

# St GEORGE FOR ENGLAND

August 2024

## In this edition

**Celebrating our King, Queen, country  
and Saint George!**

**Geoff Simpson on the trail of English  
author, Malcolm Saville**

**The England of Samuel Pepys –  
Derek Turner travels back to the  
seventeenth century**

**Plus, news from our Charitable Trust,  
national and international branches,  
and celebrations for our 130th  
anniversary year**

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# Contents

Vol 22. No. 2 – August 2024

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**4** From the Chairman

**5** Editorial

**7** My England

**8** Trust Reports

**11** Branch News

**15** Overseas Reports

**18** Annual Wreath-Laying Ceremony



**19** Obituary

**20** Curiosities of England

**22** Endangered Species

**24** St George Around the World

**25** Composers of England



**26** Writers of England

**29** Commonwealth Echoes

**30** Birth of England

**34** The Greatest Diarist of All

**36** Cities of England

**38** Christian England

**40** Letters to the Editor



**St George for England**

The Official Journal of

The Royal Society of St George

## The Society stands for:

- Respect for the Monarchy; Duty to our Sovereign and our Country;
- The cause of England and Englishness.

In accordance with our Royal Charter, the Objects of the Society are:

### One

To foster the love of England and to strengthen England and the Commonwealth by spreading the knowledge of English history, traditions and ideals.

### Two

To keep fresh the memory of those, in all walks of life, who have served England or the Commonwealth in the past in order to inspire leadership in the future.

### Three

To combat all activities likely to undermine the strength of England or the Commonwealth.

### Four

To further English interests everywhere to ensure that St. George's Day is properly celebrated and to provide focal points the world over where English men and women may gather together.

**42** News

**44** This Realm, this England

**47** Membership Affiliations

**48** Our Branches

**50** Shop Window



## THE ROYAL SOCIETY OF St GEORGE The Premier Patriotic Society of England Founded in 1894

**Incorporated by Royal Charter**

**Patron:** HM King Charles III

**Chairman:** Nick Dutt

**Published by:** The Royal Society of St George, , P.O. BOX 397, Loughton, IG10 9GN, England  
Telephone: 020 3225 5011

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Website: [www.rssg.org.uk](http://www.rssg.org.uk)

Facebook page: [www.facebook.com/RoyalSocietyofStGeorge](https://www.facebook.com/RoyalSocietyofStGeorge)

X: @RSSStGeorge

LinkedIn – the Royal Society of StGeorge Official Group

Opening times: Monday to Thursday, 10.30 am to 3.30 pm

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E&O.E.

Design and Reprographics: Jim Duggan

Tel: 01233 632969. Mob: 07714451952

Printed by: Yeomans, East Peckham, Kent Tel: 01892 839 280.

Website: [weareyeomans.co.uk](http://weareyeomans.co.uk)

ISSN Number: ISSN 2046-8369



**W**ELCOME TO THE SUMMER edition of St. George for England. Many thanks, as usual to the team, ably led by our Editor, Stuart Millson (with Andy Smith and designer, Jim Duggan) for pulling together this exciting new publication.

It was with great pleasure (and relief) that we received the notification from the Palace that His Majesty The King had agreed to accept the Patronage of The Royal Society of St George. We are really honoured that he is assuming this role, one which his mother so wonderfully carried out for us during her long reign.

We were reminded in the letter from the Palace that we must abide by the terms of our Charter, and in particular, that we are neither party-political, nor in our conduct, must do anything that might be to the detriment of the Charter, or reflect poorly upon His Majesty and the rest of the Royal Family.

We recently shared a position statement and used the occasion to refocus our Mission Statement back to what it had originally been – “Promoting and celebrating Englishness and the English way of life”. There is still – if not more so now – the need to keep alive our history, pride in traditions and ideals, and create a firm foundation for our country's future.

### Flying the flag – and cadets' parade

Many branches held events to celebrate St George's Day and my wife, Jan, and I were pleased to be able to attend some of them. It's great to see so many people trying to raise our profile – and the flag – to remember this important day for England.

The Society held its annual cadet parade and wreath-laying ceremonies at the Cenotaph and at the Tomb of the Unknown Warrior in Westminster Abbey. This was a really special day, with over 400 cadets marching past the Cenotaph and a great honour personally to lead the wreath laying. Our activities were picked up and shown on GB News, for which we are most grateful. As a result, we have gained over 180 new

members – so a special welcome to them all. I was also interviewed by Eamonn Holmes on their morning show on 23 April, where I tried to emphasise the difference between patriotism and extreme nationalism and where we as a Society we sit.

D-Day 80 was also celebrated by a number of branches, many of which raised money for the relevant charities. It was good to see many of the last-remaining veterans at the various events held both here and in France. They certainly have a great spirit. We should never forget their – and all the others who are no longer with us – bravery to fight for those freedoms we all take for granted today.

### Forever England

For me, one of the most poignant parts, was the Prince of Wales's speech during which he talked about those who did not survive the landings and who remained in France – using the words of Rupert Brooke: ‘That there's some corner of a foreign field, that is for ever England.’

As I write we are in final throes of the preparations for our 130th Anniversary Banquet at Stationers' Hall. We are sure that this will be a great evening and a worthy celebration of such an auspicious occasion, which will hopefully raise some money for our chosen charities. More on this in our next edition.

Also, by the time this edition is published, we'll know who has won the General Election. Whoever wins, we hope that they will do their best to support and develop this great country and challenge those that seem to spend all their time undermining what we stand for and the many sacrifices made for the nation in wartime.

As we look forward to the rest of the year, we'll be holding our AGM on 6 September at the Union Jack Club in London and then on 13 September we have our annual Battle of Britain Lunch at the RAF Club. I hope to see many of you at one or both of these events.

I know many branches will also be holding Trafalgar lunches and dinners.

I hope you all have a healthy and happy summer – once it truly arrives. God save the King!

*Best Wishes,  
Nick Dutt*



*Cadets' Parade at the Cenotaph*





## His Majesty, King Charles III, is the new Patron of The Royal Society of St George

The Council has great pleasure in advising that The King has formally accepted the Patronage of the RSSG (and of a number of other charities and societies) on the first anniversary of his coronation.

This means that every reigning monarch since Queen Victoria has been Patron of the RSSG.

Nick Dutt, Chairman of the Royal Society of St George, commented: "We are deeply honoured that His Majesty The King has taken on the rôle of RSSG Patron that his mother, the late Queen Elizabeth II, performed so wonderfully for our Society for so many years."

The RSSG held its annual St George's Day parade and service at the Cenotaph in Whitehall. Hundreds of young people from Royal Navy, Army and RAF Cadet forces took part in this major event.

### Help Shape the Future of the Royal Society of St George

As part of our ongoing efforts to strengthen and grow our community, we are conducting a brief questionnaire to gather your valuable feedback. Whether you are a current member or have not yet joined, your insights are crucial to us.

The questionnaire can be completed online at: [bit.ly/rssgquestionnaire](https://bit.ly/rssgquestionnaire). Or scan the QR Code below. It should take no more than ten minutes of your time.



## EDITORIAL

### Cry God for Harry, England and St George!



ONE OF THE most striking things for me as Editor of this magazine, is the number of interesting and inspiring reports which are sent to us from all over the country – and overseas, of course, where a magnificent

array of expats and allies, from Paris to Pennsylvania, are working hard to spread our message and values.

In the last edition, for example, Mark Lanyon, wrote about his one-man odyssey to unite the St George movement across the vast spaces of North America. Meanwhile, our Californian Princess, Karen Cantrell,

continues to preside with glittering grace and glamour over a heady social whirl of fundraising and charitable activity (attracting some prestigious guest-speakers, too) which seems to put her branch on a completely different footing from the rest of us! Long may it continue, Karen.

Recently, here in England, after some heavy-duty press-releasing and media campaigning by our 'Comms team', RSSG Chairman, Nick Dutt, found himself transported to numerous TV and radio studios for interviews on patriotism and what it means to be English – with one station, the proudly red-white-and-blue GB News, broadcasting stirring footage from our St George's Day Cenotaph parade. As a result of these appearances, well over a hundred membership enquiries were made in just one week to our sterling

Administration staff at HQ, Liz Lloyd and Jade King – an inspiring boost to our ranks.

With a combination of personal hard work (Mark Lanyon), thinking big (Karen Cantrell) and by striding out and telling the country and world about what we stand for, The Royal Society of St. George – in this, its 130th anniversary year – can only go from strength to strength. Defending our long history as a nation, honouring the King, serving our communities and reaching out across the globe to all who would find inspiration from the banner of St. George: let such ideals be our battle-cry, as we embark upon our next one hundred years!

*Stuart Millson*

### Corrections and clarifications

The Editorial team works hard to ensure that this magazine is of a high quality. Sadly, there were two slips of the Editor's correcting pen last time: page 28, 'Panjab' should have been Punjab; page 41, 'twelfthth' – well, that was clearly wrong!

*The Beauty of England*



*Lake Windermere, Westmorland*





## My England

**Carl Portman**

carl.portman@hotmail.co.uk

**M**Y FRIEND RAY AND I SHARE a love of exploration and discovery. Indeed we lecture about our travels to far-flung places in search of new natural history experiences. He loves the Far East and I have a predilection for South America but we are united in our love of travelling somewhere warm, preferably to rainforest habitats. It's good for the soul, you know. Yet one of my very favourite explorers was a man who travelled to much colder climes – the Antarctic to be precise.

Captain Robert Falcon Scott, CVO (6 June 1868 – c. 29 March 1912) was a British Royal Navy officer and explorer who led two expeditions to the Antarctic regions: the Discovery expedition of 1901–04 and the Terra Nova expedition of 1910–13.

On his second venture, Scott led a party of five which reached the South Pole on 17 January 1912, less than five weeks after Amundsen's South Pole expedition. A planned meeting with supporting dog teams from the base camp failed, despite Scott's written instructions, and at a distance of 162 miles (261 km) from their base camp at Hut Point and approximately 12.5 miles (20.1 km) from the next depot, Scott and his companions died. They were later discovered and buried under the ice where they remain bound, locked in a freezing tomb.

Apsley Cherry-Garrard was the youngest

members of Scott's team and a member of the rescue party that discovered Scott, dead. His book *The Worst Journey in the World* is an account of that experience. In it he writes about how Scott and his companions had described the journey in their diaries the journey and how, when already freezing and hungry, they were driven to keep walking, sometimes only a few hundred yards a day in temperatures as low as  $-77^{\circ}$ . That is almost unimaginable.

Even when Scott knew that he would die, he had time to write a final entry in his diary on 29 March 1912, and here, he had England at heart. He wrote: "I do not think we can hope for any better things now. We shall stick it out to the end, but we are getting weaker, of course, and the end cannot be far. It seems a pity, but I do not think I can write any more. For God's sake look after our people." Those words "our people" are very poignant.

Some say that Scott failed. True enough, he was not the first to the Pole but for me it was not about the destination, it was the journey. It was about how Scott and his team displayed such heroic fortitude, determination and spirit to undertake such a life-threatening journey in the first place. There is such a thing as glorious defeat. In Tennyson's *Ulysses* the line "To strive, too seek, to find and not to yield" is what drives brave men on, and it perfectly



Robert Falcon Scott.

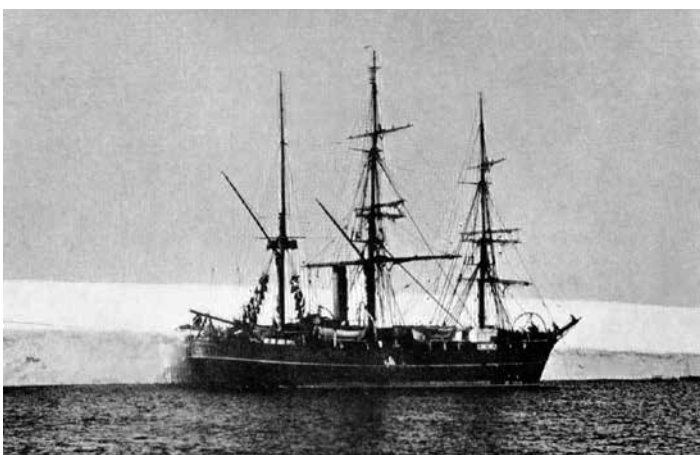
Wikimedia commons. Henry Maul and John Fox

describes the stoicism of Captain Scott and his team. Their indomitable spirit prevails and I am incredibly proud of those English lionhearts.

It is rather eerie to think that with the melting of ice over time, Scott's body will be suddenly released from its glacial prison to float out into the ocean. I like to think that when that moment arrives, he will be free at last. Maybe we shall never see him again.

*Carpe diem*

*Carl*



The expedition ship RRS Discovery in the Antarctic alongside the Great Ice Barrier, now known as the Ross Ice Shelf



Edward Adrian Wilson, Robert Falcon Scott, Lawrence Oates, Henry Robertson Bowers and Edgar Evans at the South Pole January 1912

## DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

**Friday, 6 September** – RSSG Annual General Meeting, The Union Jack Club, London

**Friday, 13 September** – Battle of Britain Remembrance Lunch, RAF Club, Piccadilly

**Sunday, 27 October** – Annual Standards Church Service, St George's Church, Hanover Square

**Monday 16 December** – City of London Branch, Christmas Banquet, Mansion House



# CHARITABLE TRUST REPORTS



## Joseph Bradley at the Icelandic National Jamboree

On 16 April last, our RSSG Charitable Trust Chairman, Mr Michael Riley, had the great privilege of presenting a cheque, along with the RSSG Charitable Trust grant Certificate, to Joseph Bradley of the Altrincham District Explorer Scouts.

Joseph, with other Altrincham District Explorer Scouts, will be attending the 24 Icelandic National Jamboree, in Ulfjotvtn between 12-19 July 2024.

Following the Jamboree, the Explorer Scouts will be engaging with fellow Icelandic Scouts and engaging in various other national pastimes to broaden their outlook on how different the Icelandic culture is to the British way of life.

We look forward to receiving a report, with photographs from Joseph, of this expedition.



## Sale Division Girlguiding and Sale District Scouts

There was a magnificent turnout for the annual Sale Division Girlguiding and Sale District Scouts St George's Day Parade in Worthington Park on Sunday, 21 April 2024.

Many dignitaries including the HM Lord Lieutenant of Greater Manchester, Mrs Diane Hawkins JP LLB, the Mayor of Trafford Councillor Delores Sullivan, Mr Michael Riley, Honorary Chairman of the Royal Society of St George Charitable Trust.

Girlguiding and Scouting would like to thank The Royal Society of St George Charitable Trust for their generous donation in support of this event.

A fuller report is included within an upcoming issue of *St George for England*. Credit for photos to Brian Williams.

Andy Atherall, District Commissioner, Sale & District Scouts, April 2024

## NAIRAC Awards

The Chairman of The Royal Society of St George, Gloucestershire Branch, introduced this year's Nairac Award winners.

Some excellent nominations were received, for both the Individual and Group Awards, and it was a difficult task to decide the winners.



## The Individual Award winner, LOLA NICOLL

Lola has had numerous open-heart surgeries and several leg operations, but has shown the utmost determination in overcoming her physical problems.

Her tutor said she is an extremely determined and persistent young lady and nothing seems to hinder her motivation. An example of her positivity was during a school trip which required a long walk throughout the day. Lola was the only student who did not complain, despite the fact she was wearing a support on her ankle.

She has completed her Bronze and Silver Duke of Edinburgh Awards. Whilst special considerations were put in place for her to complete a shorter expedition, she exceeded everyone's expectations and completed the whole expedition.

Lola has been away from school for treatment on many occasions and often for prolonged periods. Nevertheless she has shown extreme determination in her studies, asking teachers before going into hospital for work to complete, emailing everyone regularly to keep on top of her studies and most importantly completing all her work to a high standard.

Lola is a role model for many of her friends in dealing with adversity, showing constant perseverance to achieve her best. Despite the challenges, she has a fulfilling life.

She is eager and enthusiastic to share information about her condition and wrote a

booklet where she talked about her complex surgeries, how she felt and how scared she was in the darkest of days. The story was to give inspiration to parents and children facing the same journey and reminds them to never give up hope.

Lola also took part in an 'ask me anything' session at her mother's workplace about living with a heart condition. She co-presented with another lady whose husband had heart surgery. Lola impressed everyone at this session, including senior managers, with her knowledge and confidence.

Lola has asked that the Award money be given to Bristol Children's Hospital Cardiac Ward, towards new play therapy equipment for the children to use during their stay. Lola's award was presented by the Lord-Lieutenant.



## The Group Award winners: NORTH CERNEY CHURCH OF ENGLAND PRIMARY SCHOOL QUIZ TEAM

This small village school has about fifty pupils. Last year their team beat two other schools in the final of the Gloucestershire Nature Quiz, after competing in five other rounds beforehand.

The questions were extremely challenging and their Headteacher, who is here tonight, was extremely proud of every one of them, especially as it was the school's first win in this quiz.

Gloucestershire Wildlife Trust organise the quiz, which started in 1976 with just six schools competing. Last year more than 400 children from seventy-two different Gloucestershire schools took part. The Quizmaster said he found the children to be a tremendous inspiration. They gave him so much hope for the future that nature might be in safer hands than we sometimes think.

The Award money will be donated to the school.

## Hamish Webb, Nepal, 2024

I am a nursing student studying at the City, University of London. I am doing my hospital training within the Barts Health NHS Trust, where I am currently working on a respiratory ward at St Bartholomew's Hospital. In March of 2024, I was lucky enough to travel to Nepal for a month to undertake an elective nursing placement





with a company which specialises in this kind of placement called Work the World. Elective placements give healthcare students the opportunity to learn in an environment that is not their usual place of study. When I was made aware of the opportunity to undertake my placement abroad, I knew it would be the most beneficial option for me and my future career. I was given a few options of which country I wanted to travel to, but decided on Nepal due to the opportunities to travel outside of the placement time and an interest in their different healthcare practices in comparison to the UK.

Might I thank both the RSSG Haslemere branch and the RSSG Charitable Trust for their support in my undertaking this invaluable experience.



### **‘Spirit of Normandy Trust’ Eightieth Anniversary of D-Day 2024**

On 6 June 2024 the eightieth anniversary of the D-Day campaign in Normandy took place.

The ‘Spirit of Normandy Trust’ are an organisation founded in 1994 to mark the fiftieth anniversary of the campaign and has provided, since that time:

**Welfare** in the form of financial assistance to the veterans (and their dependents) of the three Services who fought in the Campaign.

**Education** by working in close liaison, throughout schools in the UK and



occasionally in the EU, with the Young Historian Project. The Trust annually awards prizes, for the best essays in relation to events leading up to and surrounding the Normandy Campaign.

The RSSG Charitable Trust, with the RSSG Haslemere branch donated a grant to assist Veterans travel to Normandy to mark this eightieth anniversary of D-Day.

Henry Rice, accompanied, by his son, Stuart, attended on 20 April last, the RSSG Annual St George’s Day Parade and Church Service. Then onto Westminster Abbey for our Service at The Tomb of The Unknown Warrior.

The photograph, with this report, was taken at the D-Day Memorial above Sword Beach.

Photograph credited to Mary Stewart, Trustee of ‘Spirit of Normandy Trust’



### **Ability Dogs 4 Young People..**

Ability Dogs 4 Young People gave the RSSG Charitable Trust, in response to grants allocated to them, the honour of naming one of their trainee puppies. Various names were proffered by Trustees, and ‘Lizzie’ was chosen.

The following message was received 26 June-2024

“With Lizzie turning two in April, we thought that the RSSG Charitable Trust would like an update on how she is getting on.

In December 2023 Lizzie was placed with a young lady in her twenties who has



physical disabilities. She also has a young son who enjoys playing with Lizzie and having her at their home.

Lizzie’s “owner”, accompanied by Lizzie, attends Southampton University one-day a week and she also helps out at a Mental Health Clinic which she enjoys. Lizzie’s “owner” is unable to drive so Lizzie gives her the confidence to use the bus which in turn increases her independence. They make a great team.”

The main objectives of the **Royal Society of St George Charitable Trust** are to help and encourage young people to greater achievement, whether in fields of academe, sport, adventure or business, to encourage their enterprise, skills and enthusiasm – for nothing succeeds without enthusiasm.

Each Branch is encouraged to recommend young people from their own area and a list of the current donations can be obtained from the Trustees.

Our funds are limited but if you know of any young person who is doing something worthwhile and who genuinely needs a donation to help with expenses, please get in touch with the Trust Secretary. And if you come across a windfall yourself, don’t forget the Charitable Trust!

Please support our Charitable Trust by sending a donation to the Trustees at the Administration Centre address or consider the possibility of leaving a donation to the Trust in your Will.

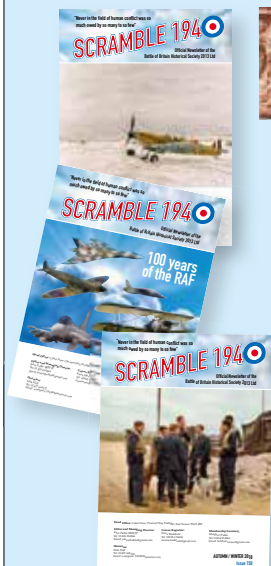
### **Branch Matching Scheme**

We are pleased to announce a new matching initiative from the **Royal Society of St George Charitable Trust**, in the hope that we can help more young people in their endeavours to support their community or their own personal development.

Under this initiative the Charitable Trust will match any donation that a branch makes to support a cause that aligns with its defined objectives, up to a limit of £1,000.

For more details, please contact the Trust’s Secretary, Mrs Shirley Hankers on: [shirt.berley@gmail.com](mailto:shirt.berley@gmail.com)

## BATTLE OF BRITAIN HISTORICAL SOCIETY



*Always Remembered ... Never forgotten*

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- To look after the final resting places of the "few" •
- To erect granite memorials to the "few" •



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We work to ensure that the historic Prayer Book continues to be available to future generations, and we seek to introduce it to young people, ordinands and PCCs throughout the Church of England. Our many activities include:

- ◆ Forging links with and between clergy and churches having a particular commitment to the Book of Common Prayer;
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- ◆ Producing high quality magazines and journals;
- ◆ Promoting the prestigious Cranmer Awards for young people.

Every member receives five magazines a year, plus invitations to a variety of local and national events, including an annual residential conference where members are addressed by quality speakers from religion, the arts and broadcasting.

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## NEWS FROM AROUND THE BRANCHES

### BATH

*Charlie Webb*

The annual general meeting of the bath branch took place on the Saturday before St George's day. After the routine business we were privileged to hear a talk by Mildred Okwako from Kenya who is concluding a postgraduate Masters degree in Education



at Bristol University. The fact that questions kept flowing long after her address showed the interest of members in what she had to say. She spoke about education in her country but she was much wider in her comments and her appreciation of 'Global Education'.

Mildred shared her knowledge, experience and passion for education while highlighting both the opportunities and challenges in her country where class sizes and gender disparity raise important questions.

Among her many goals when she returns to teaching in Kenya is to establish a digital library at her village primary school. This is part of a wider imperative to improve literacy skills through technology. A theme that cropped up often in her talk was the challenge of teaching to very large class sizes and far from being daunted by this, Mildred relished the opportunity to enact

change by improving the quality and culture of education. However, as she embarks on this journey she is aware that she cannot do this alone and is actively reaching out to individuals and organisations that can help her acquire 700 tablets necessary to kickstart her technological education initiative that will assist her community and demonstrate the potential benefits of a broader initiative nationally.

Throughout her talk and Q and A she spoke with insight, wit and a passion that was nothing short of inspiring. Mildred Okwako will be a name to remember in the coming years as Kenya's Education system evolves and embraces new methods of nurturing talent and delivering higher standards.

Afterwards we had lunch together provided by members. The event raised £320 for our commonwealth student grant fund.

### THE ROYAL SOCIETY OF ST GEORGE IN CAMBRIA

*Convener, Stuart Millson*

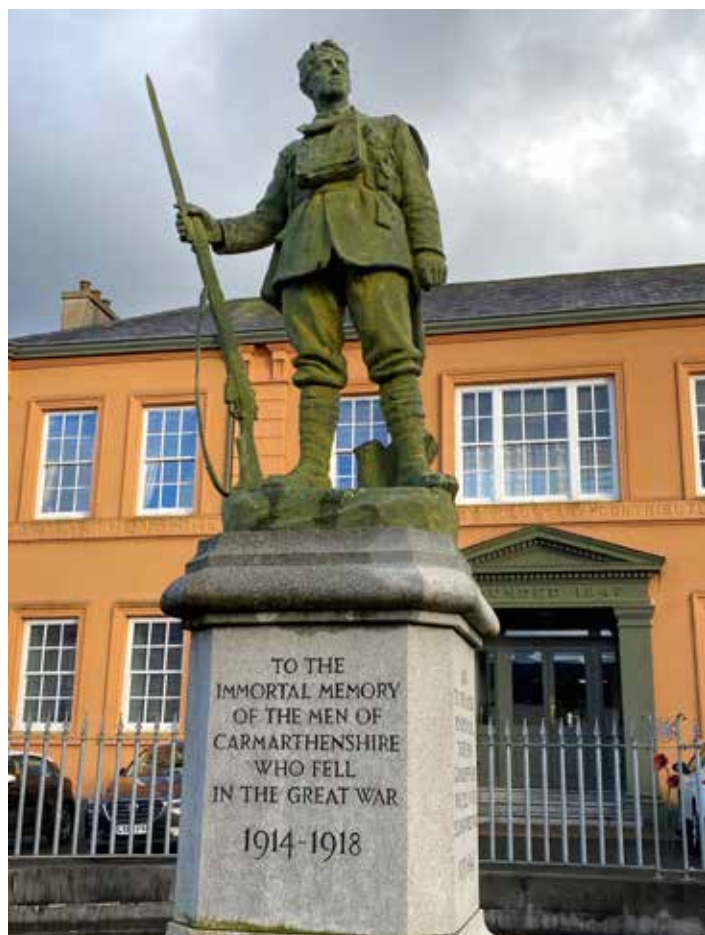
We continue to spread the word in the land of St David! Yes, a toast was made to the Patron Saint of England on 23 April in the Welsh-speaking area of Carmarthenshire, where you will also find quite a number of English emigres – all drawn to the beautiful landscape and mainly rural way of life of the region.

I am pleased to report back to you that at an April meeting of The Royal British Legion, Newcastle Emlyn Branch, an official, Mr Ken



Jones, read from the last edition of St George for England; so let us hope that 'networking' with like-minded folk (wherever we are in the Kingdom) will stimulate interest in our Society and possibly yield new members. By the way, congratulations to the local Poppy Appeal organisers for their sterling work.

On the subject of the Legion and remembrance, Carmarthenshire has some imposing war memorials to its credit. Pictured here is the warrior of the Great War, standing guard in the county town. And also, the memorial in Llandovery, flanked as it is by the Union Jack and red dragon flag of Wales.





## CITY OF LONDON BRANCH

Patron: THE RT. HON. THE LORD MAYOR

## CHRISTMAS BANQUET

The City of London Branch is pleased to invite Members and Friends from all Branches to join them at the Christmas Banquet on Monday, 16 December 2024 in Mansion House.

Reception 6:30 pm, Dinner 7:30 pm, Carriages 10:30 pm

We will be hosted by our Chairman Clifford Rust, and honoured by the presence of the Lord Mayor and the Civic Party

Dress: **BLACK TIE,**  
**EQUIVALENT FOR LADIES.**

Decorations presented by the Monarch may be worn.

Contact our Honorary Events Secretary for more details closer to the event by email at [rssgclb@btinternet.com](mailto:rssgclb@btinternet.com)

## FENLAND

An excellent event was held on Sunday 28 April 2024, here at the Fenland Branch. To celebrate St George, we assembled at The Secret Gardens in Wisbech, the event greatly enhanced by entertainment from local entertainers, Tony G and Lloyd Moon. A buffet was provided by Maggi and the Potting Shed team!

Over 170 people attended, including



At RAFA Club, Left to Right: Peter Dennis, Press Officer; Colin Harvey Treasurer; Ken Newman, Secretary; Brian Kierman, President; Stephen Phillips, Chairman; Rev David Addington SCC RNR Chaplain, and Aubrey Smith Standard Bearer



Lighting the Fenland beacon for England

National Chairman, Nick Dutt and his wife Jan. The grand sum of £885 was raised for charity. And in the audience were several local dignitaries, including the Deputy Lord Lieutenant of Cambridge, Mark Knight MBE, and his wife Dianne.

Nick was introduced to all tables and members. Brian Kierman thanked everyone for their attendance and to all who helped

make the afternoon so successful, not least our own Peter Dennis who organised the entertainment.

Finally, our President requested that all members in the audience 'step up' to keep the Branch going after such a successful year of fundraising, ceremonial and support for our cadets – the posts of Chairman and Secretary to be filled at the AGM. And we can now make the announcement that following the May AGM our new Chairman is Stephen Phillips, supported by Secretary, Ken Newman.



Men of the Fenland, with Nick Dutt, National Chairman, second from left



## GLOUCESTERSHIRE

*Patron:* Mr Edward Gillespie, OBE,  
His Majesty's Lord-Lieutenant of  
Gloucestershire

*President:* Councillor Pam Tracey, MBE

*Chairman:* Mrs Pat Ayres, MBE

### St George's Day Service

Our forty-fourth St George's Day Service in St Barnabas Church, Gloucester, was a great success. A larger congregation than last year enjoyed the Address by the Dean of Gloucester Cathedral, The Very Reverend Andrew Zihni, and applauded the winners of the Nairac Awards, which honour Captain Robert Nairac, G.C., the Gloucestershire soldier who was murdered by the IRA. This year's Awards, presented by Branch Patron, Mr Edward Gillespie, HM Lord-Lieutenant for Gloucestershire, were supported by a match-funded grant from the Society's Charitable Trust.

Pat Ayres, Branch Chairman of Gloucestershire Branch, introduced the winners and told the congregation the Branch committee had received excellent nominations this year. The Awardees were chosen because they displayed some of qualities associated with Captain Nairac - selflessness, courage and determination.

Despite numerous operations the Individual Award Winner, Lola Nicoll, has shown the utmost determination in overcoming her physical problems. Her tutor at Farmor's School, Fairford said nothing seems to hinder her motivation. She completed her Bronze and Silver Duke of Edinburgh Awards; special considerations were put in place for her to complete a shorter expedition, but she exceeded everyone's expectations and completed the whole expedition.

Although she has been away from school for treatment often and sometimes for prolonged periods, she completed all her

work to a high standard. She is a role model in dealing with adversity and, despite the challenges, has a fulfilling life. Lola wrote a booklet about her complex surgeries and how she felt in the darkest days to give hope and inspiration to parents and children facing the same journey. She donated her Award money to Bristol Children's Hospital Cardiac Ward for new play therapy equipment for children to use during their stay.

North Cerney Primary School Quiz Team won the Group Award. This small village school, with about fifty pupils, won the final of the Gloucestershire Nature Quiz. More than 400 children from seventy-two different Gloucestershire schools had taken part in the five rounds before the Final. The questions were extremely challenging and their Headteacher was very proud as it was the school's first win in this annual quiz, which has been organised by Gloucestershire Wildlife Trust since 1976. The quizmaster said he found the children to be a tremendous inspiration and gave him so much hope for the future of our planet. The Award money was donated to the school.

### EricFest

In May Branch committee members manned (and womanned!) a stand at EricFest, a celebration of the life of our past Chairman, Eric Freeman, organised by his family. On a lovely sunny day people from far and wide enjoyed displays by the many organisations with which Eric was involved. There was Morris Dancing, traditional songs, recitals and country activities, rides in carriages drawn by heavy horses and much more. The event finished with a social evening in the barn. We were able to talk about the Society with a good number of people and hopefully will gain some recruits.

### Annual General Meeting

Our Branch Annual General Meeting is in June and in July we visit the tiny

Violette Szabó GC Museum in Wormelov, Herefordshire. The museum is in the work of one remarkable woman, Rosemary Rigby, MBE, who raised the money to build it and now runs it, single-handed, unaided by any official funding. It commemorates an extraordinarily brave woman who was captured by the Nazis and tortured for months before being shot weeks before the end of World War II.



Violette (pictured left) was born in 1921 to an English father and French mother. She spent many holidays in Wormelov where her uncle and aunt lived and that house is now the home of

Rosemary Rigby. After Violette's husband, Étienne, was killed at El Alamein, Violette, who by then had a baby daughter, felt she had to do something to revenge his death. Already a member of the ATS, she was eventually recruited into the Special Operations Executive where her knowledge of French and other skills meant she was an ideal courier liaising with resistance groups in France. On her second mission she was betrayed and captured. She was imprisoned in Limoges and Fresnes but never gave information to the Nazis. She was awarded the George Cross by Britain and the Croix de Guerre with Silver Star by France.

The film *Carve Her Name with Pride* is a sanitised version of her life but gives a reasonable idea of some of the things that happened to her. We are looking forward to learning more about this remarkable woman in the museum dedicated to her memory.

For details of Gloucestershire Branch events, at which all are welcome, contact Margaret Fuller, Branch Secretary, by email at [glosrssg@btinternet.com](mailto:glosrssg@btinternet.com) or by phone 01291 625059.



The Lord-Lieutenant for Gloucestershire meeting the Standard Bearers who paraded for our St. George's Day Service



Left to right: Pam Tracey, Branch President; The Very Reverend Andrew Zihni, Dean of Gloucester Cathedral; Julia Hurrell; Mark Hurrell, High Sheriff of Gloucestershire; Pat Ayres, Branch Chairman

## NORTH DOWNS

*DeputyChairman:* Wing Commander Mike Sutton.

The North Downs Branch of the Royal Society of St George continues to play its part in the local community in mid-Kent, helping with the vital work of the East Malling and Aylesford foodbanks

The Branch also participates in village events, ensuring that our message is heard and that money is raised for local charities.

In June, Deputy Chairman, Mike Sutton, attended the D-Day commemorations on the Normandy Coast ~ a moving occasion and a chance to see the very beaches where history was made. Mike is also a keen backer of his local Ditton ATC, a squadron which continues to thrive and attract young people in Kent.

## SEAHAVEN

*Vice Chairman:* Ann Abbott

Our St George's Day celebrations started by the ringing of the Bells at the Parish Church in Seaford followed by a Church Service. We then celebrated further by a formal dinner with members and several dignitaries moving on to enjoy a delightful meal.

On the previous Saturday, several members had joined other branch members at the Cenotaph, London, to lay wreaths and then attend a service at Westminster Abbey.

We commemorated D Day with another formal dinner having paraded our Branch Standard in the morning at a short Service at Seaford War Memorial. The dinner was well attended and an after dinner talk paid



*Denton Challenge Seahaven President Laurie Holland, Vice President Steve Saunders*

tribute to the incredible logistics involved in the landings.

As is our custom we supported a local Charity, The Denton Challenge



*St George's Day. Chairman Steve Bell, Standard Bearer Frank Holland and Dignitaries*

by contributing towards the cost of the rosettes and then on the actual day of The Challenge, our members presented these rosettes to the participants.

## ST NEOTS

*Events Co-ordinator:* Sue Barnes

We recently held our monthly Lunch Club at the Bridge House, St Neots into which we incorporated our celebrations for the 80th Anniversary of D-Day. Fish and Chips was featured on the menu for the day. We also held a raffle, the proceeds of which were donated to The RAF Benevolent Fund and The Normandy Memorial Trust. There was a great turnout of members and their families.



## WILTSHIRE

Lloyd James reports that his thriving branch in the heart of ancient Wessex enjoyed a splendid St George's Day luncheon. Ever keen on creating the right atmosphere, the branch chose the historic Bath Arms in Warminster for their celebration. Wiltshire was, of course, the county in which King Alfred the Great defeated the Danes, thus setting 'England' (then a loose concept) on the way to full nationhood.







## The Royal Society of St George Annual General Meeting 2024

Friday, 6 September, 18:00–19:00

Union Jack Club, Sandell Street, Waterloo, London SE1 8UJ



1. Apologies
  2. To receive and adopt the minutes of last year's meeting.
  3. Matters Arising.
  4. To receive the Chairman's Annual Report.
  5. To receive and adopt the Examined Accounts for the year ending 31/12/2023.
  6. To receive the Chairman of the Charitable Trust's Annual Report.
  7. To approve revised UK membership fees proposal.
  8. To re-elect such members of Council who, retiring in rotation, offer themselves to serve a further term under Bye Law 23 to elect new members of Council under Bye Law 27 and to appoint those who have been co-opted.
  9. To appoint Accountants as General Examiner to the Society.
  10. Any Other Business (To be notified 72 hours in advance of the meeting).
- By Order of the Council, 1 July 2024

A hot buffet will be served after the AGM at a cost of £28 per person

Please contact the office if you would like a postal ballot and a copy of the 2023-year-end accounts. (NB we can only send out postal ballots after 6 August once the council nomination deadline has passed so people can vote.)

Register your attendance with Liz at the office by no later than midnight on Monday, 1 September.

Council Nominations to be lodged with Liz at the office by no later than 6 August. Nominations to be supported by two fully paid-up members at least one of whom must be a Member of Council (as per Governance Regulation 1.8 (a) and (b)).

Nomination forms will be made available on our website [www.rssg.org.uk](http://www.rssg.org.uk) or sent out by email or post upon request.)

## OVERSEAS BRANCH NEWS

### CALIFORNIA

A glittering event by the Pacific Ocean  
The Royal Society of St George –



California Branch – hosted the prestigious event “RSSG by the Sea II” on Sunday, 28 April 2024, at the Hotel Casa del Mar in Santa Monica, California, from 11 am to 3 pm. The event was a St George's Day Celebration and Awards Presentation where various notable awards were given to esteemed members and guests.

The event began with a Champagne Reception in the Crimson Room of the Casa del Mar, after which the guests were seated in the Conservatory Room, the backdrop to the day with a magnificent view of the Pacific Ocean. The room's floor-to-ceiling windows enhanced the stunning panorama of the celebration. A sea of ladies' couture-designer apparel from Dior to Chanel was clearly seen, along with the male counterparts in Ralph Lauren and Brioni suits.

#### Designer style

Ratu Muda Princess Karen Cantrell brought her A-Game to the event and symbolically championed Couture Designer, Fedor Regovets, from the Ukraine. The custom-designed look included a Royal blue

jacquard off-shoulder dress embellished with Swarovski crystals at the waist that caught the light in the same shade of blue, and a pair of matching gloves. According to the designer, blue was chosen “to signify trust, confidence, and stability.” Her hat was sensational in matching blue.

Roger Neal, RSSG-CA Honorary Member, introduced Vice Chairman Sandro Monetti, who then introduced Chairman Ratu Muda Princess Karen Cantrell. The Chairman announced the formation of the RSSG-CA Animal Welfare League, an organisation dedicated to assisting all homeless, abandoned, or abused pets, and finding them care and loving homes. In the tradition of Queens Victoria and Elizabeth II, the RSSG-CA intends to honour the animals that offer so much love and loyalty to the human population of our world.

#### Admirable organisation

The Chairman's announcement was met with overwhelming approval, and she went on to describe to the founding Board of Directors of this admirable organisation, the plight of some of the rescued animals. Temekung-Baroness Miranda Kramer and Aide-de-Camp Christopher Hulbert, along with Ratu Muda Princess Karen Cantrell will oversee the RSSG-CA AWL.

Marquis Peter L. Eckert was then introduced by Raja Muda Viceroy Pelindung

Spiritual Kaitiaki Dr Enrico Melson to give a presentation on the Jarso Primary School, a project of Trustee – His Imperial Highness, Prince Ermias Sahle-Selassie Haile Selassie.

Sandro Monetti led the Toast to King Charles III, and introduced the Keynote Speaker, Ruth McCartney, who addressed the attendees on her very personal experiences as half-sister to Beatle, Paul



Mr Peter Yip – New Trustee for RSSG CA with Chairman Ratu Muda Princess Karen Cantrell



Ruth McCartney – speaker at RSSG-CA event – topic “The Beatles and The Royals”. Ruth McCartney is the half-sibling of Paul McCartney. Sir James Paul McCartney CH MBE, to give him his formal name, is world renowned as a singer, songwriter, musician, record, and film producer. She is pictured here with Karen Han Ottosson – Honorary Member of RSSG CA and is an internationally renowned virtuoso, composer and vocalist

McCartney, in her talk, “The Beatles and the Royals”.

The Chairman inducted a new Trustee, Mr Peter Yip, after which she inducted three Honorary Members, including Annie Chen, Karen Han, and Paul Ottosson.

### Awards

Presentation of awards ensued, beginning with the Presidential Volunteer Service Awards from the White House. Sandro Monetti introduced Ms Donelle Dadigan, who is known as the Fairy Godmother of Hollywood. She received this prestigious award for her dedication to fulfilling dreams. She managed the Hollywood Walk of Fame stars for thirteen years and founded The Hollywood Museum, which houses an impressive collection of film and TV memorabilia. Through her philanthropic work, totalling over 50,000 hours, she has been instrumental in supporting various charitable causes.

The second Presidential Volunteer



Entertainment Tonight producer, Vin Di Bona, with Donelle Dadigan (centre) recipient of The Presidential Volunteer Service Award from The White House and a Humanitarian Award from UNA/USA with California State Treasurer Fiona Ma



Donelle Dadigan receiving the Chairman's Award for Chivalry with Deputy Chairman Sandro Monetti

Service Award was presented to Dr Jeanne Ruderman by Ratu Muda Princess Karen Cantrell, RSSG-CA Chairman.

Mr Burt Ward was also recognised during the event with The Presidential Volunteer Service Award from The White House and a Humanitarian Award from UNA/USA. Burt Ward, famous for his role as Robin in the *Batman* TV series, was honoured for his thirty years of charity work focused on animal welfare. His wife, Tracy Ward, was also acknowledged with a Humanitarian Award from UNA/USA for her involvement in Gentle Giants Rescue and Adoptions.

Also receiving the UNA/USA Humanitarian Award were Dr Spencer M. Dayton and Ms Donelle Dadigan. Mr Barry Simon from the National Council of the United Nations Association conducted the introduction and presentation to them.

### King Charles Awards

The Medal of Honour Award was introduced by Ratu Muda Princess Karen and awarded



Screen icon, Burt Ward, received The Presidential Volunteer Service Award from The White House and a Humanitarian Award from UNA/USA. He played Robin to Adam West's *Batman* in the enduringly *Batman* TV series in the 1960s, winning fans worldwide as the Boy Wonder and ultimately receiving a star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame. RSSG CA honoured him for his 30 years of charity work as a superhero to animals. Tracy Ward also received a Humanitarian Award from UNA/USA. In 1994 Burt and his wife Tracy co-founded Gentle Giants Rescue and Adoptions which has since saved the lives of more than 15,000 dogs



Dr William Martin, recipient of The King Charles III Leadership Award – Raja Muda Viceroy Dr Enrico Melson – Marquis Peter L. Eckert and Baroness Mirand Kramer

to Sir Laurent Khaiat, Marquis of Sicily of Cappadocia, in absentia.

The King Charles III Leadership Awards were presented by the Chairman to Dr Aphinita Chaichana, Dr William Martin, Dr Linyun Xiang, and Sir Laurent Khaiat, Marquis of Sicily of Cappadocia, in absentia.

The Global Leadership Summit Icon of Peace Award was introduced by Dr Aphinita Chaichana, who came from Thailand to award it to Chairman, Ratu Muda Princess Karen Cantrell for impacting and participating during the Global Leadership Summit 2023 and being an Official United Peace Keeper Federal Council Member.

A highly-distinguished award presented during the event was The Chairman's Cross for Chivalry. This award aims to recognise individuals who embody the values of English history, traditions, and ideals while supporting The Royal Society of St George's objectives. Recipients are valued members of their communities, and exemplify respect for tradition, honesty, integrity, community, tolerance, humour, fair play, and a warmth of welcome. This year's honoree was Ms Donelle Dadigan.

A sumptuous four-course meal was served after Grace was given by Raja Muda Viceroy Pelindung Spiritual Kaitiaki Dr Enrico Melson. Folio Wine and Partner Jonathan Boulangeat donated a magnum of “RARE” Champagne and certificate for a party of twelve for auction. *Entertainment Tonight* Producer Mr Vin Di Bona won it with a \$2000.00 bid. \$1000.00 went to The Jarso Primary School Project and \$1000.00 went to the newly formed RSSG-CA Animal Welfare League.

An exhilarating vocal performance by Laura Angelini rounded out the afternoon of festivities and celebrations in honour of St George's Day.

Magnificent gift bags were distributed to everyone containing Retail sizes of Bellefontaine skin care for men and women, tickets to the Hollywood Museum, and coffee from Go Coffee Go.

Overall, “RSSG by the Sea II” was a remarkable event where deserving individuals were recognised for their outstanding contributions and commitment to various noble causes.





## Optima sperando spero – Hoping for the best, I live – the motto of California Branch – Animal Welfare League.

The coat of arms have a truly regal flourish, featuring, as they do, animals closely associated with the British throne. The shield is in a Victorian shape and features some of the beasts that can also be found in the world-famous “Queen’s Beasts”, created to celebrate the late Queen’s coronation.

In the first quarter of the shield we find the white hart (hart being an old English word of stag). The white hart was the personal symbol of Richard II. The blue bird is taken from the coat of arms of His Majesty’s College of Heraldry. The sitting white lion is the

“White Lion of Mortimer” and descends to the King through Edward IV, from Anne de Mortimer. Unlike the Lion of England, this beast is uncrowned. The swan is the symbol of the Bohun family who married into the then ruling family in 1380. Together these four animals have royal connections, suitable for association with The Royal Society of St George California. However, these animals also stand for more practical and less historic protection. The stag standing for wild forest animals, the blue bird for domestic birds, the lions for cats big and small, and the swan for wild animals.

### Lions and unicorns

This theme continues as we look at the supporters. The horse supports the arms in much the same way the unicorn of Scotland would. From the end of the sixteenth century, two unicorns were adopted as the supporters of the Scottish Royal Arms. In 1603 the crown of England passed to James VI of Scotland, who then became James I of England. He took as supporters of his royal arms a crowned lion of England and one of his Scottish unicorns. The other supporter stands in for one of the most popular pets — dogs: The White Greyhound of Richmond was a badge of John of Gaunt, 1st Duke of Lancaster, Earl of Richmond, third son of King Edward III. It was also used by his son King Henry IV and especially by King Henry VII. As a crest we have, rising from out of a ducal coronet a globe —symbolising our global reach of the league — astride which stands a further white greyhound.

Princess Karen Cantrell

## BRITISH COLUMBIA

President: Shawn M. Wade

### Remembering Queen Elizabeth II in British Columbia

On 21 April (the late Queen Elizabeth II’s birthday) members of the Royal Society of St George in British Columbia, Canada, joined with members of the Royal Commonwealth Society for the second

annual Queen Elizabeth Day, at Jubilee Square, Queen Elizabeth Park, Vancouver. There are special plaques at this park commemorating the late Queen’s Golden and Diamond Jubilees, placed by the Royal Commonwealth Society. Members of the community gather there, by the memorial tree, to commemorate special occasions. This year on her birthday, a photograph of Queen Elizabeth II was placed near the tree,

speeches were given, and members of the public stopped to remember and pay their own tributes to our late Queen, commenting on the values of monarchy and expressed their support for the RSSG and what we are doing.

Remembering Queen Elizabeth II, celebrating England and St George!

God Save the King! Vivat Rex!



### D-Day remembered eighty years on!

The greatest seaborne invasion against Fortress Europe was launched on 6 June 1944. The beaches won at such terrible cost were the first steps in the last act of the European war. Fast forward to 6 June 2024 and the Royal Society of St George, British Columbia Branch gathered for a barbecue to honour those brave souls who fought to liberate Europe from Hitler’s tyranny, and especially those who died for the cause of freedom on Gold, Sword, Juno, Omaha and Utah Beaches in Normandy eighty years ago. *Lest we forget.*

### St George’s Day in British Columbia

St George’s Day 2024 saw many members of the RSSG British Columbia Branch descend on All Saints Anglican Church, alongside members of the Royal Commonwealth Society and the Order of St George, for our annual St George’s Day Church Parade. RSSG member, Captain the Reverend Gordon Barrett officiated. RSSG Branch President Shawn Wade gave a reading, and the Reverend Justin Cheng and the parishioners of All Saints also contributed to the very special service. Afterwards we held a special reception in the Church basement. Speeches were offered up to St George and our Society, and a special cake was cut and served (right).





## KUALA LUMPUR AND SELANGOR

*President: Ray Bolland*

It is great that His Majesty has become our Patron and I have shared the news with our members.

In May we held a James Bond-themed dinner, "Shaken not Stirred" from which I have included some pictures. We were entertained by Acker Kwan, an exceptionally good close up magician, who did the most amazing

trick of getting different people to choose numbers at random and getting the High Commissioner to close her eyes and tap into his phone calculator, whilst everyone round the table entered the data on their own calculators. With a series of additions and multiplications, we all arrived at the exact eight-digit number he had previously written down and, if that wasn't spectacular enough, the number, when turned upside down, spelled out stgeorge. Marvellous!

## Golf

Our golf team won the annual Intersociety Golf Tournament and as a result of this, a donation of RM10,000 was made to MAPPAC, the Malaysian Association of Paediatric Palliative Care, on behalf of the Society, an NGO we have been supporting since last July.

The Annual General Meeting of the Kuala Lumpur and Selangor branch was held in early June at which I was re-elected as President.



HE Ailsa Terry, British High Commissioner and Ray Bolland, drawing the raffle



Acker Kwan, an exceptionally good close up magician, who entertained us throughout the evening



Acker Kwan



One of the Past Chieftains of St Andrew's Society here, dressed as one of the four Blofelds who made an appearance



The President of the St Patrick's Society here and the Marketing Director of one of our partners

## ANNUAL WREATH-LAYING CEREMONY

### Annual Wreath-Laying and Cadet Parade

On 20 April, a sunny Saturday morning, many of us gathered at the Cenotaph to pay our respects to those English men and women who made that final sacrifice, for the freedoms that we can take for granted today.

After a brief but poignant service, led by the Honorary Chaplain to the Society, Rev Roddy Leece, many laid wreaths on behalf of the Society and our branches. We were joined in the wreath laying by Air Commadore Tony Keeling, Commandant, RAF Air Cadets and the Lord Mayor of Westminster, Patricia McAllister.

In this eightieth anniversary year of the D-Day landing, we were also honoured to have Richard Paulinski, Chairman of the Spirit of Normandy Trust as well as Henry Rice, a ninety-eight year old veteran of the Royal Navy.

This was followed by a wonderful marchpast by over 400 cadets representing the three main services and led by a marching band.

Air Commadore Tony Keeling, who took the salute for the marchpast with Patricia McAllister were supported by Wing Commander Cameron Braddy-Green, Officer Commanding, London Wing, RAF Air Cadets, Colonel Wendy



Adams, Commandant City of London and North East Sector Army Cadet Force and Colonel Simon Johnson, Commandant, Greater London South East Sector Army







Cadet Force as well as the Society's Vice Chairman, Commander James Nisbet, Area Officer, London, Sea Cadets.

For the first time, our event was covered by a national media outlet. GB News filmed



the event and showed clips of the event throughout the day, on their news bulletin.

Following this event, we moved to Westminster Abbey, where I had the great honour of laying a wreath at the Tomb of the Unknown Warrior on behalf of the Society.

I would like to express my thanks to all those who attended and supported us on the day, but particularly those who worked tirelessly behind the scenes, which made it all happen so smoothly. Jane Dorrington, Liz Lloyd and Chantzi King on the Society's behalf; WO1 Bill McCarthy RN, who



coordinated with all the cadet units who all performed so well; Westminster City Council and the Metropolitan Police, among others.

It was certainly a special day that will live long in the memory – and is available on the GBNews channel!

*Nick Dutt*, Chairman

## OBITUARY



**Simon Cowell MBE MCIJ**  
19 April 1952 – 9 June 2024

*Simon was an Hon. Life Member of The Royal Society of St George, North Downs Branch. We publish here the statement from The Wildlife Aid Foundation (WAF), of which Simon was Founder and Chief Executive Officer.*

It is with immense sadness that we announce the passing of Simon Cowell MBE, MCIJ, conservationist, founder and CEO of the Wildlife Aid Foundation, and presenter of *Wildlife SOS*. Simon passed away peacefully on Sunday, 9 June, surrounded by his daughters, his partner and his dogs, after a brave battle

with cancer. Simon was one of the UK's most respected conservationists and a passionate advocate for wildlife protection and environmental causes. He dedicated his life to British wildlife and worked tirelessly to ensure countless injured and orphaned animals were given a second chance in the wild through rescue, clinical treatment, and rehabilitation. He campaigned relentlessly to raise awareness of the plight of wildlife and the importance of all species.

Simon began rescuing and rehabilitating wildlife in his home and garden in the early 1980s, as a distraction from his job as a broker in London. When his career was cut short by stress-induced health problems, the hobby became a full-time job and he established Wildlife Aid (latterly, the Wildlife Aid Foundation) as a charity in 1987. It grew to become one of Britain's busiest and most influential wildlife organisations.

In 1997, Simon created, produced, and presented the television series *Wildlife SOS* for Channel Five and Discovery's *Animal Planet*. He reported on the plight of animals internationally, including mountain gorillas in the Congo, wolves in northern

Russia, and moon bears in Vietnam. Simon wrote *Wildlife SOS*, a novel *The Owl with the Golden Heart* and his autobiography *My Wild Life*. In 2005 he was awarded the MBE for services to wildlife. He was a frequent media commentator on environmental matters, sharing his knowledge and promoting conservationism.

The Wildlife Aid Foundation continues Simon's work and legacy from its base in Leatherhead under the leadership of Simon's daughter and WAF CEO, Lou Cowell.

Simon believed that every animal matters. He was committed to redressing the damage man has done to the environment. He was passionate about the importance of environmental education and hopeful for a future in which man respects and protects the natural world.

Simon's dream was to build a better world for wildlife. To do this, he championed the construction of a new Wildlife Aid Centre, one which will allow WAF to care for more animals, and to teach, demonstrate, and inspire the next generation to conserve, and to live alongside, our wildlife. For further details, go to: [www.wildlifeaid.org.uk](http://www.wildlifeaid.org.uk)

# The great oak table – made from trees from the age of the mammoths

*David Thornevell makes a remarkable discovery at Rochester Cathedral*



*The discovery of the Jubilee Oak in Norfolk in March 2012*

**A**N INCREDIBLE FIVE THOUSAND years ago a forest of tall oak trees stood in the fenland basin of East Anglia.

The trees were about 180 feet tall compared with our present oak trees growing to about sixty-five feet. The fenland became flooded as sea levels rose and fell into the silt which preserved them. Soluble iron in the stagnant water reacted with the tannin turning the wood black.

### Heart of oak

Then in 2012, the year of Queen Elizabeth II's Jubilee, during farm cultivation at Wissingham Fens in Norfolk, a forty-three-foot section of one of the ancient oaks was found. The symbol of the oak has always represented the heart of

England: what an auspicious find in such a year!

After much effort removing it from the site, the tree was cut into planks followed by a drying process in a kiln. The leading craftsman, Hamish Low, alongside Designer, Mauro Dell'Orco, worked with a dedicated team to create the large table shown in the picture.

### A table fit for a monarch

The job was completed in 2022 in commemoration of the late Queen's Platinum Jubilee. For those interested in stats, it is about forty-three feet long with a width of about five feet, weighing just over 1.3 tons.

The table, with its sponsors' names carved into it, was first displayed at Ely Cathedral. The pictures here show the table

on display at Rochester Cathedral in Kent. There it has been used for community events such as dinners. Children and adults have also been able to sit down and use the table for work, or for a quiet time – just reading.

The table is owned by a trust called The Fenland Black Oak Table Trust. Moving it is a big effort and it is due to be displayed next in Lincoln Cathedral.

Somehow, it is right for a cathedral. And although not a round table, one could almost imagine King Arthur and his knights gathering here.

**David Thornevell is the LibDem Chairman of East Malling and Larkfield Parish Council in Kent. A Borough Councillor, too, David spends much time exploring the history and ecology of 'his patch' of England.**

## RSSG LEGEND DOES IT AGAIN!



As readers of *St. George for England* will know, **Jeffrey Long MBE**, has set his own gold standard when it comes to charity fundraising. While many others wonder what their country will do for them, Jeffrey gets on with doing something for his country.

The tough ex-soldier takes the longest charity walk completely in his stride. The miles simply do not matter. This latest picture comes from way back in April when Jeffrey, surrounded by civic dignitaries and fellow ex-servicemen strolled across the finishing line, having raised a substantial sum for the Royal British Legion.

### Armed Forces Day

Patients who are military veterans or still

serving were invited to a celebration at a Bradford hospital for Armed Forces Day, on 29 June.

The event at Bradford Royal Infirmary is part of the lead-up to the day which falls on the last Saturday in June every year.

Armed Forces Day, known originally as Veterans' Day, was first held on Saturday, 27 June 2006, and acknowledges the contribution of the country's Armed Forces.

Fundraiser and ex-paratrooper **Jeffrey Long MBE**, 92, from Bingley, was the hospital's guest of honour.

All of us at The Royal Society of St. George salute our man with the walking boots! Well done, sir!



# Finnish Sauna at Reed Paper Mills, Aylesford

David Thornevell



**A**T AYLESFORD PAPER MILLS there is the only Finnish Sauna Bath now operating in this country. It was presented to us by the Finnish Olympic Team of 1948 in recognition of the help we had given and of our close connection with Finland. The bath was opened in June 1949 by Mr Wuori, then the Finnish Minister.

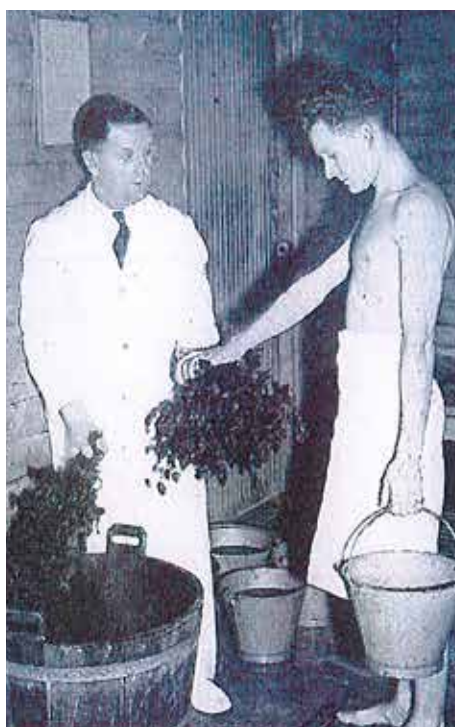
Since then its popularity has grown steadily and about eighty men use it every week. Monday is ladies' night and there is a regular attendance of up to twenty. The Sauna Bath is a particular favourite with athletes who find that it tones them up. It is also very good for those who are suffering from a cold or feeling run down. As the

Finns say, "If drink or a sauna won't cure you, you might as well die!"

The pictures show how the bath operates, but they give no idea of the pleasant aroma of the birch wood that is burned to heat the stones and to raise the temperature of the room to any required level.



Two athletes start the bath with a good wash of the feet



A birch-leaf switch is used to help to tone up the muscles.



Water poured on the red-hot stones raises the humidity

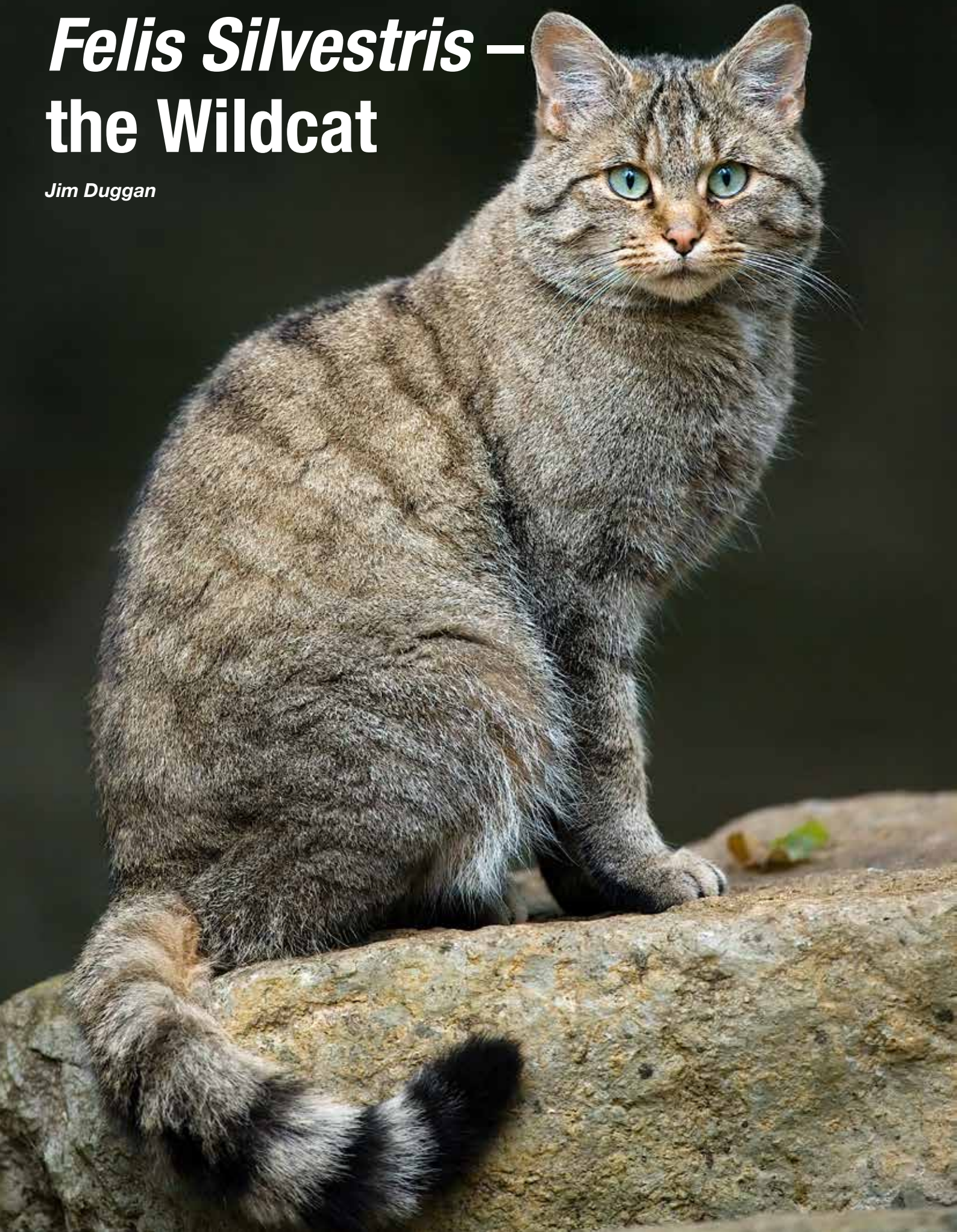




ENDANGERED SPECIES

# *Felis Silvestris* – the Wildcat

*Jim Duggan*





**I**N THE UK WILDCATS are classed as Critically Endangered by the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN).

Bearing a close resemblance to the domestic tabby cat the Wildcat (*Felis silvestris*) is Britain's only wild member of the cat family. Now confined to the Scottish highlands, wild cats disappeared from southern England in the sixteenth century, with the last one recorded in northern England being shot in 1849. It is more striped than the domestic tabby and has a bushier, blunt-ended tail marked with thick black rings.

The Wildlife and Countryside Act gives strict legal protection to Wildcats and their dens. They are easily confused with 'feral' cats, which are domestic cats living wild, of which there are thought to be about 900,000 in Britain today. Unfortunately the two species also interbreed to give hybrids, which makes it extremely difficult to define the genetic purity of a Wildcat.

The Wildcat has suffered considerable decline in population and is now considered at serious risk of extinction in this country. The loss of forest habitat, hunting for their fur then more recently breeding with domestic cats has left our native Wildcat species hanging on by a claw. There are fewer than 400 estimated left in the wild, making them rarer than Bengal tigers. But thanks to a reintroduction scheme, our most critically endangered mammal is being brought back from the brink.

### Return to the wild

Nineteen Highland Wildcats, known also as Britain's tigers thanks to their distinctive markings, were taken from a captive breeding programme and returned to the wild in the Scottish Highlands last summer. Now this small group of elusive cats have been hunting for rabbits, mice and rodents – living out in Britain's last wilderness for their first winter. The cats are tracked every day via GPS collars. A team studying how they are coping with life in the wild, and in particular how they have coped with the harsh Scottish winter. Most of the cats have stayed relatively local to the release locations so far, while others have explored more widely. Camera traps, which have been positioned across the release sites, have also recorded positive behaviours such as hunting prey."

### Reintroduction in England

The species could return to England for the first time in 100-plus years. Devon Wildlife Trust believes the South West could be the ideal place to reintroduce them.

A preliminary feasibility study on Wildcat reintroduction has been carried out by

Vincent Wildlife Trust ([www.vwt.org.uk](http://www.vwt.org.uk)). This report concluded that there are regions which warrant further exploration for reintroduction, including the south west of England (Devon in particular), as well North and West Wales.

The project is now beginning to explore the feasibility of reintroducing Wildcats to Devon. The work will involve science and evidence assessments, as well as a social feasibility study and a comprehensive public engagement programme.

At every stage of its work the South West Wildcat Project is following guidelines established by the International Union for Conservation of Nature on the reintroduction of species.

### Cryogenic preservation

Amid fears for the species' survival, tissue from a Scottish Wildcat has been cryogenically preserved. The critically endangered cat is the first UK species to have its cells frozen, as part of a campaign to create a "biobank" of the world's most endangered animals.

Wildcats measure between 45 and 80 centimetres (18 – 32 inches) in length and weigh between 3 and 8 kilograms (6 – 17.6 pounds). Shoulder height averages around 35 centimetres (14 inches) and tail length is about 30 centimetres (12 inches). Wildcat fur is grey/brown in color with creamy underparts and dark stripes.

### Wildcat habitats

Wildcats make lairs in a foxes earth, under tree trunks, in hollow trees, in bracken or in a deserted buzzards nest.

### Wildcat diet

The Wildcat is a carnivore, like all felines and consumes almost every part of any kill it makes, the coat providing roughage, the bones calcium and the meat everything else, in fact they rarely need to drink because meat has such a high water content. The Wildcat often carries parasitic worms in its



Domestic kitten playing



gut and will eat long blades of grass to help clear out its system and probably also to obtain certain necessary acids not present in meat. Wildcats hunt to eat and adults do not display the playing with prey seen in adult domestic cats.

The Wildcat is a hunter of small mammals, birds, rabbits, hares and game and other creatures of a similar size. They sometimes scavenge and cache prey to return to it later.

### Wildcat behaviour

The Wildcat is extremely timid. It avoids approaching human settlements. The Wildcat lives solitarily and holds a territory of about three square kilometres. Males overlap ranges with females, however, females will not overlap ranges with other females.

Wildcats are mainly active during dawn and dusk. As is the case with all the smaller cats, Wildcats cannot roar, however, they do use a variety of other sounds to communicate including growling, meowing, purring and hissing.

### Wildcat reproduction

Wildcats mate in February and March and produce one litter of three to five kittens after a gestation period of sixty-three to sixty-eight days. Kittens are born with hair but are blind and deaf. Their eyes open after nine days and they emerge from the den at four to five weeks old. They accompany their mother on hunting trips after ten to twelve weeks. Second litters occasionally occur in August. Wildcats have an average life span of twelve years.

## Called to order:

### Why Join the International Knightly Order of St George?



**C**HIVALRY IN THE MODERN world is, for many, an out-of-date concept. However, chivalric organisations, like the International Knightly Order of St George, are the best platforms through which you can live out the medieval values and virtues of knighthood, while gaining unprecedented opportunities for self-development, community service, and the realization of timeless values. There are several reasons why you should consider joining this esteemed organization:

#### **Uphold Noble Values**

It is based on the ideals of honour, integrity, and working for the good of others. The Order of St George is willing to protect the traditional values of chivalry – courage, justice, and compassion. Being within the confines of the Order binds you to those high standards, an obligation, and a responsibility to act with personal integrity and ethical behaviour in any sphere of life.

#### **Community and Fellowship Building**

Among the highly attractive features of accepting membership in this Order is the aura of community created among the members. It is not uncommon for members to develop strong friendships based on common interests and actions taken

together. The companionship experienced in an Order can be very fulfilling in terms of support received from other, like-minded individuals who are committed to similar ideals. Such friendship can be a source of strength, inspiration, and the birth of lifetime companionship.

#### **Philanthropy and Service**

The Order is involved in many philanthropic activities, from small-scale service projects in local communities to large-scale humanitarian endeavours. This is really a golden opportunity for any member to make a real difference in the lives of people at home and across the globe. From charity events, shelter volunteering, veterans support, and worldwide relief efforts, the impacts of such services can be as deep as they are far-reaching. One draws personal fulfilment and satisfaction from this effort to help mankind.

#### **Personal development**

Members are encouraged to learn continuously, develop their leadership qualities, and teach themselves discipline. Through participation in activities within the Order, including ceremonial events and educational programmes, members are able to gain a deep understanding of history, culture, and the human condition. This growth will go beyond the intellectual – it will be emotional and spiritual as well.

#### **Preservation of History and Culture**

The International Knightly Order of St George impacts heritage and cultural preservation since it is based on a historical tradition. The history that goes back centuries enables the Order to provide an unique experience for its members. After all, a person is afforded the opportunity to get involved in traditional ceremonies, put on historical regalia, and re-enact the history

of the Order to get an original perspective on their past. In turn, it nurtures a bigger appreciation for the continuity and heritage of one's culture.

#### **Networking and Opportunities**

Networking opportunities abound. The Order includes members from business, academia, politics, and the arts – beneficial either at a personal level or professionally. All conducted in a manner well defined by a common ethical framework and mutual respect, courtesy of the members' shared commitment to chivalric ideals.

#### **Enhancing Spiritual Life**

The Order is, though, of spiritual dimension, most often based upon the Christian faith, yet all others with various beliefs are welcomed as well. The rituals, prayers, and meditative practices connected with the Order will improve the spiritual life of its members, giving them peace, a sense of purpose, and being connected to something more important.

#### **Conclusion**

Membership of the International Knightly Order of St George is significantly more than historical affiliation. This is a choice to belong to a way of life full of noble values, service to one's community, spiritual development, and the preservation of culture. In a world where these virtues are becoming ever rarer, the Order is a refuge for living honourably, serving other people, and drawing on deep cultural sources. For all those who wish to make a difference in their life and that of others, becoming a member of the International Knightly Order of St George is a move in the right direction and is heartily recommended.

For further information please visit:  
[www.orderofstgeorge.co.uk/rsstg](http://www.orderofstgeorge.co.uk/rsstg)

**By Richard Suchorzewski**

The Order of St George is a worldwide confraternity of men and women who seek to support, in a modest way, the timeless social virtues of compassion, charity, faithfulness and courage – in a word, chivalry. We take our inspiration from the original Order of St George established in 1326 in Hungary, which was the very first royal and military order of chivalry.

The Order of St George is a membership organization with a separate but associated Charitable Trust under the name of The United Kingdom Grand Priory of the International Knightly Order Valiant of St George.

The Order is a registered 501(c)3 non-profit organization in the United States.

We have been an organisation with Special

Consultative Status with the United Nations Economic and Social Council since 2015.

Our members are drawn from all walks of life, and from across the globe.

Today's Officers, Knights, and Dames of St George uphold the virtues of chivalry and undertake to support our charitable and humanitarian mission around the world.

The Order of St George welcomes members from around the world. We work through two Grand Priories – the Americas Grand Priory leads our activities in North America, the Caribbean, and Latin America, while the UK Grand Priory takes care of the United Kingdom, Europe, and the rest of the world.



## The Cornishman who served in Arctic convoys – and wrote a symphony in memory of those times and tides.

Stuart Millson reviews the work of George Lloyd.



George Lloyd

ISSUED BY THE LYRITA record label (noted for its devotion to English music) is a definitive collection of symphonic works by another of our country's many overlooked composers, the Cornishman, George Lloyd – a figure who, after war service in the Royal Navy on *HMS Trinidad*, sought mental refuge and spiritual self-repair in the peace of Switzerland; and when back in England, in market gardening and mushroom farming, of all things, but with the early mornings of his horticultural day devoted to composing.

The Symphonies 1-6 and Agincourt-themed *Overture*, *John Socman* (written for



HMS Trinidad

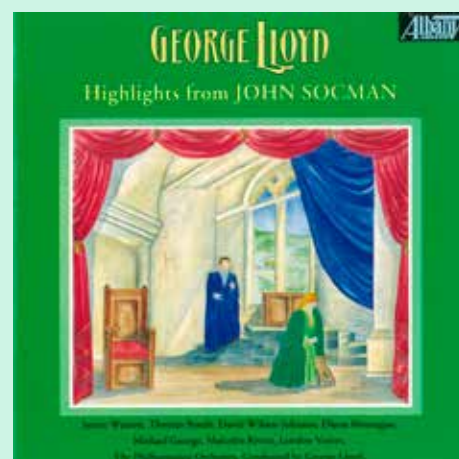
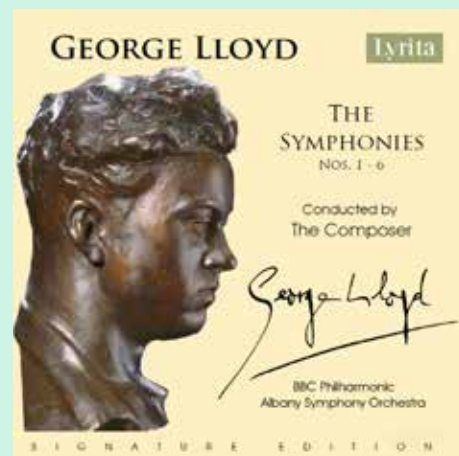
the 1951 Festival of Britain) are presented on Lyrita's handsome box-set, with not only detailed programme notes by Paul Conway and a fascinating assessment of Lloyd's life and times – childhood in St. Ives, to inter-war years questing for recognition – but a photo-album, too, of the composer with fellow musicians, friends and family. The latter, it becomes apparent, were very important to Lloyd: his father was a collaborator on operatic ideas; and the composer's marriage very likely saved his sanity, following the trauma of war spent in the Arctic convoys.

*Nothing can prepare you for the twenty-minute-long final movement*

### The Fourth Symphony

From the presentation set, I have chosen for review the hugely-impressive, splendidly-designed musical architecture that is the lyrical, hour-long Symphony No. 4, written at the war's end and subtitled, 'The Arctic'. Having heard Lloyd's music very occasionally in the concert-hall (*The Vigil of Venus* some twenty-five years ago) it struck me as I listened to Symphony No. 4 how, actually, poorly served we are for choice by our orchestras today – as this Fourth Symphony by Lloyd is a *masterpiece*, and I simply cannot understand why it is not regularly played and broadcast in this country. It actually fell to an American orchestra, New York State's Albany Symphony Orchestra, to perform the piece before the microphones (in a rich, wide acoustic) under the composer's baton – although to be fair to our own native musicians, the bulk of the box-set displays the equally virtuosic playing of Manchester's BBC Philharmonic.

Noble horn and brass statements give a proud stoicism to this extensive musical drama (not an obvious programmatic description of frozen wastes, perhaps, but a complicated, personal response, in terms of heightened feelings, to extraordinary surroundings and times) – a first movement of Sibelius-like stored energy, yet filtering away into moments of sustained lyricism. In the slow movement, such lyricism almost makes you wonder as to whether the composer had visions of sunny pastoralism in the Arctic: so carefree does it seem.



### Inner strength

Yet nothing can prepare you for the twenty-minute-long final movement: a piece that I have since played three times since being sent the CD. With perfect, sure footing in its initial sequences that make complete 'conversational' sense (no idle note-spinning here), a quietly-confident, striding-out march-theme sweeps up through the orchestra – bringing out playing of undoubted, infectious, even hypnotic spirit. The striding theme reappears in the movement, leading us to a great, optimistic conclusion – and again causing the listener to ask: could this really be the work of a man so recently scarred by war? Truly must George Lloyd have been a man of great inner strength.

*A version of this article first appeared in The Quarterly Review.*

CD details: George Lloyd, Symphonies 1-6, Lyrita, catalogue number, SRCD.2417.

# Visiting the World of Malcolm Saville

Geoff Simpson



Malcolm Saville

IN 1959 MY SCHOOL PUT ON A large fete. At the time its biggest impact on me was meeting the man who performed the opening ceremony, Kent and England cricketer, Colin, later Lord, Cowdrey.

However, the fete also produced a legacy which has stayed with me. My father, one of the organisers, bought a book he thought I might like and handed it to me afterwards.

This was the novel *Mystery at Witchend* by Malcolm Saville. I've been reading the work of this children's novelist ever since. It's possibly not such an eccentric pastime. The Malcolm Saville Society, thirty years old, has a membership well into three figures.

Leonard Malcolm Saville, 'Len' to his family, was born in 1901 in Hastings, Sussex and died in the same area in 1982. He had a considerable career in publishing and journalism, working for Oxford University Press, Cassell, Amalgamated Press and George Newnes, as editor of *My*

*Garden* magazine and took over from Enid Blyton as editor of *Sunny Stories*.

It's likely that many readers of *St George for England* will not be familiar with him but in his active period as an author, from the war years until the 1970s, he was a considerable figure in children's literature.

This second career took off after his wife Dorothy and their family (there were four children) moved from the family home in Hertfordshire to Shropshire for greater wartime safety. Malcolm Saville, left behind because of his work, sent the children *Mystery at Witchend* in instalments, basing it in the countryside with which they were becoming familiar. Publication as a book came in 1943.

In *Mystery at Witchend*, Mrs Morton and her three children were evacuated to Shropshire. Mr Morton is in the RAF as a Spitfire pilot. The children make friends and form the Lone Pine Club whose mission statement gives its purpose as "exploring and watching birds and animals and tracking strangers". The club name came from a solitary tree at which the first HQ was established, near the house called *Witchend*.

There were eventually twenty "Lone Pine" novels. They are my favourites and Saville's most popular work but there were various other series, including the books about the Jillies (a family with the surname Jillions), the Buckingham (another family) and the Nettleford stories. Later came a set of tales for older children and young adults, featuring a British spy called Marston Baines and adventures he improbably shared with young friends.

## Real places

What persuaded me and many others to transfer the title of 'top author' from Blyton to Saville? Probably it was, in part, because, although most of Saville's principal characters were as firmly 'middle-class' as Blyton's, they did seem to inhabit a world of somewhat greater social reality. However, above all, the attraction of Saville's work was that he wrote about real places which the reader could visit, or at least dream of visiting.

For the Lone Pine series (in which the characters hardly age over thirty-five years of publication) the most used locations were the Long Mynd and Stiperstones in Shropshire, and, far to the south, Rye and Romney Marsh. In two books, *Saucers over the Moor* and *Where's My Girl?*, the main action was set on Dartmoor, while *Mystery Mine* reached the North Yorkshire moors. *Lone Pine London* was a rare move out of the countryside for the author. *Sea Witch Comes Home* explored the area



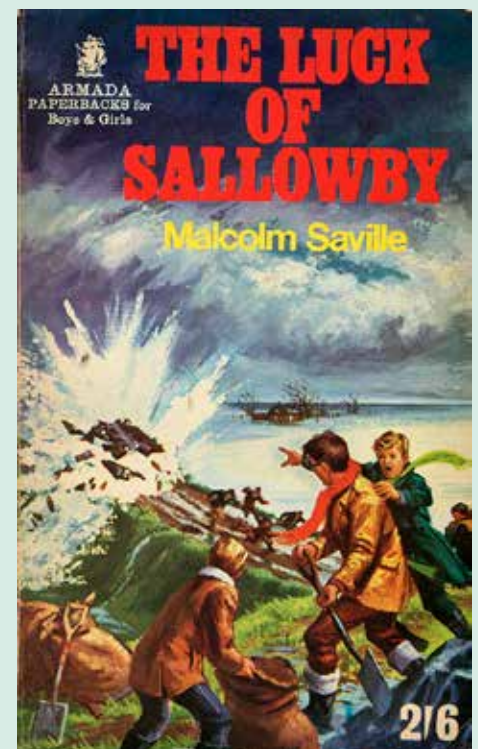
*Lone Pine London* cover featuring the impetuous and sometimes fiery, Penny Warrender and her studious cousin, Jon, to whom she was devoted. Penny and Jon were the Lone Piners who lived in Rye. (Courtesy Mike McGarry)

of Southwold, Walberswick, Orford and Blythburgh in Suffolk.

Some enthusiasts regard *Sea Witch* as their least favoured Lone Pine novel, mainly



A commemoration of Malcolm Saville on the Hope Anchor hotel, Rye, East Sussex (courtesy Bridget Harris-O'Neill)



The front of a paperback edition of *The Luck of Sallowby*





Holy Trinity church Blythburgh featured in *Sea Witch Comes Home* (courtesy Bridget Harris-O'Neill)

because only three of the regular characters appeared in it.

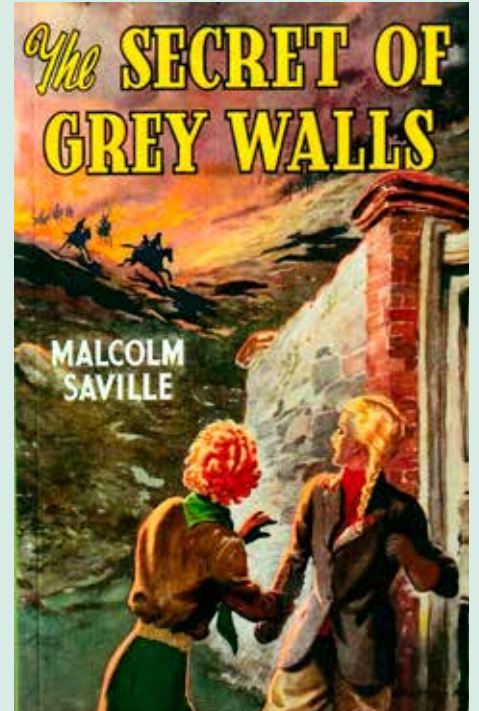
Saville often wrote forewords in which he described the area covered in the book and encouraged his readers to visit. For instance, in *The Luck of Sallowby*, a Jillies adventure published in 1952, he began his foreword,

“The scene of this story is set in the Fens – that part of our country which lies behind the Wash and is bounded roughly by the

towns of King’s Lynn, to the north, Ely to the south and Peterborough and Huntingdon to the west. Many who visit the Fens for the first time – and you can easily go there yourself – find it dull and uninteresting, for there are no wooded slopes, hills or forests in this strange country, but only a patchwork of great fields, black soil intersected by dykes and narrow, concrete tracks used by the farmers’ trucks and tractors.”

The word ‘strange’ was perhaps the clue to the fact that the author regarded the area as anything but uninteresting. Later, he wrote: “This is the part of the country where the English warrior Hereward the Wake (and you should certainly read his exciting story by Charles Kingsley) fought and harried the Norman invader after the Battle of Hastings, and where the southern approach is guarded by Ely, known as the Island City of the Fens, with its superb cathedral towering above the rooftops of the little, dreamlike town . . .”

Readers may have been confused as to whether Ely was a town or a city but many of them were surely persuaded to have the ambition to “tip toe into the solitude of the great cathedral as Mandy [Jillions] did” or “stand on the floodbanks of the New Bedford River . . . and watch the flood water



fretting down to the great sluice at Denver . . .”

Maps were frequently provided, as well as vivid descriptions.

The power of water unleashed was a recurring theme in the Saville oeuvre. In the *Luck of Sallowby* he declared that his tale was based on what actually happened in the spring of 1947. Though the plots of so many Saville books were enacted in real places, he was not afraid to move some locations, nor invent others, such as, in this case, the village of Sallowby and its manor house.

The way of the world could be defied as well. In another Jillies book, *The Sign of the Alpine Rose* (1950) the family took a holiday in Austria. This was immediately after the war and the country was still split into four occupation zones. What an adventure that would have been for the children even without any ‘baddies’ turning up.

Saville admitted that, “The flowers which the Jillies found on the mountain slope are at their best in late June, so I hope you will forgive me if just for once the Jillies forgot about school and found it possible to go to Austria in early summer . . . they had to go when the alpine rose was blooming.”

Malcolm Saville was firmly a man of his era. Villains were often signalled by their unpleasant appearance and men and women, girls and boys tended to perform their traditional roles. Nevertheless, the number of strong female characters he created was possibly unusual compared with some of his contemporaries. Petronella (“Peter”) Sterling and Penny Warrender in the Lone Pine series, Mandy Jillions and Juliet Buckingham were young women who knew their own minds and were prepared to be leaders on occasions.



Ely Cathedral





*The bridge over the River Clun at Clun*

### Quiet villages

In trying to choose my favourite among the Lone Pine stories, I find myself struggling with a number of possibilities. In the end my choice is *The Secret of Grey Walls* in which the action takes place just after Christmas in and around what Saville described as “the little forgotten town of Clun”. He also opined that “There is no other place in England quite like Clun.”

A E Housman seemed to support Saville in his view of Clun and the Clun Valley when, in *A Shropshire Lad*, he included the words:-

*Clunton and Clunbury, Clungunford and Clun  
are the quietest places under the sun*

Recently, a lady telling me in an email that she and her husband had discovered the area, remarked that, “Somewhat naïvely, we had no idea that anywhere in England could be that isolated”.

I first went to Clun more than sixty years ago and have returned often since. On that first visit there was the thrill of walking round the ruins of the castle dating back to the time just after the Norman Conquest, which the Lone Piners made one of their HQs. The thrill too of standing on the ancient bridge over the River Clun where took place an important piece of action in *The Secret of Grey Walls*, a tale of farmers suffering the theft of sheep. How, in modern times, sat nav has made that bridge suffer by directing lorries over it.

In his later years Saville struggled to adapt to changing literary fashion and spent time ruminating on falling sales. The Marston Baines thrillers and romances

produced between 1962 and 1978 did counter this to some extent. If the reader can overcome the improbabilities of the spy’s modus operandi (his relationship with his boss would surely have been remarkably inefficient and insecure in real life) there is enjoyment to be had. Try *The Purple Valley*, in which the opening action is set amongst the gowns of Oxford, with the bulk of the happenings in Provence, and *White Fire*, with Majorca as the setting.

In his introduction to *The Purple Valley* Saville admitted to inventing a mountain range between Aix-en-Provence and the Mediterranean. Any purists offended by that should though give the author considerable

credit for the understanding he showed of the nature of the Maquis resistance activities in the Second World War. Some writers of non-fiction do rather less well.

The book received positive reviews. The website of the Malcolm Saville Society quotes two:

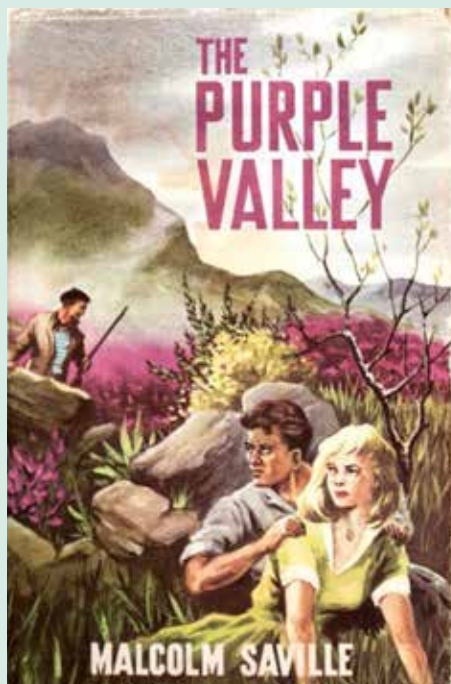
“This extremely competent story from a master storyteller . . . There is everything here, excitement, mystery and romance. The writing is good, fast and very readable. The characters are well drawn and the descriptions of the countryside of Provence are very vivid” – *New Books*

“A book in the Buchan tradition with a good story line and a clear conflict between right and wrong” – *The Times Literary Supplement*.

A weakness of the Marston Baines books was that Saville was clearly not comfortable with the level of violence required of stories in the James Bond mould. Some extremely violent episodes appear to be tacked on as afterthoughts. Perhaps they were added to satisfy an editor.

I will end as I began with Colin Cowdrey. Malcolm Saville enjoyed cricket but the two have a stronger connection than that. Michael Colin Cowdrey’s father was a cricketer and the son’s initials were, of course, arranged to reference the Marylebone Cricket Club. Leonard Malcolm Saville’s initials were no accident either. He had grandparents who were missionaries and so he became a walking tribute to the London Missionary Society.

**Geoff Simpson is an author and historian. He is a Fellow of the Royal Historical Society.**





# We continue our time-travel visits to “Britain, overseas” . . .

*G.M.S. Lauder-Frost*

The glories of old Melbourne. Our Antipodean correspondent writes with some personal memories

Although I have only been to Melbourne once in my life, both my mother and my brother died there. My father was commissioning a distillery in the city when mother died. My brother transferred there from Singapore. Melbourne still has some magnificent buildings one of which is the grand and imposing Regent Theatre. You almost feel that you are at the London Palladium.



This picture, (a DGT Leyland OPD2-12683, Hunter Street at Perkins Street) is from Newcastle, New South Wales in 1972 (I was out there mid-1971 till March 1975) so was actually resident ‘Down Under’ when the photographer took the shot. Leyland buses on the highway – and note the name of the hotel. Two passers-by are obviously not that interested in pedestrian safety!



If you ever go to Sydney you must visit the State Theatre (1929), writes our Commonwealth chronicler, G.M.S. Lauder-Frost. The building, rivalling anything in London, is a spectacular old-style Picture Palace (although it also offers the theatre-going public full stage shows).

## Why King Æthelstan is important to English people today

By Derek Hilling

| Year   | Important Developments   |
|--------|--|
| 449/92 | British leaders invite Saxons from North Germany to defend them from attacks, but Saxons rise up and take land of Britons in South and East            |
| 536/88 | Anglo Saxon Communities coalesce and begin to be ruled by fewer but more powerful leaders, major pagan kingdoms (Wessex) first emerge                  |
| 597    | Pope's envoy, Augustine, lands in Thanet and King Æthelberht of Kent gives them land in Canterbury, where the first Christian conversions occur        |
| 731    | Honourable Bede publishes his <i>Ecclesiastical History of the English People</i> , first written mention of English nation, but ironically in Latin!  |
| 792/6  | King Offa of Mercia dies in 796, first to be described as King of English. First Viking raids on English soil in Wessex and at Lindisfarne Island      |
| 865    | Great Heathen Army, mainly Danes, lands in Essex, where they winter before moving to York. These aren't Vikings but an army of occupation              |
| 871    | Danes have subdued all English kingdoms except Wessex, where Alfred becomes King. He defeats Danes at Ashdown but many defeats follow                  |
| 878    | Alfred attacked at Xmas at Chippenham, and is exiled to Somerset marshes; he fights back and defeats Danes at Edington, Danes retreat                  |
| 886    | Alfred concludes treaty with Danish leader Guthrum to divide England in half, the north and east becomes Danelaw, Danish controlled lands              |
| 899    | Alfred dies, succeeded by his son, Edward, Alfred's legacy is an English kingdom of Wessex and Mercia defended by carefully managed burghs             |
| 910    | Northumbrian Danes invade Mercia but on return they are annihilated by armies of Edward and Æthelflæd at Tettenhall, a watershed victory               |
| 917    | Æthelflæd conquers Derby from Danes whilst Edward crushes Danish army of East Anglia at Tempsford near Bedford, Danish king is killed                  |
| 924    | Edward dies in July and Æthelstan is recognised as his successor after a period of indecision. Æthelstan is crowned at Kingston on 4/9/925             |
| 927    | Æthelstan defeats Norse usurpers of Northumbrian kingdom of York, he takes the oaths of the ealdormen of Northumbria. <b>ENGLAND</b> is UNITED!        |
| 937    | Irish Norse invade England together with the kings of Scotland and Strathclyde but are annihilated at Battle of Brunanburh, <b>ENGLAND</b> is SECURED! |



Statue of King Alfred the Great High Street, Winchester (NHLE Code 1167789) (June 2019)

FOR MOST PEOPLE born in the 1950s and '60s the history of England, as we were taught it at school, began in 1066, when King Harold lost an eye and his crown at the Battle of Hastings. The year of this battle was immortalised in the title of the tongue-in-cheek history book by Sellar and Yeatman, *1066 and All That*, yet I cannot ever recall that England prior to 1066 was even mentioned in my schooldays, except for the tidal-flow expert, Canute! The tragedy of this is that of course England did **not** begin in 1066; it was already a unified and successful nation state by then. Which is the precisely why the Normans under William wanted to capture England, as it was a well organised and prosperous country.

So, exactly how long had England been in existence? Who were the people who created the English nation and culture, and who participated in the creation of England as a unified state? Of course, these questions are rarely asked, which begs a further question: why are we so coy about the birth of England? The reasons for our lack of knowledge of England's creation are many, but a major factor is both the deliberately vague and ill-informed concept of





*The Coronation Stone, Kingston upon Thames*  
 Photograph Simon Burchell. <https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/4.0/deed.en>

“Britishness”. It was Lord Reith, the first director-general of the BBC, who berated Churchill in 1940 that he should not speak of England’s fight against the Nazis, but *Britain’s* fight. No reasonable person can deny that Reith’s observation was correct, but ever since then those in the political and social leadership within the UK have been at pains to deny the concept of England and the English. Some of this is quite deliberate and amounts to an organised suppression of English identity, culture and history. Yet references to Britain are often made out of ignorance or confusion, when what is meant is England. The truth is that the concepts of Britain and England have been used interchangeably for so many years that many

people no longer understand the difference between the two.

The British Government only has authority over the NHS, Education and Planning in England because in Wales and Scotland these matters are devolved to the administrations based in Cardiff and Edinburgh. Yet the major political parties never make this clear; instead they talk in vague terms of “the country” when referring to such issues. This is obfuscation of the concepts of Britain and England, and all the British political leaders of the last seventy years have indulged in these deliberate acts of confusion at some point.

Nonetheless, we are where we are! I believe that the English people, for many

reasons, do not collectively understand where their country came from, and that is a problem, because it weakens us. Every family, village, town and nation shares stories. These stories make those groups cohesive, because they reflect a shared heritage. The English people are denied some of those important stories because we don’t understand where we came from. That is why The Royal Society of St George launched its “Birth of England Project” as an attempt to correct those misconceptions by explaining how the concept of an English nation came into being and how England was created.

The timeline shows some of the major events in the early history of England, or, as some would argue, the history of the Anglo-Saxons. I don’t intend to explain these events in any detail, which is for a later article. My intention here is to make a broad outline of the events and so give merely a taste of the many stories which have fed into the creation of England. My story of England’s creation is only one and there will be others, perhaps more pertinent, but what is important is that the stories become part of our collective consciousness. The English people deserve to know where they come from, the stories of England’s birth must be told.

Significantly the creation of England came about because the English people almost lost what they had. The possibility that the English people and their culture would be destroyed by foreign invaders finally galvanised the English people to resist, and in doing so they created our country – England.

The Great Heathen Army invaded the Anglo-Saxon Kingdom of East Anglia in 865AD. That army was largely composed of people referred to as Danes. It would be incorrect to describe these Danes as Vikings because that word means “raiders”; these people were not raiding East Anglia, they had come to conquer and stay. That army – perhaps numbering several thousand – then moved on to York and conquered the Kingdom of Northumbria. From York it moved south and forced the Kingdom of Mercia into submission before returning to East Anglia to slaughter its King – Edmund (as in Bury St Edmunds) – and completely subdue the kingdom.

Within six years this army of occupation had subdued three of the four Anglo-Saxon kingdoms of Britain and in 871AD it turned its attention to the last remaining English kingdom – Wessex. Alfred the Great became King of Wessex in 871, and he fought the Danes for many years, but they would not leave. In 878AD King Alfred was surprised at Chippenham during the Christmas celebrations, the Danes attacked and Alfred was forced into exile.

It was at this point, in the winter of 878AD, that the very existence of the



*Lord Reith*



*Winston Churchill*



*Athelstan presenting a book to St Cuthbert*  
English nation hung in the balance. Alfred's Kingdom of Wessex was reduced to a few square miles of swamp in the Somerset Marshes. The English people were close to being totally conquered by the Danes, and their Christian culture was under threat of annihilation. Yet within six months Alfred fought back, defeated the Danes, and by

his death in 899AD, the existence of the English people looked much more secure.

Alfred's eldest son – Edward, known as Edward the Elder, was able to extend the areas of English control during his reign. In conjunction with his sister, Æthelflæd, Lady of the Mercians, Edward gradually defeated the Danish armies in East Anglia and Mercia. By his death in 924AD he was ruler of all the lands in England south of the line from the Mersey to the Humber rivers. It was left to Edward's eldest son, Æthelstan, to finally defeat the Norse invaders in York and to take all of what we now know of England under his control. It is Æthelstan who is widely recognised as the first King of the English, and his achievements enabled the creation of England.

My intention is to give a flavour of the story of England's creation. What matters is that only when the English people realised that they might lose everything did they come together to defeat the heathen invaders. The leadership of the English people resided in Royal House of Wessex, and it was Alfred the Great and his immediate successors who enabled the English people to save themselves and their culture.

Over the last two decades, England has been subjected to an enormous volume

of immigration from overseas. Millions of people have settled here, many from countries and cultures enormously different from our own, making the integration of those newcomers problematic. In this context, the efforts of King Æthelstan, his father, his aunt and his grandfather are very relevant. The people who created England similarly faced a large immigrant community. They dealt with those people in two ways. Firstly, they were implacable in their attempts to defeat them militarily, and much blood was shed to make sure that the Danish armies were subdued. Equally important, they ensured that those Danes who did accept English law were properly treated, they were accorded the same rights and responsibilities as the English. Those English leaders understood the need to make these newcomers welcome once they had accepted that this was England, the land of the English people.

The statecraft applied eleven hundred years ago by the founders of England puts the efforts of today's leaders in perspective. There is nothing wrong with defending your way of life, in fact it is essential if a nation is to survive. However, there is also great wisdom in encouraging those who do accept your way of life to integrate. It's the terms of the integration that makes the difference.



## HELP YOUR SOCIETY BY MAKING A DONATION IN YOUR WILL

The Society and our Charitable Trust are helped greatly if there are Legacies and Bequests.

By making a posthumous gift of money or property you may also reduce your Estates inheritance tax liability.

### The options for a donation, in your Will, are:

- A Legacy of a specific sum;
- A Bequest of specific property;
- A Bequest of the residue of your Estate or a Share of it with other charities or individuals.

### What to do to help us in your Will:

If you wish to include a donation in your *will* please consult your Solicitor.

### A simple form of Legacy might include the following words:

"I hereby bequeath, free of tax, the sum of £ ..... to The Royal Society of St George (P.O. BOX 397, Loughton, IG10 9GN, England). or to The Royal Society of St George Charitable Trust (Registered Charity No: 263706) and the receipt of the Hon Treasurer or other proper Officer for the time being of The Royal Society of St George shall be a complete discharge of such Legacy"

This wording can easily be adapted to cover the Bequest of a Property or of All, or Part of, the residue of your Estate.

In any case of doubt please ask your Solicitor or get in touch with the Society's Administration. This is especially appreciated if you intend to lay down conditions as to how the Bequest should be used.

## The Consequences of Neglecting a Will

A Will is often overlooked in the hustle and bustle of everyday life, here is what could go wrong if you don't have a Will:

- The Courts may Decide Who Receives Your Assets
- Family Disputes
- Lengthy Probate Process
- Leaving your Unmarried Partner Homeless
- Financial Burden on your Loved Ones
- No Guardian Designation for Minor Children
- Inability to Support Charitable Causes
- Loss of Control

A Will provides peace of mind, protects your assets, and ensures that your wishes are honoured after you're gone.

Contact Sandstone Legal to discuss your Will with full confidence.

**Sandstone**LEGAL

Contact us on 0161 470 1511

or email [wills@sandstonelegal.com](mailto:wills@sandstonelegal.com)

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## Samuel Pepys – maker of the modern Navy

By Derek Turner

PEOPLE HAVE ALWAYS WRITTEN diaries, but Samuel Pepys is, says *Encyclopædia Britannica*, simply “the greatest diarist of all.”

Pepys’s 1.25 million words on the period 1660-1669 is not just a unique record of a formative and vivid period, but a literary ground-breaking advance in objective self-observation. As Robert Louis Stevenson enthused in 1881, the Diary manifests an “unequalled self.”

Pepys was born in London in 1633. His father John had come from Huntingdonshire, where his family had been monastic reeves and minor gentry. John Pepys needed to work as a tailor, and Pepys’s mother was a butcher’s daughter – but there were Pepys who were MPs, and one who became Lord Chief Justice of Ireland. There were also cousinly connections with the aristocratic Montagus.

John Pepys wisely sent his son out of

plague-stricken London – first to bosky Middlesex countryside, then to Huntingdon Grammar School, where he learned Latin but no mathematics; he wouldn’t learn his times tables until he was twenty-nine. He was back in London in 1649, the year of King Charles I’s execution. At fifteen, he had the predictable sympathies of a boy from the Puritan-inclined eastern counties, and with his family connections. He witnessed the execution, later telling schoolfellows that if he were to preach on the event, he would take as his text Proverbs 10:7 “The memory of the wicked shall rot.”

In 1653, he gained a degree from Magdalene College, Cambridge. In 1655, he married a French Huguenot’s daughter, Elizabeth, who was beautiful but penniless. Pepys was employed as a factotum in Edward Montagu’s house – his cousin a General-at-Sea and close to Cromwell.

Pepys later recalled how Elizabeth “. . . used to make coal fires and wash my foul clothes with her own hand for me, poor wretch!” Pepys always had guilty feelings about Elizabeth but was also afraid of her jealousy – for which his lascivious behaviour gave ample justification.

After Oliver Cromwell’s death in 1658, he was succeeded as Lord Protector of England by his son Richard, but poor “Tumbledown Dick” was very different from his father and resigned the post after nine months. Powerful individuals began working openly for the return of the exiled Charles Stuart, son of the executed King, and the restoration of the monarchy. In 1659, Pepys found employment with George Downing (of Downing Street fame). Pepys began his Diary on 1 January 1660, and kept it assiduously until May 1669, writing in code.

### The diaries

The first three editions, published between 1825 and 1848 by Lord Braybrooke, were brutally edited for length and what Braybrooke called “indelicacy.” Braybrooke also never gave due credit to the impoverished scholar, John Smith, who made publication possible by spending three years decoding Pepys’s cryptography. He nevertheless deserves gratitude for introducing the world to Pepys.

Pepys begins:

“Blessed be God, at the end of the last year I was in very good health, without any sense of my old pain, but upon taking of cold. I lived in Axe Yard having my wife, and servant Jane, and no more in family than us three. My wife . . . gave me hopes of her being with child, but on the last day of the year . . . the hope was belied.”

Pepys goes on to outline the tense state of politics, then returns to his pet subject: “My own private condition very handsome, and esteemed rich, but indeed very poor; besides my goods of my house, and my office, which at present is somewhat uncertain. . . This morning (we living lately in the garret) I rose, put on my suit with great skirts, having not lately worn any other, clothes but them. Went to Mr. Gunning’s chapel at Exeter House, where he made a very good sermon upon these words: — ‘That in the fulness of time God sent his Son, made of a woman,’ &c . . . Dined at home in the garret, where my wife dressed the remains of a turkey, and in the doing of it she burned her hand.”

No other book offers such a combination of high politics with banal domesticity, state secrets and sexual escapades, city life and royal anecdotes, street scenes and



Samuel Pepys. Portrait by John Hayls, 1666



The seizure of the English flagship Royal Charles, captured during the raid on Chatham, June 1667. Jeronymus van Diest II:

the rarefied Royal Society. We see the Restoration, Charles II and James II, wars with the Dutch, plague and the Great Fire, and the early British Empire. We socialise with Wren, Dryden, Evelyn (the era's other great diarist), Sloane, Halley, Hooke, Newton, Petty, and Purcell – and agonise with Pepys about which suit to wear to attract attention.

In April 1660, Pepys found himself sailing aboard the *Naseby* as Montagu's secretary, heading for the Netherlands to bring Charles Stuart home from exile. Pepys gives wonderful vignettes of the squadron's atmosphere, such as when he gave a party in his cabin to broach a barrel of oysters, then they sang ribald lyrics to the tune of *Greensleeves*.

### Romantic spell

Pepys fell under the romantic spell of the royal party, even indulgent towards



Charles in exile, painted by Philippe de Champaigne, c. 1653

Charles's spaniels when they defecated upon the decks. It was on the quarterdeck of the *Naseby* (re-named *Royal Charles*) that Pepys first heard the story of Charles's escape after the Battle of Worcester. Pepys was an empathetic listener, but he also revisited the story carefully twenty years later, when he and Charles were attending the races at Newmarket, and checked the King's account for accuracy.

Pepys was appointed 'Clerk of the acts of the navy,' and moved into the Navy Office. He knew little about navy matters at first, but he was interested, and hardworking. "So to the office," he wrote, "where I do begin to be exact in my duty there and exacting my privileges and shall continue to do so."

*"I had so great a lust to p\*\*\*, that I went out a little while before the King had done all his ceremonies."*

On 23 April 1661, he watched the Coronation in Westminster Abbey, an event all the more colourful and piquant after the drably republican interlude. He excitedly details the pomp and pageantry, but characteristically also adds earthier touches – "I had so great a lust to p\*\*\*, that I went out a little while before the King had done all his ceremonies." Much later, he and Elizabeth went out into the streets where there were huge bonfires and "a great many great gallants" who made them drink Charles's health, and then drank to them. Pepys somehow got home, "But no sooner a-bed with Mr. Shepley but my head began to hum, and I to vomit, and if ever I was foxed it was now, which I cannot say yet, because I fell asleep and slept till morning. Only when I waked I found myself wet with my spewing."

### Aspersions

His Diary casts aspersions on the likes of Sir William Batten and Sir William Penn, who had been highly capable sailors, but had little appetite for administrative work, let alone ending abuses. He stood up publicly to senior royals whenever he thought they were wrong. He even criticised the King, although only in the Diary.

In 1665 he became Surveyor General of the Victualling Office, in charge of provisioning the fleet. Pepys ensured good quality foodstuffs, fairly priced. Many ships were in poor condition, and he instituted a programme of shipbuilding. By the time of his retirement, the Navy had doubled, from thirty poor-quality battleships totalling around 25,000 tons to fifty-nine ships totalling 66,000 tons, and with far greater firepower.

He introduced a system of training officers, and regulations governing everything from shore leave to flying the King's colours. Pursers were assigned to each ship, and kept complete accounts. Captains were forbidden to trade their own merchandise, but were also given better pay. He introduced effective patrols against the pirates then plaguing the English Channel. It was the largest spending department of state, but excellently run – morally armed too with what would become lasting traditions of bravery and discipline. On his retirement, the orator of Oxford University enthused, "Truly, sir, you have encompassed Britain with wooden walls."

### Royal Observatory

Pepys also helped establish the Royal Observatory, and helped the first Astronomer Royal get vital equipment. In 1664, he became a Fellow of the Royal Society, and its President between 1684 and 1686. His name appears as President on the title page of the Royal Society's most famous publication, Isaac Newton's *Principia Mathematica*. He and Newton also collaborated on the establishment and development of the Royal Mathematical School in 1673, which still exists as part of Christ's Hospital School in Horsham. Impressive for someone who didn't learn his times tables until he was twenty-nine! He established and maintained correspondences on subjects ranging from architecture, botany, cartography, chemistry, entomology,



Sir William Batten

Sir William Penn



explosives, fen drainage, fort-building, ghosts, metallurgy and microscopy, and yet other things.

### The great fire

Pepys is most renowned for his account of the Great Fire: “I... got up upon one of the high places . . . and there I did see the houses at that end of the bridge all on fire, and an infinite great fire on this and the other side the end of the bridge.” He even noticed non-human victims: “The poor pigeons, I perceive, were loth to leave their houses, but hovered about the windows and balconys till they were, some of them burned, their wings, and fell down.”

He sailed upstream to inform the King, then walked back to give the King’s instructions to the Lord Mayor. Soon, his own house was threatened, and he records frantic piling up of work papers for swift removal, depositing iron chests of coin in his cellar, and carrying household goods out into his garden by moonlight, where he famously buried his wine and Parmesan cheese.

As well as being too free with his hands, and terribly vain, Pepys also had the parvenu’s anxious snobbery – such as when his rather rustic sister asked to live with him in Seething Lane. He eventually agreed, although “not as a sister in any respect, but as a servant.” But Pepys later made her son John his principal heir.

### Pretty Witty Nell

Bathos, comedy and colour are never far away from serious matter. On 18 July 1660, Pepys was presented with half a roebuck, but it smelt too strong – so he gave it to his mother! He coined the phrase “pretty, witty Nell” about Nell Gwynn, the actress who became ancestress to the Dukes of St Albans. He records the joy of sampling an new fashionable drink from South America,



Simon Verelst – Portrait of Nell Gwyn

named “Jocolatte.” He admires the new sport of skating in St James’s Park.

He moans about his health – “got a great Cold, I think by pulling off my periwig so often.” Periwigs and fashionable clothes were always of moment, as in March 1667 – “To church; and with my mourning, very handsome, and new periwig, make a great show.” He hurts his feet by standing on the wheel of a cart for an hour so he could watch the execution of a notorious thief. In July 1667, he was startled by a religious demonstration: “This day a man, a Quaker, came naked through [Westminster] Hall, only very civilly tied about the privities to avoid scandal, and with a chafing-dish of fire and brimstone burning upon his head, did pass through the Hall, crying, “Repent! repent!” At his brother’s funeral, the rather Shakespearean gravedigger assures Pepys he will do the corpse “all the civility he can” in the overflowing graveyard. He adds, “I will juttle them together but I will make room for him.”

### Romantic dalliances

Pepys’s romantic dalliances extended from relatively innocent kisses snatched from maidservants to a frankly exploitative affair with the wife of a Deptford carpenter – who knew, but allowed it in return for ‘preferment’. Nevertheless, he was kind to his maidservants, giving them generous gifts and standing godfather to their children. He mourned Elizabeth deeply when she died in November 1669.

By then his Diary had been put away, to avoid overstraining his eyesight. He nevertheless became a magistrate and an MP, and Deputy-Lieutenant of Huntingdonshire. He was promoted to Secretary of the Admiralty in 1673, and twice made the Master of Trinity House, a rare distinction.

Danger came with 1678’s “Popish Plot,” which alleged that Jesuits were planning the assassination of King Charles. The King disbelieved the allegations, but others believed, and Pepys was absurdly accused of Catholicism, selling naval secrets, and even of being complicit in murder. He was deprived of his Secretaryship in 1679, and briefly confined to the Tower of London – but was eventually restored to favour.

In 1683, Pepys travelled on another important voyage. When Catherine of Braganza had married the King, part of her dowry included the Portuguese colony of Tangiers, in what is now Morocco. It proved a ruinously expensive inheritance. The Committee formed to govern it was chaired by Prince Rupert of the Rhine; Pepys says all he ever did at meetings was laugh and swear.

The departing Portuguese had stripped the town, and so the English had to improve the harbour, build defences and provide

a garrison to fend off constant attacks. In 1664, 500 English troopers were massacred, and there were endless smaller problems, in an unhealthy climate of little strategic value, and too far away. The naval force on which Pepys sailed was sent to evacuate the garrison – and did so, after destroying or removing all the things of value. Thus ended the first British colony in Africa.

### Pepys Island

Pepys suffered seasickness; he nevertheless wandered the decks at night, to see singing sailors dancing the hornpipe. In Tangiers, he noticed everything, from church sermons to the “most extraordinary spider that ever I saw, at least ten times as big as an ordinary spider” that shared his room. While he was away, his friend William Cowley found an archipelago in the South Atlantic, and named it Pepys Island. It later became known as the Falklands.

By 1684, Pepys was again Secretary of the Admiralty. Just before James II fled in 1688, he asked Pepys to witness his will. He would very likely have been dismissed under the new dispensation, but Pepys wanted to go anyway. Enemies still sometimes made life difficult – he was arrested again briefly in 1690 – but he was able to spend most of his time quietly, maintaining friendships and augmenting his library, although a planned history of the Navy never materialized.

### Kidney disease

In February 1703, he was struck down with kidney disease. On 14 May, Evelyn found him “languishing with small hope of recovery.” On 24 May, the doctor advised him to pray for speedy deliverance. Later, he started to convulse, and had breathing problems. Pepys’s last hours were spent praying, and urging all in his household to be friends. At first light he asked for the curtains and windows to be opened. Asked whether his nephew John Jackson should be called, his last word was “Yes.” Jackson came to find him “ratling (sic) in the throat and breathing very hard.” That ‘ratling’ stopped at 3.47 am.

Hans Sloane helped carry out the autopsy; Pepys would have approved of this friendly yet forensic treatment. He was buried beside Elizabeth in St Olave’s Church, near the Navy Office – “our own church,” he had always called it.

Pepys had been, John Evelyn lamented, “universally beloved, hospitable, generous, learned in many things, skilled in music, a very great cherisher of learned men.” It was a moving salute from one great chronicler to another – a suitable epitaph for a superbly alive Englishman.

Derek Turner is the author of *Edge of England: Landfall in Lincolnshire*, and as a journalist, has also written for *The Guardian*, *The Times* and *Irish Times*.

## Birmingham on foot: From the Golden Boys to Ozzy the raging bull

*A walk around the centre of the UK's "second city" with Richard Dove*

**R**ESPLENDENT IN THE SHARP morning sun, the Golden Boys are in conversation. Their ideas, schemes, fresh thinking drove the industrial development of Birmingham. This gilded statue was unveiled in 1956 to commemorate the contributions of Matthew Boulton, James Watt and William Murdoch not just to the city but to the emergence of the industrial age across the world.

The statue is located close to Birmingham's modernist library and the city's concert hall. It is the perfect location to start our circular walk through Birmingham's heartland. To urge us on our way, the café in the concert hall is advertising Brummie bacon cake, a local delicacy of which more later.

Back to the Golden Boys. Matthew Boulton worked with metals and was a cauldron of ideas and entrepreneurial energy. He found a business soul mate in the brilliant Scottish engineer James Watt. They employed the equally gifted William Murdoch and built a highly efficient steam engine to power the industrial revolution.

### The Lunar Society of Birmingham

The city became a sort of Silicon Valley of ideas. Innovative thinking was the lifeblood of the Lunar Society of Birmingham. An informal philosophical society where the Golden Boys would trade thoughts with physician Erasmus Darwin, potter Josiah Wedgwood, chemist Joseph Priestley and botanist/geologist William Withering. Together they drove the Age of Enlightenment.

We leave them to their creative discourse and turn left and head down Broad Street to another symbol of Birmingham's innovation, the canals. There are more miles of canals here than in Venice. Pause at Black Sabbath Bridge before heading

down the brick steps; gothic sons of the city where metal meets the heavier variety. You can perch on a bench named after Ozzy Osbourne, Tommy Iommi, Geezer Butler and Bill Ward. A globally successful rock man started at a club down by the canals. The Golden Boys would no doubt have approved. (Incidentally, at the same club "glam rockers" Duran Duran started their career).

### Industrial heartland

Walking alongside the canal towards the Jewellery Quarter, it is easy to forget you are in an industrial heartland. The ridged brick bridges and smooth stone walkways seem timeless. Glance down and you see eighteenth century Birmingham, glance upwards and the gleaming buildings of the twenty first century confronts you head on. There are thirty-five miles of canals that carried raw materials and finished goods in and out of the city. You can still see the rope marks for towing the barges scored into the stonework and handrails.

A short walk and you are in the Jewellery Quarter. From heavy metal to shining metal, goldsmiths and silversmiths have been working in this area of the city for over 200 years. There were once hundreds of small workshops producing buttons, buckles and trinkets. "Brummagem" toys were sought after symbols of wealth and prestige. By 1913, some 70,000 people were employed here in the precious metal trades. The Museum of the Jewellery Quarter charts this area's phenomenal commercial success.

Head down Livery Street and you arrive at the church that became a cathedral, St Philip's. It's the third smallest cathedral in the UK. Its size was largely defined by the social conscience of its first bishop, Charles Gore, who decided that funds should be spent on easing social issues



*A section of The Ascension stained-glass window*

in the city rather than on a new cathedral building.

We arrive just as choral evensong is underway. The choir is soaring with Tallis' Magnificat under the spectacular stained glass central window designed by Sir Edward Burne-Jones depicting the Ascension. Burne-Jones had been baptised at the church and become the leading stained-glass designer at William Morris & Co. In what proved a very wise move, the window was dismantled and stored in a Welsh mine during World War Two. The Cathedral did suffer extensive damage from German bombing.

We stood to sing The First Nowell to conclude the service. A tramp snoozed by a side wall, reminding me of Bishop Gore's concern about social deprivation. Twas ever thus.

### The Bullring

From the spiritual to the material, we head for the legendary Bullring shopping centre. There has been some sort of retail activity in this area of the city since the 1100s. In 1964 it was the site of the UK's first indoor city centre shopping centre and was opened by Prince Philip. However, its original Brutalist



*The Golden Boys*



*Black Sabbath Bridge*





*Birmingham Back to Backs*  
photo by Tony Hisgett (CC BY 3.0)

concrete architecture did not age well, and the escalators became a non-running local joke. It has now been redeveloped, although the central tower block of circular flats remains, with untidy but somehow heart-warming human habitation evident, providing a stark contrast to the gleaming spires of retail wonderment.

For contrast and respite, head down Hill Street and Hurst Street to the famous “Back to Backs,” a National Trust-run example of a very particular sort of British terraced housing dating back to the nineteenth century with shared courtyards. They were designed to accommodate the steeply increasing population of Britain’s industrial

towns and cities. With the passing of the Public Health Act of 1875, these houses were deemed unsatisfactory although in reality they appear to be a prime exemplar of community living. The Back to Backs were completed in 1840. You can learn about some of the occupants – a pearl button driller, a glass eye maker, a bell hangar and a tailor whose shop is strikingly preserved. You can even listen to a recording of George describing his life story and his journey from Jamaica to Birmingham.

It is now just a five-minute walk back to New Street Station and your appointment with Ozzy. He is a ten-metre high mechanical bull sculpture who roars and glares his eyes at fifteen minutes past the hour. He is, of course, named after Black Sabbath’s famous lead singer and made his roaring debut at the opening ceremony of the 2022 Commonwealth Games in the city. Many pause and stare as Ozzy’s eyes gleam pinkish red and his head moves back and forth.

New Street Station is now wrapped in a curving chrome finish across what is now called Grand Plaza. The curves mirror the iconic modernist Selfridges Store that resembles a landed spaceship. It is a billowing structure covered in 15,000 shiny

aluminium disks. It was designed and built in 2003 by architects Future Systems. It has become a landmark and is seen as a major contributor to the regeneration of this proud city. Despite the city council declaring itself bankrupt last year, it is well nigh impossible to imagine that the story of Birmingham is now one of decline. Ideas and innovations have thrived here for centuries and will rise again.

We head back to New Street for our London-bound train, pausing to pick up a Brummie bacon cake for the trip. Essentially, it is a cheese and bacon soft scone with added ketchup and Worcestershire sauce. A word of warning – don’t order two, as we did, as they are huge! We munched and reflected on a marvellous city that deserves a rethink and a revisit. As the train pulls out of New Street I recall buying Black Sabbath’s single *Paranoid* in 1970. I had never heard anything like it before – and that’s the thing about Birmingham; there’s nothing else like it. Time to give the place another go.

*Richard Dove is a writer and presenter, broadcasting regularly on BBC radio Four. He is the Producer of the Footnotes Podcast series and an independent film-maker.*

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## “Pray for the peace of Jerusalem”

*The Rev'd Canon Derek Carpenter*

### Jesus and Jerusalem: Jerusalem and Jesus

**B**EFORE OUR INTERNATIONAL football matches the band plays (and the crowd sings) God save the King. Before Test matches in that most English of sports, cricket, the crowds sing something different, an anthem whose title is the name of a capital city in the Middle East, from which all the news reporting in recent months has been of a tragic war. That city is, of course, Jerusalem. It seems ironic that many would like this to be England's national song!

In his superb book, *Jerusalem: The Biography*, Simon Sebag Montefiore offers a number of quotations from different cultures and faiths. One is from an ancient Jewish script:

*The Land of Israel is the centre of the world;  
Jerusalem is the centre of the Land;  
the Holy Temple is the centre of Jerusalem;  
the Holy of Holies is the centre of the Holy Temple;*

*the Holy Ark is the centre of the Holy of Holies and the Foundation Stone from which the world was established is before the Holy Ark*

“Pious Jews,” he wrote, “knew that at the centre of this city-within-a-city, on top of Mount Moriah, was a tiny room of immense holiness which contained virtually nothing at all – but this space was the focus of Jewish sanctity: this was the Holy of Holies, the dwelling place of God Himself.”

From a different perspective a Muslim scholar wrote something similar –

*The sanctuary of the earth is Syria;  
the sanctuary of Syria is Palestine;  
the sanctuary of Palestine is Jerusalem;  
the sanctuary of Jerusalem is the Mount;*

*the sanctuary of the Mount is the place of worship;*

*the sanctuary of the place of worship is the Dome of the Rock.*

But I wonder whether Benjamin Disraeli, a man of Jewish parentage but a devout Anglican from his Confirmation at the age of twelve, perhaps captured it best of all: “The view of Jerusalem,” he said, “is the history of the world; it is more; it is the history of heaven and earth.”

And in the Preface to his book, Montefiore repeats that:

*“The history of Jerusalem is the history of the world. Jerusalem was once regarded as the centre of the world and today that is more true than ever: the city is the focus of the struggle between the Abrahamic religions, the shrine for increasingly popular Christian, Jewish and Islamic fundamentalism, the strategic battlefield of clashing civilisations, the front line between atheism and faith, and the illuminated stage for the cameras of the world in the age of twenty-four-hour news. Religious, political and media interest feed on each other to make Jerusalem more intensely scrutinised today than ever before.”*

At the centre of Jerusalem, at its heart, was the Temple which overshadowed everything else: travellers in Jesus's day who came towards the city by the Jericho road in the morning saw its golden roofs and white stone walls bright in the sun. At Passover time the place was crowded; the inns were full, and people camped in the olive-gardens outside the city wall. Jesus was steeped in a knowledge of the scriptures, and as a Jew the Temple was a familiar part of his life: the city and the Temple were central to his vision of himself. As he unveiled his mission

to his disciples, he stressed that the playing-out of his own destiny had to take place in Jerusalem: “it is not right,” he had said, “for a prophet to be killed anywhere except in Jerusalem.” (Luke 13,33) “We are going to Jerusalem,” Luke records Jesus as saying, “where everything the prophets wrote about the Son of Man will come true. He will be handed over to the Gentiles, who will mock him, insult him, and spit on him. They will whip him and kill him, but three days later he will rise to life” (18, 31-33) It all fell on rather perplexed ears, and Luke, in one verse (18,34) emphasises that confusion three times: “The disciples did not understand any of these things; the meaning of the words was hidden from them, and they did not know what Jesus was talking about.”

Jesus first came to Jerusalem when he was twelve years old; he must have been looking forward to it for months. Coming down the Nazareth road to the Plain, his own family and their party will have been joined by new groups swelling the procession. As they moved past the historic places they will all have joined in the chant of the processional psalms: we still sing them today –

*I was glad when they said to me,  
“Let us go to the house of the Lord”.  
And now our feet are standing within your gates, O Jerusalem.  
Jerusalem is built as a city where the pilgrims gather in unity.  
O pray for the peace of Jerusalem: may those who love you prosper.  
Peace be within your walls and prosperity in your palaces” (Ps.121).*

What, then, were Jesus's thoughts as he made this first journey to Jerusalem? This was no mere capital of the nation, no mere city of historic interest – this was the holy city, associated with his religion, his prayers, his Bible, with the most sacred moments in the life of his race. When pilgrims entered by the Damascus gate, they believed, they knew, that they were entering the city of God.

At Festival times the members of the Sanhedrin, the Jewish Council, sat on the terraces to teach: anyone could listen, anyone could ask questions. On their way home his parents realised that they had lost him, and when they went back they found him in the Temple with those Jewish teachers, and, we read, “all who heard him were amazed at his intelligent answers” (Luke 2, 41-47).

Early in his public ministry Jesus again went to Jerusalem for the Passover. The Temple precincts housed a great money-making machine; the outer court was turned into a noisy cattle-market. It was all a very profitable business, and the Church had



*Jerusalem from the Jericho Road. Photograph Kenneth Berg*





*Aerial view of the Old City of Jerusalem*

a rake-off – the Temple revenues were enormous. Of course, the cattle-markets and the money-changers were necessary, but what angered Jesus was that folk were cheating and being cheated under the roof of God's house. All four Gospel-writers, in their different ways, describe what happened. He made a whip from cords and drove all the animals out of the Temple, overturning the tables of the money-changers and scattering their coins. And he told those who were selling pigeons, "Take them out of here – stop making my Father's house a market place" (John 2,16). The Pharisees and the Priests would never forgive him. Jesus that day sealed his fate in Jerusalem, and he knew it.

The next visit that He made was at Harvest Festival time, the Jewish Feast of Tabernacles. Like our Christmas, there was much careless merry-making mingled with its religious devotion but the prominent theme was thanksgiving: "he who has not seen this Festival," said the Rabbis, "does not know what joy means." This year everyone was talking of Jesus of Nazareth, this mysterious young prophet who was reviving dreams of a Messiah. When he preached in the Temple, he instantly made an impression on them – he was hailed by some as a prophet and by others as the Christ, though some sneered: "Shall Christ come out of Galilee?" (John 7,41). When he debated with the authorities, the crowds challenged him, but again they were mixed in their response: "How does this man know so much when he's never had any training?" "Isn't this the man the authorities are trying to kill? He's talking in public and they say nothing against him – can it be that they really know that he is the Messiah?" (John 7)

But some "took up stones to cast at him": Jesus knew that unless he went out of the city he would face immediate death, so He left with His disciples to continue the message that He would leave with them and that Jerusalem would refuse to hear.

Two months later he was back again. It was the Festival of Dedication – Hanukkah – commemorating a national deliverance 200 years before by their great hero, Judas the Maccabee. Under those circumstances it was inevitable that they should be thinking

about Jesus and perhaps another deliverance from the scourge of Rome. Once more "they tried to seize Jesus, but he slipped out of their hands" (John 10, 39). Jesus clearly knew what a future visit to Jerusalem would mean for him.

As He went back again to Bethany, he looked back on the city and, for the first time, let His grief be seen – and He broke down and wept: "Jerusalem,

Jerusalem, you kill the prophets, you stone the messengers God has sent you. How many times have I wanted to put my arms round all your people, just as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, but you would not let me." (Matt.23,37)

Luke also records Jesus's cry over the city (Luke 13,34): it was public - on the eve of Holy Week, on the eve of his passion, on the outskirts of that city, Jesus let his grief be seen. Imagine that you are standing behind Jesus as He approaches Jerusalem on the road from Bethany, behind Him and a little to one side, looking where He is looking. You see the walls and towers of Jerusalem, that "city set on a hill" whose name meant literally "city of peace". It is a magnificent view, a dramatic scene of nature, with the Kidron valley and the valley of Hinnom meeting each other, which makes the city look as if it is rising up out of a deep abyss. And here is Christ coming to Jerusalem; here is the King coming into His own; the Prince of Peace is entering His own city, the city of peace, Salem. In the past God had come to Jerusalem by prophets, by judges, by kings. Now at last He has sent his Son.

But when Jesus saw the city, he wept. And why? Because He saw the blindness of the people, blind to the real meaning of His mighty works: "if you only knew today what is needed for peace, but now you cannot see it." But worse was the consequence that Jesus foresaw, an outcome that happened a few years later in 70AD: "the time will come when your enemies will surround you with barricades, blockade you and close you in on every side. They will completely destroy you, and your children within you – not a single stone will be left in its place, because you did not recognise God's moment when it came" (Luke 19,41-44). That was the fate of the city of God. You didn't see the Lord although He was there all the time, says Jesus; you missed the Lord just when He could have saved you. Jesus's love for the city and for the Temple was matched by his disappointment in it.

He came to Jerusalem again at the beginning of what we now call Holy Week, on Palm Sunday: each of the gospels gives a slightly different version of what happened in the city over the next three days, but

everything was done, says Matthew, "that the scriptures might be fulfilled." He was prophesied to enter on an ass – and so He did. His followers threw branches of palm along the route and the crowd went wild with excitement. They shouted "Hosanna" (which means "Now save us!") and they acclaimed Him as a king – "Son of David" and "King of Israel". This was dangerous territory.

During the first days of his final week Jesus taught, and healed sick people at the Bethesda Pool just north of the Temple and at the Siloam Pool to its south, both crowded with pilgrims who used those places to purify themselves before entering that holy place. But He also had hard words for the Pharisees: "Woe to you, teachers of the Law and Pharisees. You hypocrites! You lock the door to the Kingdom of Heaven in people's faces. You sail the seas and cross whole countries to win one convert; and when you succeed you make him twice as deserving of hell as you yourselves are (Matt.23,13,15). You are like whitewashed tombs, fine on the outside but full of bones and decaying corpses on the inside." (v.27) Then He walked out of the Temple and He never went into it again.

I will leave Jesus, and Jerusalem, there, but let Simon Montefiore end this for me as he does in the Epilogue at the conclusion of his monumental work – for this is Jerusalem today:

"It is now one hour before dawn on a day in Jerusalem. The Dome of the Rock is open: Muslims are praying. The Wall is always open: the Jews are praying. The Church of the Holy Sepulchre is open: the Christians are praying in several languages. The sun is rising over Jerusalem, its rays making the light Herodian stones of the Wall almost snowy – just as Josephus described it two thousand years ago – and then catching the glorious gold of the Dome of the Rock that glints back at the sun. The divine esplanade where Heaven and Earth meet, where God meets man, is still in a realm beyond human cartography. Only the rays of the sun can do it and finally the light falls on the most exquisite and mysterious edifice in Jerusalem. Bathing and glowing in the sunlight, it earns its auric name. But the Golden Gate remains locked, until the coming of the Last Days."

*"Pray for the peace of Jerusalem: They shall prosper that love thee. Peace be within thy walls, And prosperity within thy palaces. For my brethren and companion's sakes, I will now say, Peace be within thee."* (Psalm 122, 6-8)

Reverend Derek Carpenter writes from Kent

*Whilst loyally singing God Save The King, the membership of The Royal Society of St George recently voted to make Parry's great unison hymn, Jerusalem, the Society's anthem.*

## “England Expects” – “Action This Day!”

Dear Stuart Millson,

Our Society’s recognition that legitimate traditions and sacred memories of England are blatantly under internal and external threat is welcome. We are morally committed by our own specific chartered objectives to oppose this on-going trend.

We English are a distinctive people, who have assimilated or adopted small numbers from abroad into our ancient homeland, and accept modest minorities with positive contributions to our well-being, from Asian food take-aways to European seasonal farm-work. But this process has financial and cultural limits, since our island cannot house the world and dare not import even more of its multiple problems.

We are entitled to agree with Professor Matthew Goodwin, among others, that large numbers can adversely alter our social fabric, quite apart from imported crime and terrorism (horrors which every decent, patriotic ethnic minority citizen abhors). I would add concerns about our economy and defence falling under foreign control or influence.

Although the Society must not participate officially in electoral party-politics, members should actively raise, with both their representatives and media, the reasonable wish that England should remain a predominantly English country — and the UK recognisably British. Our honest patriotism is a unique recruitment magnet.

**David Ashton, Sheringham**

*For informed debate, Mr Ashton has quoted former UK diplomat Mr Alp Mehmet on ONS population growth projections and likely challenges from “multilingualism, reduced social trust, and sectarian conflict”. Readers can obtain further data online from Migration Watch UK, which holds that our society is “founded upon the shared heritage, values, rich history, and culture of the British people”. – Ed*



Mural of Vera Lynn by Dave Nash

## Hope and Glory

RSSG member, Eddie Lewisohn, had the following letter published in The Sunday Telegraph:

Sir,  
J. T. Fillingham (Letters, May 26) recounts

how his father, posted to Ceylon in the Second World War, became so sick of listening to Vera Lynn that he threw his copy of *We'll Meet Again* into the Indian Ocean on his voyage home. This would not be the only time that people have failed to appreciate Dame Vera's enduring popularity.

In 1962, her recording of *Land of Hope and Glory* was released in Europe and quickly earned a gold disk. However, as she noted in her autobiography, EMI refused to release the record in England, “maybe feeling embarrassed that such an unfashionable song should have any appeal for the cynical, trendy sixties”.

It is the music of that decade that, it is assumed, most older people now want to hear, rather than that of Dame Vera. But as someone who grew up with that decade's music, I fear that being forced to listen to it all over again in my dotage would finally finish me off.

**Eddie Lewisohn, London N6**

## Borderlands

Dear Stuart,

I was interested to read the letter in the April 2023 issue from Roger Collins with his ‘Monmouthshire memories’. I was born just inside the Gloucestershire border with Monmouthshire and have lived here for most of my life. This village and neighbourhood has always had a close association with Chepstow because, being only a mile away, it is our nearest town. The Royal Mail sorting office there deals with our post, which is why this tiny part of Gloucestershire has a Welsh postcode – the problems that causes sometimes when dealing with the authorities would fill another page!

When I was growing up Monmouthshire was considered to be an English county, as Roger mentioned. My late husband was born in Monmouthshire but was resolutely English, as were all my paternal ancestors born in Monmouthshire.

I have a book about the history of old English counties and Monmouthshire is included. Apparently the sixteenth century Acts of Union to bring England and Wales together extended the English system of justice, administration and parliamentary representation to all of what we consider today to be Wales. Despite a few anomalies, it was considered there was no longer a need for a recognised border between England and Wales. Monmouthshire, for the sake of organisational neatness apparently, came under the Oxford circuit for the administration of justice. As it was linked to the western England counties it came to be regarded as an English county.

This position largely continued until the twentieth century. However, as Monmouthshire contained at least a sixth of Wales's total population and was home to much of its industrial base, by the 1970s

questions were being asked about its system of Government and in 1974 it was legally confirmed to be Welsh and renamed with the more obviously Welsh title of Gwent. In 1996, as a result of pressure from the local population, the name of Monmouthshire was revived for a small area to the east and south of the ‘new’ Gwent. Present-day Monmouthshire, which includes the county town of Monmouth, is only a small part of the historic county, as the City of Newport and parts of Cardiff and Caerphilly remained in Gwent.

One interesting story is that, due to Monmouthshire's particular status, the First World War was declared by ‘England, Wales and Monmouthshire’ but the peace treaty was signed only by England and Wales, so an oversight at Versailles means that Monmouthshire could be considered to be still at war with Germany. I'm pleased to report no signs of the population being on a war footing on my frequent forays into Chepstow, not even at its famous Castle!

**Margaret Fuller, Monmouthshire**

## Honouring Sikh Soldiers

Dear Sir

I would like to add a footnote to Gurinder Singh Mann's article commemorating the Sikh soldiers.

Many of these Sikh soldiers were wounded while fighting in the First World War and were nursed in Brighton, East Sussex, at the Brighton Pavilion. This was turned into a hospital for wounded Sikh Hindu and Muslim soldiers and special kitchens were installed to cater for each dietary requirement.

Sadly some of these men died from their wounds so far away from their homelands. To honour these brave Sikh soldiers who had given their lives for our Country, a special Ghat was erected on the South Downs above Brighton where their bodies were cremated according to custom.

Later a beautiful memorial was built, The Chattri. This is maintained by a local group which holds a memorial service each year.

The Chattri stands on the site where thirty-seven Hindu and sixteen Sikh soldiers were cremated and then their ashes were scattered in the English Channel.

**Ann Abbott, Seahaven Branch**

## Wartime memory

I can remember standing in our garden when D-Day happened, many thousands of aircraft flying overhead. I like to think I “did my bit”, by feeding our chickens and collecting eggs on the Home Front!

Thank you for the magazine. It is nice to know that I am not, by any means, the only one to be worried about what is happening to my dear old country.

**Mrs Cherry Johnstone, Canterbury, Kent**





## ***The Royal Society of St George***

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### **Battle of Britain Remembrance Luncheon**

**Friday, 13 September 2024 – Time: 12.15 pm for 1.00 pm.**



**Venue: The Royal Air Force Club, 128, Piccadilly, London, W1J 7PY**

**Price – £92.00 per person.**

**Please note this is not a ticketed event, guests to register their name(s)  
at the RAF Club reception on the day.**

**Sparkling wine reception, followed by an excellent three course meal,  
fine wines served throughout, coffee, and petit fours.**

#### **Guest Speaker:**

**Dr Alastair Noble, BA(Hons), MA in History, Air Historical Branch (RAF)**

**Dress Code: Men: lounge suits – Ladies: smart attire. Medals may be worn.**

**Please send to Elizabeth Lloyd by **Thursday 5 September**: -**

**The Royal Society of St George, Administration Centre,**

**P.O. BOX 397, Loughton, Essex, IG10 9GN, England**

**Telephone: 020 3225 5011**

**Email: [info@royalsocietyofstgeorge.com](mailto:info@royalsocietyofstgeorge.com) Website: [www.rssg.org.uk](http://www.rssg.org.uk)**

I would like to book.....place(s) @ £92.00 per person at the Battle of Britain Remembrance Luncheon,  
at the Royal Air Force Club, on Friday, 13 September 2024.

**My cheque for £.....is enclosed, made payable to The Royal Society of St. George.**

**You may also book online via our website [www.rssg.org.uk](http://www.rssg.org.uk), or by email and pay by PayPal please send  
funds to [info@rssg.org.uk](mailto:info@rssg.org.uk) or via debit/credit card over the phone, or via bank transfer to our NatWest  
account. Account Name: The Royal Society of St. George – Account No: 14742497 – Sort Code: 60-07-29**

Name:.....  
(Capitals please)

Address:.....

.....Post Code:..... Telephone/Mobile:.....

Email address: .....

Guests' Names:.....

Special Dietary Requirements.....

## CURIOSITIES OF ENGLAND

### Local family commemorated in Kent church

David Thornewell

Friends of Kent Churches is a body of history enthusiasts dedicated to keeping a caring eye on some of the county's overlooked or redundant places of worship.

In this, their seventy-fifth anniversary year as an organisation, a party from the Friends explored East Sutton church, enjoying beautiful May afternoon weather in the process. One curiosity was the memorial to the Filmer family, branches of which produced a remarkable number of offspring: one with eighteen children, another beating them by two! (For further details, contact: [www.friendsofkentchurches.co.uk](http://www.friendsofkentchurches.co.uk))



### A boost for the arts



The National Youth Orchestra has announced that Her Majesty Queen Camilla will continue as the ensemble's patron, continuing a proud tradition of the Royal Family's involvement in the NYO's vital work.

Bringing together the most talented young musicians across these islands, the orchestra was awarded, in 2004, the Queen's Medal for Music, recognising sixty-four years of achievement by our country's teenage musicians.

Sarah Alexander OBE, the Chief Executive of the NYO, commented: "We're delighted that Her Majesty the Queen is continuing her close association with us. Our aim is to make our work accessible to thousands more teenagers across the UK and provide them with opportunities to flourish through playing and sharing music together."

Meanwhile, at the 2024 English Music Festival, the support of our own Royal Society of St. George Charitable Trust was acknowledged in the pages of the Festival's prestigious Programme Book. Our donations over the years have enabled free tickets to be provided to young people, as well as supporting younger performers at a number of Festival recitals.

### Anglo-Saxon – 'a source of English pride.'

Writing in *The Daily Telegraph* last May, Cambridge professor, David Abulafia, took issue with the renaming, courtesy of Cambridge University Press, of the distinguished journal, *Anglo-Saxon England*.

Now renamed – *Early Medieval England and its Neighbours* – Prof. Abulafia cites the current woke-inspired 'hue

and cry' about possible racial connotations of the term, 'Anglo-Saxon', as a reason for the name-change; and added: 'Instead of erasing the term Anglo-Saxon, it is far better to accept that our forebears oversaw a flourishing and fascinating period of this island's history. It deserves a proper name and it already has one.'

## FESTIVALS OF ENGLAND

### A successful weekend at the English Music Festival



Hilary Davan Wetton conducts the Godwine Choir in great English choral music. (Pictures by Stuart Millson.)

The late-May Bank Holiday weekend saw large audiences at Dorchester Abbey, Oxfordshire, for the 17th English Music Festival. With support from The Royal Society of St. George Charitable Trust, concerts ranged from the BBC Concert Orchestra playing hitherto 'lost' and unknown music by Vaughan Williams, to ethereal choral music from the Godwine Choir.

The EMF Founder-Director, Em Marshall-Luck, declared the Festival to be one of the most exciting in recent years and encouraged as many people as possible to join the Friends' Scheme ~ the body of supporters which ensures regular support for the concerts.

For further details of the EMF, go to: [www.englishmusicfestival.org.uk](http://www.englishmusicfestival.org.uk)



Em Marshall-Luck introduces the BBC Concert Orchestra on the opening night

### Wales does its bit . . .

A display of D-Day flags, deep in the heart of this Celtic country. Here in the town of Cardigan, West Wales, flags fly on a beautiful June evening. A quiet bowls match is underway nearby. (Picture by Stuart Millson.)





## “Buttonhole and Tails”

### Foot-tapping favourites from the English Music Festival

EM Records (the recording arm of the English Music Festival) lightens the mood with a collection of famous tunes, arranged by master-musician, John Ashworth, all evoking the inter-war romantic spirit and the later cheerful determination of the Home Front.

*We'll Meet Again*, Ivor Novello's *Keep the Home Fires Burning* and Harry Parr-Davies's *Wish Me Luck (As You Wave Me Goodbye)* all feature on a well-recorded album of the aristocrats of rhythm, The New Foxtrot Serenaders – the band that can always be

relied upon to set a certain scintillating style at the English Music Festival.

Played with panache and touching charm, this collection encapsulates the very best in bygone popular music, the songs mint-fresh in this fine presentation.

Nostalgia? Looking back? Wallowing in the past? Emphatically, yes! A thorough recommendation to every patriotic record collector.

**Stuart Millson**

(Recording details: catalogue reference, EMR CD072. [www.em-records.com](http://www.em-records.com))  
[www.friendsofkentchurches.co.uk](http://www.friendsofkentchurches.co.uk))

## Rutland, England's smallest county

### David Thornewell recommends you dust off the walking boots and explore!

A ghost of our ancient past . . . Edward the Confessor greets you at Lyddington Church. At the entrance of the chancel, on the south side behind the pulpit there is a mediaeval wall painting uncovered in 1937 which is believed to show Edward the Confessor dressed in an ermine cloak and cap holding an orb.

*Picture by David Thornewell.*



Medieval wall painting



Lyddington Church

## Flag ceremony and Cenotaph

### Our primary-school children learn about their history, reports Sarah Palmer, Headteacher, Camelsdale Primary School

Camelsdale Primary School very much enjoyed linking with St Ives School in Haslemere for this year's St George's Day celebrations.

The two schools visited each other to take part in some joint St George's Day craft activities, as well as attend the Haslemere Town St George's Day flag-raising ceremony outside of the Town Hall. The children very much enjoyed giving out red roses in the High Street to surprised local residents!

### Cenotaph

A highlight included the annual trip to the Cenotaph and Westminster Abbey where the children (who included the Head Boy, Jed and Head Girl,

Rosalie and their Deputies – Henry and Molly) laid their Royal Society of St George wreath. They also met the Lord Mayor of Westminster, a London Pearly Queen, senior members of The Royal Society of St. George and a veteran from D-Day. It was quite an amazing experience!

### An Inspector calls!

Remembering St George's Day and the school's link with The RSSG was even reflected in that week's Ofsted Inspection of the school, during which the inspector noted:

“The school's approach to pupils' personal development is very well planned. . . . They are taught about British

values, culture and heritage. As members of The Royal Society of St George, the school takes part in the annual town event. The head and deputy boy and girl attend the annual wreath-laying ceremony at the Cenotaph, followed by a tour of Westminster Abbey. Pupils enter through the King's entrance and observe the area where the King was crowned.”

It is good to see His Majesty's Inspectorate recognising the importance of nurturing such British values as culture and heritage which Camelsdale School certainly promotes as part of ‘The Camelsdale Way’. (For further details, contact: [www.friendsofkentchurches.co.uk](http://www.friendsofkentchurches.co.uk))



The pupils at the Cenotaph

## From biscuits to baked beans

**Stephen Garnett**

### National Biscuit Day

I always like to support and mark important days in our national calendar, and one that I am particularly committed to is National Biscuit Day which falls on 29 May. It coincides, I was told by a friend, with the birthday of that great Englishman, G.K. Chesterton (1874-1936), a man who, by the look of him, would not himself have been averse to a large plate of custard creams or jammy dodgers. Anyway, so keen was I to recognise this year's occasion that, as soon as the local shop opened, I hurried inside and bought three packets of different varieties. Of course, when I mentioned the reason for my enthusiasm to the girl at the till, and the other people in the shop overheard our conversation, an argument ensued about which biscuits were best. Passionate cases were made for ginger nuts, milk chocolate digestives and a number of other brands; a separate discussion then followed about which biscuits could be dunked most successfully. Having spent many years of hard work researching the subject over countless cups of tea and coffee, I regard myself as an experienced "biscuiteer" who brings specialist knowledge to the subject and valid opinions about which biscuits deserve to top the list. It is a debate, however, that arouses strong feelings, and my choices are bound to be controversial. I think, therefore, it would be best if I kept them to myself.

### Victorian treasures under threat

Founded in 1958 as a charity to awaken public interest in Victorian and Edwardian arts, architecture, crafts and design, and to save buildings of special architectural merit from needless destruction or disfigurement, The Victorian Society recently published its top ten list of structures in need of rescue. In a speech to coincide with the release of the list, Griff Rhys Jones, Victorian Society President, said: "How terrifying to see buildings I have known, loved or used all my life . . . in need of rescue. Their restoration and rescue make huge

commercial sense." The writer, actor and comedian described them as "attractions in themselves" which "should be part of local pride."

The ten structures on the list are: Kennington Boys' School, Lambeth, London; the Kursaal, Southend-on-Sea, Essex; Jesmond Dene Banqueting Hall, Newcastle upon Tyne; the former Bramcote Tennis Pavilion, Scarborough, Yorkshire; St Luke's Chapel, Nottingham City Hospital, Nottinghamshire; St Martins, Ilfracombe, Devon; Chances Glassworks, Smethwick, West Midlands; St Agnes' Vicarage and Hall, Liverpool; the former Education Department Offices, Derby, Derbyshire; Cardiff Coal Exchange, Butetown, Glamorgan.

Further information about The Victorian Society can be found at [www.victoriansociety.org.uk](http://www.victoriansociety.org.uk)

### On the street, avenue, lane, where I live

Who was it that first suggested that counting sheep was a good way of getting to sleep? It certainly doesn't work for me. For some reason, as soon as the woolly creatures appear before me, I also imagine hearing their baas and bleats: try dropping off with that racket going on. One night recently, having given up on Little Bo Peep's flock, I found myself lying there trying to remember all the addresses I had lived at from childhood to the present day. It was interesting to note that during those years I had had houses, flats and bedsits in an avenue, three roads, two streets, a close, a square and a couple of lanes (these, although about eight miles apart and not connected, were, by coincidence, both called Black Moss Lane). I would have liked to have had a crescent, parade and, most of all, a mews on the list but I do now have an address that is certainly not very common and one that makes a satisfying addition to my residential CV: I live in a brow. It was a rewarding exercise, recalling those places. More importantly, rambling down all those memory lanes, memory avenues and the rest was exhausting and did eventually send me to sleep.

### Heugh Battery Museum

While travelling around the northeast of England I came across this museum which, to my shame, I did not know existed. Preserving what it describes as "the only First World War battlefield in the UK," it commemorates the infamous bombardment of Hartlepool in December 1914 when the Heugh Battery and nearby Lighthouse Battery exchanged fire with the German



*On the street, avenue, lane, where I live*

navy. Standing beside the guns and looking out across the sea it is easy to be transported back to those times and the museum has many other artefacts from the period, as well as a reconstructed First World War trench. Distributed throughout the original battery command post, barrack room, parade ground and armoury, there are also weapons from the Second World War, an Anderson shelter and even a Rapier missile system from the 1960s. Before leaving, the Poppy Tea Rooms are well worth a visit. Oh yes, there is one other important piece of information that you need to know before visiting: it is pronounced "Yuff"!

### Airfix Artist

His name might not be instantly recognisable but if you were a schoolboy in the sixties or seventies there is a strong chance that you will have encountered and had your blood stirred by the work of Roy Cross. For Roy, who passed away in May just a day after he had turned 100, was the principal artist for Airfix whose hugely popular plastic kits made the company, in its heyday, Britain's leading toy manufacturer. Whether depicting a dogfight involving a Spitfire and ME10, a Stirling bomber being loaded with its deadly cargo or the German battleship Tirpitz under heavy attack . . . the colourful paintings of Roy Cross (he contributed more than 200) added excitement and a spirit of adventure to the construction of the kits, stimulating the imaginations of young model makers who spent hours bringing the aeroplanes, ships, cars, tanks and railway engines to life. Roy, a founder member of the Society of Aviation Artists in 1954, will also be remembered fondly for the series of motoring covers he produced for the Eagle comic and as a brilliant marine painter. Many of his paintings and a lot of personal and background information can be found on a website produced by his son, Anthony: [www.roycrossfineart.co.uk](http://www.roycrossfineart.co.uk)

### Apostrophe Apoplexy

I recently spent a few days in hospital recovering from an operation and was



*National Biscuit Day*





Airfix Artist

struck by how regularly a nurse wheeling a strange machine appeared at my bedside to take my blood pressure. Fortunately, mine was as it should be although if it wasn't for the understanding and swift action of one particular nurse things could have got a lot more serious. The problem was that opposite my bed was a toilet for the use of patients. There was nothing wrong with that, of course, but unfortunately there was a notice on the door, a notice that read: "Patients Toilet". Well, as someone who can't stop themselves from proofreading menus in restaurants, shop signs, receipts, advertisements, labels on clothing, captions on television news reports . . . a week as a captive in that ward and unable to avoid looking at that sign would have sent my blood pressure sky high.

During a quiet period in the ward, I managed to attract the attention of a young trainee nurse. I explained my "problem" and was delighted that he understood and was sympathetic. In fact, as soon as I had finished telling him my stories of all the other punctuation and spelling outrages that I had encountered going back several years, he immediately leapt up and, producing a ballpoint pen, corrected the error. "Patients'

toilet" now greeted visitors; my stay in hospital hadn't been in vain.

I recalled that episode when I read a news story about how the council in North Yorkshire was planning to omit apostrophes from new street signs because they "negatively affect geographical databases" and cause computer problems. Fortunately, thanks to a backlash from local people, largely based around a humble sign for St Mary's Walk in Harrogate, the decision was reversed. It's great to witness a victory for common sense and ordinary men and women against inadequate, rigid technology and those who are slaves to its "systems". For people like me, it's also wonderful that we can visit the area without the constant worry about what we might see around the next corner . . .

#### The scourge of smartphones

Because of the damage being done to children by their exposure to social media – almost all children own a phone by the age of twelve and seventy-nine per cent encounter violent pornography before the age of eighteen – a committee of MPs has suggested that a law should be introduced banning under-sixteens from using

smartphones. When I was a boy there were no such things as smartphones but if there had been there was already a law in place to deal with the situation. It would have been enforced something like this:

ME: Mum, may I have a smartphone?

MUM: No, you are far too young.

No debates in parliament. No legislation. No problem.

#### The Longest Yarn

Of all the projects that were undertaken to commemorate the eightieth anniversary of D-Day, one of the most ingenious was an eighty-metre, three-dimensional, knitted and crocheted depiction of 6 June 1944 as well as the build-up in England and the days that followed as the allies battled through Normandy. The crafters who have produced the work, with conscientious attention to detail and historical accuracy, are part of a non-profit association in France and come from all walks of life, creating individual parts that have come together to make an astonishing whole. It is a remarkable achievement and a superb tribute to all those who played their part in the liberation of Europe. Details of where the work will be on display can be found on the website: [www.thelongestyarn](http://www.thelongestyarn)

#### Nostalgic Nosh

A recent survey commissioned by Wrigley's Extra gum asked 2,000 adults which foods they most associated with their childhoods. The top ten were:

1. Wobbly jelly
2. Boiled eggs and soldiers
3. Fish fingers
4. Home-cooked roast dinner
5. Biscuits from a metal tin
6. Ice-cream
7. Custard
8. Ice-pops
9. Jam sandwiches
10. Baked beans



The Longest Yarn



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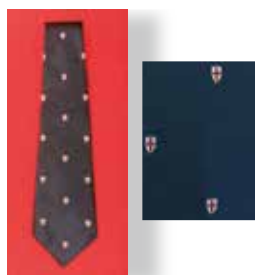


**Ref: RSSG029**  
Large Blazer Button  
20mm diameter  
**£4.50**  
**MEMBERS ONLY**



**Ref: RSSG009**  
Red Enamel Cuff Links  
in Presentation Box  
18mm diameter  
**£22.50**





**Ref: RSSG13A**  
Multi-Motif Shield Tie – Polyester  
**£18.50**



**Ref: RSSG012**  
Navy Polyester Members  
Tie with Armorial Bearings  
**£19.00**  
**MEMBERS ONLY**



**Ref: RSSG014**  
Tie Slide  
in Presentation Box  
53mm x 28mm  
**£17.50**  
**MEMBERS ONLY**



**Ref: RSSG031**  
2ft by 3ft St George's flag  
with eyelets  
**£6.00**



**Ref: RSSG032**  
3ft by 5ft St George's flag  
with eyelets  
**£7.50**



**Ref: RSSG007**  
Hand Painted Heraldic Plaque  
(Armorial Bearings) 45mm x180mm  
**£62.00**  
**MEMBERS ONLY**



**Ref: RSSG017**  
Full Membership Certificate  
**£6.00**  
**MEMBERS ONLY**



**Ref: RSSG022**  
St George's Day Envelope Stickers  
2 A4 pages – 130 stickers  
**£2.50**



**Ref: RSSG024**  
Past copy of the *St George for England*  
Journal  
Please contact the office for availability  
**£5.00**

## UK Shop Window Order Form

Please complete the order form and return it with your payment to:

RSSG, P.O. BOX 397 LOUGHTON IG10 9GN. Please make your cheques payable to "The Royal Society of St. George".

| Ref No. | Description | Qty | Size | Colour | Price | Total Price |
|---------|-------------|-----|------|--------|-------|-------------|
|         |             |     |      |        |       |             |
|         |             |     |      |        |       |             |
|         |             |     |      |        |       |             |
|         |             |     |      |        |       |             |
|         |             |     |      |        |       |             |

**ALL PRICES INCLUDE POSTAGE AND PACKAGING FOR UK ORDERS. INTERNATIONAL CUSTOMERS PLEASE ORDER VIA OUR WEBSITE OR EMAIL YOUR ORDER TO US AT [info@rssg.org.uk](mailto:info@rssg.org.uk) FOR PRICES, POSTAGE AND PACKAGING**

International Customers are responsible to pay for any additional costs such as duties, local taxes or custom clearance fees which may be imposed in their country of residence

NAME .....

ADDRESS.....

COUNTY..... POSTCODE .....

EMAIL ..... TEL: ..... DATE .....

Total amount of Cheque £.....

If you require any further information, please phone 020 3225 5011 or Email: [info@royalsocietyofstgeorge.com](mailto:info@royalsocietyofstgeorge.com)

Payment may be made via PayPal to [info@rssg.org.uk](mailto:info@rssg.org.uk), by cheque or please call us on 020 3225 5011 to place your order over the phone.

All major credit or debit cards are accepted  
For branch officer's regalia, please contact the office



# The Royal Society of St George

Established in 1894 | Incorporated by Royal Charter | Patron: King Charles III



The Royal Society of St George is partnering with Harney & Sons Tea Company to produce, market, and sell the Imperial Windsor Blend Tea, in support of the Royal Society's educational programmes for young people.



The Royal Society of St George (RSSG), a charitable organisation, was founded in England in 1894 with the goal of fostering English values and the English way of life. From its inception, it has enjoyed the support of prominent public figures in England and throughout the British Empire. Its first Royal Patron was Queen Victoria; since then the society has enjoyed the patronage of every reigning monarch, including the current British monarch, King Charles III. The Society's Charitable Trust actively provides financial support to help young people fulfill their scholastic and career potential.

Harney & Sons is a celebrated gourmet tea company located in Millerton, New York. Founded in 1983 by John Harney, it has grown from a hands-on cottage industry into one of the leading gourmet tea companies in the USA. It is still a hands-on family business now headed by John's sons, Mike and Paul Harney.

Harney & Sons has produced The Imperial Windsor Blend exclusively for The RSSG. The Imperial Windsor Blend is a medium bodied tea with briskness and a wonderful aroma, containing black teas with rose petals.

The partnership will produce, market, and sell the Imperial Windsor Blend tea globally, with particular emphasis on promoting the tea to its direct, branch, and affiliate members throughout the world. In return for the exclusive right to market and sell this RSSG-supporting blend, RSSG will receive a quarterly royalty of 10% of gross sales, allowing The RSSG to build its support programmes and assist more young people, needed now more than ever.

## About The Royal Society of St George

The objectives of The Society as laid down in its Royal Charter are to:

- Foster the love of England and to strengthen England and the Commonwealth by spreading the knowledge of English history, traditions and ideals;
- Keep fresh the memory of those in all walks of life who have served England or the Commonwealth in the past, to inspire leadership in the future;
- Combat all activities likely to undermine the strength of England or the Commonwealth; and
- Further English interest everywhere to ensure that St. George's Day is properly celebrated and to provide focal points all the world over where English men and women may gather together.

**USA, CANADA, INTERNATIONAL AND BULK ORDERS** – please contact Harney & Son's distribution agent,

Mark Cooper via telephone - +164 65 29 93 11 - or via email – markcooperltd@verizon.net

## The Royal Society of St George Mission Statement

**"To promote the character and true diversity of England and its people"**

We achieve this by:

- Supporting the Monarchy, our Charter and our democracy
- Being proud of English values and character
- Protecting English Heritage, Faiths, History and Traditions through education, practice and culture
- Celebrating and embracing the social and cultural diversity within England – Past, Present and looking to the Future
- Recognising and supporting local and regional identities, eccentricities, customs and products
- Uniting the nation and encouraging the celebration of St George's Day
- Challenging doctrines that threaten to undermine our objectives and mission, whilst upholding the right to free thought, speech and movement
- Championing campaigns and supporting like-minded (non-political) groups with an English focus
- Supporting England's role in maintaining the unity of the United Kingdom and of the Commonwealth

### Journal Advertising:

Full Page Colour £400  
Half Page Colour £250  
Quarter Page Colour £150  
Eighth Page Colour £100  
*All prices are exclusive of VAT*

### Extra insertions:

1–3 insertions 5% discount  
4–6 insertions 10% discount  
7–12 insertions 15% discount

### Mechanical Data

Full Page: 267 x 190 mm  
Full Bleed: 303 x 216 mm  
Half Page: 130 x 190 mm  
Quarter Page: 130 x 92.5 mm  
Eighth Page 62.5 x 92 mm  
*Vital matter 6 mm from edge of page on all sides*

### Publication Dates

April 28 February  
August 30 June  
December 31 October

### Contact: Elizabeth Lloyd

Tel: 020 3225 5011

Email: [info@royalsocietyofstgeorge.com](mailto:info@royalsocietyofstgeorge.com)

Website: [www.rssg.org.uk](http://www.rssg.org.uk)

The Royal Society of St George,  
PO Box 397, Loughton, IG10 9GN,  
England

**Are you interested in the Royal  
Society of St George?**

**Would you like to join us?**

**Application form on our website at  
[www.rssg.org.uk](http://www.rssg.org.uk)**

**Or telephone the office on  
020 3225 5011**

## The Royal Society of St George

### Vision

To be widely recognised as the premier English patriotic society; attracting members from all walks of life; celebrating important dates in English history; supporting and encouraging the young; sharing and maintaining our Culture; Heritage and traditions; having a voice on issues that affect our country; and supporting charitable causes.