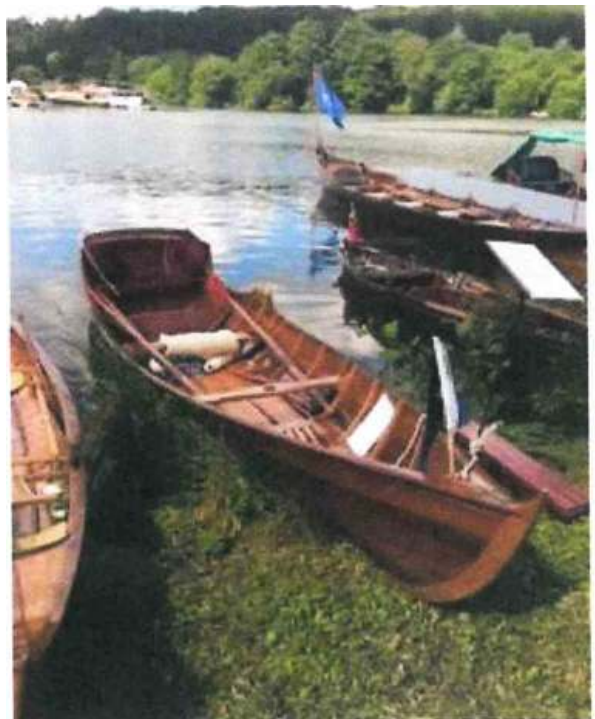
By Anne Oliver

I was born and brought up in a small fishing village called Hoylake. The boats were owned by local men who caught Dabs and Plaice which were sold at the fish market in Liverpool. The next village along the coast was West Kirby, where instead of a sandy shore as we had, had a large semi-circular Marine Lake made by having its diameter along the wall of the Promenade, and the curved side well out to sea high enough to retain about five feet deep and was low enough to allow a high tide to wash over to keep the lake full.

When we used to go on our summer holiday to stay in villages along the coast of North Wales, there was somewhere Father could hire a little boat and he had taught my sister and me to row. The boat was wide enough for us to sit side by side with an oar each and he'd sit facing us on a seat in the stern chanting "In, Out, In, Out" till we got the rhythm and quite fast. Then we learned how to turn left or right by only one of us rowing.

When my sister and I cycled home from school we would go past the semi-circular Marine Lake where we must have seen the odd looking narrow boats.

I am older now and when I was cycling along the Marine Lake one day I saw a notice saying that there were skiffs for hire paying by the half hour and that there were three young men in charge. One day I plucked up courage and hired a boat. I asked them to show me how this sort of rowing was done and one of them got into a boat and only pretending to put his oars into the water, pushed his feet against a wooden bar in the floor of the boat which sent him rolling backwards, then leant forwards till his knees were bent upwards as his seat rolled forwards. When I got in I practiced the seat rolling, then I was given the oars and remembering the rule never to put them in too deep, I moved the boat a little. As the men wore their wellington boots they were able to wade a little way into the lake and one of them held onto



the stern and helped me by gently pushing and pulling the boat. When I'd got the hang of it they let go and said they'd keep an eye on me and come to tow me home if I needed help. I was very slow and jerky but I did move and gradually got my strokes longer till I was able to move the seat back till it hit the piece of metal at the back of the grooves which prevented the seat falling off. About half way down the lake I turned round in the way Father had taught us and got safely back to the slipway, exhausted but pleased with myself. I went there several more days and even tried feathering the oars which meant running them as I went backwards just along the surface of the water.

On the last day I would be able to go rowing because it was the end of my holidays, I was busy choosing my oars when I heard one of the young men ask the other if he'd done it and when I was settling myself on the seat I noticed a sly look pass between them and one said "How long?". All this made me wary so I started off very slowly. Then I was lucky as someone called down to them from the Prom and they both turned round, so I was able to feel behind my seat and sure enough both bolt stops had been removed. This meant that the seat and me would have landed on the bottom of the boat, me with my legs in the air quite unable to get up: so I would have to be rescued and ignominiously towed back. I was determined that should not happen and by carefully shortening my strokes I was able to row back safely at almost the same speed. I saw the look on their faces, a mixture of surprise and disappointment. I pretended that nothing unusual had happened until I was getting on my bike, I turned and said "I'll see that your boss hears about this" and rode off. I'd no idea who the boss was but I hoped it would give them a few uneasy days.

Snooker Club

By Angela Vaitilingham

Here are Ron and Hebe and I exhibiting our professional skills on the snooker table....



When I first came to Avenue House and saw “Snooker Club” on the list of events, I thought I would like to join. I expected to encounter a group of people who all had some skill in the game. Maybe they wouldn’t want to welcome someone so inexperienced as me!

Rather nervously I came over on the appointed day, and found Ron! He was keen to play and knows the rules of the game.

So each week we have great fun, potting the white and often missing the ball entirely. Now Hebe has joined us and we have even more fun!

My Grandfather's Billiard Table

By Hebe Welbourn

My grandparents lived in a big, very old, timbered house at the bottom of the High Street in Sudbury, Suffolk. It was called the Friary Gate because it had been the gatehouse to a monastery – a bit like the college in Westbury-on-Trym. There was a big 19th century extension housing the kitchen and dining room. The dining room was enormous and, as well as the family dining table, housed a full sized billiard table.

The billiard table was much bigger than a snooker table, though it had a similar layout with little string pockets and markings showing where balls should go. It was made of solid slate and the legs were mahogany tree trunks as big as elephant legs and all very beautifully made. My grandpa, the uncles and sometimes my older brother played billiards after dinner but I couldn't: I was only a girl. Anyway, I am left handed and balls will never do what I expect.

My grandpa died in 1939 and Grandma came to live with us in Rugby. We had to move house into a big nineteenth century house big enough to contain all of us and the billiard table. When the war came and air raids, we all, including Grandma, sheltered under the billiard table. We kept the radio on, and when broadcasting finished at midnight, they played God Save the King and Grandma struggled out from under the table to stand to attention.

We left Rugby soon after that. I don't know what happened to the billiard table, I think it went to the local boys' home.

When I came to Avenue House I was invited to join Ron and others for snooker. I have no control over my hands and have no idea of the rules. There's always been someone who knows the rules (nowadays it's Ron) and we very much enjoy crazy snooker. Anyone is free to join in. Come on, join the club and have a laugh together.

Autumn Colours

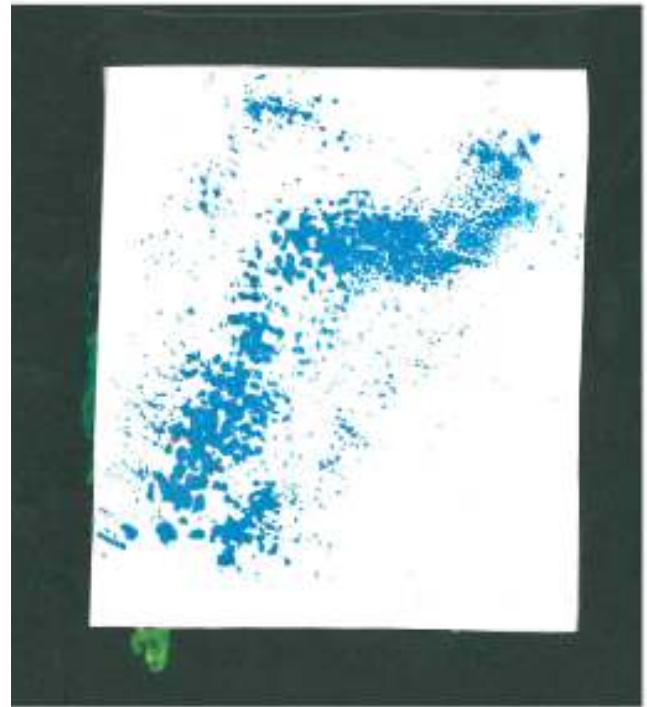
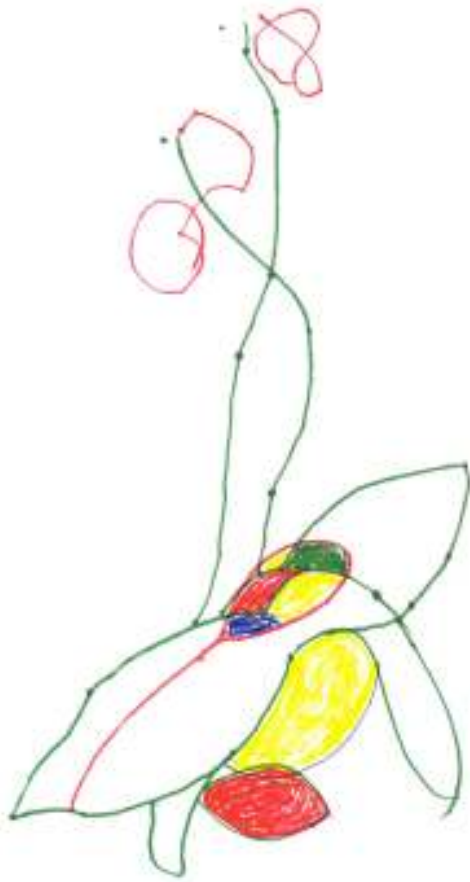


Ron



IF
2015

Spring Colours



Growing up in Inner City Birmingham

By Mary Johnson

I was born in 1922, one of three children, and we lived in an area of Birmingham called Nechells. My father was the manager of the chemical works and an uncle was manager of the gas works.

We lived in one of the three large houses that belonged to the chemical works. The workers lived in terraced houses all around us.

We had a little dog called Betty. She had a puppy called Toby and I used to dress Toby up as a baby and push him round in a pram. My brother, Murray, used to pretend Betty was a lion and he was the lion tamer. He used the fire guard as a cage.

Our family and the doctor were the only people with cars. Dad used to take us out to the country most weekends. Betty always came too. When she grew old my dad and uncle made a little stretcher to carry her on, so she could still come camping with us.

My mother had a maid to help with the indoor chores. I always wanted to be her maid because I loved being with my mum. On Saturdays I had to polish the brass handles on all the doors to earn my Saturday penny. Mr Hayden did the outside jobs like cutting with lawn and filling the coal buckets.

Over the years the green grass became brown, possibly because of the pollution in the air. It doesn't seem to have done me and my siblings too much harm, because I'm still here and my brother and sister lived well into their 80s and 90s respectively.



1936

the chemical works, Nechells

Cuttells Grove

'Prospect House'

Birds of Prey Visit

One of the highlights of recent months was when the North Somerset Bird of Prey Centre visited us at Avenue House with 3 of their beautiful owls.



First was Dotty, the aptly named 'Little Owl' who, despite weighing in at only 7oz, has a very big character! She was born and bred at the Centre, hatching in 2016.



Next up we met Nandita, whose name is taken from the Sanskrit word for 'happy'. She is a tiny Indian Scops owl, weighing in at only 4oz.



And lastly, we met Cinnamon, a dark breasted Barn owl. She was particularly stunning and, despite an early scare from an over-enthusiastic vacuuming session in the corridor was very laid back!

We all felt so privileged to meet, hold and interact with these beautiful birds, and can't wait for the centre to bring some more along!

Other highlights have included a May-Day visit from the Rag Morris Dancers—their energy, dancing and singing had us all tapping our toes....



...and a performance by Sean’s bluegrass band ‘The Hogranch’, who had everyone clapping along—even inspiring a few to get up and have a dance!



Answers to 'How well do you know your home?' Quiz, Page 14

1. Side of stairs in main house
2. Wheel of ornament on lounge fireplace
3. Lamp in garden by pedestrian entrance
4. Shower head
5. Glass panel in door to original house porch
6. Panel on fireplace surround in lounge
7. Wall light in lounge
8. Door knocker on original entrance to main house
9. Top of clock in library
10. Bannister of stairs in main house
11. Globe in lounge
12. Gazebo in garden
13. Ceiling rose in library
14. Clock on wall in hallway
15. Part of Quaker tapestry in corridor on 1st floor
16. Wall light in top lounge
17. Plaque on garden wall



Our beautiful new pond