

RUGGE – PRICE RAMBLINGS

A VERY LIGHTEARTED AND SOMETIMES IRREVERENT COMMENTARY ON THE DIFFERENCES
BETWEEN SUMMER VISITORS TO ORFORD, SUFFOLK, UK AND CAMDEN, MAINE, USA

(These pieces are the harmless ramblings of an intelligent, well-educated and well-travelled man and they are read and enjoyed by many. It is advisable to avoid over analysing in the name of political correctness. The ramblings are generally well informed and amusing but there is no malice intended.

In twenty eighteen it remains to be seen

If May can move forward with Brexit

But if Blair has a say

And Sir Clegg gets his way

The road will be signed as No Exit

On Labour's front bench there's clearly a stench

As Momentum gears up for the fray

Add MacDonald's flying pickets

And May could lose wickets

Being all out by the end of the day

In Orford all's quiet, there's nary a riot

Of Cone heads in queues for ice creams

But with Winter soon past

T'will be Summer at last

And the Town fit to burst at the seams

So here's to you all, whether here or afar

But it's many a year since I drank

So don't sup like a twit

Or you'll go arse over tit

And wake up with the Drunks in the Tank

JRP. 2018

A MERRY CHRISTMAS TO ALL WHO FOLLOW RAMBLINGS
AND A POLITICAL CAROL TO SING WHILE READING IT

A CHRISTMAS CAROL

For the Politically Correct among us

Deck the walls with boughs of holly

Falalalala la la la la

The Halls of Power are filled with Folly

Falalalala la la la la

Touching Knee and fondling bum

Falalalala la la la la

Join the Commons Christmas scrum

Falalalala la la la la

Warm your hands on my salami

Falalalala la la la la

Poor old Fallon must be balmy

Falalalala la la la la

Damian Green by now history

Falalalala la la la la

What he did remains a mystery

Falalalala la la la la

Mrs May is losing Brexit

Falalalala la la la la

Priti P was shown the exit

Falalalala la la la la

Boris J abounds like Tigger

Falalalala a la la la

Hammond's woes just get much bigger

Falalalala la la la la

While Jezza hangs his Christmas stocking

Falalalala la la la la

McDonalds Maths are truly shocking

Falalalala la la la la

He could loose us all our lolly

Falalalala la la la la

And Old Bent Toad is sniffing Molly

Falalalala la la la la

So join ye all this Christmas season

Falalalala la la la la

All of this doth give good reason

Falalalala la la la la

With only three wheels on our trolley

Falalalala la la la la

'Tis the Season to be jolly

Falalalala la la la la

JRP

Christmas 2017

THE WINTER OF OUR DISCONTENT

The actions of Weinstein et al., are despicable and, where "proven", the doer should be publicly named, shamed and prosecuted. However, it isn't all one sided, girls can also up the ante, as I discovered in the halcyon days of my youthful innocence!

Some sixty years ago at a Hunt Ball in Wales I was wandering along the terrace of the Country Pile where the event was being held, with a delectable debutante on my arm when suddenly, without so much as a "By your leave, my good Sir", she bent down and lifted the hem of her Ball gown above her slim waist and, lo and behold, she had forgotten to put her undies on!

The stress this action caused me was considerable for no gentleman is so churlish as to refuse the request of a lady.

Oh, the evil that men do!

Today the No Knickers Brigade are in the forefront of scientific agricultural research. Scottish farmers are joining the "Bury your Undies" scheme, whereby you take your smalls to a field then dig a hole and bury them: a few days later you dig em up. If just the elastic is left, and insects and grubs have eaten all the rest, that shows your soil is good. If they are untouched, then either your soil is useless, or you pooped your pants.

My dear Mrs made a good comment the other day "So that's the end of flirting, huh!"

It's a good point though, for all thru the ages both sexes, even the "ever in your face" LGBT groupies have flirted with one another. From the very beginning, sexual seduction has been a part of life, Eve had a go at Adam who offered her a mouthful of his Cox's Pippen; the femme fatale Cleopatra seduced Caesar and once assured that he was toast, she whispered sexily "Et Tu Antonius" in the ear of his old mucker Mark Anthony, while pulling the plug from the Roman Baths and then promptly led him by his Praetorian Pecker up the creek on the Nile; and how about Henry VIII, no "hand on the bum or knee" approach for him, having failed to gain an heir by knocking 'em up, he knocked 'em off while oozing his way along the corridors of the Royal Court after the next desirable Damsel in Waiting;

Casanova, Wallis Simpson, Marilyn Monroe, Errol Flynn, Alan Clark, Russel Brand and Donald Trump to name but a few, not forgetting the LGBT's own entry Byron; we merely follow in the footsteps of history and so if God hadn't wanted male and females to flirt, he wouldn't have planted an orchard!

Ere I get assaulted by an Army of Ageing Amazons or obliterated by a Snowflake Shower, let me say that anyone over stepping the mark of common decency should be dealt with by the Courts, regardless of their sex, but we don't need even more rules and regulations to do this, they already exist, we just need better manners.

More importantly, it's those that don't listen to the victim, and those that try to suppress the complaint who should be publicly named and pilloried, they are as complicit in the act as that of the aggressor, and right now that includes a senior member of the Wiltshire Constabulary.

I acknowledge that sometimes fear plays a lead role, but in all reality if you don't want a geriatric Toad in the Hole to play Snakes and Ladders starting from your knee on up, then just make it clear that this is a "No Touchee, No Feelee no Lookee!" situation.

However, amongst this plethora of criminal sexual accusations, who has potentially committed the worst crime, Fallon and his stupid flirting or those responsible for the deaths in Grenfell Towers, and I don't mean the RBK&C.

I refer to the Plastics Cladding Industry, including Rob Warren of Celotex, "working inside Government to maximise the benefits to his industry"; the Department for Communities and Local Development who are refusing, despite the Freedom of Information Act, to disclose 54 submissions from 2010 on how the fire safety rules needed to be changed; the Building Research Establishment which receives over one million pounds per annum from the plastics industry, all the above, who are refusing now to answer questions, are involved in the Grenfell Tower disaster in one way or another.

In Fallon's case no one was killed or injured, but he resigned. In Grenfell Towers many died and that's manslaughter on a major scale. Many more were injured or displaced, but no one has been sacked or removed.

Luckily Mrs Plod of the Met is investigating and hopefully will prosecute those responsible.

On the subject of sexual predators, many of my vintage were cannon fodder at boarding school for the evil lusting paedo masters. There were always methods of achieving revenge though, rumours abound in such schools and eventually when it reached the ear of Matron, the Prowling Pederast was but burnt Melba.

In 1948 at my prep school, our history master tried to slide his hand up under my kilt as I was resting on my bed after lunch, a statutory "lie down and read a book hour" back then for us young whipper snappers. Luckily the dorm was occupied by eleven beady eyed Just Williams, all of whom knew his "form" so he was too wary to grab my "young man!" in front of this enthralled and giggling audience.

During the summer term at the same prep school, all boys had to swim one length in the pool before breakfast, naked and under the supervision of a master, in case we drowned perhaps?

My half-brother notes that one particular master used to attend this daily event with his box brownie, and snapped away as each boy got out, saying

“That will be a nice picture for your Parents”

At Harrow I was once chased around a grand piano by a master, but I burst out laughing and that ended the pursuit. As Winston so aptly put it during the War: “All you can do is just keep bugging on”

There are millions of viewers who are very upset that Netflix is cancelling the House of Cards, but fear ye not, it has been replaced by a reality show called the House of Commons, and it all takes place in the Royal Borough of Sexminster and is already being aired on most International news networks

I am told that the script writer is in line for an Oscar next year, that’s providing he doesn’t attempt to warm his mitts on Leadsom’s knees between now and then. What a nauseating thought though, I mean her knees, not his hands.

Brexit, along with the volumes thus spoke and the tomes thus wrote, is fast becoming both tedious and a total farce. In fact, rarely in the history of British politics, “Have so many been so confused by so few.”

A paraphrase of Churchill’ famous statement to the House, but of course he was not only a politician but a Statesman as well, and there were other Giants of Old back then on both sides of the House, but not one in the present Cabinet or the Marxist Momentum Opposition can claim such an honour, they are all pygmies by comparison.

Mrs M maybe a good lady at heart but she couldn’t lead the line in dancing the Hokey Pokey, Davis couldn’t negotiate a discount in the Souk, Boris is all mop and mouth, Priti P was a liar, Greening is naturally promoting transgenderism, Cool Hands Leadsom, a back-stabber par excellence, and as for the new Defence Minister, Weasel Williamson, I wouldn’t want him in my tank troop, he might be inclined to shoot me in the back.

My dear departed brother in law spent much of his life proclaiming, “Aux Les Barricades” and I begin to think he was right!

There are some MPs of younger generations who could do a great job, and with a combination of Rees Mogg, as the face of Government and Dyson, as the advisor for business, our UK Brexit

negotiators would have been unbeatable, and the huge payment demands from the EU a nonstarter for openers! Now it's one huge and unholy mess,

I am very fond of Europe and Europeans and neither they or us deserve the present morass. I just don't like being ruled by EU bosses who aren't even elected, there's something quite unsettling about that, it's not PC!

Across the Aisle the earthly bound version of JC - did you notice the similarities with the Leonardo da Vinci painting recently sold for £450 million - has his own problems including his Vice Chancellor who suffers mental bouts of Dyscalculia. Another is Emma Bent Toad, MP for Kensington. Amongst her many cantankerous croaks, including her latest airing filled with racist venom, was one aimed in the direction of the Kensington and Chelsea Borough Council and the dreadful Grenfell Tower fire disaster.

It so happens that, during the period when the cladding of that particular building was under discussion by the Kensington Tenant Management Organisation involved, Bent Toad was part of that group and involved in all the meetings. What a Grinch Of Murky Dismal proportions she is, a possible candidate for the Transgender Team perhaps?

Well, if you don't believe me, just have a Butchers Hook (Look, for those who never learned Cockney slang) at a photograph of her boat race and you can see where I am going!

A big player in today's existence within the corridors of power is Facebook and Twitter. Two days before the US election, various print media outlets including the New York Times, had Hilary winning by some 92%. However, over the lead up period prior to the election, Facebook had sent staff to work with both candidates but only the Trump team took up the offer. During that time 130 million Americans posted NINE BILLION items on the upcoming election and Trump won.

Think on Mrs May, cos punchy old Oligarch Putin is winning hands down at the moment with Internet media meddling.

Another of the dreadful major factors of life today is the bindweed type growth of Politically Correct attitudes. In real terms PC stands for Pusillanimous Comprehension or Pure Crap.

We appear to be harking back a century or two to the days of Puritanism: don't do that, you can't say this, don't wear that, statues removed, pre-screened speeches at University, safe space areas, Transgender changing room rights over heterosexual bods and lots more.

Horatio Nelson wasn't exactly PC with Mrs Hamilton, might they want him off his pedestal too? Never mind Catalonia, this is the Snowflake version of the Spanish Inquisition reappearing over the horizon. Jon Snow in place of Gladstone in Liverpool, what are students sniffing, Spice?

The saddest and most pathetic part of it all is to see the abject grovelling by terrified authorities, be they Governmental, local or educational, towards LGBT groupies and roadies.

For example, this week an NHS Trust made an official apology to a family whose small daughter was taken to an NHS appointment at a Lancashire hospital by her father as the mother was too ill at the time. The receiving specialist called the father's actions "manly". The parents, Mr & Mrs Martin complained his remark was sexist. Maybe Daddy Martin isn't a man, maybe he's a TG too?

So, if your daughter wants to go to school one day dressed up as Boy George, so be it, she hasn't thrown a wobbly she's just acting out a childhood fantasy, sometime next week she'll probably be Taylor Swift.

A onetime Government Mental Expert, a female to boot please note, says it's wrong to address a classroom of girls as "GIRLS" for fear of reminding them of their gender! She must be on a legal high!

Orford has its fair share of PC advocates which is par for the course, in fact the only entry for the book cover design prize in the Flower Show this year failed to make First Prize. It was awarded second prize with the judges' comment, "Too Political for a First Prize!". I'm absolutely certain that my Ramblings would never make it, thank heavens!

While in Sweden a church group has declared God is not a man so presumably Eve was and perhaps her son Abel was a TG? This is all a form of ethnic cleansing by the Maos, Mugabes and Robespierres of LGBT teams of the Snowflake generation.

All I can say is "Pass the Pot please, I'm in dire need of a Spiff!

As my old mate Rabbi Yuza Schmuck of Brooklyn Heights used to say. "Oi Vey all reddy, all that comes out of a cow ain't just milk my Son!

I notice that there are signs of movement by normal Muggles who are beginning to get fed up with this blizzard of Flakes, and that includes the boss of the new Office for Students, Sir Michael Barber, who stated in a recent publication, "Universities must be places of intellectual discomfort"

Well said Sir,

Driverless cars, the way of the future? just bring it on Bro! For this means that I can stay on the high road for ever and ever, regardless of the DVLA and age-related driving tests.

Since I won't actually be driving the car, it doesn't matter if I'm deaf and blind, all I need is a satnav to tell the car where to go! Oh boy, as Mr Toad of Toad Hall once said, "it's the thrills of the open road for me!"

Jeremy Rugge-Price

Nov 2017

ps As I watched the Remembrance Day Service, standing in silence, I worried about generations to come, will there be young men and women of various colours, creeds and ethnic backgrounds who are prepared to stand and fight for our Country as those of past generations have stood together side by side. One thing for sure is that the Snowflakes won't be of any use, for when things get hot snowflakes turn to slush and Snowmen melt!

pps Background music: a current TV producer, when asked why background music was always drowning out dialogue, replied. "It's only deaf people that complain"

HAPPY HALLOWEEN

So here we are, back in the Land of the Free, to visit my dear mother-in-law who is ninety seven which gives rise to the thought of my still writing Ramblings for another twenty years!

Fear ye not, I will have faded into the fog before that!

Just being back here in Maine gives us both a huge feeling of freedom. That is not to say we don't love living in Orford, cos we do. It's just that the vast expanse of blue sky above, going on for ever across the land stretching over the horizon for another three thousand miles; the open highways where traffic is much reduced, at one point yesterday there were only three vehicles visible in both directions for over ten minutes; the enormous reduction in the density of population; it all adds up to our sense of freedom and the seven days of cloudless blue sky just adds to our overall exhilaration.

There is no question that Europe is now a very crowded place, much more so than even in my childhood back in the Dark Ages!

Apart from some maintenance crews on the highway coming up here, I have yet to see a Hi-Viz jacket or hard hat which only underlines hideous heights and controls that Health and Safety have over our lives. Camden is a working harbor with lobster boats galore, big working schooners of 160ft, many large yachts and more, yet while everyone is safety conscious, nobody has to dress like a canary in heat!

Being back here is a great boost to one's ego, many old friends, all delighted to see us and a multitude of memories regurgitated over dinners of lobster and Halloween ale. This is a sort of week of homecoming for us, Paula lived here most of her life and my art career started when I lived here back in '92 although I had been sailing here every summer since '79 on a classic sixty foot yawl. In my humble opinion this is one of the best cruising areas in the world.

The Fall colours are much in evidence on the trees, so the Town is full of Leaf Peepers, all the Cone Heads having gone home at the end of Summer. You can see, by the number plates on the visitors cars, that Middle America is here; Arkansas, Illinois, Kentucky Missouri, even West Virginia to name just a few.

A quick glance at the elderly white occupants alighting from these cars and your suspicions are confirmed, Trump Supporters en masse, not exactly welcome up here.

Another difference up here in Maine is that the State has an average winter snowfall of over twelve feet, and we both love the snow but it makes two wheels a definite no no mode of transportation, and as a result there are absolutely ZERO pedal Lycra Bikers or leather jacketed Hells Angels to be seen anywhere, what a relief! Luckily sno-mobiles are not allowed on roads!

Halloween here is now a major event that has left Hallmark far behind, just take a gander at these ghouls at the entrance of our hotel. Pumpkins abound along with witches and skeletons outside every house, all of which will be soon be superseded by Father Christmas with reindeer and sleigh all illuminated in the snow at night.

One of my personal delights is being able to order a rare hamburger in diners and restaurants, something severely lacking in Orford or most British eateries, once again the dreaded Health and Safety rears it's Medusa like head above the parapet. Overdone burgers are just like eating the leather soles of old boots and a real hamburger is just pure meat, no salt or pepper, no onion, herbs or anything else, once you add something extra it becomes a rissole. Bacon, cheese, Onions, tomato's or ketchup are all add ons with the bun.

Lobsters abound in Maine, it's a billion dollar industry here, selling \$6.00 a pound in the market just to make a few of you jealous.

The California wild fires are much in the news and some of the stories are horrific. Two good one concerning animals:

A blind lady was led by her guide dog from her house as the fire arrived and walked down the road a mile through the flames. "Every so often I put my hand down to pat him, and it was very comforting to know he was there".

A family watched from their house as the approaching blaze grew ever nearer, it was preceded by a mile or two, by hot flying embers, but when it reached their property, it stopped.

Their three goats had eaten all the grass!

Of course we can watch Trump on the many news channels and it is astounding to listen to the President of the United States, in a broadcast speech on TV, categorically and brazenly lying about the actions of former Presidents and anyone else who dares contradict his twisted and troublemaking tweets of lies. America deserves better than that.

Many of us are sceptical of our own politicians and God's honest truth, but Trump is way beyond any form of reality or reason, and Rocket Man Kim, who is no fool, is just playing him like a fish on the line.

Trump is no different from Weinstein either, a groper of women - if you're rich you can get away with it - his actual words. He is disrespectful of women, especially black or Hispanic, he didn't even know the name of the African American Special Forces Sergeant killed in Niger when he made his Presidential call to the pregnant widow, but that only underscores his racist attitude.

All this from the President of the most powerful nation in the whole world!?

There has been much ado recently from the House of Commons about student fees, so perhaps these two anecdotes might help you sort your opinions out:

York University. Some freshmen have been playing a GAME of purposely drinking to oblivion, thus requiring a 999 call for an ambulance to resuscitate the drunkard. Once the medics have turned up, the student's name is then put on the scoreboard!

Exeter University. Students here had a drunken party where some were dressed in High Viz jackets with Room 32 emblazoned on the back. Apparently a joking reference to the Las Vegas shooting where fifty eight people were shot dead from Room 32!

In both cases the idiots should be permanently expelled and any student loans outstanding recalled immediately. They are definitely material for my public pillory stock shaming process.

Now we are on the plane back home just in time to welcome some old Ghoul Friends of Mine.

Happy Halloween Y'ALL

Jeremy Ruge-Price

October 2017

THE MAD HATTERS TEA PARTY

Ere you begin this Rumbling Rambling it is important that we all get our priorities in the correct order, especially with today's huge problems such as Climate Warming, Mass Migration, the Mentally Deranged Dotard versus Rocket Man, Nuclear Threats, Brexit, Eyeore Hammond and a lot more besides.

Therefore, with all the above to worry about, it is fascinating to note that for the past three days, one of our leading newspaper's has featured letters from readers of both sexes discussing the Male habit of leaving the loo seat up!

A very important and daily topic in our house!

The RNLI is, truly, a fantastic and unique organisation manned entirely by volunteers and supported solely by public subscriptions. That, by itself, is an incredible feat in this day and age and I, for one, have been and always will be a great fan and supporter.

The deeds they do to save fishermen, sailors and seaman are many and magnificent as well as those they carry out to save the lives of the general public who find themselves in dire danger.

All of this is achieved with little regard for their own safety.

I mention this because recently an inshore RNLI crew, in an emergency action, were blinded by a laser beam from onshore! What sort of moronic idiot would do that, I just hope the perp ends up in the Drink one day and without a life jacket.

When you consider this moron, along with those that laser aircraft, beat up old pensioners, snatch fones etc, you realise they have absolutely nothing to fear from their actions.

If caught some get a fine, community service or a suspended sentence, most get discharged, having wasted everyone's time and public money. The only person that suffers is the victim!

Let's change the system, let's bring back the Stocks, and in very public places, with a two hour mandatory and minimum stay plus a notice saying who you are and your crime. That would give these louts something to think about.

Apart from the most hardened criminals or the mentally insane, one of the best deterrents to contain such petty criminals is FEAR, and at the moment they have no fear. Fear of being beaten for some idiotic infringement was always lurking at the back of my mind at boarding school; fear of being flogged with the "cat" kept many of Nelson tars on the straight and narrow, fear of being strung up on the end of the hangman's noose kept many from committing murder in bygone eras.

These louts today would be busy taking their jeans to the laundry were they to be publicly named and shamed like this: Repeat offenders? No problem, just bring back the birch.

I can personally vouch that while the first few strokes sting more than they hurt, from number four lash onwards, the blows will land on the lacerations of previous swipes, and that, believe me, is truly painful.

Ten lashes should achieve the objective I reckon.

This summer's tourist trade was not that hot in more ways than one , low on numbers and those that did come, came with tightly zipped up wallets, and the poor weather wasn't entirely to blame either, for this is the only Country in the World where I have witnessed Cone Heads queuing for ice creams in the rain on a regular basis!

My own humble opinion for the summer' paucity points to the Brexit Bedlam as being the main culprit, for regardless whether you a Leaver or Remoaner be, the catastrophic chaos and confusion caused by this Government is a political version of suicidal Hurri Kurri to say the least.

Despite Florence, which appeared to consist of more fluff than fabric, Mrs May clearly has little control over her Cabinet, all of whom are behaving like spoiled brats in their playpen and all of whom are in dire need of a spanking from Super Nanny Jo Frost.

(NB. perhaps the spanking might not be such a good idea in this LGBT era, who knows, some might actually like it!)

When you look at the constant bickering amongst the Cabinet, visions of a new version of the Mad Hatter's Tea Party float in to view. The problem is that May, Queen of Hearts, doesn't have the full attention of those gathered around the table and it appears to be way beyond her personal capabilities to shout the much needed cry

"Off with their Heads!" .

The Mad March Hair, Boris is spouting his own beliefs, and they can't all be wrong as Wise Owl Rees Mogg agrees with him!

At the other end of the table, Eyeore - nobody likes me- Hammond is scheming away to pull the tablecloth from under the entire picnic, while fuming away under the table can be found Furious George the monkey , chewing the Red Queen's chair leg in anger and revenge at not being invited to speak at all! I am afraid the Red Queen just isn't tough enough to carry this through.

Naturally the Brexit divorce was never going to be easy and, as I am well aware, even a one on one divorce rarely is rarely simple, especially once legal eagles get their talons imbedded in the participants flesh. So imagine divorcing 27 wives at one time. Hubba Hubba!

It is my wont to bash large nationwide organisations such as the RSPCA, English Heritage and of course, the National Trust. So I am delighted to report that the latter have just ensured that over 500 Arctic Terns have been able to fly the coop and return to Antarctica due to the gallant 24 hour guard mounted over several months by members of the Trust on the Northumbrian Coast. That was a job well done since, in 2016, only two terns and five little Terns survived the ravages of vermin and tidal surges.

Brilliant, but where were the RSPCA members, in Court perhaps?

Rumour has it the old basket shop site is becoming a Craft Shop next year, any new retail outfit is good news for the Village and I wish the enterprise well.

There are many talented locals who could use the forum for their crafts. That said, beware of "foreign" imports: some years ago we visited a craft shop in Glencoe, and my wife bought a mug thinking it was made locally: but stamped across the bottom was "made in Ireland"!

That's not a craft, it's just crapola, something that there is an abundance of already.

Immigration seems to be a hot topic today and, outside of The EU, I don't think there is any Country where you can just wander in and decide to stay for a few months, maybe years, and more often than not, for ever. Some form of permission is needed, be it family, study, work or even asylum.

I was an illegal alien (immigrant) in New York back in the seventies - I had overstayed my tourist visa by at least a year and as an illegal immigrant, I was not allowed a bank account, a driving license, the right work in order to earn a living nor ANY form of Federal or State funds. Had I been nabbed by the police due to a minor offence such as even jay walking, I would have been deported on the next BA flight in one of their less comfortable seats!.

As an illegal immigrant I had no rights whatsoever! Luckily I obtained the much sort after Green Card, permanent Residency, shortly after this.

Today even a Brit cannot emigrate to Commonwealth Countries such as Australia or Canada without jumping through several tricky hoops, despite having a close family member already living there, all of which is fine, If you have a work permit, also fine.

Just cos your brother runs the "Crappy Chicken" takeaway in Rotherham doesn't give you any rights of entry. So why is it so many bodies of varying stripes sneak in to this Country without so much as a "by your leave" permission being sought or granted, and why are we so utterly wet about deporting them, the French don't seem to have a problem there!

As I mentioned in previous Rumbings, I am no racist but I am beginning to have a lot of sympathy and understanding for Old King Canute as he stood on the beach and watched the unrelenting tide roll in over his Birkenstock sandels.

Recently I became embroiled in a monetary problem with BT, - who hasn't?- which all began when I received a call from a BT lady who, I suspect, was of pre 1947 Indian origins, Pakistan didn't exist back then.

I am sure she is a lovely and well meaning person, but I couldn't understand her Indian brogue so I asked her to email me the details. Her online reply, spread over seventy words and eight lines, was written in bad and ungrammatical pigeon English and contained not one single punctuation mark from beginning to end. This from a company using the word British in its title.

It's not her fault but that of the goon who gave her the job.

Realising that any attempt to solve my problem thru the BT website, with all its Medusa like options, would be beyond the comprehension of an old fart like me, I penned a snail mail letter to the Chairman of the Company. Yet again, credit where it's due, this morning I received a call from BT telling me my £186 invoice has been cancelled forthwith.

You really have to connect with the head honcho in order to get the right results. A strange coincidence was that both he and my Mrs have the same last name, du Plessis.

Naturally she is claiming all the kudos!

Fact always beats out fiction, so try this. York University has been researching old English words that have dropped out of use and the word "betrump" is one of them.

Its meaning, to lie or cheat!

Jeremy R-P. Oct 17

ps This months "Looney Tunes" award goes to Tesco via a letter from a customer in the Daily Telegraph:

A bottle of non alcoholic white wine wouldn't scan and required authorisation by the sales clerk. A sealed packet of mussels in white wine sauce required the same procedure.

Anyone care for a mussel spritzer?

SUMMER PEOPLE

The world is always going to be made up of Harry Enfield's "I am richer than thee" and the "I am poorer than thou" camps and rarely will the 'twain ever agree. I am lucky enough to have been members of both and, strangely enough, I am happier in the latter, and having done both does allow me to understand much better, the thought process of each group.

Over the past years I have lived in or around two places that were holiday destinations, both were sailing and fishing towns and both relied on the summer's "Thee's and Thou's" for their annual existence.

The first was in Camden, Maine and the second is of course, Orford and here we rely on some Thee's to fill their summer rental cottages, and the local Thou's to run the various retail outlets and commercial businesses, and in general, maintain in many ways the Village, in order that there are summer visitors; Thee's to rent the cottages and Thou's to buy ice creams, smoked fish and fill the coffers of the car park.

I think the electoral role numbers around six hundred or so and I would guess that number is, or was, swelled by about five to six hundred on a daily basis in the summer.

But if the summer people don't come in sufficient numbers then the whole shooting match is flushed down the khazi and the commercial entities and the local "Thou's" suffer accordingly, much more so than local Thee's.

This year the numbers are much lower than normal, tho the recent Bank Holiday weekend had many families meandering around and I was pleased to see Grandparents teaching grandchildren how to crab; in their day it was just a piece of string on a stick!

It wasn't always this way here, though, for if you go back to the old Orford as described by Charles Underwood in his wonderful book, Orford Piece, you will see that it was once a thriving mini metropolis: butchers, bakers, bus company, Barclays Bank every Friday, blacksmith, Charlie Friends bike repair, cafe, coal merchant, cobbler, Customs House, draper, fish n chippy, grocer, sweet shops, tailor. There was also the forerunner of today's supermarket home delivery; Mr Sharman had a "you

order it, I buy it and deliver it" service to Ipswich, it was up and running decades before the first Tesco had even been thought of.

So when you add in farming and fishing there was plenty to do and many ways to earn a loaf let alone a crust.

Best of all was the Town Crier, Mr Sam Smy, and I have no doubt the villagers got a better reception via him than we get from BT nowadays!

Down the decades almost all of that has now gone and due to the ever increasing number of Holiday Cottages, most of which are unused for 75% of the year, things are on a downward spiral. Of a Winter's evening, Orford, from the church on down to the Quay resembles a ghost town

Since our arrival here ten years ago, we have witnessed several changes, some good, some bad and some that could have been avoided. The success of the Pump Street Bakery has brought a whole menu of new Munchies for the populace to masticate their molars upon in the Town Square and both the Bakery and the Jolly Sailor have won national awards while the emergence of the Meat Shed has been a boon to many.

Yet the demise of Richardson's Smokery as well as the Basket Shop are sad events and still visitors ask for them, however the loss of the estate agent's use premise in the square was a bonus, there are many more useful retail outlets we need!

The sale of the Village Store need not have happened as I am told that there exists a special provision within the law of the land to prevent such rape of small villages from occurring. That said, the new shop is going great guns, and the attending blackbirds have a fruit fest every day.

In today's Orford the few retail outlets left need the influx of bodies that summer brings but we need to keep a wary eye on the things the latter can find do when they get here, cos right now numbers are way down and although the weather is bad, that's not the reason.

We need to make this place more welcoming and with more amenities, and that is going to annoy some that don't have to rely on tourists for income, but that's "a dog in the manger" attitude, especially if you don't have to earn a living.

Why is it that England is so agin street cafes, places where you can sit in the sun (!), munch on a muffin and quaff a cappuccino while watching the locals at work and play?

Why can't the Bakery have tables in the square or the bottom of the Pump Street parking lot, which of the two is the more attractive to look at, two rows of cars or an outdoor cafe?

Why can't the shop have tables and chairs outside on the green so that visitors can sit and watch Orford go by?!

All of the above would help replace the Village Hub lost by moving the shop and at the same time give the visitors something to do other than fill the Council Coopers in the car park.

Tourists may well be annoying at times but be you an Orford Thee or a Thou, just let me say that Orford needs these visitors to survive.

The Morris dancing on the Green outside the shop was a great idea but who knew it was going to happen?

The Old Tractor Show could have been used as a marvellous village event had it been properly staged in the right place with proper advance publicity. The Wisdom of Solomon suggestion that it be held on the Rec Ground was poo poed and instead we had utter bedlam and mayhem, huge traffic snafus up and down Quay Street, not once but twice, confusion and confrontation in an already over burdened car park, and just to add insult to injury, all this organised on Whitsun Bank holiday weekend when the whole place is guaranteed to be bulging with ConeHeads.

The Clinic is already now closed one weekday, and should the post office or school fall by the wayside due to lack of business or support, then that is the beginning of the end for anyone hoping to scratch a living, other than holiday cottage owners and those retirees on good pensions!

I am sure I will probably get excommunicated by some Thee's for saying this but quite frankly, "Tant Pis" to that, I have reached the age when I will say what I think needs saying and when I think it needs saying.

The Duke of Edinburgh is renowned for saying what he thinks or thought, here are a few samples:

Royal Visit to Canada

"I declare this thing open, whatever it is!"

At an official Banquet

"Bugger the table plan, give me my dinner"

Of his daughter

“If it doesn't fart or eat hay, she's not interested”

To Tom Jones after the Royal Variety Show.

“What do you gargle with, pebbles?”

His opinion of Stoke on Trent after a Royal Visit.

“Ghastly”

I am content for anyone to be whatever sex they wish to be, regardless of whatever they were when they first popped their head out and saw the light of day, and that goes also for those who wish to be attracted to the same sex. What I don't want is it all constantly rammed in my face by various organisations such as Gay Pride etc.

The National Trust clearly lost its marbles over this recently by demanding some Norfolk volunteers wear Gay Pride or whatever badges or get side-lined away from the public. Forcing Jews to wear the Star of David in public was one of Hitler's Dirty Tricks, but I am glad to say the Trust reversed itself but only due to public outcry!

However I noticed in today's Telegraph that a letter from an indignant reader stating that his gardener of the past fifty years has recently been told by the National Trust that he can no longer mow the lawn as he doesn't have “the right qualifications!”

However, all the above pales into insignificance with the scandalous news that they are raising tenants ground rents by unimaginable and unaffordable amounts.

Methinks this over grown organisation needs weeding out, they've become too big for their green wellies!

An old friend, Blanche Blackwell died recently, and I mean old as she was 106. I went snorkelling with her when she was ninety!

Blanche was a relative by marriage and I had been at school with her son Chris, who went on to start and own Island Records. Blanche had lived most of her life in Jamaica and amongst her chums at Goldeneye was Noel Coward and also Ian Fleming of 007 fame.

I met Ian back in the sixties when staying with an army mate at his family "pile" near Pewsey.

Ian had bought his eleven year old son Caspar an air pistol and decided to spend Saturday teaching the boy to shoot.

Caspar fired at a target pinned to a tree at ten paces and got two outers but 007 wasn't happy with this and said:

"No no no, Let me show you how to do it"

Coming from the author of James Bond we were all expecting some amazing firearms action, but he missed the whole target, not once but three times. My faith in 007 was destroyed for ever.

Blanche was a lovely lady and enormous fun.

Finally, our best mate Trooper died this month, but it's only Au revoir my four legged chum, we miss you!

Jeremy Ruge-Price

September 2017

ps Did you know that Southwold has become a surfing centre!? I spied piles of foam boards in the back of a delivery truck yesterday and asked the driver if he was off to Cornwall?

No he said, I deliver all these boards to Southwold every week!

pps The SCDC is trying to push through an edict declaring an £80 fine for anyone found walking a dog without a lead. Our MP has suggested they rethink!

ARTHUR THE PARROT

Now that I am established within the ranks of the Old Fart Brigade there are certain purile sayings of the modern era that I don't like, one of which is the constant use of the phrase "their loved ones" especially common within the Media.

I don't have "loved ones". I have brothers and sisters, children, grandchildren and a smattering of old farts for friends. That I love them all is a given but they are called Family or old mates, not loved ones!

Another one is use of the word "partner"! I have a wife not a partner, and We don't have a pet , we have a dog!

Not so long ago I mentioned the cow in the Petting Zoo in Harlem, put there specifically to show the young Bros of the Bronx that milk doesn't come from cartons, at the same time I also mentioned that many young Brits think tomatoes grow under ground. Well this lack of understanding of nature is not confined just to the young.

A swarm of rare honey bees was snuffed out the other day by a certified pest control operator, he thought they were wasps! DUH!

It seems that from birds and the bees to the White Rhino and Whales, trouble abounds at the hands of man. The Plastic Whale, " the whale that died for us", was I hope, a wake up call for many, and in our own house we have started being much more aware of the hidden dangers of plastic.

We do try to buy food that is not encased with the stuff, but occasionally we have no choice. I had to purchase a chicken in Waitrose last week and the plastic "fowl" carton it came in was a prime example of the dangers. The casing was so hard that in order to extract the chicken I was forced to resort methods I had been trained to use some sixty years ago, the thrust of a trusty bayonet no less, tho in this case it was a very sharp and pointed kitchen knife.

When the fowl casing eventually had enough and gave up the unequal struggle, the shards of brittle plastic that resulted from this frenzied action were almost as lethal as the knife I had been wielding.

Imagine something that hard in a whale's stomach or any animals stomach. I can't make any dent in the world of plastics by myself, but if we don't all try, regardless of age or wealth, then our grandchildrens children are in the khazi , literally, cos they won't be able to eat fish and chips any longer as the fish will be full of little plastic pellets.

(I note that the day after this was written the demise of fish and chips was high lighted in the news. You read it here first!)

I have been lucky enough to have witnessed dolphins, porpoises and whales in various Oceans around the World, so the death of a whale may seem a mite distant for some, so let me bring it closer to home, locally in fact.

Supposing you take your dog for a walk in Rendlesham Forest, or to a local beach, it won't be long before it discovers a piece of food orientated plastic of one sort or another, there's lots about, and subsequently swallows it. Your dog could choke or even die, and should the offending plastic have a trade name on it, my guess is you will be mightily sad and at the same time furious!

What's wrong with Jute for containers or veg bags , India has huge jute factories and we used to have the same here, in fact in the days when I was a seaman, we used to load tons of jute every time we docked in Calcutta, all bound for Dundee!

The fair sex has a well meaning, but highly irritating, habit of adjusting the dress of us lads in public, smoothing a ruffled collar, straightening a wayward tie etc, in my case it's trying to wipe off lastnite's spag bol that oozed its way down my T shirt. In fact each time I have to go to the Village Emporium, my imminent departure is met with. " You cannot possibly go out looking like that!"

It is all about mothering instincts I'm sure, but grown men and little boys don't like it. I saw a new version of this at Grandparents Day last week.

Our Grandchildren, were just about to launch in to a rendering of Sgt Peppers, "When you are old and sixty four" despite that many of us were a decade on from that point.

The audience of oldies were all ready to be serenaded when one particular Gran waved her hand in the air gleefully at her young granddaughter in the choir, you could see the poor girl cringe with embarrassment, which was made even worse when the two little "Just Williams" on either side turned and grinned at her with malicious glee!

That's a No No Nan!

We can put a man on the moon but seemingly can't stop drones flying around our airports: well I have a solution.

Years ago my brother had a lovely cottage in deepest Hampshire up on a hill and, below, was the Village cricket ground. A model plane enthusiast had decided this was the perfect spot to fly his plane at weekends as it allowed him to reach the extreme range of his radio control. As a result the ensuing continuous buzzing and wet farting noise as it dived and darted around became insufferable for any one with a hangover. In those days, most of us staying at the cottage had the pestilential pounding of the temples on Sunday morning. This “would be” Biggles and his buzzy biplane didn't ease the pain one bit.

But help was close at hand, for my dear Bro picked up his trusty twelve bore, loaded two number 6 cartridges and strode out into the garden. As the plane dived over the cottage he opened up with both barrels.

As the saying goes, End Of!

The summer season has clearly started, early this morning I passed a young couple jogging, and the female of the species was texting away on her iPhone as she ran. This is not a modus operandi used by any of us local Wurzles! Most of us have trouble doing one thing at a time, that's assuming we can remember what the one thing was in the first place!

Last month I mentioned Henry, the robin red breast, that lives in our garden, or so I thought he did.

He has now moved house for the Summer Season and has presently taken up residence in the Jolly Studio. He pops in for a complete Alpen breakfast each morning as soon as I open the doors , and for odd snacks throughout the day. Of late he has become totally accustomed to Mr & Mrs Joe Publik and all their little crabbing Publik's wandering in and out. He's quite happy to perch on the back of a chair and watch and has been the subject of a photo shoot selfie on several occasions. Naturally he and I chat away often which has given rise to people giving me some very strange looks.

Birds can make great companions, I noticed recently that the Countess of Leicester has a pet parrot called Basil who featured in the Daily Telegraph. Back in the sixties, My dear Wife's father had a parrot who was called Arthur.

Their home, Denmore was a typical large Scottish manse surrounded by acres and acres of gardens and woodland. Arthur lived in a big cage in a corner of the dining room. From here he was able to pick up, and learn by heart, all sorts of sounds and sayings.

The most obvious came from next door in the kitchen where Mabel, the cook and general factotum spent much of the day beavering away. The door on the ancient Aga (rescued from the Ark) had developed a grinding noise every time the oven was opened or closed and Arthur could reproduce

the exact same sound, but his interpretation had the volume turned excruciatingly full up. It was like chalk on a blackboard.

My Ma in Law had two small dogs which, despite being a mile or so from any road or other habitation, were not supposed to be let outside by themselves. Pat used to walk them daily and could be frequently heard calling out their names as they ran around, barking continuously from a distance.

Arthur picked up on this and would repeat the faint barking as and when he felt like it, which resulted every time in my Ma in Law coming helter skelter down the big staircase shouting

"Who let the dogs out" and on spying her "dear" husband would shout at him 'You stupid old fool, you've let out the dogs again"

But Arthur's piece de resistance was at dinner parties.

Back in them days, Jock society thought nothing of driving forty or fifty plus miles for a black tie dinner invitation, quaffing their way through whisky, wine and a bottle of Warr's '34 into the wee small hours. Whereupon they would be poured back into their car and then weave their way home through winter blizzards and winding, narrow roads of the Highlands.

There were no drink driving limitations, nor safety belts for that matter! Had there been a Local Plod, his only transportation would have been a bike and his only communication via the Village telephone box, and anyway, he was more than likely to be a beater on the Estate' shoot, so therefore most unlikely to apprehend a local Laird for having a wee dram or six.

During such a dinner, Arthur would have a large cloth placed over his cage, known as Arthur's Cloud. The purpose of the cloud was to keep him quiet while the level of noise and joviality increased proportionally to the rate of the assembled company slurping Chateau Legless.

Arthur didn't utter even a squawk throughout all this hubbub but was just patiently and silently, awaiting his cue in the wings, under his cloud.

With the arrival of the port decanter, mine host would pour himself a glass, and, as was custom, pass the decanter to the guest on his left, and thus the pouring of the port would continue around the table.

It is impossible to pour port from a cut glass decanter in one smooth continuous rate, the narrow neck requires the air to be allowed to flow back in, so the liquid comes out in small surges which make a glug glug sound, and as three glugs fill a normal small port glass, so you get a glug glug glug and you're done.

Arthur would wait till the decanter was about half way round the table when the sixth guest had begun to pour his quota, but as the latter reached the third glug and stopped pouring, Arthur would, without missing a beat, continue on glugging. Other guests would now suddenly stop their incessant blithering at each other and look to see who the offending alcoholic was, at which point Arthur would stop glugging and say loudly

“ You naughty boy”

He never failed to bring the house down!

Staying with Parrots for a moment

An American couple in Minnesota owned a grey parrot called Bud. One night the local cops got a 911 emergency call from the wife who reported that her husband had been killed and she herself shot in a “house invasion” gone wrong, (House Invasion being PC American for burglary)

Some weeks after the event, the Police came to tell the lady that they hadn't yet found the suspect, at the same time her Mother in law was also staying there.

The police explained the situation when, all of a sudden, Bud decided to take part in the discussion by mimicking her late husband's voice and crying out loudly “Don't Shoot, don't shoot!”

The wife is now incarcerated on a charge of murder.

That has to be the best “Getting the Bird” saying ever!

Now is the time for farmers to gather in crops and that includes fruit picking. Presently there are 80,000 fruit picking jobs going begging but with no takers. Yet there are 400,000 students, with huge college loans, presently on vacation but of course none of them applied, doesn't say much for their work ethic.

Jeremy Ruge - Price

August 2017

THE CURSE OF "AIR" COMMUNICATIONS

Who would have thought that one day ice cubes in your gin and tonic would be capable of texting your friends to notify them you were drinking far too much and were way over the drink driving limits! That's one Christmas present crossed off.

Or perhaps a toothbrush with a built in camera that connects by wifi to your fone and shows live video pictures inside your mouth! Yucky Doo, in my case that would be a horror movie!

A water filter jug that automatically re orders replacement filters via your iPhone without even asking? the wider implications of that are indeed a tad scary.

Today's World is all about IT Connections much of which is way beyond me. Last month we had to replace our fifteen year old printer with an "air" version for iPads. I spent five infuriating days trying to make the perishing printer print but despite both "air" participants recognising each other - Nada!

Eventually I called the manufacturer by land line and after pressing a few buttons got connected to my new friend, Ajeet Kumar in Kalkutta. Over the next two hours he and I established a great rapport, we discussed his City, I had been there several times many moons ago, the annual Monsoon season, cricket and, occasionally the printer. I say occasionally because even he had to refer back to A.N.Other many times.

Ajeet, by the way, is Hindi for invincible, and so eventually together we got it to print a page. We parted with many Salaams and I rushed down to tell my Memsahib that it was working, but it wasn't and didn't!

Aaaaaagggggghhhhhh.

Having been sent a new one a week later, I asked a friend if her young son could make the connection, and of course he did so in less than a minute!

These gizmos are exceedingly useful but at my advanced age, IT really isn't my thing and what's more, when any of my personal internet devices doesn't immediately do what it is told, it drives me bonkers because I know that I am the Ignoramus not the iPad.

However it doesn't all end there, the recent NHS hacking was a signal of clear and present danger to the way we are made to conduct our lives today. That same virus, let's call it InflowJezza, in honour of our next Prime Minister, can and will destroy your life through the simplest of actions.

So if you are well connected and "air" savvy, watch out!

When you are feeling a tad knackered and want the British revive-all "cuppa char" you pick up your iPhone and command your "air" kettle to boil the water. Old InflowJezza is just waiting in the wings for this to happen and shouting "Open Sesame!" , will immediately invade your privacy via the air kettle and extract your bank details, passwords, IDS et.al and ruin your life, which is something I expect he is good at!

Those that can, from afar, now control their heating, thermostats, door locks, TV programming and anything "air" orientated are all at risk from Old InflowJezza who can't wait to screw us all, it's his thing!.

BA has the same problem, their self imposed "FUBAR"*shows that even the big boys can be caught out with and with disastrous repercussions on the comings and goings of Mr & Mrs Joe Public.

Willy Walsh and his top management blamed power surges; their next excuse was a technician who attempted the well tried method, as recommended by both BT and Sky TV tech support,

"switch it off at the wall plug, wait five minutes then switch it back on"

and to be fair, more than often than not, that works in our house!

But not at BA, maybe Walsh's grandchildren could have done a better job had they been asked.

(* fu**ed up beyond all recognition)

Air communications being as good and easy as they are today, the total lack of information or communication by the Royal Borough of Chelsea and Kensington to the inhabitants of Grenfell Tower shows how out of date and out of touch they are; I may not be over enamoured of Humpty Trumpty but he sure lets folks know what is happening by tweeting away each day. I think it's time the RB&K got with the program!

This year has seen a tsunami of white vans driving into Orford in the early mornings. Brickies, chippies, leckies, plumbers and painters have descended on the town each weekday, and I pass the incoming convoy every morning as I take a Trooper for an early walk. Everywhere you look cottages are being added on to, upgraded or in one "suspicious" case, digging down under; maybe a subterranean pool or mini movie theatre perhaps, who knows!

It's all good for the local economy of course but at the same time, the Orford road infrastructure that is needed to cope with all this has to be maintained by the SCDC, and right there is a gritty problem as several of the existing potholes have now reached previously unplumbed depths.

In the good old days of Fred and Arthur, remember them do you? well you should do cos they were the two old Likely Lads who repaired our potholes every year. They knew exactly where each and every hole was and religiously filled them in every Spring, making sure it was only just strong enough to last through the Summer. Once the winter rains had washed it all away, back they trundled in the grubby old truck and filled them all in all over again, accompanied by numerous cuppas and packet of Woodies. But they NEVER failed to do the job or missed a hole.

Now, if the crater outside your cottage isn't registered on the Ipad of the Highways supervisor, it ain't never gonna get filled in. Yet again IT rules and what's more Old InflowJezza will be working his way into the IT workings of the SCDC, but even he may find the SCDC a dead end!

The dreadful tower fire and subsequent loss of life is a stark reminder how cruel life can be in today's crowded world. It brought back memories of 9/11 and one in particular, a lady dressed in a yellow top and green skirt. Her image as she jumped from the 80th floor, twisting and turning as she

hurtled down, the bright colors catching in the bright morning sun was seen by her husband as he recognised the clothes she had put on that morning; she was one of many that chose to jump that day.

PBS America broadcast a haunting program recently called "Voices in the Air". It was the recordings on cell phones from the Twin Towers made by those stranded up on high. It was very noticeable how controlled and normal everyone sounded considering they knew they were shortly doomed to die. It was apparent that the calls from those in the Grenfell inferno were a similar vein last Wednesday night, saying their last goodbyes with dignity.

Of late the Country has been hit very hard with several disastrous incidents, yet our emergency services and police have been right there each and every time, for which they must be applauded.

One of those services is the medical teams of doctors, nurses, paramedics and management staffs in our much besieged NHS hospitals.

An example of their total commitment and concern was shown by the teams at St Mary's Hospital, who, from the moment the initial call was received by the Crisis Leader, switched into overdrive throughout the entire hospital and beyond, as off duty staff came flooding in to help. It was an exercise in absolute excellence and total preparedness. The new triage plot, one learned in Afghanistan, showed just how the immediate action team saves lives.

What made me giggle tho, after the stand down had been declared, was seeing a group of those same devoted medics all tucking in to a Big Mac and Fries! I know that feeling well, there are times when nothing else fills the spot like a Big Mac can!

Despite the care taken by these medics, there is far too much moaning from many too many about the NHS, and that includes some who live locally!

It may not be perfect, but it's FREE, try living in a Country where you pay for everything medically orientated, be it a doctor, surgeon or medication, and you'll soon have something real to moan about, those that continue to do this really p**s me off!

Mrs May is, no doubt, a nice lady but it seems she suffers much from the same degrees of separation with the people as did our Top Generals with the rank and file in WW1 and that was costly!

She might well not stay the course and if she don't, then in comes Old Inflowjezza and his deputy PM Tom Wotsup seen here striding about at Glastonbury prior to Jezza's stage appearance.

Finally a couple of nursery rhymes

Each day in the life of Old Trump

He suffers from getting the Hump

Despite shouting "You're fired"

In lies he is mired

Old Trump could come down with a Bump

President Trump squats on his stump,

Porking his way thru the day

His contacts with Putin, may well put the boot in

And chase old Trumpy away

Jeremy Rugge-Price.

July 2017

PS. There is an addition to the New Testament, it's called the Book of Jeremy Corbyn and it is well worth reading! www.newyorker.com/news/daily-comment/the-book-of-jeremy-corbyn

Have a good giggle!

BITS AND BOBS

Suppose, after much careful thought and considerable exploration, you and the Mrs had decided to spend your golden years of retirement in the hidden-away hamlet of Fag End on Sea, you would expect to be able to squat in your little bungle-ho "Casa Magaluf with peace and tranquility abounding all around as you wended your wobbly way towards the Pearly Gates. However for those of us who chose Orford that's a far cry from reality, for our little section of Coast line has more than its fair share of media publicity and nautical naughties.

At the time of writing, the Border Force, (Immigration Control Officers otherwise known as ICE), the Coast Guard and numerous Plods were investigating various happenings. April 31 was to be an Open Day at the Lighthouse, but some ancient WWII ordinance had been found in the vicinity of the building, so there was much hypothermic waiting around in the arctic east wind for would be visitors: meanwhile the ICE Team plus a Plethora of Plods were interviewing the skipper of a Dutch yacht tied up to the Yacht Club pontoon. Eventually he and seven Ukrainians were taken away in handcuffs.

Earlier in the day, three overweight old fossils, just like me, attempted to launch their heavy boat off a trailer on the boat ramp, this despite the all too obvious prevailing high winds and strong Spring tides. Naturally enough the Forces of Nature won out against the Wisdom of Ages with the result that the launch was abandoned when one septuagenarian got stuck up to his waist in mud and had to be extracted like a cork; three old men but not in a boat!

All this and the summer hasn't yet started!

Of late we have begun to find more ticks on Trooper, a sign that the dreaded deer tick is here to stay. A bite from one of these pests can result in Lyme disease. Lyme is in the State of Connecticut where this illness was diagnosed years ago and when we lived in the Upper Hudson Valley, NY, our area was known as Tick Alley, due to the huge numbers of uncontrolled and never culled deer population roaming about. I have been bitten by more ticks than I care to remember, and in very

personal and pertinent places as well, some of which require third party inspections and subsequent removal.

They attach themselves to your lower leg and work their way upwards to more hidden parts where they dig their legs into your flesh and suck away at your blood and In two days they swell double in size. Hubba Hubba!

The secret is to remove the whole tick at one go, not always easy if you can't see it on your bum or other delicate spots. It is very important to dig it out completely otherwise the legs will remain embedded within and you will get clobbered with Lyme disease which, if not treated can be life long and very dangerous: if this happens you will need to see the Doc for some antibiotics!

To succeed in removing everything from your flesh, a hot match head applied to the Tick will cause it to retract its legs.

Yesterday I watered the plants as this east wind dries everything out. I was dashing away with my watering can in the front garden when our constant companion, Henry Robin Redbreast alighted on the bush beside me. He has become very tame over the last few years and comes in the garden door for breakfast. I was chatting away with him while watering, explaining that there was much more on the menu in the back garden when one of our neighbours passed by and, seeing my apparent soliloquy, remarked upon it.

"I see you are talking to yourself now!" She said.

So I explained who I was talking to and why which she quite understood as they once had a favourite blackbird in their garden until the ginger Tom from next door had it for high tea.

hen this morning I note that Bangor University recently published a study stating that talking to oneself is a sign of high intelligence and the study went on to say "inner dialogue helps organise thoughts, plan actions, consolidate memory and modulate emotions."

Clearly they had me in mind!

I think the heat of Summer just arrived, and with Brexit and the upcoming Election there is also much hot air circulating on the ether as well, but at least the wedding of Pippa Posterior is over, I think that is a good contender for "The Yawn of the Year Award" in my book!!

The terrible tragedy of Manchester and now London again is our World for today and, unfortunately, more than likely that of the future. I entered into this World to the sound of huge V1 bombs exploding and most likely will exit this World to similar sounds of the suicide bomber. But then you must never give up.

Finally, I began writing these Ramblings for my family and a few friends several years ago when we came back to live in this Country, and it was to show the difference between our lives here in Orford as opposed to previous decades in New England. They have always been tongue in cheek along with a fair amount of leg pulling and taking of the proverbial mickey, and that includes derogatory comments about myself as an ancient and decrepit fossil, which duly I am as you can see all too well from my photo at the top.

After the War, I was brought up clutching a golden spoon and all that came along with it out of the same draw. Our World, as children, abounded with butlers, chauffeur, nannies, governess, cook, housemaids and five gardeners: altogether a mini Downton Abbey in a wonderful house called Langham Hall near Bury St Eds. (The golden spoon was exchanged for a wooden ladle many years ago).

Being deep in Suffolk countryside, only ten of the seventy inhabitants had ever been to Bury, the rest never left the village so the likelihood of racism was non-existent.

It wasn't until the age of thirteen at Harrow that I first discovered the existence of the Jewish people, tho' two of my best friends are Jewish and one was my youngest's God Mother.

The closeted upbringing in Suffolk as children ensured that we were hidden away from the big Wide World outside, but that went swiftly overboard at the age of seventeen, when I served for three years as a seaman on an ocean going cargo ship around the Continents Africa and India. In those days Merchant seamen were regarded by many as the scum of the Earth, White Trash in today's lingo.

Those years and my ensuing army career, taught me to respect all peoples, regardless of class, colour, creed, nationality or sex, rich or poor.

I mention this because a fellow resident has seen fit to suggest that I may be not only a racist but also sexist to boot.

If I have offended him I am sorry but, as an ardent Brexiteer, my comments that he quotes, were of a strictly political nature and as such had nothing whatsoever to do with either gender or race and

could have just as easily been applied to many a male Remoaner. He has since told me that he understands that this is the case.

Racism is an unpleasant topic at the best of times, and even more so with the rise of Daesh and it's terrorist teachings, yet sadly it is fast becoming a daily event, so let's get my clashes with racism out in the open and done with.

In 1957 my initial exposure to rabid racism was in Cape Town where myself and four other seamen were incarcerated in the nick overnight for fighting an Afrikaans kop. We were all anti-Apartheid and didn't like the way he was bludgeoning and beating up an African with his heavy stick and so decided to intervene. Probably the wrong move but that's life, you can't just stand by and do nothing.

The most brutal incidents we saw on those voyages were always in the Portuguese colonies on both East and West Coasts, again performed by mixed race supervisors against native dock gangs.

It was certainly an eye opener to a little rich kid like me and a steep learning curve on life.

Thirty plus years of living in America from the mid-seventies onwards, and a whole new aspect of racism sailed into view.

Much of the great divide that brought about the Civil War reigns supreme still, maybe there aren't slaves any more but the attitude is still there. The Klan, the Good Ole White Boys of the Deep South, some Chapters of the Hells Angels, they are all around, and woe betide anyone that speaks up against them, especially white foreigners like me. I found that they expected me, as an Englishman, to think like them and were extremely irate when I didn't. I always felt on my guard in the likes of Mississippi or Louisiana yet on the other end of the scale I would drive my son to school in Manhattan which involved going right through the middle of Harlem twice a day and I felt totally at ease and comfortable on each and every trip. There is today a huge racial problem in the US which won't end any time soon.

It was while I lived there that I began to read up on the Native Indian and Inuit tribes that had suffered mass racism at the hands of the White Man. It is a subject that I find very interesting, own many books about the happenings and still read more about them today.

Farley Mowat was a famous Canadian author, who served at Monte Cassino as a junior officer in the Canadian Forces. After returning home he devoted much of his life in a one man campaign against the Canadian Government Department that dealt cruelly with the Eskimo and Inuit tribes in the Barren Lands and Arctic Tundra of Northern Canada.

He spent much time in the wilds living with them and wrote many books about their continuing depredation and suffering at the hands of the Government and also the RCMP, Royal Canadian Mounted Police.

Never Cry Wolf - a wonderful account of the genuine lives of wolves, which dispels many myths about them: Life in the Barrens, Walking on the Land, The Deer People and many more, he was a wonderful writer and captured the desperate plight of these poor people. I recommend his books to anyone interested in the pursuit of man and history.

The Native Indians of America were also tarred with the same brush by the white man. Indian tribes didn't own land, in their eyes the land belonged to everyone and so when the first white folk arrived and said we would like to use this land, the Indian said yes, believing that the white (British) newcomers would do the same as they did, make camp, hunt, fish, forage and live as they had done for centuries. They certainly didn't realise that the land was now no longer available to them and were rudely killed or turfed off it.

The lies, broken treaties, slaughter and eventual round up and confinement to reservations where they still are today is a history of mass racism gone rampant.

I think it is fair to say that the Indian Tribes of America, along with the Inuits of Canada and the Aborigines of Australia have suffered some of the worst forms of racism at the hands of the white man for centuries and are still suffering today.

An interesting part of all this is that we Brits played as a Nation of white folk who made up the vast majority of settlers that swelled the population of this new land.

Back in the 17th and 18th centuries, the dregs of English society, the degenerates, drunks, the idle, illiterates, unemployable and whores (no convicts) were all gathered up then exported and shipped out to the American Colonies. If you could wield a hoe or were able to bear children, then you were ideal to cultivate the land and breed in order to swell the sparse population and thus extend the boundaries for the white man.

The current TV programme, Jamestown, is one of those first settlements which used these folk as human fodder to boost the coffers of the investors, tho' naturally the only common denominator between reality and the programme is the name.

These people were not in the same category as the felons who were deported to Australia in the years to come, but free men offered the chance to earn a living, even own land. But the experiment failed in so far as most of those who took the opportunity were from a class that would rather drink and idle away the day, earning nothing and becoming dirtier, unkempt and eventually being labelled as White Trash*. They became a distinct strata of American society back then and are still much in abundance today* and most of them voted for Trump which comes as no surprise.

So back to the reason for writing this.

As it happens my dear Wife, Paula, is from the State of Maine, USA and has some Native American blood in her veins from an ancestor who was a member of the Penobscot Tribe up there. As such she is a great supporter and advocate for their cause.

My guess would be that if she had thought I was in any way a racist I reckon she wouldn't have said "Yes" when I was down on bended knee!

Jeremy Ruge-Price

May 2017

* "White Trash" by Nancy Isenberg

* Deep South by Paul Theroux

ps A new Chairman for the Parish Council no less! My thanks to Ann for all her efforts and best wishes to the new Boss!

pps The power of the written word - the hole by the Coopers house now has SCDC roadworks signs!

PESTILENTIAL PANDAEMONIUM OF PARKING

One of the downsides of becoming a popular summer spot is that the parking habits of our visitors vehicles is fast becoming venal! Many of our village roads are very narrow and are adorned with yellow lines or parking restrictions as ordained by the SCDC, yet to a day tripper that matters not a jot if it can be used as a parking spot.

They will go to any lengths not to pay for parking and, if they are big City dwellers, then they are all expert at this, so when a choice spot becomes available, they snap it up like carrion round a corpse.

During high days and holidays Pump Street is a permanent parking bay right up to the Market Square junction, yet our National traffic laws prohibit parking thirty feet back from any such intersection:

the Square itself has delineated parking spots, but on a Summer day you will find that the affluent of the affluent will slot their Audi/Beamer/ Merc/ Range Rover or Volvo on either end of the lines of legally parked vehicles, regardless of the fact that it completely blocks all emergency vehicle access and farm traffic.

I wrote "affluent" here purposely as I notice that almost always it is the rich penny pinching parkers who do this - rarely do you see a small car of the Plebeian variety like mine parked there.

Again, in our street, lower Munday's Lane, from Castle Close to the Square, the road narrows down to a single lane and is covered by "unseen" SCDC summer parking notices. This is the main drag for large tractors towing gigantic gizmos and, as we all know, they work very hard seven days a week from pre dawn to after sunset.

A week or so back we had an "Auto Sleeper" (2017 speak for Mobile Thomas Crapper) parked there legally for six hours and no farm traffic could pass. Two weeks ago the bottom section of Quay St. had visitors cars parked on both sides of the road, again legally, yet blocking everyone including boat trailers and delivery trucks, including our illustrious Chairman on her daily rounds and the Commodore of the Sailing Club towing his rib, but there's no one or nothing around to say " eff off".

City Pigeons such as those in Trafalgar Square feed off the constant dribble of detritus dropped by the public, if you transported a flock of them to a corn field they wouldn't know what to do. In the same vein, city folk have no idea of the size of today's farm machinery, so you really can't blame those that park in narrow lanes, they need to be made aware of what they are potentially blocking.

Reality Check

(In Harlem, NYC, there is a petting zoo which include two cows: this is to show the young Hoods of Harlem that milk comes out of a cow not a carton!)

Our esteemed Parish Council and the NOTT know all this but are unable to act as long as certain members insist on playing by the (Highway) rules. As the fame and fortune of Orford spreads across the land, this Summer tsunami is only going to get more and more overwhelming each year if nothing is done, and as historians amongst you will remember, old King Canute's "stand in the sand" to stem the tide merely resulted in soggy sandals, while decades later the illustrious Charles Dickens had the bulbous Mr Bumble stating:

"...if that be the case, then Sir, the law is an ass!"

Perhaps these nay sayers might have a change of mind if, God forbid, their house burns down or a member of their family is badly injured and emergency vehicles can't get access. There are always definitive moments in one's life when a modicum of common sense, discretion and initiative is needed, and this is sure one of them!

It's easy to critique but to provide some possible answers might help.

Recently KerWay repaired the oil spill area in the car park, and used orange interlockable barriers to block access. They are lite weight, inexpensive and could easily be erected either end of the delineated parking spaces in the Square during the Summer and weekends; we could have polite notices erected in certain spots, "Think Emergency Vehicle Access, please do NOT park here", "XLARGE farm vehicle access 24/7, Keep Clear", "Boat Trailer Access", "Old Farts and young Cone Heads X" etc.

It's not as though there aren't other signs around already: the Saturday Country Market, the Tea Room, Methodist Church coffee morning, Easter Egg hunts, Boat Trips, Ice Creams abound throughout the village, not to mention the the salesmen from the Souk who erect a plethora of Persian Magic Carpet signs that adorn every road sign and intersection.

So surely it is only reasonable that the Village post some much needed polite parking parameters, and, don't tell me it's illegal, of course it is but so what and who cares if it helps solve the problem?!

Research has highlighted the fact that this is a nation wide problem. For example, in our local area, Snape Maltings is trying hard, but with great difficulty, to find ways of dealing with the inevitable increase in cars because the Country's large Councils aren't ever going to help, in fact they don't even care and Plods are so stretched they don't have the time, even our own PSCO doesn't work at weekends.

So let's try and get it sorted before there's a serious fire or accident.

It does seem a shame that the retail space next to the Butley Oysterage restaurant remains both empty and in much need of repair. What it might be is anyone's guess, but if you look at some of the non food items in the Country Market, then add in some of the local artists such as the brilliant wood engravers and printers of Sudbourne Hall, cushion makers etc, there is enough around to start an "Origins of Orford" store. It would make up for the sad loss of the Basket Shop.

Of late I have been reading Richard Roberts' book "Ten Footers and All That" , a fascinating account showing just how much more use was made of our river back then, not just by adults but also children. Being able to swim, sail and row was the normal way of life and as Ratty points out in the Wind in the Willows, " there's nothing like just messing about in boats".

Using the river was a major source of not just racing and recreation but also "Swallows and Amazon" exploration : rowing up with the tide to Iken to see friends, then coming back on the ebbing flow: picnics to Havergate or Shingle beach were just some of the excursions, many times these adventures were carried out by just children with no apron strings attached. The Ore and Alde was their playground and these young 'uns grew up in it, on it, and used it to its full capacity. There wasn't a life jacket to be seen back then.

Sadly The dreaded Health and Safety has put paid to much of that and more's the pity.

I would suggest that those of you who haven't read the book do so, as it is all about and around Orford. In fact on the weekend of the book signing by the author Richard Roberts, I was reunited with an old school mate, Kenneth Webb, some Sixty Years On from ours days on the Hill at Harrow back in the early fifties. Ken and his sister, now Mary Goldin, were both an integral part of the adventurous young sailors in the ten footers.

ENGLISH HERITAGE is at it again. An ice cream vendor in Kent is under threat of being turfed off his plot after thirty years standing in the same spot. Yet again it's English Heritage that wants to oust him in order to erect a cafe, I thought they were in the business of Castles not Cafes.

I am sure that the person who dreamt up the original heritage plot had the right idea at the time, yet as is the way with many such "good works" concepts, The National Trust and the RSPCA being prime examples, they grow too big and unwieldy and as a result, loose the plot.

English Heritage now resembles the severed head of Medusa, growing obnoxious tentacles wriggling out way beyond the ramparts.

A major part of our British heritage has always been the willingness to support the underdog, not purposely tread on the heads of the Proletariat.

Back in 1034 my ancient ancestor, Marchurthian ap Kunedda, was a fiery brigand chieftain in Wales, so as I totter along slowly in the direction of Boot Hill, I sometimes wonder, were I to live to be a hundred (God forbid), if I would end up becoming an anti cultural and anti PC insurgent, it's all there, lurking in my genes!

Jeremy Ruge-Price

May '17

PS I have steered well clear of the Election as it is not my bailiwick, however there are two meddling memsahibs I could well do without once it is all done and dusted. The first is the lady from Guyana who, if she can't accept the wish of the majority, has enough money to buy herself a ticket on the next plane back to where she was born: the other is the mealy mouthed wee Haggis in Holyrood still mouthing off about referendums while the economy and welfare of her fellow Scots is sinking to the murky depths at the bottom of Loch Lomond .

To quote Henry II. "Who will rid us of these troublesome Totties!"

MYOPIC MUTTERINGS OF MARCH

On the assumption that God is all knowing and unbiased in his actions, one has to presume he made man first for all the right reasons, but just because a woman was second in the assembly line doesn't mean she is any less than a man. Apart from our great Queen Elizabeth, who sits up there all on her own, just look how many of us are married to the "Ultimate Power" behind the Throne"?

But for the Eggheads of Cardiff University, that isn't enough, and they have issued a caveat to their students to beware of using non PC words both in their daily conversations as well as those included within their written papers. In Wales while women are straining to break the Glass Ceiling, then man is clearly being buried in the basement!

Neil Armstrong's famous words from the surface of the Moon " One small step for a man, and one huge step for mankind" are all to be flushed down the Khazi. If a tiger eats your Mrs, it's a not a man eater but a Memsahib eater!

The Man in the Moon has been eclipsed, unManned space rockets grounded, HuMan Resource departments are closed as all their Managers say that the Manuals are now wrong; you can neither be "to the Manor born", nor a yeoMan; White van man is off the road; Manual labourers can no longer Manhandle large Man made items; the Courts are going to find it difficult to find anyone guilty of Manslaughter and Parliament just lost its Mandate!

Just to confirm all this, Milord Haseltine was fired for his performMance in the House of Lords - no Ladies?- for having stated that the Prime Minister was doing a Man sized job, and saying that on International Women's Day no less.

But then what's good for the goose is also good for the gander no less. So there is no longer a queue for Ladies in Waiting, charLadies aren't doing chores any more, and luck won't be a Lady tonite while Ladies of the night are doing a turn on the day shift. Finally, if you are a Ladies Man you may well just disappear in a puff of vapour!

All this would be political correctness is being forced upon us by left leaning bodies of the so called Literati, including many of the stoned students they are teaching. A great friend of mine, Henry Frost, now sadly long deceased, used to refer to this turbulent throng as;

" the heaving masses of the great unwashed".

Were he around today he would be apoplectic at their intent on spreading it across the menu of life.

Jamaican stew recently took a pasting, but a scrumptious Jamaican Pattie is to the manor born,

my first stop after landing at Montego Bay was always the Pattie Hut for a Jamaican lobster patty.

The U of East Anglia recently threw a hissy fit at a Freshers Fair when a Tex-Mex restaurant handed out sombreros! Get a life you pontificating prats, or at least have the common decency to wait till mine is finished!

American academics of a similar left leaning persuasion are miffed because English rugby fans use a Deep South song of Slavery as a war chant. Swing Low Sweet Chariot is a wonderful song in its own right, and yes it is about slavery, but I will bet you your last dime that the vast majority of those caterwauling US academics are " white boys"!

On the subject of "white van men", the dawn convoy of artisans driving into our midst every week day is for ever growing, for besides being the time of year for sprucing up the garden, 'tis also that time for the adding on to, or the painting of, and or the refurbishment to existing cottages throughout Downtown Orford.

Of course the Big House renovation is causing much scuttlebutt on both lower and upper decks: the new owner is apparently downsizing from a bigger pile of bricks somewhere near Cambridge, and is reputed to be the owner of several restaurants. Insofar as he is installing no less than six bathrooms, it gives much scope to the rumours flying around: he is going to live there; it's a hotel, possibly a guest house, or maybe even a home for the elderly (plenty of us here in Orford), a large family summer rental at around 3/4K per week; who knows?

However the Powers behind the Throne within our esteemed Village Council say no such permission has been applied for any of the above as yet. Better to complete the work and then make for retrospective planning approval these days!

Apparently it was purchased for cash while his daughter bought another house in the locality, also for cash. The restaurant trade is rife with those that run two sets of books, as I know well.

It was once a hotel and so another good one here would be beneficial for the Village as a whole, but that could stir rumblings with a "would be" power behind her throne residing in the high turrets of the Crown and Castle.

"I like Crumpet Trumpet" continues all the while to petulantly rant and rave at the media and anyone else that "bugs" him. Behaviour like this in a teenager would warrant a good clip round the ear'ole but in a President of the most powerful Nation in the World, it is both undiplomatic, unwise and unhinged, but all to typical of a rich and spoiled rotten little brat from New York City.

Republican officials are now beginning to realise just what a bully in a china shop they have elected, hoist by their own petard no less!

Where the Donald is concerned, the word "delusional" has entered the lexicon of some in DC, while his approval rating is down to 37%

Meanwhile we have our own Nicola, Queen of Scots, fiddling in Holyrood Castle, while the rest of Scotland burns. It would seem her myopic ranting for a referendum contains much False News, otherwise known as Porkies, which if you look at her picture, a rotund and dour little haggis, is rather apt description.

I never did trust those with mean little mouths!

The Ice Cream Team are back, so shortly Mr & Mrs Cone Head and all their little Cone Heads will be wending their way down to the Quay for some crabbing, which will be followed by much slurping of Salted Caramel at the trough. Summer is but round the bend and the scent of blossom abounds in the air along with the sweet odour of Porker Poo being spread on the surrounding fields for this year's crops.

Already there is an increase in number of dreaded high viz Lycra Bikas pedalling the lanes in and out of Orford. I am sure we get more than our fair share than other villages. By mid Summer their constant presence becomes a silent but fast moving mass of menace to the crowds of all the little crabbers, old codgers and coots like me plus the myriad of cone heads wandering to and from the Quay; they don't even spend a dime here either.

One of my bucket wishes is to spread tin tacks on the road up the hill into Orford, in my dreams, Baby! In my dreams.

Jeremy Rugge-Price

March '17

PS. Last but by no way least, massive congratulations to Diana Paterson on her upcoming Summer wedding!

FORTY YEARS ON

"Forty years on growing older and older

Shorter in wind as in memory long

Feeble of foot and rheumatic of shoulder

What will it help you that once you were strong"?

These are the words from the last verse of my old school song, and, boy oh boy, how depressingly accurate are they today.

I am in the process of writing a small tome titled, Jack of All Trades, it's all about me and it is for future generations of Rugge-Prices that have, as yet, to even to be thought about. So, now my mind is frantically regurgitating blasts from the past, just as well really, cos at my age it's not good to sit idly in neutral with a thumb in your bum! It's not that I have any claim to fame, but in this day of iPhones and iPads and all the online activity of kids, who knows it might be of interest to some future family member.

Shorter in wind, feeble of foot and rheumatic of shoulder am I, our dog walks used to cover several miles in the great forestry trails around here, but now as my old legs become unstable I have trained Trooper to walk himself each day around a woodland path while I stand in the middle offering encouragement; a la Nancy Sinatra, my boots aren't meant for walking any more.

"As in memory long", We are both becoming more absent minded each day and it matters not a jot what day of the week or even the month it may be, since it has no bearing whatsoever on our daily life. We know when it is a Sunday cos that's when the Times gets delivered and that means the Bakery is open, so croissants and dark chocolate cake are available. We tried writing lists, but that achieved absolutely nothing as neither of us could remember where we had put it. Putting things in a safe place has been my undoing all too often lately.

So, you can imagine I was much taken aback the other day to see blossom on a tree just around the corner and I began to wonder whether I had slipped further down the slide than I had realised, for in my mind we are still in winter and I'm clad in long-johns still.

In ages long gone, before television or the internet, it would seem to have been much less stressful when one was going slowly potty. You could just sit in the arm chair and cogitate gently while gazing out of the window, your mind would be drifting somewhere around the memories of childhood days, a tray of food would appear de temps en temps, you might eat it or you might not, people would come and go, some would try talking to you, but you didn't have to answer, it was all peace and quiet.

Nowadays such is the pace of life that every moment there is one problem or another. Our main angst right now is passwords and personal IDs. In the beginning it seemed so simple and easy to cope with, but now as the mind grows foggier, it has become a daily nightmare. Once you start having to change the format from that of the original it all goes downhill very fast.

Within a few days, I know I will forget the new one and have to change it all over again and then I forget that too. It gets longer each time and less relevant to my original thought process. If it were just the bank, no doubt we could cope, but now everything requires passwords, Amazon to Waitrose, it is never ending and beginning to become a real pain in the butt.

Across the water there's never a dull day in D.C. Tweety Pie Trump is twittering on although it is beginning to look as though his Gilded Cage might be made of straw rather than bricks.

It appears that La La Land isn't confined to just the movies, the difference is that while the Hollywood version is likely to win even more acclaim across the World at the upcoming Oscars, that of Tweety Pie's Trumpeting Team look as though they would be lucky to collect a wooden spoon. Given the huge amount of time and effort Tweety spends on his own fake news, 3/5 million illegal voters, passing out top of class at West Point, Swedish riots, plus legislation on transgender loos and deporting illegal aliens of all races to Mexico, unwinnable war with the Media et. al., it's not surprising that so little but very necessary political strategy is being accomplished.

Just for the record, Tweetie has around ten bankrupt businesses, a plethora of outstanding lawsuits for non-payment of work already done, no taxes paid for over a decade, and this is a shining example of his business acumen! Not surprisingly, his lawyer is of course, an excellent Jewish Attorney.

His dad made all the money, not Tweetie, and there are fairly obvious signs that he has much in common with Madoff and his Ponzi schemes, and to top it off, where the ladies are concerned, he is "groper par excellence". Is this the sort of person we could elect to any political position here?

A caveat though, Trump isn't nearly as dangerous as Bannon, his advisor.

We have recently been staying with my brother down in Wiltshire and while there met up with an old mate from Regimental days in the sixties. Whilst there I read up part of the wartime history of the 13/18th Royal Hussars and it would seem that the family connections to the Peninsula are much greater than I realised.

To begin with the Regiment was stationed at Wickham Market in 1943 while training for D-Day. This site was chosen because Fritton Lake was going to be the testing water for the DD tanks that would form part of the first wave of British and Canadian landing forces in Normandy.

On one particular dark night exercise, the Brigadier decided to try his hand and took command of a Valentine tank as it entered the lake. As is so often the case in military manoeuvres, Sods Law is never far away, and his tank ran out of petrol in the middle of the lake. The rescue motor boat refused to start and eventually the irate brigadier was rescued by a rowing boat manned by four nervous troopers who had never wielded an oar before!

Judging by the villages mentioned in the book, everywhere from Hollesley to Woodbridge and on to Thetford was one massive military training ground with little or no civilian population.

Despite all of this hubbub, the Brigade shoot on Orfordness seems to have been a great success every weekend and was flush with wildlife galore; the latter of course, sans any help from the RSPCA I'm pleased to point out, which only underlines previous statements in my Ramblings that noise from aircraft or blasts from big artillery or tank guns does not affect the wellbeing of wildlife breeding whatsoever. My Father was a regular member of this shoot.

Back in the late fifties, my brothers and I learned to sail on the Alde under the beady eye of Old Jumbo, who lived on Iken Cliffs. My brother also lived in Iken for a decade or more, and now we are back here till Old Father Time comes a' calling with his scythe. Even my old Regimental mate was connected to the area as he married a Pickthorn.

So, when you tot it all up, we have quite some local history, and whilst we are not of a local native tribe we are not quite the new boys some thought we were.

On the question of hedgerow husbandry, those in Dorset were trimmed and shaped immaculately, the SCDC crew could learn a lesson from them and, speaking of husbandry, the owners of Castle Close, whoever they might be, should start to trim the giant trees along the bottom end of Munday's Lane. This last gale, old Doris, had branches whizzing across our road. One hit our house and another two-foot lump hit me while unloading the car. Had that been the old lady who walks this path, very very slowly, most afternoons, it could have been much more serious. If anyone knows the owner, please pass it on. It could and will be a very expensive law suit that if it happens again!

Reading the last Council Meeting notes, I see time was spent on the motor jobs from Sudbourne, good! It seems they have tried ruining the Sudbourne Cricket pitch as well.

Having gone public with the Minutes, that now puts paid to the idea of just installing a notice about a CCTV but no camera and I suspect they will now be all too aware of this fact. As to the cars and licenses, there are plenty of people in Orford and Sudbourne who know the plate numbers, let alone the yobbo drivers responsible.

Sadly, they are all too scared to tell anyone! Faint hearts never won the day!

Jeremy Ruge Price

March 2017

BULLIES GALORE

donald-trump-cartoon-1024x682

I went to sleep on Saturday night with my Ramblings about Donald Duck virtually completed, on the basis of the Old Testament which states that "on the seventh day God rested".

He may well have done so but President Ducky had no such thoughts for, by Sunday morning I had been Trumped by another Executive Order issued from the White House. This time it ruled that all

citizens from the seven Muslim Countries involved in the White House Travel Ban published on Friday, were to be denied entry immediately and sure enough they were already being stopped at airports regardless of being either existing Green Card holders or those with previously issued working Entry Visas, and all being detained incommunicado by Officials and that included not only those just disembarking from International flights but those who were still in the air!

Everyone involved was interned by Homeland Security and at the same time refused any communication with immediate family members already in the airport or the Country legally.

Here are one or two situations of Alternative Facts:

White House Alternative Facts

"This is not a ban on Muslims."

Reality

Rudi Guiliani was called by Trump and instructed to find a way of banning Muslims legally!

White House Alternative Facts

The ban is a massive success

Reality

World wide condemnation, Federal judges overturning the Act, the American Civil Liberties Union receives \$24 million in donations overnite, it's normal donations are about \$4 million annually

You can say one thing for the Duck Presidency, there's never a dull day while he's around.

Of course an Executive Order still has to pass Congress before it can be enshrined in law, but this particular one actually is contrary to that stated in the Constitution as per the Declaration of Independence.

Setting aside his fury at the depleted size of the crowd at his Inauguration when compared to Obama and the outright lies of voter fraud , both of which appeared to be of the of the utmost importance to him, it becomes abundantly clear that old Ducky is related to Pinocchio.

Those of you who were hoping to catch a glimpse of his bouffant hair do as he rode down the Mall to Buck House later this summer, may well be disappointed. His attitude and denouncement of Global warming and his ante environmental stance is placing him at odds with HRH Prince Charles.

It seems that his close administration advisors, son in law Kurchner and Kellyanne Conway have let it be known that it would be best if Prince Charles were not to attend any functions where Duckie would be present on the basis, and I quote" he might erupt", their words not mine!

I give you one guess as to where and when history shows us another deluded leader erupting in unabated fury when his authority and ideals were questioned!

This volcanic trait was clearly visible at the White House Press Corps dinner last year when Obama made a joke about his own nationality and Trump' s continued twattish twittering concerning this matter. At that precise moment there was a camera aimed directly at Trump and I watched his orange hued suntan turned a darker shade of red, the fury on his face was all too apparent. As Trump would say, not good , not good.

Trump rates up there with some of history's great egotistical leaders, so the next four years could be explosive in more ways than one, that is assuming he lasts the course; he could well be impeached or even shot somewhere down the pike. Although he has given a much needed shake up to the long lasting Mexican standoff between Democrats and Republicans and a boost to the Dow which has recently hit an all time high, he is basically nothing more than a big and balding bully with some questionable business ethics more in tune with Philip Green. Much more of this and the Republican Party could find itself in a similar situation to our Labour Party, out of office for the foreseeable future.

It will all either turn out to be a roaring success or, more likely given the past week's history, the World will go dark for our Children.

And so back to normality:

Apparently my French fries can't be well cooked and crispy anymore, nor can my roast spuds but I don't like soggy chips: roasts of any sort seem to be dangerous as well, but never mind I thought, we will eat fish. But then the news told us that fish were now full of plastic and that in a few years the amount of plastic in the oceans of the World would weigh more than the total amount of fish. Seems that vegan is all that is left, well sod that, I'm sticking to my kippers and a crispy fried fish and chips.

This time of year in Orford, all is peaceful and there's just us mangel wurzels here which means no lines at the Bakery or the shop, even the Lycra Bikas are few and far between, yet behind the drawn curtains, much is ado about the coming season.

In the Jolly Studio we are being joined by Lisa Marie Trinder who will be running a store for Orford orientated gifts, things you can't buy anywhere else. The gallery section will still be operating and I will have a new selection of work which I will be working on as soon as I have cleared the decks of the paintings going to America.

To say all is peaceful could be described as an alternative fact! The Sudbourne Midnite Motorheads are still doing doughnuts in the Quay car park at night, (doughnuts, for the uninitiated, are circular wheelies that create noise dust and annoyance to those who live nearby. Those of you who are Top Gear fans of yesterday will know that doughnuts require zero driving skills).

A fact, not alternative but true, just recently one night, one of them managed to lose control and plowed through a neighbour's fence in Sudbourne, and all this before they even started down to Orford, two Plod cars pitched up and took him away.

If this is allowed to continue unchecked, someone is going to get hurt, be it them, us or even worse, a visitor, bad PR! These brats are again, nothing more than bullies and I would have an each way bet that some don't have driving licenses or insurance! You might get a mere slap on the wrist for disturbance, but if you are not legally on the road then that all starts adding up.

One of their tricks is to use the Sudbourne electric sign that registers your speed, they use it as a time clock of what speed they can log up on it from a standing start some fifty yards to its front!

I do not know the credo of the NOTT, but I would imagine it includes the overall protection of the good name of Orford and also the well being of the Village and those who reside here. Their deep pockets of considerable coffers surely have quite enough to cough up some cash to buy, install and operated a CCTV unit and sign declaring same, yet so far no action.

You have to take on these bullies head to head, otherwise their antics will just get bigger and more dangerous. Too much time and effort is wasted on trying to be PC perfect these days, the old rules of jungle justice were much quicker and far more efficient I think. Back then one warning and thereafter their engines wouldn't have worked ever again, what's more it wouldn't have wasted any of Plod or the Courts time.

Ee I tell yer, them was the days!

Jeremy Ruge Price

Feb 2017

ps The Amazon best seller list now features two of the World's best doomsday books,
George Orwell's 1984 and Sinclair Lewis's "It can't happen here"

The former is already sold out and a reprint ordered

2017

kkk

Christmas is now a distant memory and 2017 is upon us. It is fair to say that only God knows what is coming down the pike in the months to come, but all we can do is "Look on the bright side".

But before the Yuletide disappears into the Winter's gloom, a story to gladden the heart.

In the small and pretty village of Easton Royal in Wiltshire, my dear Brother and others decided to do a mobile Crèche scenario around the houses. He was chosen to be one of the Three Kings and my grand nieces were all little Angels.

One and all were suitably costumed in white dish dashes, the correct Arab garb for the region, and the whole event was a roaring success whereupon cast and audience ended up around a huge bonfire.

Naturally Mrs R-P Jnr. took pictures of the event as it unrolled and sent them out and around the family immediately.

The first showed old Nebuchadnezzar in his crown with a flowing black beard, and it looked great.

However pics 2 & 3 appeared to be of a rather different situation way down them bayous of Mississippi as opposed to upmarket Easton Royal. The consensus of the rest of the family is that it has to be a Klu Klux Klan cross burning initiation ceremony for young whites!

What's your thoughts on this

Jeremy Ruge Price

Down in the Bayous

santa-claus

A REAL CHRISTMAS STORY

As I write this rambling, Christmas Day is fast approaching, and our living room resembles a packing station, presents still in courier boxes, others wrapped up and labelled, bits of red ribbon, scraps of wrapping paper, sellotape, all part of the build up to next Sunday, it's no wonder that finding my glasses is much harder than usual!. Luckily our village postman, Ian, isn't part of the Postal Strike so most gifts will get there in time. If they don't then I will just have to don my own Father Christmas outfit and get on with it myself.

How typical of the Union bosses to use an international holiday period to have strikes that damage people's happiness and lives, and just to add insult to injury, the rail union boss earns £140,000 per year!

Back to Christmas, and Father Christmas in fact. Folklore has the old boy back emerging around AD 280 as St Nick but he really came into his own red outfit in the EU, in both Holland and Germany in the 1800's as Santa Claus (as in mouse) and when we joined the Union he became Father Christmas to us here.

Using Einstein's theory of Relativity in 1905 we can see just what an amazing feat he accomplishes each year.

In today's World, he must visit 700 million children, and so has to travel at speeds of 6.2 million MPH, and it takes only thirty-four hours for him to travel the whole Earth. This high speed squishes his huge girth which allows him to fit in the chimneys or central heating pipes to deliver his presents, the speed also explains why no one ever hears him, he's way through the sound barrier on arrival and, if a small person does hear a bump, well that's the Sleigh taking off again and going thru that sound barrier. Einstein's theory also explains why he doesn't seem to get any older.

Theresa May will have to negotiate good terms for us using his services once Article 50 is declared.

The best and yet saddest story about Santa comes from Kentucky. It concerns a professional Santa whose white hair and beard are all his own. He is in much demand there at this time of year,

Read on

Eric Schmitt-Matzen, the Santa got a call after work.

"It was a nurse I know at the hospital, she said there was a very sick 5-year-old boy who wanted to see Santa Claus."

Schmitt-Matzen, whose 300-pound frame and real white beard make him a popular Santa in the Knoxville area, got to the hospital in 15 minutes and requested that anyone leave the room if they were about to cry.

The little boy said.

"They say I'm gonna die,' he told me. "How can I tell when I get to where I'm going?"

"I said, 'Can you do me a big favour?'"

"He said, 'Sure!'"

"When you get there, you tell 'em you're Santa's Number One elf, and I know they'll let you in."

"He said, 'They will?'"

"I said, 'Sure!'"

"He kinda sat up and gave me a big hug and asked one more question: 'Santa, can you help me?'"

"I wrapped my arms around him. Before I could say anything, he died right there. I let him stay, just kept hugging and holding on to him."

After the boy's family realized that he had died, Schmitt-Matzen said he left the hospital and cried all the way home.

"I was a basket case for three days. It took me a week or two to stop thinking about it all the time," he told the News-Sentinel. "Actually, I thought I might crack up and never be able to play the part again."

That is as I say, very very sad but at the same time a wonderful real Christmas story

Happy Christmas one and all

Jeremy Ruge Price

Dec 2016

PS

I expect many played of us played Happy Families as children, Mr Bun the baker, Dr Drill the dentist, Mr Stitch the tailor and of course our old friend Mr Plod the policeman. Well, I saw a new one this week - Mr Khazee the portable Khazee Kleaner!! A good one to add to the pack but I don't fancy collecting him!

thegodfatherlive_logo1

MALICE A'FORE THOUGHT V MAFIA RULES

I had been going to ramble on about Donald (Duck) Trump but on reflection decided he was getting more than his fair share as of publicity so, as our noisy petrol heads are still at it of a night time I decided to write this, cos if officialdom in various quarters can't help we might be compelled to ask other sources.

Two years ago, a young lad from nearby spent all summer roaring noisily up and down Quay St on his phut-phut L plated moped, with no care for small children, old folk and certainly not the speed limit

One day I took his picture which he saw me do and roared back to the bench where I was sitting opposite the pub.

He asked why I had done this and I told him, so he said

"It would be a shame if that gallery burned down wouldn't it"

I informed him he was now on record - my iPhone- threatening me and that unless he gave up his wheelies I would be sending it on to a Plod. I gather he is now working and an excellent brickie, good job lad.

Most of us have threatened someone at some point either during childhood, school days or perhaps later, but not necessarily with malice a'fore thought.

However If you are in the habit of practising the latter from time to time, it is best to ensure that you are holding the winning trump hand before you declare you hand and the facts below will demonstrate exactly why!

Back in the Eighties I was living in Manhattan and was the general manager of one of New York's first fashionable mega restaurants. It was a two hundred and sixty seater in Lower Manhattan, a district surrounded by international publishers, fashion magazine photographic studios and model agencies. Thus we were open lunch and dinner seven days a week and our business lunches had many a famous person eating there, in fact the list would take me too long to put in here. In its heyday the restaurant was The Place to eat as well as to be seen.

Every part of the New York restaurant supply industry, be it meat, fish, fruit and veg, wine and spirits, beer and colas, laundry - we used over five thousand napkins a week - and even daily garbage collections were, and still are, controlled by one Mafia Family or another. For me it was all part of my daily business and I knew the God Father of each family, and also, much more importantly, how to get to talk to them when I needed to.

The myth of the Real Mafia demanding protection money is just that, a myth. In New York City, The Chinese, Irish, Koreans, Russians and almost every other Nation run protection rackets, but the Real Mafia, no way, why should they bother, it is small change compared to what appears to be one of several legit businesses. I have actually called in an emergency to one particular Boss when a Serbian gang tried to suggest they would offer us protection: our "side" arrived within five minutes and I didn't see the Serbs again.

From time to time one Godfather or another would come and have lunch or dinner in the joint and we would discuss their needs, our needs and how we would deal with it, but they always paid their own tab and their tips were always the best. We paid the going rate for all our produce and had a tacit understanding to stick with a particular supplier. It was a good arrangement all round.

The meat and fish markets open at midnight so we would sub contract our purchasing through an agent of our choice and in the case of the fish market it was a young Canadian and he did us a great job and the fish was delivered early each day.

One summer lunch time a fish delivery truck pulled up outside and the driver and his mate came in to see me. I knew them both and soon discovered they were looking for the Canadian. It seems that their Boss hadn't received any money for the past month. I sent them up to the office to see the book keeper. On the way out the driver confirmed that while we had paid up, our agent had not! I asked if I could help if I saw him.

"Don't worry about it, he can't hide from us" he replied. He was found later that day.

If you have ever watched an expert fillet a fish, it is always fascinating to see how quickly they do it, the razor sharp blade of the knife flashes a couple of times and, lo and behold a fillet of sea bass appears right before you.

They are real experts, and it was one of these guys who removed a thin fillet of flesh from the Canadian's inner thigh. He should have had more savvy than to try tricks like that, it was truly dumb!

Morale: don't mess with the Mob!

One day the garbage truck broke down outside the double doors of our front entrance and the driver came in to ask me to call his dispatcher to get a mechanic sent out. I put thru the call and got the Boss's son on the other end. I explained the problem together with the fact that we were due to open in one hour and the truck was blocking the entrance . His reply was very unhelpful so I told him to get that fxxing truck out of the way ASAP. He went ballistic and said he was coming over himself and would be "addressing" the fact of my swearing at him.

I called his Dad , the Godfather of that family and explained what had taken place.

"Don't worry Jeremy, I am just around the corner and will be over to see you".

When the belligerent son duly arrived he found his old man sitting at the bar, talking to me. It was pointed out in very certain terms that the fault was his and to get the problem sorted, oh and yes, I was to be respected in future since I was providing good business; we parted friends.

Morale: its who you know that counts!

One day a very smartly dressed man came in just before lunch and asked to see me. He introduced himself and explained that he was from Chicago and would be conducting business in Manhattan for the coming year and went on to say that he had been recommended to me by XXXX (one of the Godfathers) as someone to whom he could talk.

" I would like to reserve a table for two, and would be helpful if this could be in a quiet spot so that we can conduct our business without having to shout at each other in order to be heard".

I immediately realised that when translated he was asking for a table where they could not be overheard at any time. I showed him where he would be sitting and he asked that this could be his regular table every time his office made a reservation. That was no problem as many of our other lunch regulars had the same deal, but they were just normal beings!

He thanked me and reaching into his inside jacket pocket, pulled out a thick wad of greenbacks and peeled off a one hundred dollar bill. The deal was sealed!

Over the next year he would be there two or three times a month, usually with the same guest and each time I was up another hundred bucks.

Eventually I left that job and went to work for KLM in the hotel they had opened on Lexington Avenue and 59th street, as one of the three assistant general managers, my main concern was public relations for the hotel.

Some months later I got a call in my office from the Concierge to say that two FBI agents were in the lobby and would like to see me, so I had them sent up to the office floor and walked out to the elevators to meet them. I was not fazed by this meeting as to my knowledge I had not committed a Federal crime as yet!

Once they were seated they confirmed who they were and that I had been the previous GM at the restaurant and asked if I would mind leafing through a folder of photographs of various men and to point out any I recognised.

Within the first few pages I found the "guest" and he turned out to be the NYC Commissioner for the parking meter contract in the five boroughs of the city. That is a huge area with meters on every street!

Next up was my 'friend' and he turned out to be a senior Mafiosa figure from one of the big three Families in Chicago.

They had been running a vast scam over the City's parking meters, we are talking millions of dollars here, and each lunch time two to three hundred thousand dollars had exchanged hands in ready in our gents loo. To think I settled for one hundred!

I was then told I would be cross examined in front of a Federal Grand Jury in the following week as part of the official investigation, and all details of the latter would be in the hands of the media that very night.

"W-Wait up!" I cried. "I have a wife and child living up town and I don't want them in danger."

Not to worry they said, I would be fine and so would the family as they had surveillance teams all around town. Not exactly reassuring as in NYC you are more likely to be shot by the cops than the Mob!

On the prescribed day I went down to the Federal Law Courts, a large building in Doric style with huge tall columns along the front and a thirty yard wide set of fifty steps leading up to it. Inside were the banks of elevators with several people waiting to ascend to what ever office or court they needed.

I asked if any one knew which floor the parking scandal jury was sitting and once told, zoomed up to the ninth floor.

After being briefed by the two agents, I was summoned into the court before the Federal Judge and jury. This was not a trial but a Grand Jury hearing to ascertain that there was a criminal case to be answered prior the actual trial, and the two defendants were in the dock surrounded by armed agents besides others outside the door and in the hallway.

I answered the questions as quickly as I could and the proceedings came to a temporary halt while the next witness was briefed and ready.

The defendants were lead out of court and in doing so right passed where I was sitting: I was not too happy about this encounter

My 'Friend' asked the agent to whom he was cuffed if he could say good bye to me(!) and having been granted permission, he addressed me quietly and said

'Jeremy, this has absolutely nothing to do with you so do not concern yourself. You have always behaved like a gentleman towards me and I respect that and I owe you thanks for doing so. Should you ever find yourself with a tricky problem and need some assistance you only have to call this number and mention my name. Thank you and remember, we don't ever forget those who do us wrong but nor do we forget those who have helped".

Morale: don't threaten people with malice a'fore thought unless you are sure they can't beat you at the same game, and yes I do still have the number!

Jeremy Ruge Price

November 2016

PS

No names were given here for obvious reasons and don't ever ask me!

PPS

The petrol heads will soon be (in)famous as they and their cars will, in future, be posted on UTube and every other online app now that the movement sensitive cameras are in place.

fullsizerender

HANDS ACROSS THE SEA

Over here in the State of Maine, the weather is superb, bright blue and cloudless skies stretching out over the Atlantic Ocean towards the horizon in the East, then turn about and look westward, and the same blue sky seems to go on and on for ever towards the Pacific Ocean, some three and a half thousand or more miles hence.

As I mentioned in my last Rambling, the trees here are turning colour as the cooler Fall air arrives.

There is bright lemon yellow of the birch trees which in turn is surrounded by orange, then crimson and finally dark maroon of the maple trees and then it is all interspersed with the dark green of the huge forests of fir; it is a truly magnificent splash of colour as I hope you can see from the photo at the top of the page.

On a still day all these colours are reflected in the surface of the sea that surrounds the tree lined coves and inlets that make up this part of the North Eastern seaboard. When you add to that the glimpses of the white clapboard houses, wherein the lobstermen's families abide, and the New England red boat houses on the old wooden jetties, it creates a beautiful and colourful picture.

These little harbours are filled with moored lobster boats all painted white, and occasionally interspersed by a two masted schooner of yesteryear, with tall masts, crafted from local firs, stretching up to the blue skies; in my humble opinion, it is a wonderful place to be, and there isn't a finer cruising area to be found anywhere, with some five thousand little islands dotted up and down this Maine Coast, it is the adults answer to Arthur Ransome's Swallows and Amazons.

Driving on the roads around here is so peaceful after the A12/14, just get on the highway and you can drive for hours at 75 mph, hardly ever braking for other traffic. One very noticeable difference is the almost total lack of Lycra Bikas. Those few we have seen take their lives in their hands, and literally for American drivers don't do bicycles. Imagine being squished by the massive Mack 36 wheel trucks that roar down the highways and byways, it wouldn't even be worth trying to pick up the remains, just leave it for the coyotes and wolves to lick up the bolognese sauce!

Speaking of wheelies, it would seem that the Quay car park is still the spot for the local petrol heads to burn and turn!

Not much fun for those who live nearby trying to grab a few Zzzeds, but there are ways to curb this midnight enthusiasm.

In a combat zone, if you don't want the enemy to go down a certain road, you put up a few signs saying MINES, very few if any are likely to test it for some time.

If a gizmo looking like a CCTV camera is put on the Jolly Sailor facing the car park and CCTV signs are placed at obvious places then the boy racers will think twice about being caught on Candid Camera!

The charade won't last forever, and eventually the Whizz Kids will be back. But now, with the warning having been made, you now install real camera and Hey Presto, you can now get their numbers for old Plod to deal with.

The American author, Bill Bryson, stated in his first book on England in the seventies, that we as a Nation should give up manufacturing as such and turn the whole Country into one enormous Disney World of "Ye Olde England". Maybe not the whole Country but certain parts would do.

Right here we have the buildings, the castle, the church, the countryside, old codgers, marshes and all with a river flowing through it. So all we need is a local central casting office with costume and make up departments covering the various eras from King Arthur to Queen Victoria.

In Old Orford we are already an archetypal farming and fishing community of the mid eighteenth and nineteenth centuries without having to do much scene setting, this is a quintessentially quaint example of Olde England even today, like it or not!

Just watch the international visitors of today as they wander around, cell phones in hand, peering thru people's windows, noses pressed firmly to a window pane, looking into private gardens, walking casually inside when the odd front door is left open in the hope that some old crone is inside knitting bedsocks, or maybe an Ancient Mariner working on a scrimshaw; all that's missing is a wurzel or two picking their remaining tooth with a piece of straw in the Square and we would have it made.

Of course we would need 21st Century internet, "BT TAKE NOTE" as with all the various online communicating Apps now being the best way of advertising known to man, this would be the way to broadcast our historical hamlet.

What we would require is not just Facebook and LinkedIn, but Tweet, Instagram, Snapchat, Backchat, Mumsapp, WhatsAp, Wotsup, and of course the new one developed especially for the Brothers, Whoodat! (at this moment available in Harlem only) and for them all all to be linked to the Orford website.

It is sad that the NOTT has for its own reasons decided not to continue to back the website. Forgive my cheek but this seems a step backward into the fading past? I know from feedback that my Ramblings are read far beyond the Orford boundaries, and that includes Australia, America, South Africa plus several EU Countries, so the Orford website is visited by some who haven't yet been here. Pursuing the Crown Estates thru the courts will be extremely costly, and with no assurance of success, although I hope they will prevail if it is beneficial to the village.

To support a website that successfully informs the world of the beauty and benefits of Orford and businesses that exist within its boundaries must be good value for a mere £250. It cannot but help fill the NOTT coffers in generations to come: cheap at the price I would have thought.

Surely that is worth something!?! When the NOTT is prepared to fork out a considerable amount of cash to try to correct an earlier oversight with Stony Ditch which has dubious value to the community, why can it not see the value of supporting something that does benefit the community?

Jeremy Rugge Price

Nov 2016

ps The Jolly Studio will be open at weekends from November 12th to December 17th for the run up Christmas. Lisa Marie will be joining us for this period with all sorts of Christmas items as well.

The hours will be 11.00am to 3.00pm, Saturday and Sunday, so come on down!

wwi-britanniarules-l

BRITANNIA RULED THE WAVES, ONCE!

By rights this Rambling should have been written from the cockpit of the good sailing boat, the Sunntach, whilst cruising the waters off the Brittany shores around the Bay of Moriban.

At least, that was the plot, but as the Armed Forces maxim goes, even the best laid plans go out the porthole once the start line is crossed.

We crossed our start line on a Monday, but by the time Colchester was abeam, we had broken down on the A12 and were eventually low loaded back to the start line at Orford.

To me this was a blow of some magnitude besides one of deep sadness, for with my love for the sea and sailing, this annual short spell on the coast of Bretagne is my only chance for real R & R, so not to be able to make it over there is indeed a bitter blow. It was also a double whammy as it sounded the death knell of our car and the distinct possibility of reverting to Shank's Pony!

I just want to do it one more time before I get the signal to report to Davy Jones Locker!

However on returning to the fray here in Orford , I discovered that one or two others that we know have had problems that made ours positively pale in significance.

On the subject of channel crossings, it would appear that our recent migrant invasion at Bawdsey was itself significantly different from most cases of refugees and people smugglers. All too often now we see ghastly images of terrified families in over crowded inflatables being tossed into the briny by the actions of untrained migrants at the helm. Now with the cessation and increasing incriminations at the end of the US/Russian arranged cease fire, this migration of Syrian refugees has still no end in sight. Watching the latest catastrophic, calculated and criminal cruel bombings of hospitals and children, who can blame them for leaving.

In our neck of the woods, those who came ashore that evening had to be white illegal immigrants, as opposed to asylum seeking refugees, it was clear also that they were not exactly impoverished either as they had crossed the North Sea on a balmy sunny day in the comfort of a nice sailing yacht belonging to a Dutch couple.

On arrival at the quay in Bawdsey they were picked up and whisked away in a black Range Rover which then drove towards Woodbridge and into the car park of the Unruly Pig, one of Suffolk's more salubrious and expensive eating troughs.

No doubt they were intending to dine a la carte there but the CCTV video shows that the sudden arrival of PC Plod had them all running for the forest before they had a chance to even read the menu, however one was seen to turn back and lock the Range Rover! I suppose that, other than the driver, the rest will never be apprehended by the Border Force.

As an island nation, our existing command and control of the British Coastal waters is practically non-existent. Britannia may have ruled the waves once, but right now the "three men in a boat" syndrome is about all we can muster on a good day.

In the bygone era of the Spanish Armada there was a coastal watch system of beacons which admirably did the job while in Napoleon's day, Martello towers were built to keep the Greedy Grenouilles away.

Right now the nearest thing to this is the RNLI, the most seaworthy and nautically savvy volunteer force in the whole world but one not covered by Government funding. They do however have radar operating from each station around the whole coastline, the trouble is though, should they get a blip on the radar, it is no good calling the Coastguard around here as there is no one at home!

Our local Coastguard force consists of old Sid and his mate Bert, and great lads they are too and besides, they are mates of old Fred and Arthur, them as wot mended the potholes in bygone days.

Sid drives a clapped out black and yellow Coastguard Toyota truck, (the vehicle of choice with Isis and Taliban fighters) and they clatter down to the Quay from time to time for a fag and a natter, well aware that they are out of reach of one and all due to the lack of any internet signal down there.

When they have finished their char and chat, they mosey on to the next port for another good cuppa, never a moment of peace for those in charge of our coastal defences!

Defence cuts under Cameron and Osborne have reduced our control of our coast to dangerously low levels, and it's no good asking the Royal Navy as five of the six new destroyer fleet are presently sitting idle in port as there are not enough qualified engineers to run them! (Fact)

Genuine refugees, such as the unfortunate Syrians, are a different kettle of fish and need help, undoubtedly we should resettle some here. Many are professionals, be they doctors, dentists, engineers etc. all of whom could benefit the Country. The trouble is that the most commonly used areas of refugee resettlement are in towns, and therein lies the rub.

Most of our towns have numbers of unemployed Bald headed Brits on Benefits and some of them are thugs with far right racist attitudes. Strange is it not that most of said bellicose Brits, young and old alike, are involved in racist verbal and physical acts around the country, yet have never so much as lifted a pinkie to help England in any way whatsoever and would not be able to tell you where Syria was on a map. Only this week, a refugee recently resettled in Cardiff, asked to be repatriated, he considered his surroundings too dangerous, plus which he was burgled twice?

The Army, Navy and Air Force are all undermanned and recruiting figures are down. Given the level of persecution by various bodies, both private and otherwise, is it any surprise?

Ihat, Iraq Historical Allegations Team, Operation Northmoor both official MOD organisations together with Public Interest Lawyers (now disbanded) and Leigh Day, a tank chasing private legal firm, are estimated to spend over TWO HUNDRED MILLION sterling on this prosecution and persecution of our soldiers by 2019.

Should and could this money not have been spent on giving the lads, who fought the battles back then, the equipment they so desperately needed, asked for and refused?

Just for the record, of all the Countries that participated in Iraq and Afghanistan, we are the only one who is doing such a nefarious persecution!

The village is now in an Autumnal mode, the weather has been fantastic and no queues in the Bakery! however that doesn't mean that all the visitors have gone. It's the time of the year when people can come here without the summer crush and rush, saunter slowly round the area, all the time constantly peering in everyone's windows. However Coneheads they are not, just members of the Old Brigade and as such should be known as Peekers!

We are off in October to our alternate "home", Camden Maine where, just as here, the summer crowd are long gone down south. The multicoloured leaves at this time of year bring a whole new set of visitors, known as the Leaf Peepers. They completely fill all hotels, restaurants, shops and galleries for a month long period. On the whole Peepers also tend to be good spenders, no more T-shirts and ice creams, but plenty of art, antiques and of course winter clothing.

While there it will be fascinating to watch the Presidential Race for the White House. It will be much better than hearing yet more of Carry on Corbyn, although rarely have three candidates for the post of future World Leaders, Messr's Clinton, Corbyn and Trump, been so unpopular or out of touch with their respective voters!

Just a final note, the Jolly Studio will be open for half term week and the for weekends in November and December running up to Christmas. We are combining with the Queen of the Coneheads, Lisa Marie who will be there with all sorts of Christmas Stuff!

Jeremy Ruge Price

September 2016

PS I reckon Allardyce is but the tip of a huge muck heap! Too much brass breeds greed and graft

"I AM GB"

Following on from our recent Olympic prowess in Rio, much is being made about keeping the sporting spirit alive through the I AM GB programme, and nowhere was that ideology backed up more successfully than by the competitors in this year's Jolly Ore Boat Race down by the Quay. With a 15 knot wind a fleet of fifteen vessels pulled away from the start line at the Quay and as is often the case in such races, pole position is key and in this instance the late arrival of some Captains gave them a clear advantage by starting on the inside of the fleet which gave them much use of the slack water by the Quay, and subsequently they were able to pull clear of the melee on the grid. Perhaps next year the draw for pole position should be by entry number, thus the first come get to pick their position at the start which of course will require the captains of each boat to consider both wind and tide, for this a naval encounter where no quarter is asked nor given.

As soon as the gun signalled the start, the scene on the briny resembled the chaos caused at Trafalgar by Admiral Nelson's tactics of crossing the enemy line: skippers jockeyed for position, arms, oars and sometimes even feet were used to push others out of the way. International Rules of Navigation play no part in this cut throat endeavour.

Once out in the river, the fast flowing tide began to come into play and leaders began to emerge, it was clear that the advantage lay with those vessels with just father in the engine room and a small child navigating, and these boats began to pull several lengths clear of the dogfights amongst the rest of the field.

The crew of HMS Sinking, who were perilously paddling from the deck of a sunfish, were successfully dunked as a result of the fierce close quarter fighting. On the last haul two boats, manned by the Piercy and Pearce families respectfully, were dicing in contention for the lead as they disappeared behind a larger moored vessel. When they emerged, the order was reversed, so clearly some form of piratical skullduggery went unseen by the crowd and the race was won by the Pearce vessel with the Piercy family a close second.

Rio Carnival Jolly Toddler As to the Concours d'Elegance, the standard was very high and after much consultation, a difficult decision was reached by the Concours Race Committee and The Jolly Toddler pirate boat took the laurels with Rio Carnival a good runner up.

As with all such good events the Crowd were kept on their feet till the last boat came ashore and we all look forward to next year when it is hoped that more entries will be included in the Concours d'Elegance .

Jeremy Rugge-Price

Nautical Correspondent

SCUTTLE BUTT FOR AUGUST

keep-calm-and-scuttle-butt

As I scribble away the Town is awash in the Cone Heads of August and the car park is ratcheting up some shekels for the slush fund. Judging by the chaotic confusion and apparent total inability of cone heads to park sensibly when not in a superstore white lined car park, it might well be the NOTT requires new parking space. In the short time that we have been here, the day visitor numbers have increased at least twenty five percent during the summer and they all have to park.

How about hiring a traffic wardens outfit for August, the very sight of such a person just walking around the village would solve the present indiscriminate and rampant parking all over town.

Did you know that the term "slush fund" originated in the Royal Navy ships of Nelson's day. The crews were fed on old beef and mutton soaked in brine. In order to make the old meat even marginally palatable, it had to be boiled for hours. This salty solution produced a very thick grey scum on the surface, which the "head chef" had to keep spooning off.

Ships cooks were allowed to keep this foul smelling mixture called "Slush" and they sold it to tallow merchants who had a good use for it, hence the "slush fund".

Nelson's tars were responsible for several well known sayings: many sailors carved their own plates out of wood and they were easier to stack when made in a square as opposed to round; a square meal indeed, hence the slang term for breakfast, lunch and supper, "three squares a day".

Most plates had a raised rim on all sides called a fiddle, to keep the slop from spilling, so if a matelot became known for being greedy and over filling his plate, it was known as being "on the fiddle".

On the subject of being on the fiddle, I am delighted the law firm Public Interest Lawyers that has been prosecuting our servicemen and women, over the past two years, for acts of alleged torture in Iraq, has been forced to close its books for ever and is being investigated by the CPS.

Under the dubious proprietorship of "Professor" Shiner they have been persecuting military personnel, falsifying claims, hiding evidence and using a paid investigator to round up potential witnesses, all of this paid for by millions of pounds from public funds.

Although some of those who were hounded are going to sue him, I don't suppose the money can ever be recovered.

My hope is that he is found guilty of fraud, cruelty and misuse of Government funds amongst other crimes, and is sentenced to serve time in a "Nick" where there are several ex squaddies also incarcerated. The punishment handed out would totally fit the crime, he would learn what being really frightened meant.

I was reminded of those years by the recent ITV program on Easy Company in Musa Qala back in 2006. That our men and women should be pilloried and persecuted after fighting for the Country by such a low life as Shiner is a crime.

Today I was interviewed for two hours by an author for a new book being written on the London Mexico World Cup Rally in 1970.

It was organised by the Daily Mirror and covered 5,000 miles in Europe then 13,000 in South America. A gruelling escapade for 98 cars and their crews of which I was one. It was far harder to remember the events that took place than it was to drive it!

The only clear memories I had were nearly drowning off Ipanema beach and getting dysentery in the Boonies of Brazil, neither of which had any driving connections at all.

I have been writing to our esteemed Council to try and get some form of minor traffic control down at the bottom of Quay Street and the car park. During the summer holidays and Bank holidays when little nippers, cone heads, the crippled and the gently tottering OAPs like me, use that section as a walkway to and from the Quay, all and sundry have to compete with cars, trucks and worst of all, speedy and rude Lycra bikers. That there has not been a serious accident to date is by a Divine Intervention only.

It is public road so the SCDC has to take the action required. Sadly, apart from school signs, level crossings etc, large Councils will only take action by default: ie. There has to be a very serious if not fatal accident at the scene and only when that happens will they install safety signage.

So to put that in context, children can no longer have conker fights as it is deemed by Health and Safety too dangerous and someone might be hurt, Yet on a section of public highway, under the jurisdiction of the SCDC, which is clearly in dire need of safety rules, someone has to be seriously injured first!

It's easy to criticise but one has to give some thought to an answer!

There is a huge sign opposite the Jolly which has little, if any at all other than confusion, effect on visiting drivers. They do slow down enough to read that it IS legal to park on the Quay, very few of them ever obey the unattended parking, so the NOTT loses out every busy day as there are on average about fifteen to twenty parked cars there every hour, think of the shekels that could we are giving away now:

That's 15 cars at £1.50 per hour for eight hours a day and so, just for August alone, that is £5400 by my calculations, not to be sniffed at!!

As to the necessity of allowing access to the disabled to the Quay, they never are able to do so as too many cars have been already left there by people who have gone walking along the river.

So why not erase the rather nebulous "Unattended" portion along the top of the sign and write,

No Parking on the Quay

Commercial Deliveries & Blue Badge Disabled Only

Much as I love hearing the summer's shouts and screams of delight from little nippers, I have reached that time when I begin to long for the silence of winter. I expect there are many here could do with return of winter's isolation. But keep your pecker up, as it's all just around the corner!

Talking of keeping one's pecker up, there's some hot air prattle surfacing from around the area of the Scuttle Butt of gruesome goings on in one of our local salubrious saloons a while back. The rumour has it there was an incident in the pecking order of a truly serious case of Gross Bodily Harm. After all is it not true that "Hell hath no Fury like a Woman Scorned!"? A point proven by Mrs Bobbit a year or two ago.

But yet wait a minute, this is Orford and surely these things don't happen here?

So as summer winds down it is time for some to take stock. It seems the number of day trippers was a tad down on previous years but a little ingenuity by our ice cream vendors overcame any potential downturn: cone heads of all ages and sizes are their market and so not to miss a trick, they now offer doggie scoop ice creams no less, you've all seen a hot dog but I bet you never thought you would ever see a cone dog!

Anyway have a happy and, hopefully, sunny flower show.

I will be writing next month's Rambling from a sailing yacht on the Bretagne coast, thoughts of the local Patisserie are already oozing thru my mind, Yum!

Jeremy Ruge Price

Sept '16

IT AIN'T OVER 'TIL THE FAT LADY SINGS

There have been some strange happenings in the past few weeks and they are not all confined to Orford, Westminster or the Corbyn Chronicles. The ongoing heightened terror alerts are making life tricky for the everyday thief and here are two recent examples, neither of which could have been made up.

In a supermarket car park in Wyoming, a shoplifting thief tried to make his getaway on a stolen bicycle, but was spotted by some bystanders who shouted "Stop thief" but he was pedalling far too fast for them to be able to catch him.

Nevertheless their cries were heard by a local cowpoke, whose saddled and trusty steed was tethered to his Ford Bronco pick up that was parked nearby. (Any half educated half breed knows you always tie up your horse whenever you go to the trading post)

In true Western style, he mounted Tonto and gave chase to the scarpering outlaw across the car park. The latter, on seeing this one man one horse posse thundering down upon him, dismounted from his two wheeled steed and fled on Shanks's pony.

But to no avail for the steely eyed Marlboro Man from Laramie lassoed the perp in one go, tied up his wrists and hog tied his ankles to a "no parking" sign to await the arrival of Sheriff Wyatt Twerp and his deputies who of course, pitched up in their own Ford Bronco pick ups.

In France, a Country whose unfortunate citizens seem, at the moment, to be under a daily threat, two run of the mill junkies stormed into a MacDonald's in an attempted hold up for drug money: (not exactly the Banque de Paris and pretty meagre pickins I would have thought.)

By pure chance twenty two members of the French SAS had just sat down in there to "manger le petit dejeuner" at the same time. It didn't bode well for Jean Paul et Fifi who were quickly subdued and handed over to Inspector Clouseau and Les Flics.

On to more important items. Thomas Crapper was, and is, world famous for his splendid loos which could, and can still, be found in many a baronial bathroom around the country.

Some eons ago there was also a book published called The Good Loo Guide, it was a sort of AA guide to posh pooping and the rating was shown by the number of China Crappers beside each location. So if it was rated excellent, like those that were once to be found in Harrods, you had four pans: however if it were Chinese restaurant belonging to Whu Flung Dung, the chances were more likely to be a pile of something most unpleasant.

In the heat of summer the town male and female khazi in the Quay car park would not even rate a baby's potty, not because it isn't clean, it's actually cleaned on a daily basis by Bob the Bogman, the SCDC's lavatorial expert, but even he can't stay in there for more than five minutes each time! And time him we have!

There are others down here who also disinfect daily with store bought bleach in an effort to control what the Scots would call "a wee pong": what it needs is a source of constant fresh air, i.e. a Ventaxia wall fan or window opening. There is a decade of some very unsavoury lethal and lavatorial gas trapped in there, and as the old saying goes, it's best to let your wind flow free!

There are daily moans from the users and one lady said it was the worst she had ever been in!

I must admit that on a summer day the smell is reminiscent of some of those less than salubrious thunderboxes that I have had the urgent necessity to perch upon in far flung hot and humid spots such as the docksides of Bombay or Dar es Salaam. In fact I have vivid and lurid memories of one such fly infested Egyptian pit in the port of Suez!

Now that summer has arrived and the temperature has soared, the oil spill residue is sinking through the tarmac, but all is not lost for Ernie the Estimator was seen measuring the site last week. It is an odds on certainty that they will decide to repair it at the height of the Summer Season added to which of course, the quoted price has exceeded all expectations! Oh where are you Fred and Arthur when we most need you?

Who would have ever thought that a cruise liner would anchor off Southwold?

Part of a Hidden Britain Cruise it would appear. No doubt the local businesses thought it was Christmas all over again. However, most of those that go on cruise ships have reached the age when they already have everything they are ever going to need before they walk the Great Plank to the Skies. They only buy Kiss Me Kwik hats for their bald pates and T shirts for their grandchildren.

Meanwhile a local cruise vessel hasn't fared so well. The Lady Florence managed to break down while attached to the Quay, a commercial dock for all the community.

What an amazing coincidence and stroke of luck was that, unless of course, it was a case of Divine Intervention by King Neptune. There the vessel remained for a few days on the dockside which must have been a mite inconvenient for others.

Over the past fifty years I have been both a seaman and a sailor, (and yes all ye landlubbers, there is a difference) and as such I have been to many a harbour worldwide. Yet be it commercial such as Capetown or Calcutta, or a sailing harbour like Cowes or Camden Maine, every vessel, large or small, is charged Harbour fees (!?)

Orford had yet another Mention in Despatches, this time in Country Life. Very good and accurate description indeed, including the majority viewpoint of most inhabitants in "lamenting" the misfortunes of our village shop.

The good news is that the village mini market has been leased to a new owner. The previous purveyor, Penny, has left Orford, and all her Pen Pals were invited to a yard party on a Sunday evening to wish her bon voyage, she is rumoured to have announced she won't ever be coming back!?

When Julius Ceasar visited this Sceptred Isle centuries ago he said

"Veni, Vedi, Vici", which, for those amongst us who didn't pass Latin 1 at school, translated reads

"I came, I saw, I conquered".

Some years before Julius arrived, this part of the Island had been invaded by bands of red bearded Norsemen who mistreated and upset the locals. Their modus operandi was "Veni, Vedi, Vestersi et ego Vero navigamus!"

If you resided here for the past few years and witnessed the demise of the shop and butcher, then no translation is necessary!

But be aware, the shop is only rented, so as the American saying goes, "It ain't over till the fat lady sings!"

You never know who you will meet wandering around Orford in the summer:

A distinguished and elderly lady popped in to ask about a painting of a square rigger rounding Cape Horn. She had hoped that the rocky cliffs shown in it were Gibraltar. It would appear that during the war she had been a Royal Navy signaller in the wartime tunnels under Gibraltar that were dug out especially for the purpose. She had also been stationed in the Orkneys for a year when the aircraft carriers HMS Indefatigable and Indomitable had been stationed there. As Wrens, they were often asked to go aboard for parties as females were a scarce commodity in Scapa Flow

"I always had to take my hockey stick with me," she said.

I asked if this were to defend herself against sex starved matelots in Scarpa Flow

"Oh no my dear, we used to play hockey on the flight deck"

They don't make 'em like that anymore!

One of the great joys of living here in Orford is heavily underlined at this time of year, there's no long drive home on Sunday evening. After a lovely summer's weekend, the hordes of departing unwashed prepare for the dreaded but inevitable packing of the car. Endless carrier bags with left over bits of Brie, squashed donuts and half eaten cereal packets, half a bottle of Chateau Entre Les Genoux, overtired and grumpy children: the dog, too hot and reeking of Ore river mud: what's left of the crabbing gear and bits of smelly bacon in the bait bags, holdalls stuffed with dirty clothes, and of course the bicycles. Somehow it all seemed to fit in much easier on the Friday afternoon. Loaded to the gills they take to the low road, and crawl back into the World and the Sunday evening traffic snarls.

Quietly I thank my lucky stars.

Anyway have a happy summer.

Jeremy Ruge-Price

August 2016

A LESSON IN THE USE OF WHITE POWDER

In this era of high security against the rise of world wide terrorism, our emergency services, MI5/6 , police, fire and ambulance are on a state of constant high alert.

In some of our big cities they have carried out mock terror attacks in order to check out the response times as well as heightening the skills of those involved.

Whilst a few fruit and nut cases can melt through the cracks, most people can sleep peacefully in their beds of a night time, assured that the security blanket of Britain's emergency services have them well covered.

However woe is ye wot lives in a tiny back water habitat like ours, this oversight and security blanket has been ripped off the bed by one governmental cut or another yet many here are still under the impression that our needs will be taken care of by the regional emergency services from neighbouring towns. Well, let me assure you that if and when the poo hits the fan, don't hold your breath till the pong evaporates, for it won't unless we all get on and do something to help cos us country bumpkins and cud chewing mangle wurzels are all on our Jack Jones!

The following is a chronological description of the events that took place recently in our small community, and even our excellent and esteemed world famous resident author would be hard put to come up with such a mind boggling saga..

It reminds me of that great country comedy programme on steam radio, Much Binding In the Marsh with Kenneth Horne or an episode of television's great comedy series, Dads Army; you simply could not make up what follows even by using the best script writers available.

Two weeks ago an emergency environmental situation occurred down by the Jolly Sailor and the town car park. A subcontractor working on a local house, loaded a large green container of heating oil on to the low trailer which he towed behind his white van. For reasons known only to himself, I suspect he was incapable of reversing with a trailer, he drove down to the car park in order to turn around. As he accelerated out and up the exit ramp, the 400 or so litres sloshed forward inside the tank and then back again. The back surge was big enough to send the whole huge green enchilada shooting off the rear end of the trailer with a resounding thump, followed by the inevitable " Oh Shxt!"

The white van man made some high cost boo boos, not only was the tank totally unrestrained, the trailer's tailgate was down and just to cap it all, the filler cap wasn't in place. As a result several hundred litres of heating oil surged down the ramp like black lava and oozed its way across that section of the car park.

The whole episode was witnessed by the staff of the Pub and Corrine, the good lady landlord of the Jolly, sprung quickly into action with a 999 call to the Fire Service, and spoke to the dispatcher somewhere at an inland control centre, reportedly to be in Kent!

She explained that the oil spill was on the road.

"Oh well in that case you need to call the SCDC Highways Dept, we don't deal with that"

"No actually it's on the car park ramp!" She replied.

"No sorry, that's down to the Environmental Agency, you need to call them,"

She hung up. So now at this point we were nought for one.

I had seen the van and trailer go into the car park and had heard a heavy crashing noise and so I came out to look around. On seeing the huge blackened and oil soaked area it was obvious that some action needed to be taken and quickly. I fetched my mate Richard, he of the Mohawk hairstyle and a trusty member of our Orford Town fire brigade, who happened to be working on a nearby house. He and I tried to call the fire chief but naturally the BT mobile signal was, of course, zero at that moment.

(The score was now nought for two.)

Richard grabbed his bike and did an amazing peddling impersonation of Sir Bradley Wiggins off up Quay St to get help.

It was clear that the oil spill must be cordoned off immediately to prevent the public driving through the pools of oil. This time of year our visitors are mainly geriatrics like me, either deaf, demented or both, but I hadn't reckoned with the blind and dumb!

I placed yellow cones around the oil spill perimeter and the exit ramp. But in my haste I had forgotten the intransigent nature of elderly "Mr & Mrs Joe B. Public"

The first old codger drove around the cones and through the oil spill while heading straight for the exit. Those of us watching yelled at him, he stopped in a black pool, then reversed and drove out of the "In" ramp as desired. His tyres won't last long!

(We were nought for three)

Quickly I re arranged the cones to prevent this happening again, but to no avail, as a elderly lady, sporting a blue rinse hairdo, now drove her Skoda, not just around, but straight through the line of cones!! Again we yelled and waved our arms. She came to a halt in the middle of the oil, glared daggers at me then engaging reverse, promptly backed into one of the cones. The bump made her stop, so she got out of the car and waddled through a pool of oil around to the back of the vehicle to see what she had hit. On observing the cone she turned around and shouted at me. "Who the hell put that there?"

"I did" I replied, "and just for good measure Madam, you are standing in a pool of oil!"

Not only her tyres will need changing, but to my great glee, she can throw away her shoes as well!

The score was mounting as we were nought for four

A body had been despatched to the Cordle farm in the hopes that they would have a fork lift tractor that could assist in picking up the offending green fuel tank, and in due course an old tractor trundled along and did the job.

(One for Four!)

Just then the dulcet blast of an emergency vehicle sounded and down Quay St, a fire tender could be seen wending its way along the single free lane. He was almost there when a car pulled out of a driveway blocking the road temporarily, sometimes you just can't win!

This was not Orford's official fire engine but John Backhouse's own tender, known locally as John's Toy. Never mind that though as it was the first positive move on our part.

(Two for Four)

The four person team were quickly in action, Richard used a shovel to make a gravel boom around the spill while the others used four small bags of white powder fire retardant on the worst pools but it clearly wasn't enough powder for the job., a bit like using a crabbing bucket for bailing out the Titanic.

At this point I was asked by the Fire Team to call the Environmental Agency and luckily Bradley, one of the Jolly Sailor crew, had a signal on his mobile, so he googled the EA, dialled the number and handed me his phone.

The male voice that answered had not a drop of Suffolk accent in it.

I gave my name, number etc and quickly explained the problem.

His first reply was "Where did you say you are?"

"Orford" I replied.

"It's not on my map" he said

Sometimes enough is enough, and this was one of those times, and I pointed out that not only did we exist, but that this was an emergency.

"Oh" he said. " in which case you need to dial 0800....."

He got no further before I yelled into the receiver.

"Listen you useless prat, I'm standing by a swamp of oil, in a car park with almost no signal, don't have pen or paper, let alone memory cells to recall a ten digit number, the fire brigade urgently want to talk to somebody with an IQ greater than yours, so effing well put me thru now,"

A pregnant pause followed, then a number dialled and we were through.

I handed the mobile to one of the crew to explain the problem.

Five minutes later I saw him waiting with the device still pinned to his ear hole. He told me the people on the other end, the EA themselves, were having a discussion on what to do!!

AAAAAGH!

Luckily the Town Clerk, Kara suddenly appeared and said to John

"I see you are using the white powder.!?"

"Yes said John, " we've used all four bags but I know we only paid you for two!"

"But would the Trust spring for another four?" A quick executive decision by Kara and the A Team were resupplied with white powder and back in business again. Who knew that the town office was a source of white powder and that they give it out on tick?

Phillip the Harbour Master appeared with more cones and a reel of red and white tape which we set up around the disaster area. Before he left his post on the Quay, he had swept the sea's horizon for the migrating millions of Turks and other migrants: it is as well to remember he is all that stands between us and them, again due to badly thought out economic cuts by those Wallies in Westminster.

(Authors note) presumably now there is little point in them coming here after the Brexit vote?

In a small community such as ours, secrets don't stay secrets for very long. The village tom toms were already tweeting and texting the news of the oil, and the first to arrive was our esteemed Chair of the Council, Ann Macro who had come to inspect among other things, the collateral damage to the Trusts car park, otherwise known as Orford's sacred cash cow. Minutes later the head of the Orford's equivalent of the Cobra Committee, Michael Pearce appeared, he just happened to be peddling down Quay St at the time and must have been well satisfied with the prompt reactions of his team.

I began to realise that everybody who was anybody in OCTET, the Orford Counter Terrorist and Emergency Team, was now present and correct, but I was too quick off the mark with my assumption of a Full Monte!

There is that well known Yorkshire saying "Ee, where there's muck there's brass" and that applies to Orford too, for into the car park trundled Lisa Marie's husband Matthew with his old Etonian coloured (!) ice cream cart. Good and worthy electrical salesman that he is, he wasn't going to miss out on a random crowd formation regardless of the fact that it was almost half past four!

It was at this point that I realised I was supernumerary to requirements and began to drive home. As I did, the EA vehicle arrived, with all bells and whistles going.

Having sussed out the situation, they summoned their secret weapon, a Dyson type truck built as a giant vacuum cleaner, to come and suck up the black congealing mess. The only problem was it took nearly three hours for it to arrive here as it is stationed in Welwyn Garden City! Friday's evening drive up the A12 is never a doddle.

The driver of said truck is used to turning up at much more calamitous sites as opposed to this mere village event, all of which would normally be awash with emergency teams of every shape and size. When he had finished hoovering the car park, he took stock of the one single fire tender with its small Band of Brothers and said .

" This is just the community doing this isn't it ?!"

Right On Bro!

EPILOGUE

As it stands, not much has happened since, the car park exit is still cordoned off and the heavens having opened with monotonous monsoon like proportions, the seepage must be creeping towards nearby streams. The EA official thought that they might have to remove the top ten inches of gravel and top soil: estimates have that around £25/30K and who is going to pay? Not looking good for the White van man once the EA get on his case, and they surely will: I reckon he wouldn't get more than £800 for his vehicle!

Had Plod been around the white van man would have already incurred several summonses, carrying fuel oil without a permit; failing to secure the load just for starters.

One thing for sure, the single entry/exit ramp is a huge success, everyone obeys the signs, all and sundry have to slow down, which in turn helps the immediate traffic dangers to streams of small Tykas running to the the ice cream trailer.

So ye good burghers of Orford, sleep tight tonight in the assurance that our blanket of home security has been safely tucked in by our own emergency crews.

I am told that one local who was watching instead of trying to help the A Team at work mumbled that they were not qualified to handle such a job, a fat lot of help was he, nowt but a prize Wallie!

Jeremy Ruge Price

June 30

PS. I sense there are some here amongst us who continue to predict that Apocalypse Now is facing us . The Battle of Brexit is over and has been won, now all must extract their thumb from their bum,

there is no second chance just cos you lost. On that basis, having lost 2 to 1 against Iceland could we ask for a replay?

SIGNS OF THE TIMES

I detect a rumbling in the rhododendrons by some in Orford as Spring gives way to Summer and flowers brighten up the gardens, leaves appear on the trees and the weeds in my garden abound. Summer produces a plethora of signs that spring up around parts of town which don't sit well with some residents. Despite a PR and marketing background in America I have to say they have a point. On the other hand if you are running boat trips, selling meat, fish, a full English, or salted caramel to young cone heads, you need to advertise the whereabouts of your wares, especially here in Orford.

I say that because of the huge number of visitors that arrive here and, having parked in the downtown car park, are then totally and utterly lost and confused as to where they are at that precise moment. They are constantly asking where is the quay or which way is the castle, where is the cash machine or how do we get to the bakery. Its never ending during the summer season and by default we have become the Orford Information Booth. The only thing we don't do is change for the car park, Council please note!

Right now the assembly of signs at the five roads corner is growing by the week and has even spawned one for the Farmers Market in Snape! It has now reached a point where it is almost impossible to read the small writing on the boards unless you stop, in which case you will be shunted smartly up the bum by a visiting voyeur.

A much needed sign though, is required on Quay Street by the car park and Jolly Sailor.

The hundreds of Lycra Bikas, the would be "sole owners" of the high road, that zip down to the Quay are a menace to all and sundry during holiday periods. We need a sign that says "Think Little Tykas not Bikas".

I gather the pond by the car park that Rob Orford has cleaned out might become a wildlife park! I am keen on the preservation of wild birds but haven't they got enough foreshore and forests around here to keep them happy? As my old mate, Rabbi Yusa Schyster would say "enough alreddy, my son".

How about a model boat lake like the Round Pond? It is a quiet but much followed pastime and would be a good summer addition for visitors of all ages, especially as the end of the Basket Store and the Orford Museum is now sadly in the offing. What will folks do when they get here? Nevertheless I suspect my boating pond idea has no more hope of floating than the Titanic!

At long last Castle Antiques have ridden out of town after many years of paying a ridiculously low peppercorn rent for the shop premises, it is said they were paid to go!! In which case it is a great pity no one passed the hat around!

On the subject of estate agents, Orford has long been at the very bottom of the 3rd Division, but now with the arrival of Savills and now Jackson Stops & Staffs methinks we made the Premier League!

Sometime ago I mentioned the possible demise of the innocuous electric kettles that most of us have. Well it transpires the nameless Gnomes of Brussels are going to issue yet one of their more crass edicts, but cunningly little sods that they are, not till after the Brexit vote!.

It concerns small electrical appliances such as routers, lawn mowers, hair driers, toasters and kettles, all of which will be illegal in their present form. As a Nation that loves its cup of Rosy Lea, we own more electric kettles per capita than any other European Country.

So this summer if you fancy an early morning cuppa char being brought to you in bed by your dear old Trouble and Strife, forget it mate, She will be too busy trying to dry her Barnet after a shampoo and set!

As I promised I have given my vote on the EU to my family who are all "Ins". I just hope they like Turkish Delight!

That said, judging by the Brexit pontifications of war, plague and pestilence in the daily press, it is becoming very clear that Messrs Cameron and Osborne's dismal diatribes of doom are making them look more like a couple of Pinochios every day.

A glance through the history books will show many previous attempts at cobbling together conglomerations of different Countries. Yet be they as a result of conquest or cooperation and, regardless of how well they were forged into a single entity, all have suffered the rust of ages and have disintegrated on the scrap heap.

Amongst them are the past empires of Ottoman, Rome, France, Great Britain and the Soviet Union, to name some of the larger attempts, and all have fallen into decay and ruins by the wayside.

One presently bucking the trend is the United States of America. However before you all clamour that it is all one Country, give this a second thought.

Although The Constitution begins, "We, The People....." , The question of color and race, creed and religion are all lumped together in one vast pressure cooker. Occasionally they boil over such as the LA riots or those more recently in Ferguson.

Donald Duck may bang on about building his Wall to prevent South American Hispanics entering the Country, but he is too late. Wile E Coyote and his Road Runner Amigos are already there and what's more are already US citizens to boot.

In a decade or so, it is acknowledged that Hispanics will outnumber whites.

Color and Race is a far larger problem in almost every American City, much more than most Americans care to acknowledge; and look at the rabid racial animosity and negativity by Republican Senators towards anything that President Obama puts before them in the Senate: their refusals to pass many bills are regardless of whether it was for the good of "We The People" or not. It wasn't because Obama was a Democrat, it was because he was black and that riled them!

The disinterest of American pols towards the general public has given rise to the ascension of Donald Duck and old Prof Sanders, and the malaise doesn't stop over there.

Around the EU, various political bodies are on the rise that favour populism, Austria Britain, Finland, Germany, Holland, Italy, Norway and Sweden just to name a few of the Western European Countries. Then on the Eastern side there is "Nick the Greek" and, even possibly, "Jonny Turk" neither of whom really strike me as Europeans in the first place, plus several once upon a time Eastern Bloc lands. Many of these peoples think and act very differently from those of western Europe, and yet all are governed by Gnomes from afar, and of these European citizens, most have never heard, seen, let alone be able to name any of the Gnomes.

As Private Frazer would have said. " Aye, yer all doomed laddie"

The Gnomes of Brussels don't have to worry about votes and regard all this populism with disdain calling them activists or barbarians. Just look at Herr Juncker and his head gofer Dr. Selmayr vilifying Italy's Grillo, France's Le Pen, Donald Duck Trump and of course Our man Boris. If the latter all make the next G7 at least they will all have been elected by "We The People".

Can you imagine a European Army, the enemy would have won the day long before the twenty eight Countries had even begun to discuss what time first parade was supposed to to be, and this would have the Gnomes temporarily in charge!!!

Blimey , Beam me up,Scottie!

So my prediction is that soon the EU will go the way of all previous amalgamations that went before it. When it does implode, the destructive and all encompassing blast waves that will surely spread across Europe are going to make the years of paucity and penury that followed WWII look like the days of wine and roses.

Of course there are not many around today who witnessed those days of deprivation, but I remember as kids we had no sweets! Bah Humbug.

Be careful of what you wish for!

Vote with your heart

Jeremy Ruge Price

ps For those of you who are old enough to remember the TV programme called "Whicker's World", an interesting snippet:

Shortly before he retired Whicker was asked, of all the many places around the World that he had visited on his programme, which was his most favourite?

"Orford" he replied.

OLD FATHER TIME

Father time

I am old, decrepit and unbelievably scruffy!

Confirmation of that fact can be gleaned from the bald old coot that goofily stares back at me in the mirror each morning and if that isn't enough, just check out the three course tasting menu of food that I have dribbled down my front. In fact if you stir in my paint spotted clothing, I could easily be taken for one of the homeless though that is more than likely an insult to many of them!

I hadn't actually planned on becoming old nor, over the past forty odd years, had I given it any thought of coming to pass, but it seems to have sneakily snuck up on me in the last few years. As a young man, life is filled with aims and gains whereas as an old fart it is a constant battle with aches and pains and "non dignitas" is the order of the day.

If one is going to retire, and I haven't done so yet despite knocking up a score of almost seventy six, it is best to give some thought as to exactly where that might be, in order to act out a peaceful existence whilst I await the Grim Reaper to lift his forefinger and declare me out. My hobbling gait means I will most likely be 'run out'

Had I been given the choice, I suspect I would have either chosen a warmer climate such as can be found around the Mediterranean or alternately the coast of Maine which can range from minus 30C in winter to plus 30C in August. The seasons in the latter are very pronounced as opposed to here in Orford, especially this last winter, and as yet I have had no reason to don my woolly long johns. The latter just compliment my overall sartorial splendour a stage further.

However Dr. Who's Tardis having landed us by chance in Orford, we are delighted with the outcome. It is far enough out on the Peninsula as it can be and, as such, is a very peaceful place at most times, besides which there are wonderful friends here too. Orford is blessed with having several award winning entities, including a bakery and an internationally famed fish smokery. Even our local clinic won commendations this past winter, and for us old sods that is a major plus!

Naturally the Summer brings visitors by boat, car and now bus, but then we need to make a living, or most of us do, which brings me to a point for thought.

As I was waiting in line at Pump Street Bakery this morning, despite it being a blustery February day, it occurred to me that it will soon be time for the visiting hordes to do their annual migration back here. Now that there is no village shop or cafe in Pump Street any more, might it not seem a good idea for the focal centre of Orford to be re established as it was once a few years ago.

Why not block off lower Pump Street, from the water pump down to the road in the square, from cars and turn it in to a pedestrian area as opposed to the scruffy car park it presently is.

Install a few benches and those who have just purchased café au lait and croissants could foregather together there to chat and chew the cud. After all Pump Street Bakery's excellent pain au chocolat and other delicious products gather in from the surrounding hedgerows, a whole multitude of meandering Munchies every day, all they need are perches to be able to sit and gossip.

If you don't like the idea, tant pis!

But if you live in one of the Pump Street cottages I would imagine that anything is better than being unable to get in or out of your front door all day and night because of wall to wall parked cars.

I am glad to hear that the sale of the old smokehouse and accompanying buildings is finally going through: hopefully the purchaser will be able to deal with any squatters left in the premises.

Credit where due, to Andy and his wife for re opening his butchery in the "Meat Shed". I am going to campaign for them to be allowed to erect a proper sign that can show our summer visitors where they are situated. Every time they try to accomplish this, somehow word seems to get back to the SCDC within days and they send him nasty notes. As my old mate Rabbi Yusa Schyster of Brooklyn NYC used to say. "Enough already, my son". This is personal persecution, decidedly unfriendly and nowt but an attempt at preventing someone from earning a crust.

I have always been a keen supporter of the Old Bill so it is sad to see that their boss, Met Chief Hogan Howe finds himself unable to apologise to some of those who have been traumatised, insulted and pilloried in the media. His peadophile posse were allowed to run amok with little or no supervision, let alone any common sense or decency. His own petty refusal shows off poor leadership skills to the rank and file.

If his team had been around when I was at boarding school in the fifties, they would have had a field day with more work than they could cope with. There were often times when the likes of a maths teacher disappeared overnight or the fourth form master was no longer to be seen at morning prayers.

My prep school was one of several in and around the Broadstairs area at the time, but during the war it had been relocated to Loch Rannoch in order to keep us young gentlemen from out of the clutches of the Third Reich!

On returning to Broadstairs after the war, those boys with Scottish ancestry were allowed to wear kilts on Sunday; kilts plus small boys versus predators, not a very good idea and there were a few negative and touchy moments as you can imagine!

To my knowledge none of us there at the time has suffered as a result, being boys of good British stock one just learnt to grin and bear it.

At my next school, Harrow, it was a different kettle of fish as we were all older. Shortly into my second term, the housemaster informed us at breakfast that our head of house had been expelled overnight, having been caught smoking. That seemed a trifle hard for having a fag. The real reason

was that he had entered into a brief European Union with one of our Spanish maids and his "liaison dangereuse" had been witnessed, "in fragmented delecto" by the Matron!

This leads me onto the question of whether to stay in or leave the EU; it will have little bearing on what is left of my life and my opinions are probably outdated anyway. Personally I resent the idea of being adjudicated by Brussels and I know one group who would benefit greatly from leaving, our hard pressed fishermen.

That said, I am a bear of little brain and the economics and benefits involved are way beyond my comprehension. However I do have eleven grandchildren and it is they who matter, so I will vote for whatever my sons and daughter think best, regardless of any views that I might have.

T'will be a fascinating few months!

Happy Easter

Jeremy Ruge Price

March '16

ps Last week an elderly euro couple set off on a drive across their country. They diligently obeyed every instruction announced by their Satnav GPS. So when it told them to turn right, they duly did so and drove into a river. What was their nationality?

Think light bulbs!

REMEMBERING ROCHDALE

The words of Rudyard Kipling's British Sergeant talking to his new recruits about their brave water carrier Gunga Din, an Untouchable, makes Interesting reading in today's world.

"And for all 'is dirty 'ide,

'E were white, clear white, inside."

(With apologies to Rudyard Kipling)

Some eight years ago my wife had to take the UK Immigration Test in order to be allowed to reside here permanently, and one of the many multi choice questions was:

"What percentage of the British population is Chinese?"

Not exactly one of those pertinent snippets of information one keeps in readiness at the fingertips.

Having grown up in a small isolated village in the countryside of Suffolk back in the fifties, we lead very sheltered lives as kids, the only natives we knew were the locals that lived in our tiny village. They didn't stray too far either, out of seventy, only twenty of them had ever been to Bury St Eds, some ten miles away by the local bus and even "tha there buss" only went on alternate Fridays.

Our cook was from the same mould as was portrayed by "Mrs Patmore" in Downton Abbey but had a twenty year old daughter, Mary, who was charming and sweet but minus a cog or two "upstairs" but never the less, she did a great job as the kitchen maid for her mum.

One day, to the complete amazement of everyone, it was discovered she was five months pregnant and the burning question was, 'Oo dunnit? Mary, bless her was totally mystified as to not only how did it happen at all, but also where and when the dastardly deed had occurred. Since she had never left the house it posed a particular and rather a pertinent puzzle, was it an inside job or had a local "wurzel" had his wicked way with our Mary?

In a small village the size of Langham, you can't keep a good rumour down for long, and soon various individuals came under the scrutiny of the local wags.

"Tis young Ed, Oi reckon 'e be the dad, see that there gleam in 'is oiye last 'arvest!"

Eventually of course, Mary had a little child and out popped a mini mandarin.

On first glance, clearly a direct descendant of the Myng Dynasty, and it soon became known that his inscrutable dad owned and drove the van for the Chinese laundry that delivered to our house every week. There wasn't no washing machines in them days, in fact there was no mains electricity or water supply throughout the entire village.

So after all it hadn't been a roll in the hay with young Ed at harvest but a quick Peking Duck in the back of the laundry truck with Wu Flung Dung. "Vellee comfee in dirty laundlee, ahh so!"

So going back to the beginning of this Rambling, the correct answer to the immigration test question therefore is that there just might be one or two more Chinese here than one had originally imagined.

I point out the ludicrous nature of this question in light of the mass immigration from Eastern European, Arab and African countries. I have the greatest sympathy for genuine refugees from Syria, families with children, children without families, the Countries genuine professionals, all of whom, in time, will be much needed to rebuild a utterly shattered and broken infrastructure of their own Country: all of these genuine Syrians need the World's help for now, as to how I don't have a clue right now.

But amongst their teeming hordes are thousands of single men from various other Eastern European and Arab countries, all trying to cash in on this once in a lifetime opportunity to go "west young man"., these, I believe, we don't need. It was a group of such men and boys who created the firestorm of aggressive sexual harassment in Cologne and other European cities over New Year.

In many of the Arab and eastern parts of the Islamic world, children are taught that women are inferior to men, and must always be accompanied by a family member outside of the home at all times. Those females who go bareheaded in public are deemed to be less than worthless, even whores, and must be publicly shamed. Hence the mass sexual assaults around Europe, their religious code of conduct and ethics is very different from that of western democratic nations. This major difference of behavioural code is inadequately "covered" by one single yes or no answer in the Immigration Test!

The fact that many of these gaderine swine will be allowed to become "European" residents in due course is disturbing, for that in turn allows them automatic rights to come here. That gives credence to the fact that perhaps there should be a rethink of British Immigration testing let alone policy.

This problem isn't necessarily racist but is religious antagonism. In the days of the Ottoman Empire in the 12th Century, the Knights Templar took the fight to the door of the ever swelling Islamic hordes, but in the 21st Century it is clear that the Barbarians are now at our Gate.

It isn't just Syria, the radical Islamist Daesh are spreading their tentacles far and wide and you can't bomb an ideal, it is a radical and rogue Islamist "movement sans frontiers".

I grew up when racist and racially religious remarks were two a penny and part of everyday life. You only had to open a jar of Robertsons Blackberry jam and, low and behold, there was a paper golliwog inside! As children we collected them.

Until I went to a Harrow I had no idea there were Jews and when told by a room mate that the Captain of the School's cricket eleven was Jewish. I actually went to see what he looked like! To this day I have no idea what I expected to see!

My best friend ever was Jewish and stood right by me when things were tough, life isn't the same without her.

Many years ago in Capetown several of our crew, including yours truly, were arrested and thrown in the nick overnight for fighting with the Afrikaans police when we objected to the way they were beating with truncheons a black fellow for no apparent good reason.

My dear Wife has Penobscot Indian blood in her DNA so that racist label doesn't stick on me.

Anyway as I said the problem in Cologne was more religious than racist.

So if you come here to live here you can have your own religious customs inside your home or place of worship but otherwise all and sundry should play by our rules, be it in school, work or play.

Right now we have a South African messing with our history at Oriel College in Oxford. If he doesn't like the idea of Cecil Rhodes he should never have accepted the scholarship in the first place. Perhaps he could use his obvious academic skills to sort out his own country' problems first before coming and telling us what to do, what a swollen headed little p**t!

Anyway it is wrong to apply today's politically correct ideology to people and events that happened in a different time zone. They can only be judged by the order of the day that existed in that time zone.

As most of us know only too well, any nation en masse outside of its own borders is a public nightmare and huge embarrassment, and we Brits are high up there at the top of the dung heap and are known the world over for being some of the worst public offenders. Crowds of brawling, besotted and blithering drunks and young punks of both sexes, lying puking their guts up in the gutters and in some places such as Magaluf, with worse sexual behaviour than even those Islamists in Cologne.

Playing by the rules presumes that Governments, security and police forces will properly and strictly administer justice where applicable and not pamper to the left wing human rights organisations, do-gooders and PC groups. Should you be an asylum seeker or recent immigrant, be you Buddhist, Hindu, Muslim, Mormon or whatever, you get chucked out of the country without any further discussion.

All in all, I am glad I am approaching the end of my life's voyage here in Orford, I would hate to have to start all over again. I worry though about my Granddaughters' futures should these boys and men gain European status, we could all be in trouble and that includes all the good and decent followers of Islam who are and have been British citizens for years.

Just as I finished penning this diatribe, the EDP announced that due to cut backs within the Border Force, the vast stretch of our Orfordness coastline is now "Open Sesame" to people smugglers. The last lot were Eastern Europeans and they can be pretty heinous so I don't suppose tomoro's gangs will be any better.

Felixstowe has its own civilian water borne border patrols! Any volunteers for the Orford boat?

Jeremy Ruge Price

Orford. Feb 2016

PS. Orford Not Spot

If your super fast internet isn't doing to well, blame the Roma in Rendlesham Forest, rumour says they nicked some of the new cable! Plus ca change!

A STITCH OF OLD TIMES

capA short time ago my youngest son's Ma in Law threw out a few of his oldest and most favourite T shirts whilst he was out of the house, that is indeed a crime against male humanity! These were no doubt well worn items from days gone by that had a particular and very special meaning for him, and him alone; military memories, sporting events and team T shirts. He wasn't best pleased and I know just how he feels as I have several old threads myself and in almost all of them moth holes abound. But so what, each reminds me of a special moment long gone to everyone but me, and my dear wife knows well to treat them with due reverence. She has a penchant for stuffing everything in the tumble dryer after which my clothes have shrunk beyond redemption, bless her!

Many men have items of clothing or shoes that can never be thrown out, old tweed jackets with leather patches on the elbows; a pair of shoes, the toe caps of which have been subjected to countless hours of spit and polish and a sweater that has been a winter's hibernation feast for a whole moth colony, but yet is still worn.

I treasure several of such items as they remind me of an event, place or time that is long gone forever.

I have a blue blazer with Regimental buttons that was made by a well known Saville Row tailor for my father in 1934. The cloth is really thick and heavy and I wear it on special occasions but you would never know it was over eighty years old.

I remember having a tweed jacket made many years ago and the first time I wore it a brother officer told me that I should give it to the gardener to wear for a year or two, at which time it would look suitably shabby and wearable at that point.

Those who have served in the Armed Forces know only too well the trouble taken to get a beret into a proper shape that will last forever. Mine had years of tank grease and oil all over but I wore it with pride everyday; the RSM hated it!.

Naval ratings spend hours making their new uniforms look old: the blue collar has to be washed in seawater several times to give it that old faded look; the Lower Deck call that "looking tiddly". Alternatively you can tie it on to a line and tow it behind the ship for a day; the end result will be a properly aged and faded collar which looks as though you have served below decks since Trafalgar.

Shakespeare himself wrote in Hamlet "clothes make the man" and Mark Twain agreed with him in his writings. There is much truth in that saying for I remember years ago standing at a corner of Park Avenue and 63rd Street in Manhattan on my way from the office when a blue rinsed Upper East Side Doyenne stopped beside me to wait for the lights to change. These Manhattan Matriarchs have an unerring ability to give you one hard and meaningful stare, the readout of which tells them in a micro second, not only your breeding but much more importantly, your net worth, job and annual income down to the last dime.

In my case the latter gave away the fact that I wasn't worth a bag of peanuts but that my ancestry had a Touch of Class!

'The cut of your suit says you must be an Englishman" was her only remark before crossing the downtown lane of Park Avenue and into her high rise apartment.

On leaving Manhattan for Maine, my bespoke shirts and suits were of little use, 'suits' are not worn in Camden and my sartorial elegance gave way to scruff order which has remained the order of the day ever since.

Luckily for me Orford doesn't have suits either and so my dress has degenerated even further as my clothes now are all splotched with oil paint from my latest painting or even worse, samples of last night's dinner that I constantly dribble down my sweater. Many is the time that I resemble a homeless individual, and the Boss often has to say "You cannot go out dressed like that" and of course she is right but then it would appear that the oddball Leader of the Opposition is following my trend!

But I can at least say that I never wear sandals.

It is always dangerous to get into discussions that are about politics, religion and or money but I am now going to throw my old baseball cap into the ring.

Last Sunday I found myself in complete agreement with Jeremy Clarkson, a rarity indeed as I am not normally one of his fans. He wrote about his singing in a church recently and it transpired that the local church he attended had imported a Gospel Choir for the service and that before long he found himself belting out songs along with the rest of the congregation.

He suffered from the same problem as I did when I left Harrow School, in so much as he and I felt that we had done 'religion' and as a result have rarely been back since. At the time at Harrow we went to the Chapel everyday and twice on Sundays and for Sunday Evensong there was a visiting senior cleric to give the sermon. With an audience consisting mainly of eight hundred teenage boys, some of whom were playing cards, others doing last minute homework, all of which was accompanied by much coughing, spluttering and nose blowing, it must have been very disconcerting for any preacher.

Only once was it silent throughout the entire address. The speaker in this instance had been the Archbishop of Singapore when the Japs invaded and had been a POW for several years in Changi Jail. You could have heard a pin drop for the entire sermon.

I do not pretend to be a good Christian by any means but the Church of England seems to be either stuck in a rut at best or in a decline at the worst. I would hazard a guess that most churches are more than half empty during services. Before some of you boil over, let me say this is no reflection on our good and hard working clergy, especially our own and wonderful David, for whom I have the highest respect and regard.

Each week The Holy Romans crowd into Catholic Churches, the Chosen fill the synagogues and Good Muslims pour into the Mosques, while British Protestants, by a large, have a late breakfast then read the Sunday newspapers till it's time for a pre Sunday lunch promenade.

The average white American is probably more religiously conscious than his Brit counterpart, but even there Catholic churches are under subscribed while way down in the Deep South you almost have to book ahead to get a pew!

It's the wonderful gospel music and choirs that help pull the people in week after week, year after year. Instead of the deadly dirge of psalms there are rousing songs with religious undertones or meanings: ones that make you tap your feet, clap your hands and make you want to join in the singing. In the riverside town of Hudson where we lived for some years, many residents were African American resettled in upstate New York and there was a very large church there with a fantastic Gospel Choir and it was always full.

Singing helps pull people together, if you doubt my word just look at the success of Gareth Malone's choirs such as the Military Wives and others that have performed at the Royal Albert Hall, and unlike some he earned his O.B.E.

This form of religion may not suit everyone, but it is very noticeable on British television programmes that whenever a pop singer belts out a Gospel song, the assembled audience sing along as well as clapping out the beat. They love it and so possibly therein lies a way of re-sowing the seeds on barren land.

Hey it's just an idea but then of course pigs can fly!

I don't do New Year's Eve so see you in 2016

Jeremy Ruge-Price

January 2016

AND A MERRY HO HO HO TO YOU TOO

Christmas story

If it weren't for the Three Wise Men there would be no presents at Christmas whatsoever! It was those three tribal bosses who, on seeing a bright laser beam lighting up the skies to the East, decided there must be a party going on over the horizon. So grabbing a few gold shekels and two substances from strange plants that they were cultivating in the back garden, the three set out to join the Rave.

It was only once they got there that the old codgers realised their mistake and that it was the heavenly arrival of JC that was being celebrated by a group of shepherds.

No worries tho, they gave Joseph the gold to pay for another night's stay in the manger while the aforementioned shepherds all clamoured around to sample their glue based resins of Frankincense and Myrrh.

Over the millenniums the tradition has grown year by year, and now in 2015 it is totally and completely out of control, and thus the whole system is undergoing a drastic change up in Santa's Store to be ready to go by Christmas Eve.

When I was a small boy the whole process was kicked off by each child writing a letter to Father Christmas explaining in it what he or she desired. This letter was then taken by Nanny over to the fireplace where the updraft whisked it up and away to Santaland.

Now it was just question of waiting with growing impatience - "is it Christmas Eve yet?" - until midnight on Christmas Eve when Old Poppa Claus would arrive on the roof with his sleigh. By some feat of magic he would manage to wiggle, squeeze and squish his way down the chimney and then creep silently around the house filling all our stockings before, once again, his sleigh would be whisked away to other children's houses by Prancer and Dancer et al.

Sadly that plot doesn't work anymore, for millions of people now live in high rise blocks and most newly built houses have underfloor heating and no chimneys. Thus it was time for a major modernisation of the workshop and delivery system.

Last week I was lucky enough to be given a personal tour of the new Santa Super Store by one of my childhood elf friends of yesteryear. It is enormous, and covers an area about the size of fifty football pitches.

The first large building houses the "Orders" department and in it are hundreds of elves in yellow hi-vis elves' hats. Each elf has an iPad on which he records every Christmas request.

In place of the letters of yesteryear, children now use emails, texts, Skype, Facebook, LinkedIn, Mumsnet, WhatsApp, WotsUp and every form of Internet messaging known to the young. One young boy even texted to suggest that Father Christmas should text his Dad who had the list on his phone (fact not fiction).

Once a present is recorded on an iPad it is automatically retrieved from the package room and whizzed by a conveyor belt to the Dispatch Department next door.

In here are more elves, this time in orange hi-viz hats, and each one has a hand held bar code receiver. He checks each present has the right name, country and postal code and then another conveyor belt takes the stocking gift off to the loading ramps. The Loading Dept is manned by elves with red helmets and red flying suits; they are the all important team of Red Elf pilots for the thousands of Santa Sleigh Drones.

The drones are stacked in a hovering position for miles and miles awaiting a signal to swoop in.

Each pilot elf has ten drones under his command and guides their delivery progress on console screens. As the present arrives at the end of the loading bay, a drone moves in to pick it up and at that point it registers on one of the pilots' screens. Within milliseconds the sleigh drone is on its way to a home near you.

Every drone has an inflight recording system so that as the present is delivered, the departing drone plays a soft recording "Ho, Ho, Ho" to satisfy the younger children who obviously still believe in Father Christmas, as do I.

Slick doesn't even begin to describe the whole operation.

Some of the best events around Christmas time are the children's Carol Services and the junior school Nativity Plays. The latter are always best as it can be guaranteed that there will be a major mishap on stage at some point in the play, in fact most parents are waiting with baited breath for the inevitable to happen in case it is their child who does it.

Some years ago we went to a nursery school Nativity Play in which one of my grandsons Seb, was performing. He was one of three shepherds, each of whom was carrying a small cardboard guitar as opposed to a standard crook. Their entrance on stage was very early on after the opening curtain rose and from there on, right up to the final curtain they had to sit quietly side by side throughout the whole performance: quite a feat for five year olds at any given time, let alone in front of an audience for the very first time! All was well till almost the last part of the play, some twenty minutes later.

Suddenly my grandson turned and looked at his fellow shepherd, who just happened to be one of his best mates, then quite slowly and silently swung his guitar by the neck and batted his mate over the head. The latter played the fall guy brilliantly, didn't move a muscle, just remained in his serene

shepherdly pose, his assailant also resumed his composure: not a word had been spoken by either party. It brought the house down!

One of the best accounts of items like this that I know of was written by Rowan Pelling, an excellent columnist in the Daily Telegraph.

She was given a last minute invitation to a children's carol service in a local church.

She told her son to go quickly upstairs and put on his coat. They both then rushed off to the service which was packed to the rafters. After a couple of carols the vicar asked all the children to come up to the front to sing the next carol by the crib.

The large crowd of children, all in Nativity costumes, gathered around the crib to sing the carol and amongst them her son who quickly pushed his way to the front of the 'choir.

It was only at the point when he took off his overcoat that she realised that he had dressed up in his Halloween pyjamas. The startled congregation was left looking at a collection of Josephs and Marys plus a variety of shepherds and Angels all singing "Away in a Manger" to Baby Jesus, with a traditional Halloween Skeleton happily singing away in the middle!.

I don't think it gets any better than this, though we did have a close second to this at our home at Langham many years ago.

Christmas there was a time of much merriment and mirth: the house was full with various grandparents and Tom's brother Uncle John. The latter had been captured at Dunkirk, and had spent five years in a Stalag POW camp but despite all that he had a wonderful childish sense of humour.

As I mentioned at the beginning, the Christmas spirit was kicked off on Christmas Eve, and that year Tom, my stepfather, had decided that he would dress up as Father Christmas especially for my half brother and sister who were then three and four years old and still keen believers.

At five thirty Tom donned his red suit, hat and beard, then having downed a large and sunburnt whisky and soda, he ventured out into the cold and windy night.

Promptly at five forty five, Miss Parker, the governess, brought the two children through from the nursery wing.

For those of you who haven't been following my ramblings, I must explain that Langham was run strictly along Downton Abbey lines; there was the main part of the house where we lived and then behind the "green baize" door the nursery wing and the servants area, which included the butler's pantry, the servants dining room and the kitchen and scullery. Thus the smalls didn't come through to the drawing room till six o'clock to say goodnight.

We all gathered by an open French window in the drawing room while Uncle John wound up the children's excitement by telling them that Father Christmas was about to arrive, and they were both fast becoming very over excited. Yet it seemed to be taking much longer than we had estimated for Old Pop Claus to make his stage entrance. Suddenly Uncle John shouted. "Look, there he is!" and pointed his very powerful car torch out into the dark night.

Meanwhile out in the blustery night Father Christmas was having his own nightmare: a sudden gust of wind had blown him into a large prickly bush and his big white beard was now firmly entangled in said bush and he couldn't get free. Not only that but with the powerful searchlight beam pointed right at him, it meant he was truly blinded by the light.

Giving a yank on his beard he suddenly came free and staggered forward from behind the bush. Unfortunately in freeing his beard, he had dislodged his headdress.

Charlie and Caroline peered excitedly out into the night to catch their first glance of Father Christmas. What they saw didn't exactly match their childlike image of Santa. For advancing towards them with an ungainly and uneven stagger was a terrifying red figure with a white beard sticking out of his left ear and what appeared to be a large festering red boil protruding from the other. This evil looking being, with arms waving, was lurching towards them shouting "turn off that b****y torch, I can't see".

Both children screamed and screamed with absolute terror and fled back to the nursery, neither wanted their stocking left in the bedroom and both had trouble getting to sleep at all.

Father Christmas, well he sunk in to his armchair with a large dram.

So there you are, Christmas is for children and without them Christmas isn't the same at all, as I know all too well.

I hope you have a Happy Christmas and you get that which you ordered.

Jeremy Ruge Price

Dec 2015

IF YOU GO DOWN TO THE WOODS TODAY.....

As December approaches we are now well into the pheasant shooting season 'over here' whilst 'over there', in America, the bear, deer, moose and 'crittur' hunting seasons are happening, but right there is where the similarity ends.

British shooting is a highly organised sport, from game keepers to guns.

It is one often handed down from father to son and the rules and etiquette and dress go hand in hand from the very beginning with the recital of "Never never let your gun pointed be. And so on.

My stepfather was an excellent shot and his rules were sacrosanct, so the likes of dress and punctuality were foremost in his eye after safety. He had two guns in the shoot at Elveden, a twenty two thousand acre estate near Lakenheath owned by Lord Iveagh of Guinness fame.

The land around the Thetford/Lakenheath area is very flat so, years ago, large fir trees had been planted in narrow belts so that driven birds were forced to gain height before passing over the guns. At the same time farming plans allowed fields of kale to be grown at strategic points near the end of each drive, resulting in a last minute explosion of game.

The shoot was under the thumb of head keeper Turner - aged ninety by the time I started there - under him were nine beat keepers, four of whom were Turners; eighteen under keepers, six of whom were Turners; and lastly forty warreners and I reckon it was an odds on bet that some of those had Turner DNA in their blood too!

The guns, all excellent shots, came from Peers of the Realm, members of the Aristocracy, a Member of the Cabinet, the Lord Chief Justice and Chairmen from the board rooms of the City, a high flying bunch all around.

My introduction to this scene was as a beater aged nine. This way I learned how shoots were conducted and was able to see, first hand, both rules and etiquette required to participate in the sport of shooting.

Just a quick mention here about the beaters, without whom nothing would move. They numbered around fifty each shooting day, and all were clad in black Macintosh coats and leggings, tied up with baling string around the waist and knees.

It was always noticeable how much stouter each one became as the day wore on; four for the Shoot and one for the pot.

This was proven to me one day when a numbered gun, a tall young viscount of the realm, was put as a back gun in the beater line. Between the two of us was an elderly fellow, old Charlie, swathed in black Macintosh. As we walked forward a wily cock flew back and hid himself in a small bush about thirty yards to our front.

"There's a bird in there" said our young courtier to Charlie.

"Don't ee worry about tha', just you watch for them burds comin back, I'll take good care of this ere old cock."

Sure enough more pheasants came winging their way back and his lordship began blazing away. The old cock pheasant realised he was in a hot spot and as he lifted off the ground old Arthur threw his knobby stick, killing it stone dead; then picked it up and winking at me, shoved it inside his jacket.

At sixteen I was allowed to shoot at Elveden as a back gun under the supervision of a Beat keeper at all times. The consistency of birds curling and flying back taught me much about accuracy.

Head keeper Turner ran a very strict shoot along militaristic lines and that included not only the bulging beaters but also the aristocratic artillery of the guns.

One of the latter, JH for anonymity, was at the time Minister for War in Anthony Eden's Cabinet. He had been a Colonel in the Brigade of Guards during WWII and was renowned for his "up and at 'em" aggressive shootings style; woe betide the next door gun to him should a hare be on the run.

One particular day, the numbering guns were asked to walk in a small area of two foot high fir trees. Turner accompanied the line, standing mounted in an open Land Rover, like a tank commander at el Alamain. He blew the "advance" on his brass horn and the troops moved forward. It only took a minute for the eager Minister of War to be seen at least ten yards in front of the line. All of a sudden the horn blew for the halt, quickly followed by the stentorian voice of Turner blaring through his brass megaphone.

"Milord, if yer not back in the line by the time I've finished, ye'll no be in the Cabinet come Monday morning!"

The bag was normally around three hundred per day of which ninety percent was pheasants. I do however remember a "cocks only" day at the end of January being three hundred and ninety seven.

In the late seventies my brother and I were members of a small shoot in north Norfolk. In order to lengthen the day's sport we would end up with duck flighting. This could be done in two places, either the foreshore of Morston marshes or a large piece of inland water, each was conducted in rapidly failing light and advancing gloom.

The former was dodgy going, the planks over the water between each dyke were narrow and slippery going out, and impossible to see on the return. One time I was put in position by our young foreshore man called Jimbo. After half an hour, all around was pitch black when a sudden fusillade rang out to my front. I could see nothing but did notice the water by my feet was no longer still, but actually travelling at a good two knots, so discretion being the better part of valour, I retreated .

The inland water was just large enough to be encompassed and surrounded by six guns, the extra two boarded an ancient punt, known as HMS Troutbridge, and paddled out to the reeds in the middle where they would moor then lock and load. If you were a member of the crew, it was essential to remember that you should never both open fire from the same side at the same time, for with a mere two inches of freeboard, Troutbridge had a habit of heeling over as a result of the blast!

Despite all of the etiquette and safety rules that exist in English shooting I am one of those who have been shot in the face and shoulder but lived to tell the story.

Across the pond everything is very different and I know of only two pheasant shoots and even they didn't appeal to me; the birds were put down on the ground on the day of shooting while high pheasants consisted of live birds thrown out of a tower!

The vast majority of Americans, known as hunters, shoot four legged beasts, and the sport is hunting as opposed to shooting. It may be carried out by use of a rifle or crossbow, both of which are much more lethal than a shotgun.

The hunter has to have a valid annual permit for the State he is hunting in, allowing him two deer, bear or whatever. The other major difference is that he can go on "any" land he wishes unless there are "Posted" notices every two hundred yards around the property. Just think that one through!

The American hunter, be he dentist or delivery man, sees himself as a descendant of those hard and rugged trappers of bygone pioneering eras on the Wild Frontier; days spent in the saddle, open to snow, blizzards and warlike bands of Sioux or Cheyenne roaming the plains and mountain trails. Thus today it is of the utmost essence that he equip himself for the part.

Assuming he already has his semi automatic rifle, he offs himself to the local hunting equipment store such as Orvis. There he begins assembling his outfit. Every article purchased will be in a matching camouflage to that of his rifle stock: so there is baseball cap, padded top jacket, padded trousers or pants as they call them, camo boots, gloves and scarf, everything matching.

Dependent on what four footed beast he is after, the hunter can add to this face cream that is described as 'deer/moose odour' so the latter don't smell him down wind, just add a box of bullets and he is now ready for the hunt. Come the prescribed day our delivery driver/hunter, plus a six pack of Budweiser climbs into his Dodge Ram pickup truck and heads to the hills.

The problem starts right here as he is far from alone. Battalions of similar folk are doing exactly the same, one and all are headed for the forest covered mountains of New England.

Some hours and a few hundred miles later, our intrepid hunter is in New Hampshire, the State motto of which is "Live Free or Die"! This sort of puts the whole venture in true US perspective!

He spots a likely looking piece of wood of about ten acres, and pulls into the verge and parks up. Before grabbing his rifle and beer, he dons a high viz orange bib; the purpose of which is so that he can be seen by other hunters. In light of the total camouflage outfit, I have asked the obvious question on several occasions and each time I was told that bear, deer and moose are all colour blind!

Ten minutes later our hunter will be in position with his back to a tree, six pack by his side, quite invisible to all four footed beasts and other hunters and, with his telescopic sight, will be searching the undergrowth for anything that moves around his position.

Were he the only person in that wood it would be quite safe, but that is far from the actual situation.

In the next hour or so others will decide the same area looks ideal hunting ground; one and all will creep into the forest, each unaware others are there too.

At some point one will think he sees a deer and a volley of rifle fire will be loosed off. Rifle rounds go at least two miles so it is no wonder there are many fatalities during the season.

In days of old Davy Crockett, Daniel Boone and Wyatt Twerp would tie the carcass of their prey across the pommel of the saddle and ride back to town: our hunters, keen to emulate that they are every bit as intrepid, tie the bear/deer/moose across the hood(bonnet) of the pick up and drive back to the City.

Across the USA there is an excellent system of yellow buses that pick up and deliver, door to door, school children of all ages. During the hunting season mothers in New England insist that their kids wear high viz baseball caps lest they be mistaken for a small deer.

In Maine, some years ago, a busy housewife was doing her family laundry on Saturday morning, it was all her kids Tshirts and smalls. As she hung up a pair of white underpants she was drilled through the chest by a rifle bullet and died. The hunter later claimed he thought he saw the white flash of a deer's tail!

So there you have the story from both sides which explains why I never picked as much as a catapult while living in America.

The final word this month is another item from my Stepfather's game book - he served in the Guards Armoured Brigade in WWII - and it is one that totally unseats all those arguments made a year ago by such bodies as the RSPB, National Trust and even our own Ore and Alde Association. All claimed that aircraft flying out of Bentwaters would be detrimental to the preservation of wildlife preserves, rubbish!

Game Book Entry for November 5th 1944.

Nijmegen marshes:

"After ten days of fierce and bloody fighting around Nijmegen, a good day of partridge shooting, birds flew well and recently emptied German foxholes made excellent butts".

See ps below!

The pheasants in our game pie are all local roadkill!

Jeremy Ruge-Price

November '15

ps Events in Paris last week were horrific and terrifying for all Parisians and the World in general, and sadly this appears to be but the beginning.

On the News video shot of the raid on the second day, you could hear both bomb blasts and much semi automatic gun fire - the flock of pigeons that could be seen on the street never moved!

RSPB take note, Game, set and match I think.

A BONFIRE OF VANITIES

Ruge November

FRIENDSHIP HARBOUR MAINE USA

I am writing this Rambling while we are in the U.S. seeing my wife's family who live in Portland, Maine. So far we have had clear blue cloudless skies every day which is why the sea always seems so blue in some of my paintings. Some years ago my brother remarked how bright some of my work appeared which had me worried all night. This all came to pass on a day of true English weather when the Hampshire countryside was immersed under a heavy dark cloud from which the Heavens had opened up with a deluge of Noah's Ark proportions, otherwise known by BBC weather forecasters as "a final clearing shower"!

The next day I looked up the average number of days of sunshine in Hampshire compared to the coast of Maine; the latter won out by a considerable margin.

You only have to look at a cross section of Edward Seago's wonderful paintings to see that it is the perpetual clouds giving light and shade which he uses so cleverly in his work of East Anglia.

Right now the Fall leaf season is in full colour and the trees, especially maples, are a mass of yellow, orange and scarlet leaves and it is quite gorgeous to see it. This time of year is called Leaf Peeper Season and everywhere in New England is full to the gunnels with tourists, known colloquially as Leaf Peepers, the cone heads of summer families having all left for the big cities and school.

This adds a whole six weeks to the tourist season and is, by and large, a more profitable time for galleries as most Peepers are of the retired fraternity and consequently larger wallets!

I have visited the galleries up here that carry my work and am pleased to note my efforts did not go unrewarded which is always a cheering thought. Being an artist is indeed a wonderful bonus, for as the winds and fog of old age blot out the horizon, I don't have to retire ; provided my brain, hands and eyesight are still functioning in some fashion I can plod on , and with my dicky legs, plod is the operative word.

We went up to visit our piece of land which is on a tidal creek next to a small fishing village called Friendship; we bought it some years ago and it is where we would have built a house and lived out our days. However life is such that you never know what is just around the headland and in our case it meant moving to England and Orford and now we love living in the latter and don't intend moving again.

The local town of Camden is the epicentre of sailing ships, yachts and lobster fishermen on this part of the Maine coast it is a very pretty and busy place that has existed happily for years. However like Orford it has become a tourist attraction in summer including cruise ships!

It is where the "cone head" label I often use in my summer ramblings emanated from originally, and the ambience and beauty of the area as a whole has brought retirees from the big cities such as New York, Washington, Chicago and Houston who wish in their dotage to reside here on a year round basis.

Now there is nothing wrong with that as it all goes to help the local economy, however sadly it doesn't end there. Once they are settled in to their new life styles, other than golf, sailing or skiing in the appropriate season, they can be left a bit high and dry with nothing to keep themselves occupied other than by endless bridge parties. So what better than to put you name forward as a future town council appointee, after all you have a lifetime's knowledge of international business or political experience that could be of vast help to these local folk; and what is more you also have almost unlimited hours of spare time to devote entirely solving their every problem.

Therein lies the rub.

The local folk seem to have managed perfectly well for centuries on their own and generally know what's best for their town as a whole. Recently we had the flower pot episode here in Orford which appears, for the time being at least, to be settled. Although on my return I had a letter from an

English Heritage director who seemed to think that the ice cream trailer, parked where it always has been, constituted a health and safety hazard to the cone heads.(boy some mothers do 'ave 'em!).

It is now some years since I lived in Camden and while there yesterday I was talking with an old friend whose family have lived there for many generations. We were chatting about life in Camden today and he told me that there were moves afoot to do away with several short stay (15 minutes) parking spaces on the Main Street.

These slots are placed strategically by the bank, post office, the town grocery store and the cleaners etc. and are in constant daily use by hardworking and busy locals. The Selectmen, or Council members, who are not Camden natives by birth wish to have these parking slots removed: and in their place? Believe it or not large flower tubs! Duh!!

In another instance nearby, some big city folk who have built houses around a farming community, much like ours in Orford, are lobbying to have a dairy farm prosecuted for bad odours! The farm, which has been there for generations, had recently sprayed some silage on the fields to enrich the soil! What's with all these city slickers?

My last story from here concerns guns and we have all seen endless TV and newspaper accounts of the never ending multiple shooting incidents that happen over here. The day we arrived the State of Maine passed a resolution allowing the public to carry firearms "for their own protection".

Everyone we have talked to is upset by this but as usual, the gun lobbyists, backed by the all powerful National Rifle Association, won the day. They pay millions per annum to the right Senators in Washington.

This could have bad connotations for those living deep in the back woods of northern Maine, up there alcohol, poverty and domestic abuse are rampant and everyone has guns and repeating rifles so the chances of additional slaughter is more than probable.

Sometimes though a gun can be put to good use for, on Friday last week, a successful shop lifter ran out of a local electrical store with about a thousand dollars worth of goods while being pursued by the stores security guard. However he made it to his Isil and Taliban Vehicle of Choice, the Toyota pick up, in the parking lot and, throwing his ill gotten gains in the back, jumped into the cab and was about to drive off, when SHAZAM , it was SuperGran to the rescue!

A sixty year old Grandma had witnessed the whole escapade and as the 'perp' attempted to drive off, she drew her .38 calibre handgun and shot out his front tyres and then kept the woeful shop lifter at bay until the Sheriff arrived to cuff him. It doesn't get any better than that!

After a week here in the port of Portland I realise that living happily in Orford with everything readily at hand, it is all too easy to get mired on a mud bank and watch the Ore flow by day after day.

During the period of April thru September our horizon goes no further than Woodbridge or Saxmundham. The thought of going any further away tends to fill me with dread, after all we are perfectly content and living amongst friends so why bother slogging against the appalling traffic congestion we are bound to meet.

However It has been refreshing to drive on interstate freeways at 80 mph for miles without ever having to touch the brakes or worry about traffic: to go to a restaurant and get a burger cooked "rare": to have two eggs 'over easy' with a side order of crispy bacon in the breakfast diner down in the port; (This famous diner, Becky's, opens at 3.00am for fishermen and closes at midnight and is busy all the time - that's how you make money!)

Nevertheless tomorrow we catch the red eye from Boston and the following morning slog around the M25 and on up to Orford. We had a great time but it will be equally wonderful to be home with supper in front of the tele and, of course, our lab Trooper comatose on the sofa!

Now back home happily in the bosom of Orford we await Halloween and Bonfire night. Yesterday while dog walking in the forest I heard the snap crackle and pop of the local shooting parties, therein lies a tale or two.

My stepfather's game book records shooting in Germany in '44:

"Twenty two brace of partridge - next drive interrupted by shelling".

Next entry;

"Dec 3. A few pheasants but bag consisted mainly of Germans - a good showing all round,"

Meanwhile Happy Halloween y'all

Jeremy Ruge Price

Nov 2015

THE SHIPPING FORECAST

rugge sea

S.S CLAN CUMMING

IN THE BAY OF BENGAL DURING A HURRICANE OF FORCE FOURTEEN

ON THE BEAUFORT SCALE 1958

We had some weather this August much like that which I remember when, as a child, we used to have holidays at Thorpeness; cloudy with short bursts of sunshine, longer spells of rain, strong chilly winds from the North Sea accompanied by what was known on the BBC weather forecasts of the time as "final clearing showers". Typical English summer weather, but then in 1952 as children we didn't seem to mind the fact that it was cold. We swam in the North Sea come rain or shine under the impression that it was said to be warmer in the water than out when raining!

Every day all three of us bicycled against a Force seven headwind into Aldeburgh for sailing lessons under the auspices of the great Jumbo, an ancient mariner from bygone days, who taught us to sail in his heavy gaff rigged fishing boat. Not one given to unnecessary verbage, old Jumbo would sit silently on a thwart watching our antics with only an occasional instruction in a broad Suffolk dialect, "Don't 'e mind tha there vessel for 'e be motoriosed!" Jumbo's cottage can still be found on Iken Cliffs today.

Later that day we would practice our new found nautical skills on Thorpeness Mere. It was the beginning of my love of the sea and sailing and I am very thankful for all Jumbo taught me for I have sailed whenever the opportunity presented itself. It is one of those oddities of life that I should have started on the Alde and ended up back here on the Ore some sixty years on.

I first went to sea in the Merchant Navy, aged seventeen, on an Ocean going cargo ship, the Clan Cumming which is pictured at the top of this rambling. As a deck cadet I crossed many oceans and experienced two hurricanes at sea in the Bay of Bengal. One was Force 14 (the Beaufort Scale goes to fourteen only in the Indian Ocean) with 100ft waves and 180mph winds, these were the details entered in the ships log at the time. I learned to appreciate the massive raw power of the seas and woe betide he who thinks otherwise. Maybe in a rambling over the winter I might tell you about being at sea in a hurricane of that immense strength.

My brother and I had some good years sailing out of the Hamble in the sixties and when I went to America in 1976 I was lucky enough to have a great friend with a classic 60ft wooden yawl which we sailed off the Maine coast for many years.

The coast of Maine, with over five thousand islands, some inhabited many not, is like Swallows and Amazons for adults. Sailing craft of all shapes and sizes, large three masted schooners, which once had been part of the Grand Banks fishing fleets; yachts both ancient and modern and the only motor boats were those belonging to the local lobsterman picking up traps . Maine is the Lobster Kingdom of America and even MacDonalds has lobster rolls.

Nowadays I watch with envy our local Orford sailing folk pulling their boat tenders down to the Quay. Would that I could embark with them but the old bones just can't do it any more, my sea legs have given up the ghost and now I totter around the village, a marooned old fart.

Luckily my longing to go back to sea is assuaged by my painting. With a few brush strokes I can whisk myself away to mid ocean, out of sight and smell of land. I can lie becalmed and dormant in the Doldrums or be careening and cavorting over spume covered gigantic swells in the South Atlantic while an Albatross swoops effortlessly alongside, its wingtips missing the curling wave tops by inches as it glides forever onward on a nine month five thousand mile journey. The sea carries many different memories for me and amongst them some that are quite unusual.

Before I could step aboard my ship, I had to kitted out with the required uniform. All the males in my family were or had been in the Army whilst my dear Mother's only seagoing voyage had been a transatlantic crossing in the Queen Mary, and even that had been in a first class stateroom with dinner at the Captain's table every night. My future career did not lie in that premier league where they dressed in starched whites a la Royal Navy. The only naval outfitter Mother knew of was Messrs. Gieves & Sons, 1 Saville Row.

This prestigious company had been outfitters to HRH Kings George V and VI, King Feisal of Jordan, the Duke of Edinburgh, and every Sea Lord and Admiral since Trafalgar; hardly your everyday Merchant Navy officer!

Some weeks later I was driven to East India Docks by our uniformed chauffer Hartley in the maroon Bentley, which was stuffed to the gills with seabags full of doeskin blue uniforms etc.

I walked up the gangway dressed in suit and tie, and the scene that greeted me was straight out of Dante's Inferno. Clattering of steam winches, the whirr of cranes with cargo slings swinging overhead and then plunging down into a black hold, wires, ropes and hatch boards littered the open deck. The only human I could see was a stocky bloke in a greasy jacket and dungarees, topped off with an even greasier Kangol cap. I approached him and nervously asked, "Could you tell me where the cadets cabin is please?" Having taken in from head to foot my natty gents suiting he replied, "this yer first trip matey?" and with out further ado we walked over to the ships rail and looked down to the dock. There was Hartley, my mate, uniform cap on head, standing at ease besides the car with a huge pile of gear around him. The docker took one look and said, "Gor Blimey Nelson, yer needs elp" and consequently helped me carry up my gear to the cabin. It transpired he had been a Chief Petty Officer during the war and as such recognised a new snotty when he saw one.

Thus began a three year spell of deep sea voyages that totally transformed me from the cosseted schoolboy I had been into one who could hold his own with the best and in so doing injected me with the lure of the sea forever. There followed some incidents and experiences that will not forget.

One of those was a few days spent anchored off the island St Helena, a thousand or more miles out into the South Atlantic off the African Continent. The sheer rock face rises four hundred feet up out of the Ocean like a gigantic impregnable fortress against which the slow rolling swell of the Southern Ocean forever smashing to no avail.

There is no harbour here, just a stone jetty which is the only landing place on the entire island. This leads to Jamestown the capital and only town with one main street the surface of which is hewn from rock. At that time there were very few houses that weren't old rusted Nissan huts. If one continued on you would reach Longwood, a sprawling Georgian mansion where Napoleon saw out his exile. The rocky surface, with huge volcanic fissures means that even today no aircraft can land there.

Back then, as is now, the Island has monthly visit from a ship bringing food and supplies of all sorts as well as the Royal Mail. All have to be unloaded out in the bay and run into the tiny harbour on small lighters. Even in good weather the swell makes discharging quite a tricky performance especially as in our case it was 50 gallon drums of fuel for the Island.

On the second day some of us went ashore to see Longwood. On the way back down to the quay a very old white man, the only one we had seen there, asked us in to his Nissan hut home for a cup of tea. He had been exiled here by General Kitchener some sixty years previously as a captured Boer Commando when he was a mere fifteen years old. He had married a local girl so that under South Africa's apartheid rules he couldn't go back ever again. He was staunchly pro British and had a large photo of the Queen and Prince Philip on the wall.

The other interesting fact is that in 1957, the year of our visit, there were three foreigners imprisoned in the fort above the cliffs: all were there with permission of the Crown and one had just paid for a QC to come out and hear his appeal which he had subsequently lost. It cost the prisoner more than his freedom as not only did he pay the legal Eagle for his time but also the cost of a Royal Navy frigate to get the barrister there and back!

As I have said once the sea gets into your blood it's there for good but it was never an easy course to set. Take the case of fishermen and their families, it's a life of hardship and family losses unequalled by any other I know of and should anyone doubt that just take a look at Deadliest Catch or The Catch, both on the Discovery Channel. The former showing crab fishermen at the mercy of the Bering Sea in pack ice and winter storms and the latter, British trawlers out in the Atlantic, who not only have the weather to cope with but also foreign flagged trawlers dragging through their nets which results in massive financial repercussions to their earnings.

They are cold, soaked through, with aching limbs and hands, at times exhausted from working for thirty six hours non stop in gale force conditions, yet when the catch is unloaded, with a little luck

combined with the skill of the skipper and a check in the bank, back out they go to sea, ready to begin all over again - it's in their blood, 'cos if it wasn't they wouldn't do it.

When you add in lack of time spent with the family, the constant stress of making a living in order to pay mortgages; ongoing boat maintenance and repair: crews wages: international and EU restrictions on fishing in general; quotas, licences and permits, its wonder any of them go fishing at all. Lastly, but in no way least, there is the never-ending toll of those lost at sea. So the next time you have a fish and chip supper give a quiet thanks to the fishermen that caught it for you.

In years gone by the shore station in the nearby village of Shotley, HMS Ganges, turned many an orphan boy into young ratings destined for sea life with the Royal Navy. Ganges was a harsh training school with a fair smattering of sadistic instructors and below is a ditty describing the food they ate.

My seagoing days are long gone apart from Brittany Ferries to St Malo, yet each winter night that I walk our lab around Orford, I can see flickering lights of cargo ships waiting to enter Felixstowe and immediately the longing to be back out there once again bubbles to the surface. When I was a deep sea sailor the distant lights ashore were always very beckoning yet having been in port for a day or too and we were all longing to get back to sea and rid ourselves of the dirt and hubbub of every day life on land.. Being out on the Ocean it seemed that everything was free and clean even if it was rough and tough at times.

Now all that's left are distant memories of a sea going life that doesn't exist any longer, memories that are there one moment and gone the next, swallowed up in the fog of ages. I have a picture of my ship the Clan Cumming in the gallery and every so often an old salt like me comes over and says, "I was in P& O", Shaw Savill or whatever the Line that he had served in was called and we will have a great conversation about our days before the mast earning nine pounds ten shillings a month, and we thought we were rich! "Ee I can tell yer, them wus the days".

Now in 2015 it seems the BBC is even cancelling the Shipping Forecast, what next!

SHOTLEY STEW

There's half a pound of bully beef left from the month before

And half a string of sausages found on the canteen floor

One or two old hambones that were minus of their meat

And two old tins of meat and veg the dog refused to eat

They took it to the galley and they let it boil all day

And topped it up with "Number Nines"* to pass the time away

And when they finished boiling it, it tasted just like glue

And gave it to the Ganges Boy and called it Shotley St

Anon

Jeremy Ruge Price October

*Laxative pills

PLOPS PROGRESS

The weather hasn't been very good for summer visitors this year. I gather that stall holders in places like Lowestoft and Felixstowe are tearing their hair out as yet another rainy week looms. I suspect several won't be renewing the stall again next year.

For the past summer months here in Orford we have been awash with swarms of vacationing visitors of varying ages, shapes and sizes. For the most part they are just relatively normal folk enjoying some sun and sea and, in the case of this attractive village, the peace and tranquility of country life.

Never let it be said tho' that Orford is merely a quiet river backwater: Over a two day period this month we ate up our annual allotment of police and fire services in one go. The morning of the first day a stolen white van was seen lurking in the leafy lanes of Orford. Now while burglaries are no longer on the investigative crimes list, stolen white vans rate highly on the rozza richter scale and before you could shout "Call the Old Bill", five squad cars were racing through Orford's narrow single track byways but all of which failed miserably to spot the infamous white Road Runner.

Back up was called for and out of the far blue yonder hurtled Plod the Pilot in his helicopter, who proceeded to circle the town, heat seeking rays burning up our back gardens. Meanwhile back on Mother Earth all five Z cars had been utterly defeated by holiday crowds of crabbers and so they parked up in a tactical formation in the fire station, awaiting orders from on high. You will notice though that budget cuts notwithstanding, no expense was spared here which gives rise to the thought as to what the value of a second hand white van might be or what and who was in it, Migrants?

What one and all seemed completely unaware of is that there are only two ways out of the village and an ambush would have been a no brainer, had they but asked one of us local straw chewing Wirzul Gummidges, but alas they didn't. Defeated they all left and the tranquility of an Orford summer's day resumed. But not for long, for no sooner had lunch been taken when the curtain went up on Act II of the new series, Emergency Services High Drama.

A mayday call from a boat on the high seas complete with an engine fire set the scene for part two. Suddenly, without warning, a schreeching ambulance hurtled down Quay St. Immediately a "Cameron " size swarm of coneheads of all ages, shapes and sizes, ran and waddled down to the Quay intent on witnessing first hand the "Dance Macabre" that was obviously happening down there. After all what is a day's crabbing without a dash of blood and gore in the mix?

Watching them go was akin to a mammoth egg and spoon race but with ice cream and cones instead. Adults, children and dogs rushing helter skelter like lemmings for the Quay, yet whatever happens you don't drop the ice cream ! Many did but didn't even break step in the headlong rush not to miss out on the action.

It wasn't long before Uncle Tom Cobby et al were back once again; Plod, Fire Brigade and this time, the Coastguard, returned to the scene while the RNLI towed the boat in; so if you include the ambulance that constitutes a Full House Emergency Team!.

Orford wasn't done yet tho, the next day a local resident staged her own Driving Demolition Derby taking out a gate and a brick wall all by her ownsome. So back came the Old Bill, ambulance and fire brigade as she required a mechanical tin opener for her extraction before being swiftly whisked away to hospital to recover. If it keeps on like this we are going to lose our reputation as a quiet backwater.

Speaking of which, I noticed that one of Suffolks trendy seaside spots was mentioned in the Telegraph. Snooty Southwold was the headline and it went on to say that families and OAPs were no longer allowed to squat and eat their cheese and pickle sarnies and potato crisps on the Pier. Objections had been lodged by the trendy restaurant and food outlets perched up thereon. T'would appear these hungry folk and their nose bag nosh were taking away good business. In my humble

estimation anyone bringing a picnic wasn't ever going to enter the portals of any fancy food emporium in the first place, ice cream maybe but that's all.

On the subject of icecream, this last winter an agreement with the council was hashed out which allowed ice creams to be sold on a site, for which the vendors pay an annual fee, outside the Castle railings. In the last week three giant flower pots are to be seen sitting on the exact grid reference that ice cream trailer is supposed to be! I wonder who orchestrated that illegal land grabbing move, is it perhaps a Putinesque gamble in the hopes that no one will notice. I am glad to say many have so this is an ongoing saga!

While I must admit to eating the odd salted caramel ice cream, there is something rather nauseating about watching adults en masse slurping ice cream cones. In the late afternoon when families return from their crabbing expedition, the children spot the ice cream van and the whole family immediately lines up to indulge in a glop or two.

The adults then walk across the road, cone in hand and stand gawping at my paintings while their mottled tongues flick out to catch the melting ice cream, just like fly catching toads in tropical rain forests!

Yet there is a morbid fascination in watching and waiting till an errant plop of glop escapes the ever searching tongue and dribbles, quite unnoticed, down and around the extended rotunda of the consumer's tummies. The larger the latter's protuberance the longer it takes the melting glop to circumnavigate his or her globe, and thus the greater my fascination becomes in Plops Progress. Yucky Doo!

The World today abounds with daily stories of horror and terrorism of one sort or another, the idiotic ideology of Isil which has resulted in the swarms of Syrians being the currant multinational debacle. It is possible that amongst all this carnage you might have missed the very important scientific information concerning Pooh Sticks, in case you did let me remind you. It isn't the thin smooth stick that wins the race under the bridge but rather the gnarled and twisted old twig; so there's hope for me yet; that's assuming I don't get hooshed in the process like old Eyeore

As I write this, the summer holidays are being prematurely ended by yet another downpour and the summer swarms are packing up their cars with bicycles, strollers, bags of sailing gear, foul smelling crabbing lines and buckets, all in the mad rush to get home so as to get ready for school. I will miss squeaks and yells of little children playing, the cries of small princesses when they spot the ice cream stall, children of all ages armed with lifejackets, peddling pell mell down to the Yacht Club. But then as they say, there's always "Next year in Marianbad".

So that's it folks, we re off to Brittany for our hols!

Jeremy Rugge- Price

August 2015

OLD COOTS LIKE ME

Just as the call of the cuckoo heralds the arrival of Spring, so the honking of geese flying South announces the start of the winter months. Here in the peace and quiet of Orford the night time screeching of car alarms reminds us of the arrival of the flocks of summer folk; happy days are here again!!

The river is awash with sailing boats, the car park ticket machine is busy amassing shekels galore for the Orford Town. Ever burgeoning crowds of coneheads licking and slurping their ice-creams meander to and from the quay, peering ever more closely through the windows of the inhabited cottages at the bottom of Quay Street ; one wonders what they expect to see, S&M Orford style? At Coastguard Cottage, despite the red and yellow building site tape strung between cones clearly fencing it off as being a working site in progress, tourists can be found wandering around inside the house at times and have to be turfed out by those working there! The Great British Public, Bless'em all.

There are many more dyke walkers this year. The markings of these marsh birds are easy to spot although there is often little difference between the plumage of the male and the female of the species; Raiders of the Lost Ark fedora hats with chinstraps firmly in place; huge back packs filled with sandwiches and water and heavens knows what else: map cases slung around the neck, and of course all shod in sturdy Gore Tex boots. They are fully equipped to yump the heights of the Brecon Beacons let alone the flat paths of Orfordness. As I mentioned last year, these wandering walkers rarely, if ever, spend so much as a dime in the Town.

Each to his own of course but walking was never one of my aims in life, better left to past times when paid by the Army. Even then rather than be a member of the PBI, I joined a cavalry regiment as not only did this mean driving from A to B but our armoured vehicles came equipped with a plug in kettle for cups of Rosie as well as the warmth from the engine decks when it was cold and wet.

Now that I am entering my twilight years of amnesia, dementia as well as feeble of foot, walking is a whole different ball game. I had imagined that my shiny new titanium hip joint would have had me back sailing but it was not to be. The hip may be connected to the thigh bone, the thigh bone connected to the leg bone, the leg bone ...etc, but mine are just dem old dry bones!

One of the advantages of aging over seventy five is not having to pay for a TV license. Two months before my birthday I cancelled my direct debit and informed the appropriate Beeb department of my actions. I had a very polite and swift response of acknowledgment along with the information that I was due a refund!

Two months later I received a letter from the same folk informing me I am liable for a fine of £1000, a possible term of incarceration care of HM Prisons and, just to put the boot in, our house had been designated for an inspection - not a visit - but an inspection from a Licensing Inspector in the next three weeks. I had visions of standing rigidly to attention by our tele as he toured the house. It really pissed me off something rotten, and so I hit back with a letter stating what had previously taken place and suggested that their record keeping was pusillanimous at best and that threatening letters such as this aimed at the elderly were not in order especially if the recipient was frail in any way.

My opening round must have scored a direct hit for their next barrage was even heavier declaring that IF CONVICTED I WOULD BE A FELON no less. I sent back an email saying "go ahead and make my day". Then silence for a few weeks followed by the arrival of a nice cheque, no apologies of course, that was beyond their capabilities or IQ. It would seem that the avaricious licensing department of the Beeb knows no bounds, they have suggested that pubs carry TV licenses even if they don't have a TV installed in case some closet fan is watching Eastenders on his cellphone!

In one of Harrow's School songs there is a line that goes on about being "feeble of foot and rheumatic of shoulder" which is where many of us here in Orford are now at in time. One drawback of being feeble of brain that really gets my goat is the constant cold calls. Despite being registered on the official "No Calls" list they still manage to get through somehow just like the migrants at Calais.

Since I cannot get at the rich CEOs of these companies I am going to try a new method of attack on the actual person doing the cold call. You can buy small foghorns, the size of a tin can, yachtsmen use them and I think the sailing club does as well. On discovering the caller is a "cold one" instead of hanging up I am going to say I am deaf so please speak up and then when they adjust their headset I am going to damage his or her eardrums with a long hard blast. It may not stop the calls but that particular operator will be out of action and not be able to hear anything for the rest of the day! What a serendipitous sense of satisfaction that will give me.

As I write this the heavens have opened and we may need the Ark if this continues yet the farmers must welcome it. Some weeks ago during the early summer heat wave, much of the Orford public greens had gone brown. This prompted the arrival of the SCDC contract grass cutters and eventually they reached the "brown" green by the car park with the "Mad Mike" on the mighty mower and "Cyril" on the strimmer. They attacked the brown with gusto whirling dust clouds everywhere, so I walked over and asked Cyril if there was any point or any good in strimming an almost dead green.

He removed his ear defenders and said "Contract says mow so we mow"

So I replied that surely it was better left alone at this point to which he replied without so much as pause "Contract say mow so we mow!"

As far as he is concerned the light may be on in the house but there is definitely no one at home. Other Councils across the Land have some strange rules, try this for a start: a female driver pulled into a bus lane to allow an emergency ambulance to get passed; she got a £60 fine?

In some parts of the Country local councils are allowing participants to flower and vegetable shows to purchase the latter in supermarkets and then enter it as home grown! I don't see that getting by the scrutineers in the upcoming Orford Flower show.

There has been much lather created over seagulls of late, attacking people and animals and what to do about it. First of all as a nation we are appalling at leaving litter around the countryside. Some of the motorways are a national disgrace when compared to the Continent. Therefore when you get a seaside town you can hardly blame Sammy the Seagull for zooming in on potential lunches as we humans are primarily to blame in the first place. The problem seems to have reached Cabinet level and almost required a Cobra meeting yet the Government has yet to come up with an answer to date.

I can suggest two that work; the first was from a lady in Devon who owns a beach café. They purchased two toy high powered water pistols and squirted the Stuka diving seagulls who veered off under the Ack Ack barrage and have not been back since. Secondly many moons ago I was a merchant seaman on a cargo ship. One of our jobs was to re-varnish and repaint everything each trip. Whenever we steamed near coastlines gulls, or shitehawks, as we called them, would fly along side using the air currents created by the ship. Whilst in flight they were forever pooping on our paint and varnish, and so the method we used was cheap and simple. Taking a loaf of Mother's Pride, (remember them?) we rolled up golf ball sized pellets of dough and threw them up in the air to be caught by the gulls. Once swallowed this pellet would swell in side their crops forcing them to peel off and land on the ocean, unable to fly for an hour or so. Both are cheap and simple methods and both work.

Lastly, the morning after the screeching car alarm woke many of us, I happened to notice a windshield replacement van just down the street. Lo and behold he was replacing a shattered front screen of a pristine Chelsea Tractor!

No I did not, but so far the score is Oford Town 1, Visitors 0.

I will leave you with this thought, if Calais and other Channel ports continue to be increasingly migrant infested, Orfordness begins to look positively porous and inviting!

Jeremy Ruge - Price

August 2015

SHOOT THY NEIGHBOUR

The tragedy at Dunblane in 1996 brought about a change in the British gun laws which had existed almost virtually unchanged since the British Bill of Rights in 1689, whereby, amongst many other reasons, it allowed Protestants (only) to bear arms for their defence within the rule of law.

By the same token the Second Amendment of the United States Constitution, much of which was based on the British version, was to enable people to bear arms in “resistance to oppression, and the civic duty to act in concert in defence of the state” and then goes on to say “having reasonable relationship to the preservation or efficiency of a well regulated militia”.

I don't think the Founding Fathers had any intention of allowing the present outrageous gun related killings that happen each and every day of the year in the United States, even in 2015.

Charleston is one of the best and prettiest Cities in the US and I have been there many times and have friends who live there. That the latest murders took place in a church is both horrific and extremely sad for those involved. Many from the President on down have condemned it, including Hilary Clinton.

Yet the Republican Senator Ted Cruz, a Texan Senator in the House and 2016 U.S. Presidential candidate, actually joked about it in public, “ There is an old saying, Praise the Lord and pass the ammunition” are his exact words.

It is crass and bigoted idiots like him, the army of rabid ‘good ole boys’ of the white South plus many members of the National Rifle Association who prevent any chance of change in the gun laws, yet this is supposedly the cradle of Democracy?!

In this latest tragedy the gunman was caught, but nationwide, over seventy percent of “black on black killings” no one is ever convicted, mainly because of the “lack” of witnesses to testify lest they get topped too.

Bear in mind we're not talking just handguns here, the Country is awash with pick up trucks with clearly visible gun racks holding semi automatic rifles hung across the rear window, the “civilianised” version of the fully automatic used in the Military. Then there are pistol packin mommas whose children are quite capable of removing said weapon from Mom's purse and pulling the trigger. Not so long ago a two year old did just that and shot his Mom in Walmart.

There are records showing that babies of the same age have shot themselves, their sisters, brothers friends and A.N Others as well.

A quote in a local Ohio newspaper reads as follows;

“A three-year-old boy has killed himself while playing with his mom’s purse...

...My son just shot himself and I'm not getting a pulse," she is heard screaming on a 911 emergency call”.

If this were just a one off it would make it a little more bearable, but sadly many children under the age of three have been involved in such tragic shootings. Children of nine and ten are instructed how to shoot an SAR on ranges. We are not talking about hitting a tin can at ten paces here, but blasting away with ear defenders on with multiple shots at targets, superimposed with images of storm troopers just the same as those on the military ranges. On becoming teenagers, the same kids with the same rifle plus a full magazine, will go off into the woods “huntin critters” but that’s another story for the future.

Sadly I don’t think there will never ever be a U.S. President or Political party strong enough to make changes to the law, and as a visitor, with any luck you will never be involved with any of this. However if you hire a car south of the Mason Dixon line and drive down the bayous of Mississippi or Louisiana I suggest you don’t get involved in a road rage incident. You could and most likely will loose more than just the argument and it wont be a black guy holding the gun! We have nearly been there once, but some slick driving on my behalf got us out of it.

However before all of the above is solved the humungous question of white on black racism has to be sorted out. The Southern whites still believe they won the war, yet strangely enough the white population of the US is changing and soon the Hispanics will out number the whites who themselves then become a minority!

In Maine, way up the eastern seaboard by the Canadian border, much of this hiatus didn’t exist. Many of the locals have forefathers who were fishermen from across the Atlantic, Bretons, Cornishmen, Portuguese and Scandinavians just to name a few. Up there they are so far removed from the rest of the Country that different local rules apply.

In the small fishing village of Friendship, well off the beaten track, where my wife lived for many years the “ruling” family were the Reeds, and with no law enforcement for miles around, they ran the roost.

One time when one of them shot a moose illegally (for the meat) the uniformed Forest Ranger turned up to issue a summons. They attached him to the back of a pick up and towed him around the village; he left town soon after. On another occasion one lobsterman had spent the long winter rewiring his house. One Spring day the County inspector pitched up to check it all out and knocked

on the door to gain entry. The door duly opened by the owner toting a shotgun aimed right at the inspector's midriff, so he left also.

They don't like tourists either; one of the latter parked on the small landing stage which, being a working dock, is strictly illegal. When the lobster boats returned to unload the catch, the car was in their way and no owner in sight. The answer was obvious, and yes, they pushed it over the edge. Now there's an idea for our Council!

On the subject of councils, I notice that the almighty SCDC has recently cut our local verges some one to two metres back from the road surfaces. It is a fact that if all verges in the whole Country were put side by side, they would amount to half the total meadow and pasture land in the United Kingdom. That might not be of huge interest or importance to you personally unless you happened to be a bee.

Our own verges in the surrounding area are full of flowers of many sorts, cow parsley and more, all of which is fodder for Buzzy & Co. makers of fine honey to the masses. The company is already under siege from the illegal immigrants of huge hornets from across the Channel so what they don't need is half their crop being removed before harvesting the pollen by over zealous councils.

It would appear that if your verges are full of flora like ours, they should and can be classified as "special" verges. Under this classification they are not mown till after July, so if you are a beekeeper get on the horn to our local environmental official and demand they back off next year.

Luckily today it was announced that a rescue operation is being mounted as we speak by the World's greatest expert on HONEY, yes it's none other than Winnie the Pooh himself. The British Beekeepers Association, together with Michael Burgess, the original illustrator of AA Milne's books, are bringing out a new Pooh adventure.

It takes place in the Yorkshire Dales and Pooh, Piglet, Eeyore and Tigger will all be in it. They will be digging a veg garden and building a bee hive, so I can already foresee a problem in the dales, how will do you keep Pooh out of the hive before the bees have finished making the honey?

H.R.H Queen Elizabeth visited Bergen Belsen this week, and she and the Duke of Edinburgh spent time alone together in the House of Silence., something I very much understand as when you are actually there in Belsen the whole thought process of the dreadful saga is very overpowering, almost beyond human comprehension.

As a young officer in the 13/18th Royal Hussars I was stationed just down the road from the site of Belsen Concentration camp. There was a strange and very ominous aura of horror and death about

the area. At that time in the early sixties there were no birds or animals anywhere to be seen and if you let your dog out of the car, his hackles would go up immediately.

By a pure coincidence I have just finished a fascinating yet horrific book by Sarah Helm called "If This Were a Woman". It is an account of the Ravensbruck Concentration camp for women as told by survivors in their twilight.

So before you turn away from yet more terrible stories of WWII just pause a for a brief moment. It is only right that these brave, courageous and badly treated old ladies who then were desperate children, young girls and women of all ages are not cast aside without a thought and forgotten yet again by us today.

They came from many different Countries; American, British, French, German, Poles, Hungarians and Romanians, Russian and Ukrainians and many gypsies. They came from from differing creeds and beliefs, Christian, Communist and Jews. Among their number were aristocrats, ladies of the night, Allied SOE agents, Russian Army doctors and nurses and a few with very important connections, De Gaulle's niece being just one.

I am not going to say anything about the book as I hope some of you will read it, it is very compelling with passages from letters and diaries. The reason it has taken till now to be told is that the camp was liberated by the Russian Army, which itself produced even more harrowing experiences. As a result almost all the inhabitants who were left there, plus records that were saved, remained hidden deep within East Germany till the sixties.

Sarah Helm has spent years, even into the nineties, interviewing survivors and even just getting them to open up and talk would have been a major hurdle but she managed to persuade them to overcome their reluctance, besides chasing down and documenting evidence from many Countries.

One of the sad but not surprising truths is that a fully documented diary of events from one of the inmates was given to the Foreign Office at the end of the war, but almost no action was taken as at the time their main concern was whether to reward one of the Swedish rescue team with money or a gold watch (I quote).

The book has some truly dreadful deeds that the World hoped could nor should ever happen again: yet now we have Isil and all their gruesome happenings, the latest being Tunisia. plus ça change it would seem even today as the FO warned Diplomatic staff in Tunisia to stay away from tourist gathering spots such as hotels, restaurants and supermarkets some time ago, yet not a word to Joe Public.

Lastly on the subject of random shooting and killing, two days ago the PM had his own ramblings in which he emphasised standing strong against terrorism and in particular Isil. He mentioned that our clapped out Typhoons would continue to bomb targets there.

Yet, from “Bomber” Harris in WWII, the USAF with massive “death from the Air” in Vietnam, to Rumsfeld’s “Shock and Awe” in Iraq, never has an enemy on home ground been defeated by assault from on high as was aptly stated by Ho Chi Mien many years ago.

Jeremy Ruge - Price

June 2015

ORFORD THROUGH THE LOOKING GLASS

Half term holiday week is done and dusted and our visitors have now wended their way home through the usual traffic snafus and snarls leaving us alone in our riverside tranquillity. Yet in another two months the whole holiday hiatus will begin all over again.

Summer people, for that is what they are, are often of the opinion that all of us lot are very lucky to live in Utopia and, for many reasons, we are indeed privileged so to do. Look at all the goodies we have on our doorstep; an ancient historical castle; quaint little red brick cottages most of which are empty; lovely river views and walks, sailing boats and boat trips across the river with tours to the lighthouse; a hotel and two pubs, a world famous smokery; a shop and post office and our own school. Our own little bubble of English countryside life in fact, so what more could we possibly want in this East Anglian Garden of Eden

Were Walt to have created an archetypical English village for Disney World he could have modelled it on Orford and in some aspects he wouldn't have been far off the mark.

However all is not exactly peaceful in Paradise and were anyone to disturb the muddy creaks and waters of the Ore, bubbles of disgruntlement would break the surface. Alice, when she went through the Looking Glass, found there was an element of topsy turvy in the garden including clocks that worked backwards, the Mad Hatters tea party and of course an irate Red Queen!

We seem to have certain similarities here but it isn't the clocks going in reverse but the topsy turvy make up of the town as a whole and specifically the shopping availabilities which appear to be going full speed astern over the horizon.

A few years ago we had an award winning bakery and village store, along with a butchers shop, two cafes and two smokeries. That was the nadir of Orford shops. Since then along the way, a butcher, a

cafe and one smoke house have sunk without trace while the village store appears to have shrunk into the realms of Gulliver's Travels.

No doubt we could have all existed quite happily with just that which remains. Were that to have been the case, the rumblings and rumors of Discontent and Disgruntlement might have stayed buried beneath the waves. However the voyage of life is well renowned for hidden rocks and submerged surprises.

All of a sudden, pinned to the mast by the Town Hall, is an application for a butchers shop in Bakers Lane, and, lookie lookie, it is on behalf of the town's one time butcher who had to walk the plank a few years back! This news has been received with shouts of joy by most of the local crew, but of course one can always expect a few mutineers to be down in the bilges.

All is not yet plain sailing though, for another disturbance is visible over the distant horizon that may yet turn into to be a heinous hurricane. T'would appear Gulliver's shop is now for sale and, in a hypothetical situation where no one bought it, and indeed that is very possible, it would be all to understandable to simply shut up shop and sail away. We would be marooned with Ben Gunn on a beach with no food store and that could have the natives sharpening their spears and lighting a fire under the large boiling pot. So it is not exactly Happy Families being played here, it begins to look more like B*gger thy Neighbour.

With the various building conversions now under way in Pump Street and more to come with the old Richardson site, most of downtown Orford will consist of empty summer cottages which at night it is a darkened ghost town to all intents and purposes. That isn't a good set of circumstances when all is said and done for it is possible that Orford could end up with no clinic, post office or school in years to come.

Our Neighbourhood Watch notwithstanding, if I were Roma the Robber this would be my dream setting; I could do five houses in one fell swoop and be back on my bike long before P.C. Plod pitched up. Nowadays the nationwide forces of Plod the Peeler are hard pressed enough with severe budget cuts, citywide cases of massive child abuse and young British teenage mujahedeen returning from Isil's Caliphate full trained in the art of suicide bomb attacks. So it is highly unlikely they would have time to bother too much about a petty house burglary, they haven't the time to investigate such crimes.

I know I am but Jeremy - come - lately however I feel the atmosphere between uptown and downtown gets worse each year. The latter understandably feel that with yet more holiday homes appearing every year, they are finding it harder if not impossible to be able to afford to live here. As a result the ambience of old Orford that they all knew is fast disappearing down around the Ubend into the muddy waters of the Ore River.

It is an all too familiar trend that is affecting many an East Anglian coastal town and village. It won't affect me in the long run, as I will be busy pushing up poppies but there needs to be a bit of long term forward planning to right this matter or Orford will end up like the Hamptons on Long Island. There the worker bees, be they domestics, shop assistants, gardeners or whatever, all have to be bussed in daily from an out of town area with affordable living accommodation.

For the past few months my family has been badgering me to have the Instagram App on my Iphone. Neither a twittering tweeter nor Facebook fanatic am I, so this wasn't an "app" that I was conversant with or had ever heard of nor had I any desire to have it, yet regardless of that it was duly imbedded in my phone over a family Easter weekend. As it so happens it proved its usefulness this week when I suddenly found it contained an image of a Chelsea Flower Show Gold Award to a winning team that includes my latest daughter – in – law. I am hoping that she might take pity on our little plot!

Conversely, last week I was in the studio when a nice young princess, whose Mum and Dad do the yummy ice creams across the road, came over to chat "cos I'm bored" she said.

On seeing my Iphone, she asked if she could look at it. I suspect that her generation come out of the womb with their thumbs already twitching up and down ready to tweet. In an instant she had taken my photograph so I suggested that I send it onto to my family as an Instagram.

"You have Instagram " she queried. " how weird!"

"Why is it weird?". I asked

" Cos you're really old', she replied. Out of the mouths of.... etc!!!

Whilst on the subject of aging, years ago my Mother's last husband keeled over and died one morning while trying to put his socks on. In the strain of doing so he suffered from what is known in my family as having had a "throbber". In the blink of an eye the dear old Brigadier was dead as a dodo by the side of the bed, the sock still firmly gripped by the rigor mortis in his hand; it's a sad scenario for kicking away the bucket.

I now fully understand his problem, and am not about to follow suit, for having had a new titanium hip joint I can no longer put on or wear socks nor can I scratch my big toe. As a result the soles of my feet resemble a cross between the scales of an iguana and the outside rind of an aging stilton!

To get my plates of meat descaled I went to a very nice "foot" lady at the local clinic who had all the right chisels, drills and sandpaper for the job. It seems she is a much sought after busy bee every day of the working week. So parents, if your children are wondering what career to follow after school,

may I recommend being a paediatrician. It obviously pays very well as this dear lady drives a brand new 450 Mercedes coupe!

Harping back to summer people for moment, I am going to pass on to you some of the more ridiculous mutterings and moans of the great British Public while they are here over the coming summer.

It must be said that if you have never dealt with the general public on a face to face or retail basis, we can be and are a picky and rude bunch when en masse, and I say this is from personal experience.

So here are two examples from last week;

a) Two guests checked into a rental house down by the quay last weekend. They had been sent a brochure and liked what they saw encompassed within it. However on arrival they entered into the establishment, and having scrutinised the interior walls, complained that the WHITE paint in said brochure was not the same WHITE as was on the walls Duh!

b) A family sitting down to eat in the Jolly Sailor asked if the food came on plates. I know some trendy places dish up dinner on a shovel but this is Orford, maybe with all the piggeries around they expected a trough!

So that's it for now, have a good June.

Jeremy Ruge-Price

June 15

PUTTING THE BOOT IN

When I wrote my original Ramblings last year, t'was much ado about Fred and Arthur and their efforts in pothole packing here in Orford. Little did I know at that time how much they would be missed, nor how much experience and knowledge on the art of potholing had they garnered between them over many a year!

What brings me back to the old lads is that a week before Easter, those of us who live in Munday's Lane awoke one day to find that yellow 'no parking' bollards had been lined up on both sides of the entire road like a guard of honour. It would seem that the SCDC was about to relay a new surface on top of that which they did last summer!

Given the ruts and rough grading that now exist after twelve months that came as no surprise to most of us. A week passed and nothing happened, then ten days later a mechanical road sweeper cruised slowly up and down, constantly bleating like a flock of lambs. He left and yet still nothing happened, except that Easter was now upon us.

That holiday weekend parking was at a premium all over town except of course Munday's Lane where we were left in blissful peace. Three days later a truck appeared and two hi-vis covered stalwarts sadly removed the entire avenue of bollards.

Seems the SCDC won't be re doing the road till mid May, so why the cones and why sweep? If that leaves you confused as to how County Councils operate road and pothole repairs, let me fill you in!

To explain how this operates we must go back to Fred and Arthur. Their modum operandi was simple and straight forward with no bells or whistles attached. The duo arrived on the scene at about 10 am, and parked up for a thermos tea break. After this, like true professionals, they slowly walked the course, making sure that each and every pothole was exactly where it had been last year. This in depth reconnaissance had them back at the truck at about eleven thirty just in time to fire up the tar boiler which took at least an hour to heat up to the right temperature. So it was back into the cab and out with the thermos's and the lads partook of their sarnies.

Around one o'clock it was time to hit the road and they did just that, proceeding to fill all the potholes up and down the street. At four pm all holes were filled for another twelve months and the old lads repaired back to the depot. A job that was not only well done without any fuss or bother but also one with a great future. Or that's what they thought, but they had not reckoned with modern computerised technology.

Last week we discovered, totally by accident, just how our two gallant potholers had been shafted. We watched a program on "tele" about how a City Council's road and pothole department tackled the job. Why, you might ask, did we want to watch this program is a matter I will deal with in due course!

As one starting an apprenticeship in such a huge and much abused department, your first job is as a road sweeper armed with broom and cart. From this lowly position, provided you pass your Health and Safety exams you graduate to the road repair team as a Stop and Go sign holder where a hundred percent concentration and coordination with your opposite number at the other end is an absolute must!

In due course over the years you will climb the ladder within this team, eventually becoming he that decides the job in hand is done and dusted. Should you be still at it some thirty years later, there is a chance that you will reach the pinnacle of power and become a supervisor.

This is a whole new ball game for now there is no more manual labour as you are now part of management. With this heady and responsible job comes a little council van of your very own and state of the art technology in the form of an iPad and phone.

So now when Mrs. Stuck of Up Street calls the council and moans about the crater outside her bijou "des res", a clerk registers the position by GPS on the Council computer and seconds later the message wings its way to your iPad and off you go to visit Mrs Stuck and see if she has a pothole worth filling.

On the programme the camera followed Supervisor White – Chalky to his mates - to the scene of the offending hole; once there he placed his size twelve boot in the middle of it and commented. " Aye, needs fillin do tha!" and then called in the repair team with his new phone; no worries huh!

So you see, regardless of the bottom line, modern day technology ensured that not a minute was wasted. Yet if you wondered why other potholes, not feet from this one, were left unattended, Chalky's answer quickly put us straight. "T'aint on my computer and anyroad, we don't ave all day yer know."

I think I preferred Fred and Arthur's way and anyway it ensured all potholes were done every year!

As to why we were watching this program, well it is all totally age related. As senility creeps daily in to our lives it becomes much harder to understand what people are saying on tele, even with hearing aids, and then of course there is the question of memory

Regarding the latter it is clear that at our age the tide is ebbing for both of us yet at the same time the grey fog bank rolls in across the sands of time, clouding over the memory. All too often we lose the plot with some of the "noir" whodunits and find documentaries much easier to follow. Besides which they don't have that pesky background musak, drowning out all forms of verbage.

We've done fishing in the Bering Sea, whale watching in the Antarctic, wrecker recovery teams on iced up Canadian Highways, Ice road truckers, Billion Dollar Chicken which was all about KFC; A&E, you name it we have been there and seen it, whether it be land, air, sea or desert.

So that's it for this month; who knows what next month will bring? With Sturgeon and Salmon(d) swimming up the Thames, there well may be a smell of rotting fish in the hallowed halls of the House of Commons

Jeremy Ruge-Price

April 15

“WINTER SPORTS”

We just spent a week with my wife's Mother in Maine USA.

Up there they have what we call a real proper winter; they have had twelve feet of snow in the past six weeks and temperatures hovering between – minus 23 /31°C; that is truly cold. Harbours were iced up and frozen over which makes fishing a non starter for inshore boats, meanwhile on land the snow covered over the ground floor windows. Walking on the pavement was very tricky and hazardous, as the snow plows had built up a three foot bank next to the road through which shop keepers had tunnelled out a narrow icebound pathway to their shop doors. Quite tricky for old hobblers like me!

Maine winters are very long, going on from late October till the middle of May, but there again during the short Summer months between June and September, the glass goes up to around 20 to 32°C .There's a saying up in Maine as regards the weather, “Best get yourself a good stout women for a wife, she'll keep you warm throughout the cold winter and in the summer she will keep the sun off if you stand in her shadow!”

Skiing along with sailing was one of my favorite pastimes but is no longer an option due to old brittle bones, and so in such conditions as above there isn't much fresh air entertainment as even walking is tricky. Thus it is fortunate that my Wife's Mum and her elder sister enjoy indoor games like Scrabble which they will play most days while we are over there; I hate board games with a vengeance so I have to find other ideas to keep me occupied.

My dear Sister in law, who is a paid up member of the Fuller Figure Sorority and one not known for her sporting prowess over the past two decades, decided that she should explore some outdoor snow orientated activities that we could all be able to participate in.

She emailed us a couple of astounding ideas she had found online, the first was sliding down a mountainside inside a cardboard box (bring your own), and the second was careening down a different mountain on a tube, the same tube that is used for towing behind a speedboat in summer. Due to my new hip I decided that discretion was the better part of valour and declined both offers.

Two days after our arrival they drove one and a half hours down the thruway to the site of the Cardboard Cresta. Unfortunately they had not reckoned with the popularity of the sport, for the crowds were humungous. Many had painted up their boxes in multi coloured psychedelic designs, fancy dress was also in order and one cardboarder had dressed up as a Maine moose. Abandoning all hopes of ever getting to the course it was all they could do to get a cup of coffee in the Cardboard Café before returning home.

Two days later they set out again, this time for the Terrifying Tube Run. Some enterprising fellow had made good use of the snow into a downhill slide with six tubing lanes abreast with ridges between each lane. Yet again this sport was heavily over subscribed but this time Olivia had been able to reserve two tubes and a 'tubing time' slot some weeks ahead! As you can imagine, once the tube starts on its bouncy and speedy descent, there is little if any control or skill but they managed several runs safely and successfully.

Descent is easy compared with the ascent and, in order to get to the summit, you had to hook up your tube to a form of ski lift. This required clipping your tube to a hook which was attached to a permanently moving drag line; then you sit on the tube and hang on for dear life as the tube and you are hauled up the mountainside.

At the top the general idea was to roll off the tube while at the same time releasing the latter from the drag line which is of course okay for the agile, the nimble and the fleet of foot, but Olivia wasn't short listed in any of those categories. Consequently when she did bale out, both too late and also very heavily from her tube she broke two ribs in the process which brought about the end of tubing! Cracking or breaking ribs, as some of us know all too well, is very painful, even more so when you are of a certain age. It wasn't exactly a happy group of down hill athletes that returned to the hotel!

It would seem Olivia has developed a latent desire for sporting events of this nature, for last summer she decided to go surfing off one of Maine's great sandy beaches, where, even on the hottest day of the year, the water temperature never exceeds 60 degrees. She bought a boogie board and duly waded into the roiling surf. Waves can be very powerful at times and one breaking roller sent her tumbling into deep surf while separating her from the boogie board which, being considerably more buoyant than O, shot up from the depths and cracked her on the knee and hurt her badly. Again this was the sad ending to surfing for the year.

So now safely back in the peaceful ambience of Orford, it is good to know that the Easter Bunny is lurking around the corner but Murky Dismal, our weatherman, is going to have to do better if the holidays are to be fruitful. Right now I don't think that even the crabs will be ready for the upcoming tourist season. The dour prediction of a Scottish cook will be with me forever. As Spring came to the Highlands of Aberdeenshire and one began to think of Summer clothes, she would be heard muttering, " Dinna cast a clout till May is oot".

Like most sayings of old there is much truth to be found within that statement, especially as our Spring holiday makers arrive this week while fifty mile per hour gales lash the foreshore.

This year Orford has fewer amenities than last as we are down a butcher, a smokery and the General Store café. The present smaller Front Street shop should suffice locals during the long off season, though it may well resemble Bedlam & Sons during the summer hols.

What saddens me most is the Butchers Shop going on the chopping block; I know there is virtual meat available but in my old fashioned way, virtual beef is not on my radar. I like a good old 'butchers' at meat that I eat. The loss of the café has removed the social and summer hub of downtown Orford and it has already resorted into a soulless parking lot. The town is very short of retail footage, and once gone, it will be difficult to get back.

That having being said, there is always the shop premise in the town square once owned by the Richardson family. Who knows what the new owners will do with that, but whatever that may turn out to be, it has be a vast improvement on the dilapidated and shameful eyesore of a shop front that is there right now.

Who knows, maybe the lower section of Pump Street could become a pedestrian walkway during the summer months? The Pump Street Bakery cafe could expand on to the walkway which would recreate the ambience that is now gone; anything is better than a row of mud free Chelsea tractors parked there for the entire weekend.

The mass media is now pedal to the metal about the upcoming election as the official campaign is now open. Our talking head polls are full of promises they will either not be able to keep or like New Years resolutions, will quickly forget. The blessing about our British elections is that the whole process is over and done in five weeks, and in general candidates don't spend hundreds of millions of pounds in campaign diatribes on television ads specifically crucifying and slagging off their opponents.

The main items up for discussion here seem to be the NHS, Immigration and the European Union question of "To be or not to be". I haven't noticed much on Defence or the Armed Forces as yet which would be one of my queries. My friend Sir Richard Dannat wrote an article in the Telegraph today so I am far from being alone in this.

Leaving aside just for a moment the fact that germs of Isis are sprouting like a cancer throughout many countries coupled with the added factor that Putin's provocations in Eastern Europe threaten a general peace overall, there is another long distanced defence worry that the Falklands are once more under threat yet again.

Putin is selling the Argies some dozen or so long range bombers. But no worries, the present Government is sending two Chinooks to help boost our Forces there (no reflection whatsoever on those who fly them).

While this is all going on it seems we are quite incapable of stopping some of us from leaving the Country; did you know that in the past year twice as many Brits have joined Isis than have enlisted in the T.A? That is despite millions spent on an advertising campaign with recruiting run by a civilian organisation.

And so on that bombshell of an encouraging note, I end by wishing one and all Happy Easter while we still can.

Jeremy Ruge Price

March 30th

“FINGS AIN’T WOT THEY USED TO BE”

WITH APOLOGIES TO LONNIE DONEGAN

In bygone Ramblings I have mentioned some differences between living in Orford and our past lives in America and here are a few odd thoughts and observations that spring to mind of late.

In reference to having the NHS as it exists now or alternatively going totally without, and relying on personal and business health insurance plans, perhaps some of you read about the young couple who flew over to New York for a few days shopping before Christmas?

She was six months pregnant which is great but, unfortunately gave birth six months early while still in the Big Apple. The Hospital bill for the birth alone was \$130,000 added to which she was told she would have to stay there for another three months as the baby weighed only three pounds, so air travel wasn’t an option. Imagine what the total might have been if the hospital hadn’t waved payment. So before anyone starts moaning and complaining about the NHS; think on Bro!

The other week our local A&E had a full waiting room with a one hour back up. At about midday the hospital was warned of an accident and the ambulances were on their way in with at least six serious trauma casualties.

The A&E receptionist announced to all and sundry in the waiting room that this being the case, the wait time would now be at least three hours. Fifty percent of those in the waiting room got up and left. HUH!

The second thought came from watching the program of the A&E in Kings Hospital in London. At weekends and bank holidays some eighty percent of the intake is drink or drug related! That is just not acceptable in this day and age, so give what follows some thought process.

Now I don't know what driving while intoxicated, is called over here, but this is how some States cope with the DWI problem.

At the weekend the City's police department sets up a large mobile booking station in a convenient location. On being breathalysed those suffering from the affluence of alcohol and those who have been sniffing talcum powder are all assembled at this booking station and made to sit down one side of a long table, eight in a row. Facing each one is a police officer and the suspects are held in place by handcuffs that are bolted to the table top. All will be documented, breath and blood tests taken, and if over the top, charged and taken to a central drunk tank in the city to chill out! The mobile has full testing facilities plus a doctor and even a magistrate to pass sentence there and then! (just think of the time and money saved right there).

First offenders get a month's equivalent of community service, beyond that it is an automatic mandatory one year sentence or worse depending on the magnitude of the offence. One mother was pulled over by a deputy sheriff, found to be twice over the limit and then the cop then discovered her nine month old baby strapped in the back seat! She got a year.

Now here's the good part; whether you be serving a month or more, those sentenced are placed in similar prison units, in this case it was an old army base with razor wired all round. (We have lots of those). Contrary to a normal US prison community which is full of the multi tattooed Brothers and dangerous street gangs such as the Bloods or the Crips; these inmates are not hardened criminals but are just like you and me; some are mums or dads, some are rich others are poor, old and young, all normal everyday working people. All have one wish in common, that is the absolute desire never to be inside there again.

While interned there everyone wears a bright pink T-shirt with DWI printed front and back along with black and white striped sweatpants. The aim of this colourful garb being to make them very visible while working in public areas. During the day they all do community service, BUT, and here is the real difference, everyone is in a male or female chain gang of six inmates and the work they are doing is in full eyesight of the general public.

One of the tasks these gangs do is clean the roadsides and verges along major highways. Have you noticed how clean the French routes are, pristine! Whereas ours, especially the motorways and City ring roads, are covered with discarded cans of Iron Bru, Kentucky Fried Chicken containers, Costa Coffee paper cups and Starburst jellybean packets, just to name a few. Wouldn't it warm the cockles of your heart to see a DWI road chain gang at work cleaning up all the detritus that some one else threw out of the car window.

Despite the unusually warm winter, its pothole time again. The road that runs from Munday's Lane to the main road seems to have no name which explains why it is not on the SCDC pothole computer site. It is beginning to look as though the Taliban have been practising the art of laying of IEDs along it. Sadly Bert and Alf, who took over the potholing from old Fred and Arthur a couple of years back, are never going to find it while it remains "off grid" as far as the Council are concerned. Meanwhile take an alternative route to the Post Office.

Last night we watched "And Night Will Fall", a program about the making of the movie at the end of WWII by Sidney Bernstein and Alfred Hitchcock. It was about the Concentration Camps set up by the SS, and was very harrowing to watch even for me whilst my Wife was appalled by the brutality. One of the camps was Bergen Belsen and I spent some of my army career stationed there as it was next to the tank gunnery ranges.

It was a very strange and eerie place, even in the early sixties, and only the Guard Room was left standing at that point. There were no birds or animals of any sort living there and when you let your dog out of the car, his hackles went up immediately, everything about the place left you with a deep feeling of evil.

In this day of Isis and other horrors it seems there is a sharp rise of right wing entities around the Globe on all sides, and not just Christian but Muslim as well, plus there is an increased exodus of Jews from much of Europe.

This film should be compulsory viewing by anyone remotely harbouring those ideals lest it come to haunt us once again during our children's' and grandchildren's life time.

Lastly, my thanks to Bridget, her team of Shrimp supporters and all of you who contributed to the raffle for my daub of Orford. We have raised lots of luvverly shekels for our Shrimps which are a very necessary need as they don't get funded.

If I win it in the raffle - and I believe I am the one putting his hand in the ticket stub box to choose the winner! - I will sell it again down at the Jolly Studio this Spring and hand over the entire proceeds to the Shrimps.

Jeremy Rugge-Price

February 1st 2015

2015

New Years Eve is almost nigh, Twenty Fifteen indeed. Across the time zones of the globe, police forces, paramedics and nurses in A& E's will be dealing with an epidemic of the over imbibed found lying immobile on city pavements and sidewalks. From Sydney to San Francisco, Trafalgar Square to Times Square, hordes of New Year's Eve enthusiasts will be counting down the seconds to midnight, before having another wee dram or four and will wake up in the dungeons of some drunken tank suffering from amnesia of the night before. Have pity on those paramedical teams spending all night mopping messy technicolour yawns galore from inside their ambulances!

That may sound cynical but New Year has never been a special night to me. There have been the odd one here and there; the SS Clan Cumming leaving King George V dock in Glasgow at midnight was one. The stevedores, tug crews and some of our own matelots were several sheets to windward, it made for some dodgy and exciting movement in the close quarters of the docks till we reached the River Clyde.

The Army in Malaya was another good place to be on a night like this; we had two Aussie officers who were singing the ballad of Ned Kelly while teetering and tottering on the apex of the officers mess roof; I never realised there were so many verses. The main problem was that their mates were attempting to re supply the roof top team by hurling beers as tho they were grenades. Each time one or the other of the vocalists would lean precariously out in an attempt to catch a near miss, to the accompaniment of applause from the cheering crowd below.

A pub full of seamen in Mile End road was another time but somewhere in the back of my memory I think I joined the ranks of the over refreshed groupies that particular time so maybe the less said the better. I do remember being on the little stage singing that old sea shanty which starts with "Four and twenty Virgins came down from Inverness....."

Right now there will be much crunching of the old grey matter as to New Years Resolutions, most of which will land on what the Good Book calls "stony ground" where they will have all withered away by the end of February 's frosts.

Me, well I wish my dear Wife would be able to get better after two years of being ill. My resolutions are twofold, a) to be nice to people and b) since my TV licence payments stop for ever in March I feel that from here on I am going to eat everything I like and to Hades with diets!

Over the Christmas period I had to take my wife into the Hospital on a 111 call; ie we went to entrance 5 and not A&E. We were instructed to tell the receptionist that she was a priority case which was just as well as the small crowded room looked like Paddington Station on a bank holiday. We were seen and dealt with in minutes and finding just two chairs left, we sat down to wait being collected by my son. No one looked that ill or desperate but the amount of people who kept coming up to the hard pressed receptionist and complaining about waiting was endless and it began to

annoy me. It's not the staffs problems there aren't enough doctors or nurses but that of the Government and George Osborne's severity cuts across the board.

While we waited a young mother came in with a three month old sick baby while carrying a large bag with nappies etc. She stood there in the middle of the room for two minutes and not one person offered her the seat she so clearly needed. I am on crutches at this time after a hip replacement but I stood up and made my way over to her and said very loudly

"Madam you clearly need to have a seat, I may be on crutches but your need is far greater than mine and no one in here seems to have any manners whatsoever'.

She was most grateful and sat down next to my wife.

We got back from a five day Christmas holiday with the family, all of which was great fun if not exhausting. While our luggage was being unloaded into the house, I spotted a white plastic dog poop bag on the door step; it was both full and clearly very fresh. Since the step is twenty five feet from the road, it would suggest that it had been put there purposely.

Maybe my Ramblings have made me an enemy, but let's face it; it is only one old fogey's thoughts, not exactly Hansard! Anyway everyone is allowed an opinion, that being said, revenge is sweet!

I have a lifetime promise from my years of running hotels and restaurants in New York City. It was made to me by the boss of one of the Mafia families in person. "Jeremy." He said. "In the years you have been here it has been a pleasure working with you. Should you ever have a problem back in England, call this number, it is manned 24 hours a day, seven days a week; Rest assured we will get what ever it is sorted for youse!". So ye of the dog poop depository on my doorstep, best watch yer back chum, for I still have the number!

The NYC Mafia run the meat fish and veg markets, the garbage disposal, table linen and hotel laundry, the booze trade, plumbers, electricians et al. I worked with each and every one of them directly thru the Bosses of each Family, and they were all gentlemen. Just don't fall foul of the system. A guy I knew who didn't pay his fish supplier for a month had a pound of flesh neatly filleted off the back of each thigh. That I can guarantee as he lived above one of the restaurants and I had to help him upstairs that day

Have a Happy New Years Eve; I will be sleeping soundly by ten thirty.

Jeremy Ruge-Price

CHRISTMAS PAST

As Christmas Day approaches, the level of excitement begins to build up in the minds of little people like our Shrimps at Orford School. Somehow Christmas seemed to be much more fun when we were young; Father Christmas climbing down the chimney; bulging stockings at the end of the bed; the pile of presents under the tree; mince pies and a morsel of Christmas pud to put on top my brandy butter; it was a time of festive fantastic fantasia.

Of late I was reminiscing about some Christmas's we had as children and the very thought of Father Christmas climbing down a hot chimney to put stockings at the end of our beds was madly exciting, I used to wonder how he never got his red costume dirty. The very fact of going to sleep on Christmas Eve was an extremely hard thing to accomplish, yet I never was able to stay awake till the magic hour.

The first Christmas I remember well is when I was ten years old. We had just moved to a big Georgian house in the village of Brinkley near Newmarket. We three brothers had a new stepfather Tom Blackwell, a great person and better stepfather one could not have wished for.

The house was full of his family and friends whilst we smallfry were domiciled in the nursery wing with Nanny. One of the regular guest's was Tom's brother John who had been a Prisoner of War, having been captured at Dunkirk, and he had five years to make up. So the chance to buy toys for three young stepsons was right up his alley.

The toy of the year in 1950 was the solid fuel jetex propulsion pack, it was a small solid object, about the size and shape of hotel soap freebees, and with the addition of a small gizmo you fitted it onto a toy car, plane or boat, lit the fuse and stood back!

I got the plane, my brother Andrew the car and Jamie had a boat. Naturally Nanny immediately complained to Ma that these toys were way beyond our limited knowledge of rocket propulsion and not at all suitable, so of course the Brothers Blackwell got to play with our presents.

After a long and liquid Christmas lunch brought to an end only because of the Queens Speech, the ex Coldstream Guards brothers went up onto the roof with my plane while the rest of the company took up station some fifty yards away in the garden. There was much giggling from the firing party on the roof and then the magic words were heard.

'Here it comes!

My new and as yet unseen present shot like a rocket from the roof towards us at a height of about fifty feet, looped the loop then peeling off left, disappeared over the ploughed field next door and was last seen heading at tree top height over a belt of trees some four hundred yards away. It was never to be seen again. I had not even had the time to unwrap and open the box! However the wacky Wingcos up in the control tower declared mission accomplished!

The following day it was the turn of Andrew's car, it was modelled on a sort of Brooklands type racing car. The "Pit" party decided that it needed a very smooth long surface and the ideal track was found to be the long the back passage which led from the back door to the green baize door by the butlers pantry.

I should point out here that there was a mini Downtonesque lifestyle at Langham with several living in staff amongst whom were Archer the butler, Hartley the chauffeur and Doris the cook and of course Nanny, others came on a daily basis; I would also like to add that since we lived all our lives on the same side of the green baize door as all of them, they were our best friends.

Anyway back to Brooklands; We all gathered in the various doorways that led off this passage while the pit crew messed about on the grid by the back door. They must have been a mite overzealous for the jetex fired up prematurely. The car shot down the long passage at an amazing speed and smashed head on into the green baize door and was, of course completely totalled! Much cheering from the pit crew yet again.

The following morning it was the "Lords of the Admiralty" that decided to put to sea in Jamie's boat. The action was to take place on a large round muddy pond by the stables, and was some forty feet in diameter.

Crowds gathered including Archer, Hartley and some of the gardeners. This time in the interests of some form of survival, their Lordships put the rudder at an angle that would make the torpedo boat circle around the pond the pond. This it duly did at great speed but must have taken on some water as the solid fuel system went out like a damp squib leaving the boat marooned in the middle of the ocean.

"Never mind" said the First Sea Lord, "you get it back in and we will try again this afternoon". At which the entire board of the Admiralty repaired inside for a large gin and tonic.

What to do, the boat was at least fifteen feet from the edge and it was too deep and muddy to wade in. Hartley suggested gently lobbing small pebbles between us and the boat and eventually the ripples would wash it to the other side of the pond. So we commenced with this scheme; it was slow work but the boat was certainly drifting in the right direction.

At this point Arthur decided he should move things along a bit faster as he was going to have to lay up the dining room table for lunch very shortly. Arthur was a great mate and one of his most arduous daily tasks was to refill all the wine and brandy decanters before lunch and dinner. This meant tasting each bottle of claret he opened in case they should be corked.

So realising that a little claret tasting was much needed, Arthur found an old brick and without warning launched it at HMS Troutbridge. It was a direct hit amidships and the vessel; turned turtle and sank like a stone never to be seen again.

I hope you all have a wonderful Christmas; we are off to spend it with my children and five of my eleven grandchildren; just a quiet family holiday as usual!

A Merry Christmas to any that peruse my ramblings

Jeremy Ruge-Price

THE GOLDEN EGG

This month's ramblings are a bit late as I have been under the care of the Ipswich NHS Trust with a right hip replacement two weeks ago. I must say that my entire experience under their wing, from pre-op to post-op, was one of care, consideration, cheerfulness and smiling appearance of both doctors and nurses was truly excellent. They work long and exhausting shifts with a totally professional attitude and skill. This includes everyone, from my surgeon and his theatre staff, the nurses and physios on the ward right on down to the two cheeky tea ladies. I was very suitably impressed by the whole team and have written to the Chief Executive of this Ipswich Trust to convey my sincere thanks. It also has to be said here that our own Peninsula Practice has a very professional and helpful team of both doctors and nurses.

It seems that everyday the media, both electronic and tabloid, fires yet another quiver of arrows deep into the heart of the Trust, seemingly intent on killing off for good the Goose that lays the Golden Egg. Yet my experiences in hospital give me to wonder why anyone would seek private medical attention while such excellent expertise and services are on offer for free just down the road.

It is mere coincidence that two weeks after my release the Chancellor of the Exchequer paid two million pounds into the NHS trust. Knowing how hopeless I am with money I want to ensure members of my family that this was not to pay my personal expenses while serenely floating on a morphine cloud above my hospital bed.

For every article that tells where something bad has occurred, somewhere around the country there must be millions like me who have been treated very successfully, both medically and physically and whose stories never get reported. But of course good news doesn't sell papers or attract viewers.

Talking to senior nurse I discover that all this is negative reporting has produced a large group of people who would rather suffer at home than seek help in a hospital entirely from a false fear that they will die inside as a result of some malfunction. Now I don't say it hasn't happened nor that it won't again. If you consider the likelihood of this when stacked against those millions who pass through the system and emerge cured and well; there is probably more chance of being knocked down by a passing bus.

As a nation we are extremely lucky to have such a Golden Egg as the NHS and it seems that many consider it their absolute right to have free medical help. Wrong bro!

Imagine if you had to pay to see the doctor, pay for your prescription package every month, pay every time you went to A& E, pay for every operation you underwent? Most in this country could not afford that.

That is a problem that we faced for years when living elsewhere. I never saw doctors in the US. If I felt the need for any reason I would visit the local pharmacy and ask the pharmacist, after all they are qualified medical folk who can diagnose and offer you the right way to go medically. Think how much more time our doctors here would have if this was a norm; think of the massive reduction of wasted time in A&E; think how much money this would save the NHS in one year.

President Obama's health plan is a much-needed piece of legislation by the masses who can't afford health insurance, that is about seventy five percent of all Americans. If, as seems highly likely, the NHS as we know it now withers under the weight, it will come as a massive shock to all those in the middle to lower income brackets let alone those on benefits or unemployed! We will be suffering the same problems as over the pond.

So, ye good folk of Orford, just imagine none of the NHS freebees including the Peninsula Practice existed and everything from prescriptions, doctors visits to operations had to be paid for - even A&E would want plastic before they check you in. As for ambulance drivers, some would ask if you have medical insurance while you are lying there injured on the road and if, as would be the case, most wouldn't have coverage, there would be a good chance of your crawling painfully off this mortal coil as road kill!

My own wish in all of this; charge anyone brought into A&E as a result of drink or drugs before they were treated. That would remove a huge waste of good medical time that could be put to proper use for those really ill. If you have gone to A&E with some minor ailment and are still waiting after twenty four hours, be assured of two things, you are still in the land of the living and your complaint wasn't an emergency.

The NHS isn't just the Golden Egg, it's a Jewel in our Crown, and God forbid some one nicks it.

Jeremy Rugge-Price

December Ramblings 2014

A WALK ON THE DARK SIDE

As I write this it will be a couple of weeks before we will all be at the mercy of the ghostly Trick or Treaters, for Halloween will be upon us. Ghosties, ghouls, gremlins, skeletons and witches and inevitably the occasional mini Spiderman will all be abroad come the darkness of night. Loud knocking at our door triggers Trooper, our Labrador, into a frantic fit of extremely loud barking, which should be enough to scare most mini vampires all the way back to Transylvania.

Although our esteemed vicar would tell us that the origins of this festival were derived from All Hallow's Eve, that would be in name only, for in pagan eras there were similar events to mark this time of year, no doubt considerably more grim and ghastly back then. Nowadays Halloween has been hijacked by Hallmark Cards, and Nestlé's et al.

When my youngest was about five, we lived on the 31st floor of a high rise apartment block on the upper East Side of New York. Most apartments in that part of town were inhabited by the rich and famous as well as the aged facelifted wrinklies of the Blue Hair - Rinse Brigade. Some of the latter were far more ghoulish and grisly than the children in costumes!

With thirty floors and four apartments per floor making by my suspect calculations one hundred and twenty front doors, just imagine the possibilities of potential plunder available and what's more, without ever have to step outside the building.

The Head Porter was given strict instructions, along with the mandatory crisp twenty dollar bill, not to let in any passing proletarian phantoms of the night from the street outside. All the children living in the building were dressed up in ghostly gear and let loose to haunt the occupants who were, no doubt, settling down comfortably to watch ABC News. Even allowing for the odd Cruella de Ville per floor, the overall takings of candy and chocolate were most impressive and massive, and it was best to be armed with a garbage bag to hold all the takings, Willy Wonka would have been positively drooling with envy over the spoils.

There is of course, as always, the eventual payback for all this heathen generosity. All these candy treats had to be consumed, and so over a few years many little teeth developed hidden cavities. The Upper Eastside dentists, rubbing their hands with glee, awaited eagerly for the young to cross their gilded portals, accompanied of course by mothers armed with bulging check books to pay for all the required drilling for endless root canal.

Maybe I should have been a dentist rather than an artist, but then I think the smell of rotting teeth, let alone the cavernous view, would have put me off.

A further walk on the dark side is but a week away following Halloween, when it will be Bonfire Night courtesy of G. Fawkes Esq. Although his original blast was aimed at the King, I suspect dear old Guy's Gunpowder plot to blow up a few MPs might find some willing helpers in today's world, considering the pusillanimosity of almost all our politicians of today.

I don't intend to enter the scurrilous world of politics in my Ramblings, but I have to say I have always been fond of the occasional kipper, just as long as they don't hang around too long!

For the past week, while driving to various local stores, I have observed three orange clad friends of old Fred and Arthur inserting reels of long rubber clad tubing in to manhole covers. Nothing struck me as strange until I realised they were getting nearer and nearer to Orford. This morning I stopped by them and discovered they are laying a new IT cable. Could it be were are, at long last, being treated to the world of fast internet service? I do hope so?

Should any of you go and see the new movie Fury, please read on. The film is about the crew of a Sherman tank called Fury in Normandy and Brad Pitt is the leading man. Much of it was shot around Bovington Tank Driving school in Dorset - a spot I know all too well - and the American producer wanted to achieve maximum authenticity. He asked if there was still anyone alive who might know what life was like in Sherman in those days? There aren't many I can tell you!

His answer lay in a great old fella called Peter Comfort now 91 years old. Peter had served in the B squadron of the 13/18th Royal Hussars when they went ashore on June 6th, he was then aged 21 and my Dad had been his Squadron Leader at the time.

They had Peter down to Bovington and he instructed Brad Pitt on what it was like to live and fight in a tank, day in day out. He described just how dirty, noisy, oily, smelly, including body odour, massive fumes from the diesel engine and cordite from the empty shell cases, the whole thing was and that didn't include any enemy shelling either!

To those who have never lived in an armoured vehicle let me tell you it is cramped at best. You are forever hitting your head and body on the many sharp projections inside the turret even when the vehicle is stationary; as for going cross country well, you just hang on for dear life while at the same time map reading, answering radio messages, giving instructions over the intercom to both driver and gunner, and last but by no means least keeping a very watchful eye out for the enemy! Multi tasking is hardly the word for it.

This was Peter's job to get it all over to the actors and he must have done it well for he was a guest of honour at the Red Carpet opening of the movie in Leicester Square last Sunday. I remember one of the very few of stories my Dad ever told about the war and Shermans.

At one point his tank was hit and caught fire tho they all baled out safely. At the point of contact he had just started eating a compo biscuit. These were for many years a staple part of the army rations given out in the field of operations by the quartermaster (they were still going when my son Jake served in Iraq and Helmand).

They consisted of a large biscuit which could be eaten just as such or, alternatively, soaked in warm water to create porridge, either way it bunged you up for days to come. I can assure you that when your daily life requires being forced to poop in the nearest ditch whilst squatting in the rain, being solidly bunged has its distinct advantages !

In Dads' case he had eaten one bite when they were hit, he put the biscuit down on the turret ring as he jumped out. In 1947 he took me back to that spot and the tank was still there and so was the half eaten biscuit! Just imagine what it does inside one's tummy!

Life back then must have been one very long wall on the dark side and sadly many didn't finish it.

Happy Halloween

Jeremy Ruge-Price

November Ramblings 2014

ps Orford Shrimps

Ruge-Price image

In an attempt to raise money for our Shrimps programme in the school, I am auctioning a painting of the Quay at the Christmas Bazaar on Dec 6th.

The painting is on view in the window (facing the square) of the Manor House during the week and will be on view at every Country Markey between now and the 6th of December. Bids should be placed thru the Manor House letterbox and must include; name, telephone number and amount. A daily tally will be on display.

A FEW DEGREES OF SEPARATION

Those of us in Orford are considered by many to be living in a small corner of paradise and I must say they have a point. Once you are passed the five corners junction it feels as though you have left the mainland behind and are now in a small world devoid of the humdrum and bustle of the rest of the UK. That, by the way, includes any remote form of signal on mobiles as well as the slowest internet speed possible!

We left our little Utopia last week for our annual pilgrimage to another piece of paradise, Roche Bernard in Bretagne. Here we boarded a yacht of one of my eldest friends for a week of R&R, much needed after the summer's activity. My sealegs and balance having deserted me some time ago, we tend not to do too much and so, as an inveterate conehead, the most urgent question requiring deep thought process is what flavor of ice cream to consume after lunch.

Bretagne has always been one of my most favorite places since my childhood days spent there on family summer holidays. Brittany feels itself to be apart from the mainstream of the host country in which it lies, and unlike the forever "a non, c'est impossible" Parisians, Bretons are for the most part hospitable and welcoming to those whom they know.

Celtic in origin, Bretons have much in common with Cornwall and Wales, their languages are all very similar. In the 9th century onwards many Celts from Wales sailed to Brittany, some to convert the locals to Christianity, most to avoid the Viking hordes. I like to think that a few of my Welsh family forbears were amongst those that settled there.

There is a beautiful island, naturally called Belle Ile, some fifteen miles off shore. It is about five miles long by twelve mile in length, with a craggy and rocky coastline facing out into the Atlantic Ocean. Monet spent much time here painting the huge rollers crashing on the rocks below.

In the centre is a small village called Bangor which would tend to back up my family links as Bangor Cathedral was founded in Wales in the sixth century. At this point in history Wales consisted of fifteen tribes, and my ancient relative was the Brigand Big Shot in charge of the Northern most clan.*

It so happens that my wife, Paula, was born in Bangor Maine. These Maine Celts, sailing from Bretagne, Cornwall and Wales were fishermen by trade, who followed the Portuguese to the massive cod fishing grounds on the Grand Banks off Nova Scotia.

It wasn't just a one way trade tho, we reaped a big benefit from these fishermen besides fish. Labrador in North West Canada is separated from Newfoundland by the Straights of Belle Isle (!) and the Inuit tribes had lived there for centuries.

The nineteenth century explorers of these harsh and unforgiving lands found that the Inuits bred two domestic dogs, our present day labradors. They had two different species; the smooth haired variety who were used for hunting and those with curly hair down their backs and tails. The latter, like our dog Trooper, were known as fishermen. They had webbed forefeet and were used to catch fish in the seawater around the coast. When we took Trooper to the west coast of Scotland, he spent all day in the crystal clear rock pools, head totally immersed under the water, picking objects from the sand and depositing them on the rocks. This fishing came naturally to him and was without any prompting from either of us.

As several of you know, many of my paintings depict fishing schooners of Nova Scotia and Maine. Fishing on the Grand Banks was a dangerous occupation as it is anywhere even today and up there many lives were lost to storms. Each schooner carried some eight sixteen foot dories which would be lowered into the sea. The one or two occupants would spend the next hours longlining cod, haddock and swordfish, alone in the ocean, two hundred and fifty miles or more from land and at the mercy of the wind and waves.

That part of the world is prone to fast rolling fog banks and in a few minutes all the dories would vanish from sight in the swirling mists. Loss of life was one thing, loss of the catch quite something else, it was hard currency!

However canny Celtic skippers would have a Labrador on the schooner just for this very purpose. The lab would sniff the air, and the helmsman would point the vessel in the direction of his head, and lo and behold there in due course, they would find the dories!

If you go to Cornish fishing ports such as Falmouth, you will find little alleyways and streets such as Labrador Way or Labrador Alley. This is where the New England fishing boats brought the labradors ashore to England.

So here am I, a cantankerous old coot of Celtic origins, with a wife from Bangor and dog from Labrador, all connected in one way or another to each other down through the ages, with merely a few degrees of separation between us all .

Jeremy Rugge-Price

October Ramblings 2014

* Some years ago, my brother sold his house in Iken. Whilst turning it out he came across a large rolled up object in the downstairs loo cupboard; all the best long lost items are to be found in loo cupboards. It was about to be consigned to the deep six but a sixth sense told him to dig deeper. It turned out to be a five by eight foot parchment from 1822 with our family tree inscribed thereupon; this has since been authenticated by the College of Arms. Our ancestor was indeed in charge of one of the fifteen Celtic Welsh tribes and his was from the north which included Bangor. It only goes to show, check out the loo cupboard, you may be surprised at who you are and what you find!

SEPTEMBER SONG

THE GOOD AND THE SAD

As I write, the summer of '14 has been and is now gone. It's Bank Holiday Monday and the monsoons are now deluging down on the participants of the annual Orford Boat Race. Those that sank were no wetter than those who completed the course.

The last few holiday cottage families are loading up their Tooting Bec Tractors (I don't know anyone who still lives in Chelsea whereas I do know several in Tooting Bec) with bags and bikes and boat trailers for the drive back to the outer London boroughs or wherever they may live.

These folk are always the last to leave Orford, all the daily conehead consumers departed yesterday afternoon having been warned off in advance by the dismal weather forecast. So that really is that for this year as far as the summer season is concerned.

In the North Eastern States of America this is the Fall season - referring to leaves in case you hadn't realised - and the multicolours of the leaves on the hills and mountains are a bountiful beauty of nature to behold. The kaleidoscope of gold, yellow, orange, pink and red against the backdrop of dark firs and pines creates an artist's landscape dream.

It also creates a whole new tourist season from September till October, operating from the Canadian border across Maine, New Hampshire and Vermont south through Massachusetts, along the Hudson River valley and down through New York.

These Fall folk, in general the tottering and wrinkly like me, are known as Leaf Peepers. They arrive in droves and besides peeping, are well known for swelling the coffers of the hotels, guest houses and restaurants for the next six weeks and, as discerning art lovers, they also help boost gallery sales.

Sadly our leaves, already falling off the trees, don't get this wonderful spectrum of colour, they just go brown and drop on my flowerbed where they remain waiting for me to rake them up. Lacking the leaf peeper folk, most of our daily visitors here will be of the hiking and bird watching fraternity and as such contribute very little if anything to anyone!

I shall miss the sound of small children as they walk past armed with crabbing nets and buckets. Some of their remarks are classic:

Six year old princess on entering the store;

"Oh Mummy, what a lovely shop, what shall we buy'!

(Clearly a future platinum card holder of American Express)

Another young lady walking down to the quay.

"But Mummy, if we aren't going to swim why did we bring our cossies?"

(That remark was game set and match in my book so she must be destined to be a leading member of the judiciary)

However the best crabbing story involved two old Nans.

The elderly pair went into Pinneys and bought a whole large fresh crab, then purchasing a crabbing bucket, filled it with water, put the crab inside and took it over to their families who were having a hard time catching a few little crabs on the Quay. "Look what we caught!" they said in unison.

(It's never over 'til the Fat Lady sings!)

Crabbing apart, I didn't think it was the best of summers either in tourista numbers or weather and I don't think I was alone in that view. There were people about but not as many as normal and those that were didn't want to open their wallets anyway!

There is, I suspect, a very good reason for this; while prices and the economy continue to soar, wages for many have stayed static and in some cases been reduced.

NOW TO THE GOOD:

There was one new venue that soon became well known, the Lisa Marie ice cream stall on the site near the castle. Both previous operators here had failed to make this site work at all and had given up using it. So here was a young Orford family investing hard earned wages and trying to better their lives and that of their children. The summer coneheads had a bonanza for the ice cream, all fourteen flavours, was of a very high standard. It has been a major success but as all successes are wont to do, it has brought its detractors which is sad.

I hope this all ends amicably as the ice cream brought pleasure to masses of children and adults alike throughout the summer. If I were a betting man I would bet it helped swell the numbers of turista at the castle gate!

The castle is a great feature of Orford and apparently, being part of English Heritage, does not require any form of directional signing as everyone is presumed to know exactly where it is! I reckon as a norm during the summer, I must tell a hundred people per month how to get there from the Quay car park. Now I just tell them to follow the signs to the ice cream stall which they would have seen when entering the village. They know immediately where to go!

THE SAD:

One great sadness to befall Orford is that Tim has closed the Richardson Smokehouse after many years of trading. Death duties are the plague of far too many families and the threshold should be far higher than it is. It will be very sad to see them go and I will miss both them and their wonderful products. There is often some good that comes from the bad and in this case it just could be that the shop front on the square might be put to a more interesting use than by the present occupiers!

So now as the pace calms down for a while I am going to take a break in Brittany, with a bit of sailing and of course consume cones by the score.

Au revoir Mesdames et Messieurs, à bientôt!

Jeremy Ruge Price

September 1st 2014

THE SILENCE OF THE LAMBS

My teenage years were spent near a little Suffolk village called Langham, twelve miles from Bury St Edmunds. There were about a dozen cottages where lived the seventy or so villagers.

There was no bus, church, pub, post office, school, telephone service or telephone box and no village store; most of these were a mile away in another little village where a bus service was available every Friday to take you to the highlights of Bury St Edmunds.

There was no mains water so each cottage had its own outside privy in the back garden. These could be a little chilly on a frosty winter's morn whilst at the height of summer – well maybe we won't go there right now!

The villagers themselves didn't stray very far afield, two had been to London, each week a dozen housewives would venture to Bury to shop, otherwise all stayed put and worked locally. This was indeed a time when the countryside really was silent.

There was a Langham church but it was situated a mile away in the middle of the parkland of our house. It was half a mile from any road and was mainly used in the summer as the roof leaked and there was no heating. A long Christmas sermon by the vicar was likely to produce frostbite and hypothermia amongst the massed congregation of seven.

The church dated back to before the eleventh century and was surrounded by giant yew trees. It would have been a place of last resort for the villagers from raiding Danes and Norsemen and, if you were low on arrows, all you had to do was nip outside and cut a few small branches off the trees and you were back in the firing line again.

But then cometh the Black Plague which struck down many villages and in a last ditch attempt to contain the disease, villagers picked up their goods and chattels and trudged at least a mile away from where the contaminated bodies had been buried around the church.

In the fifties Suffolk was a scene of peace and quiet, the loudest noise at that point being from the rookery around the church.

So imagine our amazement then, as children, when one day a squadron of USAF sabre jets roared very low over the house and landed at what we had thought was a disused WW2 airfield not three miles away as the crow flies. My brothers and I were on our bikes within seconds to recce the scene. To our absolute delight we discovered that the house was directly in line with the runway for massed take offs. The start of the Cold War had put us back on the map and it was at this point I left Suffolk to begin my working life.

So now we scramble aboard the Tardis with Dr Who, whiz thru time and land back in Suffolk in 2104.

We were lucky enough to touch down in Orford and hopefully here we will stay till the Grim Reaper calls. It seems my line for the checkout gets shorter every time the ambulance pays us a visit in the dead of night!

However, Orford is a wonderful place to wait in the queue, we have everything we could possible want in local amenities, good friends and neighbours from all walks of life, sea air and lovely countryside to walk in. As someone merely passing through I could not want for more, but I do worry about those families who have been here for generations, be they farmers, fishermen or more. The cost of houses in the town is reaching mega buck levels, real estate agent's signs line the roadsides like poppies and while you can't halt progress, there are some who seem forever determined to push the level way above the going rate. They remind me of leeches in the jungles of Malaya.

I know a town in the fashionable Hamptons, a seaside community on Long Island, seventy miles from New York where all local folk have been pushed right out of the hive by this process. Each day buses

bring worker bees back into the small town to look after and care for the needs of the wealthy townees from the City. It is no longer a pleasant place nor one I would want to visit let alone live in.

I have noticed in various forms of media, a growing group of moaning minnies who have recently moved to the country and are amazed that it is no longer silent as they were given to believe. These complaints range from cocks crowing, children playing, even to aircraft overhead. Just today in the Telegraph there is one from a lady on holiday in Cornwall who moans about seagulls in Cornwall waking her up at 4am each day; welcome to the seaside Madam.

One of the musical directors from Snape, lately declared that the noise of aircraft from Bentwaters could endanger the Aldeburgh Music Festival! Clearly he is a descendent of Pinocchio. A big wig from English Heritage moaned that the small generator from the splendid ice cream stall by the Castle was making too much noise. Part of the reason more visitors are going to the castle than before is because of the quality ice creams now available at the stall, so quit moaning and be grateful for small mercies.

At dawn in the country, cocks are crowing, pigeons cooing, cows a'mooing, and three hundred and fifty mornings per annum, the hard working farming community starts work. If that means huge tractors growling past our house early in the day or late evening all year round, so be it!

Later on in the day we will hear the sound of children playing in nearby gardens. Surely it is better they be doing that than sitting indoors tweeting.

In this day and age you cannot expect to sit in your back garden with the newspaper surrounded merely by the sound of silence. If you do, then hie ye awa to the heather and the Highlands and find a wee bothy to live in. Beware tho, it probably has a privy out back!

Oh yes, the silence of the lambs? Well they have a high pitched bleat in case you didn't know.

On this special day of August should anyone want to know just what silence really sounds like, I would suggest a visit to somewhere like The Menin Gate, Thiepval, Tyne Cot or any of the World War I cemeteries.

Believe me when I say, you can truly hear it.

Jeremy Ruge-Price

August 3rd 2014

QUAINT IT AIN'T

As July kicks in, many people are awaiting the arrival of the Coneheads and Crabbers, some with dread and others with glee. This time of year most of the visitors in town are of the creaky limbed and wrinkled variety and they too have their own nomenclature, the Teas and Wees Brigade of which I am now a fully fledged member.

Yesterday a group of them were hobbling up Quay Street and I heard one old dear say to another.

“Orford really is quaint and oldie worldy isn’t it”

Little did she know just how far from the truth that statement was. For had she been able to peer beneath the surface she would have realised that Orford is now living on the Dark Side.

A week or so ago a vessel flying the Dutch ensign deposited eight illegal aliens on the Quay around midnight. They were spotted disembarking by a sharp eyed legal eagle from his weekend perch near the quay.

This was no haphazard happening for just as the boat came alongside, two hooded individuals walked down the quay to whisk away the illicit aliens, all the while carefully avoiding walking in the lighted area. The boat had timed its arrival to coincide with high tide, so much so that the disembarkation all happened so quickly and smoothly that they hadn’t even bothered to tie up, and having disgorged the cargo, they disappeared into the night; a very professional job all round.

The following morning I was chatting to a very nice young policeman who suggested to me that there must have been people around who would have seen all this taking place so I pointed out that most Orford residents were in bed with their teddy bear by nine pm!

He followed that up by asking where the CCTV cameras were placed along Quay Street; so while we stood there together shooting the breeze I suggested he try and contact me on my mobile there and then; I think he got the plot!

My question would be that if you are smuggling members of the Islamist Jihad fraternity, why fly your National flag in the first place? There again why attempt to navigate a very tricky river mouth with ever shifting pebble shoals and no night navigational markers, motor an hour up river, deposit your contraband and flee the same way as you came. This was a much meticulously planned landing and, I gather, far from being the only one of late. High tides and no moon are the prerequisites of this skipper.

You might wonder why the Coastguard and UK Border control have not put the river mouth by Shingle Beach under constant observation by now but then on thinking that thru I realise that it is more than likely that due to Government cuts the Coastguard probably don’t have a boat anymore and the UK Border guys are all playing catch up in the passport office, so no one is available at the present time to repel the invading hordes.

So tonight when you are tucked up in bed supposedly safe and sound, should you be woken by the tramp of marching men in the middle of the night, don’t worry it is merely the Legions of Romanian Romas or a battle hardened Brigade of British Jihadists fresh from Syria or Iraq tramping down the one and only road out of Orford!

Methinks that even Captain Mainwaring and his Dads Army Platoon would have worked that out.

Now if that weren't enough, later that week, an overnight line fisherman down river by Havergate found a bag of some very expensive white powder on the shore. I don't think the two were in any way connected but it does suggest that the Ore and Orford are no longer in the quaint and oldie worldly bracket.

Seems that some of my mutterings and mumblings have borne fruit in the past month; first of all Fred and Arthur's mates in the SCDC highways department have not just filled in potholes but in time will be totally resurfacing the entire Munday's Lane, or so they say but I wouldn't hold your breath. Secondly the Army's compo biscuits in my D Day ramblings hit the headlines when two of them dating from the Gallipoli Fiasco were auctioned for £345; see I told you they were long lasting in more ways than one.

Lastly the Ore and Alde, an organisation which does untold good in our area year round, has come out against the Grace Spitfire on the grounds of disturbing the wildlife. In my personal experience wildlife abounds on such places as gunnery or tank firing ranges as on most commercial airports I have been to. All such spots are filled with incredible ear shattering noise but yet are vast uncultivated areas where the actual foot print of man doesn't ever go and thus wildlife flourishes.

The opposite end of the scale I witnessed was the Belsen training area where, in 1960 there were no birds or animals whatsoever, and if you let your dog out of the car his hackles went up immediately; that was due to man and not noise, yet the silence was deafening.

Jeremy Ruge Price

July 1st 2014

D DAY SPECIAL

As I write this, 0730 hours on June 6th, D-Day 70th Anniversary Day events are gathering way in Normandy. It was at this hour seventy years ago that my Old Man went ashore on Sword Beach. He was commanding B Squadron of the 13th/18th Royal Hussars and they were acting in support of the 2nd Yorks. The Regiment were all part of the Hobart "funnies" in their floating tanks. Later that day his tank was hit and he moved onto another which again was destroyed by fire, having gone head to head with a Tiger Mark II.

At the time they were hit he had just started eating a compo biscuit, part of the army rations supplied by the War Department. For those who have never eaten compo rations let me explain.

A compo biscuit was a flat round object, oatmeal in colour measuring about four inches in diameter and half an inch thick. Supposedly it was made from oatmeal, starch and water, with perhaps a sprinkling of cement dust for seasoning.

If your teeth were strong enough it could be eaten cold, but if not, then when soaked in water it eventually morphed into a porridge like substance. The compo biscuit was to the soldier like a Cornish pasty was to the miner, a forerunner of "meals to go".

They were still around in my time in the Regiment and also that of my youngest in Iraq and Afghanistan. Durability was their name, if dropped they never shattered on the steel tank floor, and the proof of eating was in the aftermath.

To begin with it staved off hunger for the next twenty four hours and secondly but equally important, there was no need to be scurrying off to the undergrowth armed with a trenching tool and loo paper. You were bunged solid for the next forty eight hours and anyway there was always the chance you might get interrupted by one of the enemy creeping through the bushes.

I mention this for in 1947 he took me back to Normandy to visit the landing areas. We found his burnt hulk some miles inland, and Health and Safety notwithstanding climbed up on the tank. There sitting on the turret ring was the burnt compo biscuit with just one bite out of it. Neither animal, fire, storm nor tempest had been able to destroy one iota of it in the interim period.

What has this to do with Orford?

It is well known that during the war most of East Anglia was covered by RAF aerodromes and what wasn't the Army were using for training. Local areas around here were evacuated and the Invasion Forces moved in en masse; Sudbourne has a Cromwell tank in the top left quadrant of the village sign. Orfordness had a gunnery range on it which my Father's squadron made much use of and he also spent some happy hours shooting and wildfowling on the Ness as Brigade HQ organised a weekly shoot of twelve guns. So it would appear the Ruge-Price family was around in Orford decades ago.

We owe a huge debt to those elderly veterans attending the Commemoration in Normandy as well as to the thousands who fell on those beaches, never to rise again nor able to see the victory they had achieved

That which our enemies failed to do with the cut of a sword over hundreds of years, consecutive Labour and Conservative Governments, with the swipe of a pen, has done in a decade, the demise of the British Armed Forces.

Maybe Farage has a point!

Jeremy Ruge Price - Captain 13th/18th Royal Hussars QMO. Ret

June 6th 2014

...AND GIVE US OUR DAILY BREAD....

The ability to earn a daily crust seems to be getting harder with each coming year. We are informed constantly by governmental surveys that the UK economy is now upwardly mobile. Yet I canvassed some local summer business operators and all were of the same opinion; "Mean pickins" so far this year, meaner and harder than this time last year.. mere breadcrumbs.

Orford has a plethora of small businesses; not just butcher, baker and basket maker, but also cafes, a hotel, post office and general store, pubs, restaurants, smokehouses, boat ride operators, B&B's and holiday cottages and last but by no means least our own commercial fishermen, gardeners, housepainters etc. all of whom need to earn that daily crust.

For a small coastal town with only five hundred people on the electoral role this presents a beehive of commerce and many that somehow have to be supported all year round by that earned from the summer invasion. Like similar places in this predicament, it may be that we have to look for other ways to earn the crust without spoiling the ambience and beauty of Orford

The Town is now firmly entrenched on holiday websites and those who wish it otherwise are unwisely wandering in the footsteps of King Canute; for in the words of that immortal optimist of Dads Army, Private Frazer "Aye laddie, y're all doomed !"

The migrating madding crowds of July and August are of course a much needed lifeline of "filthy lucre" that help some of the enterprises to remain afloat financially. However the open window of summer is but a short period and once over and gone, there are seven long, cold and wet winter months with just local spendthrifts till the Easter spring tide opens the visitor season again.

Our existing summer guests run the whole gamut; there are those on bankers type bonuses who are able to afford a rental cottage for a week accompanied by the whole family; weekenders in B&Bs

and at the other end of the spectrum, the day tripper people carriers full of mini crabbers and coneheads . All of the above contribute, in their own way, much towards the ability of village enterprises to earn their crusty bread, whether it be in the stores, the various food troughs and in the case of the crabbers car parking fees, the deep and ever open jaws of the N.O.T.T. car parking machine is a veritable treasure trove!

Come September and the start of the school year, the visitors all leave town like demented lemmings. The businesses count up the shekels they have accumulated over the summer months before reverting to winter belt tightening practises whether it be staffing levels or in some cases winter closure.

So what else can we do to keep the oven on during the quiet months. The fact that we have a bakery and general store that have won National awards has helped our overall image considerably but there is still some light hidden under that bushel that is yet to be capitalised on.

We have a top class smokehouse of international repute that not only catch and land their own fish but also run a well known fish restaurant whose kitchens are used but part time; a famous hotelier whose TV programmes have been aired world wide - Paula and I watched them in America for years - and one whose public relations skills are second to none in this field. Mix all these ingredients in the blender and what have you got? The makings of a first class year round cooking school right here in central downtown Orford.

No one can deny that the successfully rising soufflé of culinary arts is now world wide, it is featured everywhere; books, magazines, weekend supplements and of course TV's Masterchef and The Great British Bake Off just for starters.

When my youngest son came back from a tour in Helmand Province, he wanted to boost his detox from war to peace by going on a three day cooking course with Rick Stein in Padstow. It was very booked up months ahead but I managed to get a place for both of us. In time gone by, Padstow had a summer trade only, just like here.

The course was excellent and the town bustling in November. But more importantly, as far as Orford is concerned, it required from us a two night stay at a B&B, meals in restaurants and we also took the opportunity to do a little local shopping.

All was grist to the mill when it comes to earning a crust. Think about it, some would learn to bake the crust, some would get to eat it and others would be more able to earn a crust or two.

Just a thought!!

Jeremy Ruge - Price

June 2014

ps Can I cook more than just a full English?

Yes, I have many years of experience in the restaurant and hotel industry, both here and in New York City and so on the “glass is always half full” basis I believe this could work.

TWO WHEELED TOURISTS

In a previous rambling I mentioned the old stalwarts Fred and Arthur who once did our potholes. Well it seems their demise is worse than we thought for Suffolk County has come at the bottom in a nationwide survey of road repairs, or lack of same in our case.

“Eee, I tell yer, we didn’t know we ‘ad it so good wi’ em lads”!

That being said, you would think that the potholes might deter the throng of luminous lycra cyclists that whizz silently by on their way down to the Quay at weekends.

My problem is that even with my new hearing aids their approach is totally inaudible with the result that frequently I am in danger of being mown down. For a year I was a cross country biker, having volunteered to take part in the first Help for Heroes bike ride through the hills of Normandy in 2008.

This required a touring bike where the position of the saddle and your bum are higher than the handlebars. This is not a normal position for the body, so the end of each day saw many riders seeking the aid of the accompanying medical officer with complaints of severe “megasaurus”. British military humour rarely fails even when under extreme pain.

I must say that riding in such events with others you do tend to think that you “own the road” and this was brought back to me last weekend when a group passing from the Jolly Sailor towards the Quay made this exact comment as they weaved through the crabbing fraternity of small children and cone heads meandering along.

One of the necessities I remember from those cycling days, was that the more speed you built up the less effort required for the next hill. However my biking days are over now as some years ago a nice old lady gently nudged me off and I flew through the air into a signpost in Leiston. She drove sedately and slowly on, all the time peering grimly under the rim of the steering wheel that was gripped firmly in both hands, while quite oblivious to my aerial acrobatics. Bless her!

The ladies Tour of Great Britain is presently underway for the first time, although at this moment we are not on the intended route, though maybe we could change that in the future. In Orford we have our own flurry of femme fatale riders around town; they can be seen with wicker basket well to the fore, some piled with groceries, others with sailing gear and the "piece de resistance" being the all in white tennis girls armed with racquets. There are even a few daring ladies who bicycle with their dog on a lead. To these I doff my cap, were I to try this feat with my lab I would be dismounted at the first sight of the ginger tom from next door.

Lastly just when I thought I had seen it all, a new rider merged onto the highway. A week ago as I drove into Orford I met our esteemed vicar mounted on a stationary bicycle which at that moment had developed a dangerous looking front wheel wobble; I slowed to ask him if all was well and with his ever cheery smile he announced, "I am just trying to remember how to do it!" - I seem to remember that forward motion is a requisite part of the plot but I refrained from mentioning it and drove on, he is more likely to get help from above than I am!

Talking of things from above, the Grace Spitfire which we see overhead from time to time is based at Bentwaters airfield. Carolyn Grace tells me they are having problems with the SCDC over future use of the field. To those of my senior vintage and older, the sounds overhead of Spitfires conjures up memories of 1940.

Were it not for these aircraft and their daring young pilots we might not all be here today. So if you have a moment maybe you could email d.c.admin@suffolkcoastal.co.uk and using reference no.C10/3239 put in a good word for them; the Grace website is www.ML407.co.uk

Jeremy Ruge - Price

May 2014

ps Cone Head alert; Good ice cream may now be found at the castle car park at weekends

CONE HEADS AND CRABBERS

For those like me who have arrived at the arthritic and wrinkly age, being able to live in a beautiful old fishing town like Orford is indeed a bonus not available to one and all. Paula and me are doubly blessed as this is the second time that we have found ourselves living in such a salubrious spot, for Camden Maine USA from whence we came, was just such a place .

There the resident population numbered about three thousand during the cold winter long, while here in Orford there are at present some five hundred "bods" on the electoral roll.

During the heat and height of summer the numbers in Camden swelled to fifty thousand. Guest houses were jammed to the rafters, B&B's bulged; restaurants were of course over booked, and cafes were filled to the brim. The two harbourside breakfast diners that opened at seven a.m. for seven days a week had lines forming outside by eight o'clock every day.

Now some of these visitors were week long vacationers while others were sailors from the many yachts in the harbor, and all of these contributed to the local economy. For in such places as these the rule of thumb is that some seventy five % of the year's turnover happens in this brief open window of opportunity.

However the vast majority of the invaders were just day trippers. Once they had found a free place to park, this madding multitude of all ages would trundle down to the harbour, hunker down and spend the day gawping at the bustle of tenders, yachts and big schooners coming and going on the water.

It can be very hot in Maine, around 85/90* F on a daily basis and it is not long before the sweltering heat begins to cause one and all to burn and perspire rapidly. Thus it was that the long queue by the icecream store never seemed to ebb throughout out the entire day.

Which is why the blistering and sizzling hordes, ever sucking on ice cream cones, were known as "coneheads" by the locals.

I must point out that the icecream was of a very high standard; black chocolate, blueberry and black raspberry were my three favourites.

As the first weekend in September came and went so the last of the coneheads were seen disappearing south down the highway and peace and tranquillity in "Peyton Place" was once more restored.

Here in Orford we don't have to deal with such gigantic numbers, and our own invaders are comprised of several different groups. We have our own weekly visitors in the holiday cottages, cyclists and hikers and even bird watchers.

Yet most of our day trippers are families with tribes of small children and since the latter have to be fed at the trough every so often, the local eating houses get a good lunch trade.

Many are here for that time honoured occupation of crabbing off the Quay and on any given day during the summer there might be a hundred or so people of all ages, armed with blue pink and green nets busy hauling up their catch and filling the bucket with crabs.

By the end of August I reckon those crabs must be totally knackered. They have been hauled up on lines, stewed in a bucket for an hour then made to race back down to the water day after day, week after week. They must welcome September too!

There are of course "coneheads" here too but the icecream sucks! When I was a young nipper, it was purported to be made from excess pig fat left over from the bangers of that well known sausage maker and nowt seems to have changed much in the recipe over the last fifty years.

Never the less, all of the above folk are a requisite part of the year for otherwise who would fill the car park coffers snack at our cafes, buy the smoked salmon and nosh on the doughnuts and fresh bread from the bakery.

There are some people who will, no doubt, view this annual migration with a jaundiced eye, but not those who need to earn a dime. This divide is a thorny thicket in most spots like Orford and one that I might comment about after the summer; nor am I going to address the groups of cyclists, 'orrible 'ikers or bird watchers at this time for I think they richly deserve a whole article unto themselves.

Jeremy Ruge - Price

April 2014

PROGRESSIVE POTHOLING

We moved into Munday's Lane some years ago and it was as tho we had come home to roost; the town reminded us much of the small fishing communities in Maine from whence we had come.

One of the many similarities was the road surfaces, most of which were always full of potholes by this time of year. Over there it was the sub zero temperatures endured for months over the winter that spawned a proliferation of potholes while here it was not so obvious to me until recently.

For the last few years just as Spring is sprung, an ancient and dirty yellow Highways truck belonging to the SCDC would trundle to a halt in our multi potholed road.

Two elderly gentlemen, who I will refer to as “Fred” and “Arthur” would climb arthritically down from the cab. Their health and safety jackets were no longer fluorescent yellow but blackened with oil and tar over the years. Clearly they were both nearing retirement age so speed was not of the essence as they plodded up and down our road peering into the potholes while puffing away on home rolled smokes.

Eventually they would get out the repair kit; a bucket of steaming pothole filler, spade, rake and a large wooden block for tamping down the finished product of their labours. Gradually they progressed down the road filling, raking and tamping down as they went.

Clearly no rules stated that the new surfaces should be exactly level with the road surface nor did they need a map to tell them where to fill in the craters. It mattered not a jot as the same pothole would, as a matter of course, reappear by next December and so Fred and Arthur had been filling in the same piece of road year after year and knew only too well where the potholes were to be found.

The old guys must have retired, for last week a smart new Highways truck from the SCDC pulled up outside. The pair that jumped out were strong, young and wearing shiny new helmets and safety jackets.

Seeing as how my car was parked carefully over a deep trench outside our house, I went over to ask if it should be moved so they could fill in the offending crater. It was then I noticed that gone was the old and trusty repair kit, now they had a mini electric roller and strange black tape to stick around edges of the new perfectly level surfaces.

What is more they didn't need my car moved, for although the road resembles the aftermath of the Somme battlefield, this particular pothole they were filling was the only one that appeared on the council computer and “if it wasn't on the computer we won't be doing it”

Fred and Arthur please come back, we need you!

Jeremy Ruge - Price

March 2014