

# *Foulness Island*

*May 2017*

May is a difficult month to find a 'peg' to hang the front page on. Spring is well under way, there's no particular seasonal peg except Whitsun (and it's in June this year, with a later Easter) and with diaries these days printing details of the two Bank Holidays in this country they tend not even to print the date of Whit Sunday. How many of us even remember its significance?

What we do find that occurs regularly in May is Christian Aid Week and, whether we are churchgoers or not, we cannot fail to be aware of that week as it is advertised in newspapers and other bits of the media. With a relatively scattered community such as ours – yes, we've got the villages, but there are several 'outlying' houses – it's never a practical proposition

to think about door-to-door collections, however dear the charity may be to your heart. Would you like to be the one who draws the short straw of going out to Great Burwoods or Havengore Farmhouse, and then finding there's nobody at home the day you called to collect the envelope? Door-to-door collecting in a couple of compact streets in a town is a thankless enough task – I know, I've done it – and our wider-spread community is not any easier.

So we don't have a collection on here, but there are plenty of places where we can make a donation, however small, for those who are less fortunate than we are. Those of us who struggled to cope last September when we lost electricity for 17 hours – yes, we do remember the lack of offers of compensation from certain powers-that-be – could perhaps consider those whose only power comes from the scraps of wood they can collect to make a fire. Those of us who have been well aware of the wasted water from the unrepaired leaks on here might like to consider those who have walked miles to get any water at all – every drop is precious. Any collecting box will find a space for anything you are able to put in it.

### **In Memoriam**

*In May we remember*

*Karl Arnold*

*Kathleen Burroughs*

*John Lilley*

*Andy MacIntyre*

*Ann Mahoney*

*Walter (Sagey) Rawlings*

*June Stanford*

*Margaret Wood*

*Gone but not forgotten*

### **Foulness Parish Council**

#### **Council Matters**

County Councillor Colin Seagers attended the meeting and reported that this would be the last meeting he would be attending in his capacity as a County Councillor as he was not standing in the forthcoming County elections. The Parish Council gave a vote of thanks to Councillor Seagers for his regular attendance at Council meetings and for the help he had given the Parish Council over the years.

District Councillor Neil Hookway also attended the meeting but had nothing to report of interest to the residents of Foulness Island, partly owing to restrictions caused by the forthcoming local elections.

Council approved the payment requests for the month.

The Clerk reported that he was still working on loading the necessary information on the parish council website. Unfortunately there were still a few problems loading certain information but he was working on this with the web provider.

It was noted that there was still no news about the procedure to make compensation claims regarding the major power failure on the Island and it was agreed that the Parish Council would write to QinetiQ and others expressing their disappointment at the time it is taking to resolve this issue.

Finally please note that the May meeting will be on 17<sup>th</sup> May (the third Wednesday) and will commence at 8.00 pm.

## **QinetiQ Report**

**Early Starts:** There are no early starts programmed.

**Power Interruptions:** Power interruptions are scheduled in the future. No dates are yet available but residents will be notified well in advance.

**Water Interruptions:** No water supply interruptions are scheduled.

**Sewage Works:** Severn Trent Water Authority will be working in the Courtend area. No dates are yet known but residents will be notified as soon as possible. Work will be starting on the trench for the new power main for the sewage pump at Courtend and there will be a power interruption to allow the switchover from the generator. Notices will be issued to affected households.

**Scrub Clearance:** There will be scrub clearance at DAT on 14th/15th April. Land Area 4 will be closed to the public during this time.

**Churchend Noticeboard:** This has now been updated and firing notices are displayed.

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*The change of date for the May meeting is very close to the deadline for the newsletter so perhaps the best way to know what is going on is to attend the meeting – Ed*

## **Foulness Conservation and Archaeological Society**

We often receive reports of the birds that like to consider Foulness as home or as a nice place to visit, and we had two interesting visitors over the past few months, species the man-in-the-street may well never have heard of. One was the Lesser White-Fronted Goose which was seen frequently – the first time it had visited Essex since 1986 – and the other was a Tundra Bean Goose which got the airwaves twitching and many



people ringing up to ask how they might visit Foulness! These birds are pictured in the display in the Heritage Centre.

The next opening of the Centre will be on Sunday May 7<sup>th</sup> from 12 till 4pm and we look forward to seeing you there. If you have visitors over the weekend the Centre is certainly somewhere to take them.

Our next Committee meeting will be on Tuesday May 9<sup>th</sup> in the Centre at 8pm (summer hours). Do come along and join us if you are interested – you don't actually have to be a committee member to have an input and any small offer of help would be welcome.

#### **Children's Society boxes**

Towards the end of this month we have to think about emptying the Children's Society boxes which some of you have indoors to help children less fortunate than those you know.

If it is convenient and if you are passing Hall Farm, it would be helpful if you could leave your box inside the porch door. Every

box delivered is one fewer I have to collect, and you'd be surprised how heavy 20 boxes and their contents can be. Then I'll make a tour of the island and collect any remaining boxes and the total sent to Headquarters will be announced in the earliest newsletter I can manage.

Please remember that one pound coins are changing – have you had a new one in change yet? – and the Society would welcome anything that you may wish to donate, but not the old-style £5 note which ceases to be generally acceptable soon after the beginning of this month!

If you don't have a box indoors and feel that you might be able to support by putting in a few pence each week, or whatever your system might be, I'll be more than pleased to talk to you about this; it would be nice not to have the number of our supporters decrease. Thank you.

*Denise*

#### **Window cleaner**

Observant ones among our residents will have noticed that we have a new window cleaner

coming to us. Lee has moved with his family to Norfolk and Rob has taken over his round. If you don't currently have a window cleaner call at your house, and would like someone else to take over what may be a burden to you, Rob may be contacted on

07494012667

or [Robadam391@gmail.com](mailto:Robadam391@gmail.com)

**Foulness Tide Times  
May 2017**

	AM	height	PM	height
Sat 6	09.56	5.2	21.19	5.0
Sun 7	10.57	5.4	22.25	5.2
Sat 13	02.21	5.8	14.36	5.6
Sun 14	02.56	5.7	15.09	5.5
Sat 20	07.29	4.9	20.00	4.8
Sun 21	08.52	5.0	21.13	5.0
Sat 27	01.40	6.3	14.09	6.0
Sun 28	02.28	6.3	14.57	6.0

**The changing countryside**

Spring seems to be well on its way, after the changeable months we have had recently and there's a feeling that our summer winged visitors will soon be here, if they

have not already arrived – have you heard a cuckoo yet?

The on-going plan by some farmers on here to develop more diverse habitat on the farmland continues to bear fruit. It's encouraging how many residents and visitors have commented favourably on the teeming life in the 'bees and butterflies' areas. Other areas are sown to provide food for birds, even if they may look to be full of weeds or rubbish to the untrained eye. The sight of a cloud of linnets rising from one of those areas is quite something to see.

These areas are designed to encourage more diverse wild life. While we encourage people to walk the farm tracks and footpaths we do ask you please to respect what we are trying to achieve. Enjoy the countryside but please be careful where you tread.

**The curse of the commentator**

"As he (Chris Eubank junior) improves, he's going to get better"

*Lennox Lewis ITV Box Office*

"Are you in denial about hearing loss? Keep listening"

*Jane Garvey Radio 4*

"Is the gunman thought to be armed?" *Victoria Derbyshire*

"We've got more woman Labour MPs than all the other parties put together"

*Harriet Harman BBC1*

"Although Leeds have been let off the hook, Wednesday aren't letting them off the hook"

*Brian Laws Radio Sheffield*

"Lucy, if I may say so, is looking at this through the wrong end of the magnifying glass"

*Peter Hamilton Radio 4*

### **They lived on Foulness**

#### **John Bennewith**

Among the celebrated characters of Foulness was John Bennewith, who was the son of Amelia Bennewith, the landlady of the George and Dragon in the early 1800s. Thanks to his fighting skill he became known as the Foulness Champion. He was a man of great muscular development who kept

the roughs of the island in wholesome disciplined order. He sustained the reputation and manhood of his birthplace in repeated pugilistic encounters. He reigned undisputed as master upon the skittle grounds, then at quoits, and at the annual fair where he began his first attempts at bare-fist fighting.

Many of the later fights took place in the garden of the George and Dragon that we can see today. The then rector was so scandalized at what was going on in that garden he caused the church wall to be raised to the height it is now – he wanted to protect his church-goers from such sights.

Although requested, Bennewith would never enter the boxing schools (there is a great difference between bare-knuckle fighting and boxing). Because of this refusal, he was limited in his skills, 'devoid of science' as the purists would say. He could defend his chest but exposed his head through not having learned to defend properly. Consequently his opponents always directed their efforts to blind him but he usually



prevailed, or he'd never have earned the nickname of the "Foulness Champion".

Among his neighbours who acknowledged his prowess were 'the Infant', 'the Giant', 'Bullock-Bones' and other men of Herculean proportions, all of whom entertained a wholesome dread and respect for him. Several of these fighters he disposed of with one hand only. Certainly a man to have sorted out any small neighbourhood disputes.

*Information taken from Philip Benton's History of the Rochford Hundred*

### **Have you tried ...**

The Tranquil Artichoke?

Well, we're cheating this month – this isn't a real review but we couldn't resist it.

Children have much more sophisticated tastes these days. A recent survey tells us that many under-fives now enjoy foods such as quinoa, pak choi, mussels, aubergines and olives. And of course they dine out more often than our generation did as children. I am a great admirer of Toby, 5¼, who writes restaurant

reviews for one of the posher magazines. Here is one of his recent articles:

The Tranquil Artichoke, a high-end restaurant serving modern European food with a nod to Pan-Asian fusion, is a welcome addition to the eateries in this up-and-coming area. Upon arrival I was pleased to be handed an iPad to keep me amused. So much nicer than those dreary colouring books, though I have always enjoyed the way you can make the pencils roll great distances across a restaurant floor. The service was attentive, the waiter was happy to crawl under the table several times to fetch the cutlery I had thrown down there.

As for ambience, I was disappointed that The Tranquil Artichoke does not have banquettes, as I find it pleasing to lie flat and have a good squirm between mouthfuls of sea bream fillet. However, the room was uncluttered, and allowed plenty of space for me and my companion (ie my sister Poppy, three) to race up and down. The collision with the sweet trolley was a setback, but I must say my nosebleed was dealt with efficiently and they cleaned me up with Evian water –

a bit steep at £10 a bottle. The blood spatters were hardly detectable in the Eton Mess.

I found my venison loin a little too salty, but this may have been due to a mishap with the cruet during an arm wrestling bout with my companion. Also, the waiter had to be reminded once or twice to fetch my side order of steamed pak choi, but this may have been because he was disorientated by one of Poppy's sudden shrieks. Desserts were excellent. My companion declared her pistachio crème brûlée to be 'very throwable'. We did not linger for coffee as my nose started to bleed again.

*With thanks to Oliver Pritchett,  
Sunday Telegraph.*

**And finally ....** As the bus stopped in downtown Houston and a queue of shoppers started to get on, a lady became aware that her skirt was too tight to allow her leg to come up to the height of the first step of the bus.

Slightly embarrassed and with a quick smile to the driver, and equally blessing the fashion for easily-accessible zips, she reached behind her to unzip her skirt a little, thinking this would give her enough slack to raise her leg.

She tried to take the step, only to discover that she still couldn't.

So, a little more embarrassed, she once again reached behind her to unzip her skirt a little more, and again attempted the step.

Much to her annoyance she found she still could not raise her leg. With a little smile to the driver, she tried the same manoeuvre, hoping against hope for success. No joy.

A large Texan, who was standing in the queue behind her, picked her up by the waist and gently placed her on the top step of the bus.

The lady turned to the would-be Samaritan and went ballistic, yelling, "How dare you touch me! I don't even know who you are!"

The Texan smiled, and with a drawl he replied, "Well, ma'am, normally I would agree with you, but after you unzipped my fly three times I kinda figured we was friends."

*Items (articles, adverts, 'free to a good home', opinions) for inclusion in the newsletter are always welcome. For the June newsletter these should be with Denise at Old Hall Farm by 18<sup>th</sup> May.*