

# Eton Matters

The Wall Game

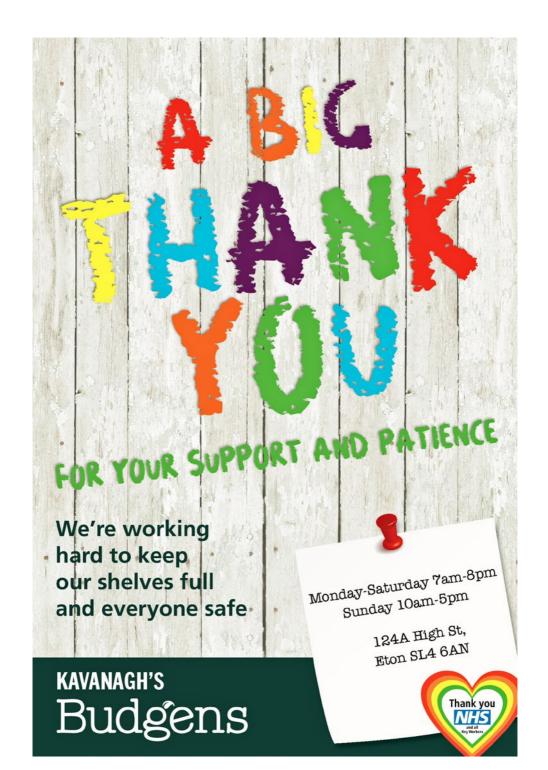
First Disc jockey

> Kitchen Sink

1908 Marathon



**An Eton Community Association Publication** 



#### Back to the Future

An Eton Community Association Survey

Founded 10 years ago and run by community volunteers, the ECA:

- Produces Eton Matters
- Runs the weekly Online Newsletter
- Organises, funds, and runs the Christmas Light Switch On
- Installs the Union Jack flags and Mini Christmas trees.
- Organises walks, talks and events
- Acts as the voice of our community to Eton Town Council, RBWM, the Police and other officials.
- Supported the Walkway, Barnes Pool restoration, and the Eton Information Centre.

PLEASE NOTE: We are now developing a short questionnaire and need your input to decide on the priorities for the ECA in the future.

It's really easy - The survey asks you to rank your issues from a supplied list - or to add your own.

We will deliver the questionnaire to your door and you can complete the survey on-line or drop a PAPER COPY into the Eton Information Centre by to let us know your opinion.

Do take part so that your voice is heard.

#### **Eton Community Association Annual General Meeting**

Due to the Covid-19 Crisis there are no Public Meetings Planned.

I would like to thank the regular and guest contributors and the sponsors of this issue of Eton Matters, without whose generosity we would be unable to produce this mini-mag. The sponsors are: Kavanagh's Budgens, New & Lingwood, Hybert Design, Warren Property, J Manley Gallery, Richer Sounds, Rhubarb and Custard, Vario Press, Beechwood Interiors, My Handyman, Eton Cycles, Salamandra, Eton College, Kelvin + Co, Fourlegsonetail.com and Dogknows. Peter Eaton, Editor

#### **Eton Community Association and Eton Matters Information**

ECA Chair - Ros Rivaz- chairman@etoncommunity.co.uk
ECA Secretary - Leonie Bryant - secretary@etoncommunity.co.uk
ECA Treasurer - Malcolm Leach - treasurer@etoncommunity.co.uk
EM Editor - Peter Eaton - editor@etoncommunity.co.uk

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#### Town & Gown

Susan Glover - Dame, Timbralls, Eton College

I am Susan Glover, the Dame at the Timbralls, one of the 25 boarding houses the College has. Whilst at The Timbralls I am responsible for 52 boys as well as being a mother to 3 children, 2 boys, so I know how they tick, and a daughter, so I have a rough idea how they work too.



Our day to day job in essence is like "running a 5\* hotel and giving the clients, the boys', some extra special pastoral care." We aim to ensure the boys are safe at all times, fit, healthy and fully prepared for their busy day to day life whilst they are boarding at Eton. We have copious supplies of ice packs for those bumps and bruises, bucket loads of TLC and answers to those million and one questions! The Timbralls has its own dining facility so I manage the smooth running of catering as well. I also ensure the maintenance of the house is in tip top condition by co-ordinating the various departments to ensure the plumbing and general repairs to the house. As the admission process begins many years prior to their arrival at Eton, liaising with parents throughout their sons' journeys is a key role for a Dame

My fellow Dames have previously been nurses, prison officers, carers, policewomen, air stewardesses, secretaries and a few

teachers so a very mixed eclectic bunch of people. Times are ever changing and moving forward and we have just appointed our first male Dame. In addition, we have an invaluable Cover Dame who is able to step in and support any one of us if the need arises.

The Dames encourage the boys and support them in all the activities from playing sport, running the steeple chase, performing in the concerts, reading in College Chapel, delivering their prayers in house, or when they come to us at 1.30am in the morning to ask if they eat a piece of toast, will it prevent them from going to sleep? It never stops!

Being a Dame is a thoroughly rewarding role which provides the opportunity to develop these young boys into wonderful young men.

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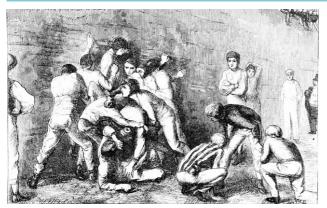
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#### A Spectator Sport, The Wall Game?



© Sydney P. Hall. 1870. Wood-engraving -The Victorian Web

The Eton Wall Game evolved in the early nineteenth century from a game of football played on a field, one side of which was bounded by a wall. By the eighteen forties it had crystallised into a distinct game and rules were tabulated and published. Since then it has changed but little, although the number

of players has been reduced from 11 to 10, with the

intention of increasing mobility – which has hardly been fulfilled.

The game is played along "the Wall" which is some 120 yards long, on a strip of ground some 6 yards wide called "The Furrow". It begins when the 'bully' forms up in the middle of the Wall, under the 'ladder' (which has long since vanished). Each side tries by main force and sheer cunning to push the ball to the other end of the Wall. (It is not allowed to 'heel' the ball backwards, as in Rugby football). When it comes out of the bully, as happens occasionally, they attempt to rush it down the ground, or to kick it out - the next bully being formed not where the ball crossed the side line, but where it finally stopped.

At each end of the Wall is a special area known as "Calx". Once the ball is lodged in this area, special rules come into force. A bully is formed and the defenders try to "furk" the



ball backwards so as to give a 'behind' a chance to kick it out of Calx. The attackers try to raise the ball off the ground and to hold it against the Wall. It is then touched by hand and a shout of "Got it" is given. If the umpires are satisfied, the attackers are then awarded a 'shy' (1 point) and entitled to try to throw a goal. (The goals are a mark on a

#### Tom Lyttelton (written in the early 1970s) Former Eton College Student and Master



tree at one end and the Lower Master's garden door at the other).

If they succeed – which they rarely do – they are awarded a further 10 points and the game is resumed in Mid-Wall. 'Shies' are frequently scored – goals only once a year or so, and hardly ever in the big match of the year.

The game is played by all the Collegers (i.e. 70 Scholarship boys) and by the older and most athletic Oppidans (i.e. the rest of the school, who live in the Oppidum, or Town).

The big match is that between Collegers and Oppidans on Saint Andrew's Day (30th November, but now celebrated on the Saturday nearest), and often results in a draw, as defensive tactics have been very elaborately evolved. The last goal was scored in a St. Andrew's Day Match in 1909 by the Collegers, and in their team was Harold Macmillan.

The Wall Game is exceptionally exhausting, very skilful and extremely amusing to play. The skill consists of the scientific application of pressure and leverage as one advances foot by foot through a seemingly impenetrable mass of determined and husky opponents. No sport offers less to the spectator.

Some additional facts:

The wall along which the Wall Game is played was built in 1717

The first recorded Wall Game was in 1766

The rules of the Wall game were first written down in 1849

The 16th revision of the rules was in 2001

The Wall game was banned in 1827 after a fight resuming in 1836

Prime Minister Boris Johnson played in the Wall game in 1982

Prince Harry played in the Wall Game in 2002

The last time a goal was scored in the St. Andrew's Day match was 1909

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#### The Pound at Folly Bridge

Teresa Stanton - Eton Wick History Group

Close to the Eton Wick Road on the outskirts of Eton is a small brick enclosure – The Pound, which was built in the 19th Century: the successor of earlier structures. It was used by a 'hayward' to impound stray animals (mainly cattle or sheep) which had been found to be grazing in excess of their owner's Lammas or 'commons' quota; or which belonged to people who did not have 'commons' rights

The Pound was owned by The Manor of Eton-cum-Stockdales-and-Colenorton which controlled the common lands of Eton and Eton Wick, drawing up rules for their use. Eton College became Lord of the Manor in 1940, ratified the rules at a Court Leet/Court Baron when a bailiff and hayward were elected. In the early years of the last century, the fines (per impounded beast) would have been 6 pennies (2½p) to the hayward and 10 shillings (50p) to the Lord of the Manor.

In 1996, after removal of ivy and weeds, a gaping hole in the back wall was revealed. Although the pound was no longer in use, the Eton Wick History Group felt it was right to try to preserve it as part of our heritage. The remedial work was to cost £3,000 and contributors to the fund included: local residents, together with Eton College (Lord of the Manor), The Royal Albert Institute Trust, The Rural Action Trust, and The Windsor



Forest Countryside Project. E.W. History Group gathered volunteers and (under the direction of lan Drummond) the site was cleared. W. Livesey & Son were hired to repair and repoint the brickwork; the interior was tidied and levelled and the base lined with plastic sheeting, topped with pea shingle. Free of charge, Andron Engineering (Andrew Hodge and Ron Savage) removed the heavy steel gate, shot-blasted and repainted it, and re-fashioned and then re-fitted the old lock; and they later provided the descriptive stainless steel plaque. At a brief but significant and well attended ceremony, the pound gate was locked and the key was presented to the (then) Bursar, Mr Roderick Watson, who entrusted it to the College's Buildings Department.

Down the centuries, the commons and Lammas lands (which were registered under the Commons Registration Act of 1965) have had a great influence on the development of the area: thanks to them, much of the land has been kept free from buildings.

#### Britain's First Disc Jockey

David Treder - Eton Resident

Christopher Stone (1882 – 1965) is buried in sight of his birth place at the Eton Parish Cemetery on the Eton Wick Road. He was a man that loved music and as the first disc jockey in the United Kingdom he brought his music to millions!

Christopher was the youngest son of Eton College's assistant master Edward Stone and he was educated at Eton College.

He approached the BBC with the idea for a record playing programme, which the corporation initially dismissed. Eventually convincing them there was a demand he started playing records on air on 7 July 1927. His relaxed, conversational style was exceptional at a time when most of the BBC's presentation was extremely formal, and his programmes became highly popular but of course he wore a dinner jacket and tie when he presented.



In 1934 Christopher joined the commercial station Radio Luxembourg for £5,000 pa (about £360k pa in today's money) and was barred by the BBC in consequence. He wrote a column reviewing new popular records for the Sunday Referee newspaper and appeared in advertisements for Bush radio sets. In 1937, as "Uncle Chris", he presented the first daily children's programme on commercial radio, Kiddies Quarter Hour on Radio Lyons.



He later re-joined the BBC and caused a major row in 1941. On 11 November he wished King Victor Emmanuel of Italy a happy birthday on air, adding "I don't think any of us wish him anything but good, poor soul." This good wish towards the head of a state Britain was at war with at the time led to the sacking of the BBC's Senior Controller of Programmes and tighter government control over all broadcasts.

Christopher was an avid record collector; in the mid-1930s he already owned over 12,000. He moved into 6/7 Turk's Head Court when the flats were first built in the late 50s, living in one flat and keeping his record collection in the other.

When he turned 75 in 1957 the magazine Melody Maker praised his pioneering work: "Everyone who has written, produced or compered a gramophone programme should salute the founder of his trade."

#### **Explore the Eton College Collections Online**

The Stories in the Stones: An Architectural Tour of Eton College



We invite you to explore this new trail either digitally from the comfort of your own home, or in Eton itself, where you can view the buildings and points of interest from public rights of

We hope it will enable you to find out more about some of the most well-known buildings but also prompt you to explore some less-familiar corners.

https://bit.ly/2RdBQDe



The recent exhibition of Ancient Egyptian artefacts from the Eton Museum of Antiquities is now available to enjoy online.

Ancient Beings www.ancient-beings.com



www.twitter.com/EtonCollMuseums



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www.facebook.com/EtonCollegeMuseums



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#### In His Presence

La Stacey Vicar, St. John the Evangelist Church



Remember, remember... Do you remember those olden days when we used to be able to meet up for a family gathering? Or gather together to sing carols? Or go to listen to a concert? Or do so many other things unworried by restrictions and viruses? Do you feel some sort of nostalgia for that era of freedom? Is it really only 9 months ago?! This is the remembrance season of course – 1st Nov is All Saints Day and we remember those who have inspired us; 11th Nov is Remembrance Day and we remember those who died in the wars; 25th December is Christmas and, I don't know about you, but we usually like to share memories and tell anecdotes about the relations no longer with us.

Those sacrifices of the past were given in the hope of a better future. We can either look back and indulge in nostalgia, or we can allow the cherished memories to awaken a sense of responsibility for our present and future world.

Sunday by Sunday we mark an event that changed the narrative from nostalgia to vision, from regret to hope. Jesus said, 'do this in remembrance of me', bidding us to remember that he took on board the pain of this fragile existence and, rather than reflecting it back into the world, received it and showed that it doesn't get the last word. As we remember, we re-awaken our awareness of the potential for good in the world around us.

In the midst of the turmoil in our climate and in our social and economic life, do we remember our responsibility for our future world? Can we reimagine ways to live that will give life to the things we value? In an economic system where forests and wild places only have value when they are cut down and brought under cultivation, is it any wonder that we are losing them at such speed? In a system where people are measured by the amount they earn compared to others, is it any wonder that so many have lost their sense of self-worth?

When we emerge from this strange, quiet winter, will there be hope and vision to reinvigorate and care for the things that give life? Will we take responsibility and ourselves make the sacrifices needed for a future differently-shaped world?

Wishing you tidings of comfort and joy!

#### **Services**

We are meeting again in St John the Evangelist church: 1st and 3rd Wednesday of the month for Holy Communion at 10am; Tuesday nights for guided prayer at 7pm; we'll be there on Sunday 8th Nov for the Remembrance service and again on 20th December at 11am for a pre-Christmas service.

We are also meeting at 11.00am every Sunday at St. John the Baptist, Eton Wick.

## **Bookworm** from Eton Library Mary Skelly and Anna Fallgren Supervisors



During the last six months, the library staff have been working from home, or going into libraries when it was safe to do so in order to catch up on stock work and essential health and safety checks.

Many colleagues have been manning the phones, taking and making Shielding and Welfare calls to vulnerable residents.

The Digital Library has grown in strength, you may have seen yours truly reading some children's stories on Library Social Media.

There are many useful online resources and Free websites available, such as Oxford Dictionary of National Biography People who have shaped British history. Who Next...? Guide to children's authors and books. Theory Test Pro UK driving theory test. EBooks, eAudio and eMagazines are also available to download.

The main libraries at Windsor and Maidenhead have now opened a select and collect service. Colleagues have also been driving to collection points around the borough with pre-ordered books. Browse the catalogue online, choose your title, then select where you would like to collect it from. If you are not comfortable browsing online, you can telephone Windsor library 01753 743940 between 10am - 4pm, Monday to Friday or email windsor.library@rbwm.gov.uk where staff will order your book and ask which collection point you prefer. You can also request a bag of books in your preferred genre.

If you are unable to leave home, there are volunteers with the home library service who will bring books to your door. email: home.library@rbwm.gov.uk Telephone: 01628 796969

All returned books are quarantined before being available to borrow again. This means that they will remain on your library account for a further 3 days before being removed.

The library website has recently been updated, so please be aware that any saved links may have been broken.

https://www.rbwm.gov.uk

https://www.rbwm.gov.uk/home/leisure-and-culture/libraries

#### PLEASE FILL IN OUR PUBLIC LIBRARY CONSULTATION:

https://www.rbwm.gov.uk/home/council-and-democracy/consultations/libraryconsultation click on Have Your Say to participate. It closes on 30th November. Paper copies can be collected from outside Eton library.

Please follow Library social media pages for regular updates on what's happening: Twitter, Facebook, Instagram and YouTube.

#### Naturewatch - The Amazing Private Life of the Dunnock! George Fussey - Curator, Eton College Natural History Museum



Courtesy Gordon Langsbury (deceased) and Brian Clews of the Birds of Berkshire Atlas Group

Dunnocks are extremely widespread residents throughout Berkshire, preferring the cover of scrub or secondary growth as its habitat. Unlike so many of our birds, ringing data suggests that they are extremely sedentary. To illustrate this, the longevity record for Berkshire is a

Dunnock killed by a cat in 1988 at Cookham Dean which had survived all but 8 years since being first ringed, but in all that time, it had only moved 2km. Often referred to as a Hedge-Sparrow, it has no relationship whatever to the equally familiar House-Sparrow, the term sparrow being widely applied, in ancient times, to many small bird species. They love to forage on the ground close to cover, flicking their tails as they catch insects and seeds of grasses and in winter, they become bolder in seeking food under bird feeders and even around household doorways.

Their looks may be drab and unobtrusive, but they have very interesting private lives, only revealed by work done in Cambridge in the late 1980s. We tend to think of birds having very stable monogamous relationships with a male and female pairing for life. But DNA testing has shown that chicks within Dunnock broods often have different fathers. It is evident that when two or three adjacent female territories overlap one male territory, then that single male can breed with all the females concerned.

This surprising tale doesn't end there. Once the chicks hatch, broods can be raised by a lone female, or multiple females with the part-time help of a male, or multiple females with the full-time help of a male, or by multiple females and multiple males.

Where Dunnocks are concerned, TV's Love Island seems dull by comparison!

The Eton College Natural History Museum in South Meadow Lane is open to the public every Sunday, from 2.30pm until 5pm. It is Berkshire's only dedicated Natural History Museum and is a family-friendly museum with over 16,000 objects. It has numerous displays featuring the wildlife of the Thames Valley. Contact us: g.fussey@etoncollege.org.uk or by phone on 01753 370602 or visit www.etonnhm.com

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#### Chair's Chat Ros Rivaz - ECA Chair



As I write this, I am acutely aware that Coronavirus continues to be a dominant factor in all our lives. We continue to do what we can to help; please tell us if there is more that we could do. The delivery service for medicines and provisions is on hold and ready to come live again if the need arises.

We have managed to achieve some community events, where the risk assessment dictated it was safe to do so. The Eton Clean up back in July was supported by more than 20 of you and we cleaned up our Town removing about 30 refuse sacks of goodness knows what! By the time Eton Matters comes to press, we will have achieved another Eton Clean up! Some 13 people (lucky for some) joined the walk to the Palmer Arms in Dorney where we had some well-deserved excellent food, before needing the walk back to exercise off the excesses!!

The planning for Christmas is a challenge. The current plan, led as always by Karen, Stephen and Paul is to erect the cross street lights and mini Christmas trees and the main trees too....but we won't be accompanying this with the normal popular event. The team have some things up their sleeve using social media...so watch this space. We will include information in the weekly Newsletter. Be sure to sign up at www.etoncommunity.co.uk if you aren't on our mailing list.

#### Diary

For C of E Church services please see page 12

The Christmas Light Switch-on Event has been cancelled this year but the Christmas Lights will be on

The Bekynton Christmas Meal for senior citizens has been cancelled this year
Town Council Meetings are being held on Zoom on the first Thursday of the month
Details of how to join the meeting are on the Eton Town Council web site
No public Community Association meetings are planned at present

Our Diary will return in full when we have more certain times

#### **Useful Numbers**

Charteris Club	Julie or Jackie	07598 565091
Churches	St John the Evangelist (Vicar)	01753 852268
	Our Lady of Sorrows, Eton Court	01753 542862
Community Warden	Jake Hynard	01628 685636
Council Offices, Eton	Bob Austen, Town Clerk	01753 860377
Councillor (RBWM)	Samantha Rayner	07811 974442
Emergency	Fire/Ambulance/Police	999
Eton College		01753 370100
<b>Eton Community Association</b>	Chair	07734 073117
	Treasurer	01753 865647
Library	Eton	01753 860506
	24 hr renewal line	0303 123 0035
<b>Eton Porny School</b>		01753 861995
Eton Pre-School		01753 850842
Healthcare	Fast Medical Help, Non-Emergency (NHS)	111
Doctors	South Meadow Surgery (24 hr line)	01753 833777
	(Appointments)	01753 832332
Hospitals	King Edward VII Outpatients, Windsor	01753 860441
	Prince Charles Eye Unit, KE VII Casualty	01753 636359
	Wexham Park Hospital	01753 633000
	Wexham Park A& E	01753 634017
	Upton Hospital, nr Slough – Walk-in unit	01753 821441
	Heatherwood & St. Marks Minor Injuries units	01753 877805
	Heatherwood Hospital	01344 623333
	St. Marks Outpatients	01628 632012
Natural History Museum	Eton (curator)	01753 370602
Police	Crime in Progress	999
	Non-Emergency	101
River Authority	Environment Agency (gen. enquiries)	03708 506 506
	Floodline	0345 988 1188
Royal Borough Of Windsor And Maidenhead (customer care)		01628 683800
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#### Taking Council

Bob Austen, Town Clerk, Eton Town Council
Tel: 01753 860377 email: clerk@etontc.uk



At the time of writing, the Council Offices remain closed and I continue to work from home. The impact of closing the offices has been surprisingly minimal; the number of phone messages and the amount of post confirms this. I hope that folks in Eton have not been affected too much by my absence.

We have been deeply saddened by the passing of long-time town councillor Michael Cadwallader, one of the nicest people to grace the Council chamber. Michael used to pop into the offices on a regular basis to catch up and pass on local concerns, and his visits were always a pleasure. Michael held the Eton community close to his heart and we shall all miss him greatly. May he rest in peace.

Currently the emergency Coronavirus hot line has been discontinued with the end of lockdown, and Eton Town Council has expressed its deepest thanks to all those that have contributed in ensuring vulnerable residents have been looked after. It has been a great community effort.

The Council reopened the play areas in July with a risk assessment in place that mirrored that of the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead. As we all know, the Coronavirus situation is constantly changing and Members are well aware that we may have to change our tack if Government guidelines dictate. In the meantime, the play areas are being well used with thankfully few signs of bad behaviour and vandalism, and daily checks by a councillor are being made to ensure that signs remain in place and all is well.

Football has restarted on South Meadow Lane Recreation Ground and so it is business as usual there, at least for the time being. A fresh approach is being sought by the Mayor, Councillor George Fussey to determine the future of the pavilion, a continuing eyesore in the town and one which needs resolving as soon as possible.

The other routine duties of the Council have continued throughout the pandemic and feedback from residents suggests that the appearance of the town has been greatly enhanced by the flower displays initiated by Councillor Malcolm Leach earlier in the year and the beautifully restored Barnes Pool. On the negative side, the long hot summer brought many problems of anti-social behaviour, especially on the Brocas, and it is to be hoped that the onset of Autumn will eliminate this unwelcome activity. Additionally, the random profusion of waste bins has caused annoyance to many residents and this is being progressed with the Royal Borough.

The Mayor has introduced a 'Public Forum' section on the agenda for future Council meetings and residents that wish to raise an issue of local concern can do so then. There is a maximum of 3 minutes to get the message across, and anyone interested should contact me by the Monday preceding the meeting so that I can book you in.



#### Eton Porny School

Katherine Russell Head Teacher

A new academic year has begun and we have thoroughly enjoyed welcoming our children and families back to school. This year we welcome 2 additional members of staff to our team – Miss Rosanna Armitage and Miss Briony Martin.

Everyone has adapted extraordinarily well to the new routines in and around school and the children are happy and settled. We have focussed on wellbeing and the children are really enjoying their 'mindful moments' and 'calm me time' which complement our Jigsaw PSHE lessons perfectly. The first half term has been all about 'Being me in my world'. Our Early Years children have transitioned well into school and are cheerful, confident and certainly keen to develop their independence.

Don't forget that you can keep up to date with all of our exciting learning and adventures on our school Twitter account @EPFirstschool.

#### Kid's Play - Looking After Our Planet! Darcey age 7



My sister Bronte and I are really proud of where we live and how Eton looks. In the early months of lockdown we spent a lot of time playing rounders, frisbee and riding our bikes and noticed a steady build up of litter. I told my sister that we have to "look after our planet!". We went to visit Ros Rivaz the Eton Association Chair, who lent us three litter picking grabbers. Since then we've collected over ten bin-liners of waste from around the Brocas and along the Thames where we sometimes run in the mornings. It's been great, we found some money, many bottles and cans and received lots of encouragement from the people we've met. Here we are about to set off on another Womble-ing mission, my Dad's quite old he had to tell me about the Wombles!!

#### **Eton Pre-School**

Sue Clifford - Manager



We are very happy to have welcomed so many new families to the Eton Pre-School community this year....and what a year it has been. We have had to do new parent's meetings in the garden, fortunately in good weather, and we have welcomed the children in whilst balancing lots of health and safety issues. I can honestly say that everyone now knows how to wash their hands properly!

Whilst we were closed over the summer we took the opportunity to have a bit of a refresh and have had some work done on our decking, we have refloored the toilet area and we have had a huge amount of work done in the garden including returfing the whole area. It was a big project for us especially in a year where fundraising is going to be difficult,

but it is such an important part of our provision that we had to do it. I think you will all agree it looks amazing, the children are already reaping the benefits. If you want to have a closer look, follow us on Instagram or Twitter at eton\_preschool.

#### Art @ 67 Barbara Hunt

Local artists have found a new place to display their work at the Eton Information Centre.

Based in the High Street 'Art at 67' provides new exhibition space for those wishing to display their work and a gallery of exciting new art for budding collectors and visitors looking for a souvenir!

There will be a variety of artists all



working in different mediums; water colours, acrylics, computer generated and pen and ink drawings being just some examples; from landscapes to abstract, ceramics and glass to animal art. There will be opportunity for community groups to display their work and competitions for children.

You can purchase original art or prints and the exhibitions will change on a monthly basis.

Anyone wishing to display their work should contact the manager Barbara Hunt on 01753 852588 or email Barbara@visiteton.info.

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#### Eton within the Borough

Samantha Rayner RBWM Councillor for Eton and Castle

I hope you have enjoyed the glorious weather this summer and the longer days, which has been very welcome after spring and early summer when many of us have been in lockdown.

Over the summer Eton has looked wonderful with the many hanging baskets, flags and stunning gardens. We had winners for The Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead Garden in Bloom competition. Eton has wonderful gardens which have been enjoyed by many locals and visitors this year. We have seen a sharp decline in foreign visitors but an increase in domestic travellers as more people have decided to stay at home this year. Windsor and Eton has ranked high as a destination for British day trips.



**Bridget Bartlett - Winner in Eton** 

In The Royal Borough there has been a gradual easing of the lockdown as pubs, restaurants and shops opened. The Eat Out To Help Out campaign was very popular in the Windsor and Eton area with 96,000 meals claimed.

The Royal Borough has been working very closely with businesses and tourism partners to understand the challenges of COVID-19 and as a result has produced a video and a hub resource to help. There have also been campaigns on social media for supporting local businesses and shops. The local economy is very important.

I was delighted to take part in the litter pick and ramble through Eton this summer. Both events showed the wonderful resilience of the community and pride in such a wonderful town.

As the autumn and winter approaches the council has been working on its strategic position and protecting residents in Eton and The Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead.

As always I appreciate any communication from you and please do get in touch if I or my colleagues can help you.

#### **Contact your Councillors**

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#### Then and Now

Derek Ledger - Eton Resident

Not long after my wife and I moved to Eton I was driving up the High street when suddenly a fluorescent yellow phantom appeared in the middle of the road opposite the Porny School. She stood foursquare with one arm akimbo and the other grasping a pole with a circular sign proclaiming that children were about to cross the road. It was the first time that I had seen a Lollipop Lady and I was both startled and impressed that such measures are taken to safeguard young children when crossing a road after school. On another occasion I was driving near Eton End School and encountered a near traffic jam as numerous cars parked along the road as parents waited to take their children home.



These two encounters reminded me of my early school days at the beginning of the Second World War. I lived with my mother and elder sister as my father was abroad on diplomatic government duty. At five I was due to start school and the nearest was some distance away. For the first few days mother took me to school by bus but after a while she decided that I could go alone. My daily journey involved walking across a field, down a lane, over a railway track at a gated crossing then along a road to the bus stop. The bus fare was one old penny. Fortunately the bus stopped exactly opposite the school so all I had to do was to cross the road. Cars were a rare curiosity in those early war years, when one passed everybody stopped to look, as most of their owners were on military duty or as petrol was rationed few rarely used them. Returning home after school involved a reverse journey, often taking more than an hour depending when the infrequent buses arrived.

This would be unthinkable today and fraught with risks but I never had any difficulties and was never approached by anybody.

In the mid 1940's I acquired my first bicycle giving me greater mobility, public transport still being very scarce in the immediate post war years. There was never any thought of locking cycles and one could park them almost anywhere without any risk of them being stolen or 'borrowed'. Food and clothing were still rationed, and it was sometimes difficult for my mother to clothe and feed me in a manner to which she would have wished.

Life was very different in those half-forgotten days, no need for anyone to help you cross the road and no thought of being chauffeured to school. They may have been perceived as harder times but still fondly remembered.

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#### The Kitchen Sink Department

When I was about three and a half my mother took me to see a panto in Bath. It was Little Red Riding Hood. I can still remember a scene of a log with a large cut out tree, a girl in a red cloak and a large wolf. However, my everlasting impression was the sounds coming from a dark pit. I liked the noise they made. "What is that noise?" I asked. "Shhh," replied my mother, "That's percussion."

I was hooked. I always wanted to be a percussionist. But at the time girls did not play percussion unless you were in a school band.

However, my luck turned when I was 29. I finally found someone who would take me seriously. Jack Pinches, a wonder trombonist who taught at Eton College. He kindly introduced me to John Cave, the then percussionist with the BBC Concert Orchestra. John



said he would give me three lessons to see how I got on. Clearly not thinking I would stay the course.

My first lesson arrived. I turned up at the Music Schools. Shaking with excitement I could not stop smiling. I was handed a pair of drumsticks and showed how to hold them so I could play a snare drum. John kept taking the sticks away from me and handing them back. I was puzzled. "What am I doing wrong?" I asked. "How do the sticks feel?" "Fine." Apparently, it took some pupils a long time to be able to hold the sticks properly. For me, it was as easy as breathing.

For the first two years I practised every day in the Drum Room for half an hour or I borrowed the drums to play at home. Fortunately, I had a room that was suitable and did not drive neighbours mad with the noise!

After two years I was asked whether I would like to play in the Eton College School Orchestra. Of course, I did. But I was very raw. I turned up for my first rehearsal one Sunday. Shaking like a leaf. I was scared that I would be hopeless, and I would never be allowed to play again. The first piece I played in was Night on a Bare Mountain

#### Jane Speller - Eton Resident

by Mussorgsky. I was so nervous that I only tickled the bass drum. Not realising at the time that the omission of the sound of the bass drum in such a piece was extremely noticeable. I can remember a boy, the head of section, saying "Louder Jane, louder!"

Well, I survived that rehearsal and went back for more! Somehow I managed to get through the first concert and was asked to play the following half. After another couple of years, I was asked to join the Eton College Concert Band.

Over the years I learned to play, with various degrees of efficiency, some thirty-two different percussive instruments.



I was lucky enough to play the bass drum on the Fourth of June for the Procession of Boats. One year it rained and in between playing a boy kindly offered me a cymbal to act as a hat to keep the rain off (photo opposite).

One year the then head of section and I started up an Early Music Group. I made a couple of early

triangles at the Eton College School of Mechanics, one with a set of jingles. A great experience! That particular year Porny School was holding a Medieval themed Summer Fete. Eton College was asked if they could provide any musicians. The Early Music Group duly turned up suitably attired to play on a very make-shift staged, comprising a series of large cubes (photo above). The ground beneath the cubes was uneven so it was tricky walking across the stage to take our seats. I learnt to stay as still as possible, otherwise it felt as though I was bobbing along on the briny sea.

I have always been grateful to Eton College for giving me two decades of immense pleasure in playing percussion with the boys. I should mention that the Eton boys were all amazing kind and patient with me as well as being extremely helpful.

Oh! The title? The percussion section is often referred to by members of an orchestra as the Kitchen Sink Department!





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#### The 1908 Olympic Marathon

Jim Walker - Chief Executive, Commonwealth Walkway Trust



The only route marker left in existence for the Olympic Marathon in 1908 which was held on a route from Windsor to the White City Stadium in London, is on the Old Rowland's building adjacent to Baldwin's Bridge.

For the official Trial Marathon held on the 25 April 1908, the start was 700 yards (640 m) from Queen Victoria's statue in Windsor on 'The Long Walk' with the finish about four miles short of the full distance, in Wembley.

Since the start of planning it had been hoped that for the Olympic Marathon itself, held on the 24 July 1908, the start would be on the East Lawn near the private East Terrace of Windsor Castle, with the permission of King Edward VII, so that the public would not interfere with the start. This permission was granted.

With the start now securely within the private grounds of Windsor Castle, the Princess of Wales and her children drove from their home at Frogmore in the Windsor Great Park to watch the start of the race.

Shortly before the Games opened it was realised that the Royal Entrance could not be used as the marathon entrance so an alternative entrance was chosen, diagonally opposite the Royal Box. A special path was made from Du Cane Road running due south just east of the Franco British Exhibition ground so that the distance from Windsor to the stadium remained "about 26 miles". The finishing line was left unchanged, but in order that more of the spectators would have a good view of the final yards, the direction of running was changed to clockwise. This meant the distance in the stadium was shortened from a full lap of the track to 385 yards (352 m), and the total distance became officially "about 26 miles plus 385 yards on the track". A modified version of the Polytechnic Harriers' April 1908 map was issued in June 1908 incorporating the changed ending and omitting the "Long Walk" start used for the Trial Marathon. This was published in the newspapers and in the official programme for the games.

This distance (ignoring the word "about" in the phrase "about 26 miles plus 385 yards on the track") eventually became the origin of the modern Marathon distance of "no less than 42.195 km".

#### Full Circle

Anthea Baillie - Eton Resident

In 1973, with both children in school, I badly needed something to do. With a friend, having done an upholstery course, we started buying or rescuing old chairs and stools which we did up and sold at Barrett's Sales Rooms in Maidenhead. We loved the buzz of the auctions and really wanted to be part of it in a small way.

So, we rented a stall in the Eton Antiques Market, number 79 next to the George. With bits and pieces from home and things we bought haunting Barrett's again. It was so exciting for us novices to be bidding in an auction!

Thus armed, we set up business in the Market. It was such fun, with about 26 dealers at that time, selling right across the board. Not forgetting Queenie, and daughter Carol, who ran the "caff" upstairs. She kept us going with her famous "the Works" lunches, a very unhealthy fry up! Her lovely husband Harry was a local painter and decorator. We learnt very quickly by our frequent mistakes but, eventually, we moved to a prime position at the front.

The Street, at this time, was really humming with 20 or so dealers, apart from the Market. It was a great venue for both dealers and punters, alike.



But in 1985 the rents went up so high we had to re-think our position. Very luckily for us Anthony Cove , Studio 101, offered us his other shop, the Turk's Head. We, of course, jumped at it! Four of us moved in selling silver, jewellery, lace and boxes. People came and went but I stayed put, until it was just Andrew

Reeve and me. I lived in Stoke Poges but Andrew had to commute out from London. Eventually it got too difficult for him and business was pretty flat. So, sadly, we shut up shop in 2008.

I keep a "finger in the pie" with a cabinet in the Antiques Centre in Maidenhead, just can't give it up!

However, in 2019, I had to bite the bullet and downsize. Where to go? Back to Eton, where else! So, Poppy, my elderly Border Collie and I returned! It's great to be back, so convenient and quite a few familiar faces still around. Full Circle!

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