



*Floreat Etona*

July 2022

Issue 28

# Eton Matters

*Eton Celebrates  
and Thanks Her  
Majesty the Queen  
for Her Devoted  
Service on Her  
Platinum Jubilee*

*An Anthem  
for England*

*Ducks  
(and Drakes)*

*Defying  
Gravity*



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# Chair's Chat

Ros Rivaz – ECA Chair



Summer is here and the sun is (mostly) shining!

And my goodness we've been busy! We have enjoyed talks on Joseph Banks and Jack the Ripper in Eton College's Natural History Museum; a pub walk; 2 more street cleans with brilliant participation and well-deserved nourishment afterwards from Eaten Café and Budgens; our AGM with food and drink provided, including a donation of a pin of beer from Windsor & Eton Brewery...and the Eton Platinum Jubilee Street Party! We've held face to face ECA meetings at the Hop House of The George, where the space and window/door arrangement was optimum during COVID...and we have come to enjoy the location, so it's become our new base!

Sincere thanks to all our committee who have led on different events.

We receive great feedback about the ECA weekly Newsletter (or Shout Out, as we call it) where you can find out what we are organising and what is going on locally...and Eton Matters, so thank you to Russell and Peter particularly. Sign up for the Newsletter at [www.etoncommunity.co.uk](http://www.etoncommunity.co.uk)

And in this issue of Eton Matters on page 6, you will see anthems (a) (b) (c) (d) and (e) and we'd love to hear your preferences! Email [chairman@etoncommunity.co.uk](mailto:chairman@etoncommunity.co.uk)

## Forthcoming Eton Community Association Meetings

6 July; 17 August (tentative); 28 Sept; 2 Nov.  
18.30 at the Hop House, The George PH.

**I would like to thank** the regular and guest contributors and the sponsors of this issue of Eton Matters, without whose generosity we would be unable to produce this mini-mag. The sponsors are: Kavanagh's Budgens, New & Lingwood, Warren Property, J Manley Gallery, Richer Sounds, Academy Insurance, Vario Press, Beechwood Interiors, Fresh 'N' Fine, My Handyman, Eton Cycles, Tastes Delicatessen; Eton College, Eaten Café, Lawsons Residential and Susan Handy Dance.

**Peter Eaton, Editor**

## Eton Community Association and Eton Matters Information

ECA Chair – Ros Rivaz – [chairman@etoncommunity.co.uk](mailto:chairman@etoncommunity.co.uk)  
ECA Secretary – Leonie Bryant – [secretary@etoncommunity.co.uk](mailto:secretary@etoncommunity.co.uk)  
ECA Treasurer – Malcolm Leach – [treasurer@etoncommunity.co.uk](mailto:treasurer@etoncommunity.co.uk)  
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# Eton Helps Ukraine

Jane Speller – Eton Resident

How does one start to create a Variety Show? Well, first you get an idea on a Tuesday evening, in this case, 1st March. Go to church the next morning and see Charity Miles and tell her about your idea for a Show to help the Ukrainian people; Charity is on board. You spot Duncan Reed and mention the Show; before you know it, you have a publicist and ticket seller, thanks also to the Windsor Theatre Guild. Later Malcolm Leach kindly agrees to be compere and you settle a date and venue, 19th March, Eton Parish Church.

Wednesday morning, tickets and donations are coming in and you have already made £151 but with only two acts on board. Thursday was nerve wracking. A lot of contacts, who would have loved to have taken part, were already committed but by the end of that Friday there were nine acts.

## AFTERNOON VARIETY PERFORMANCE

in support of

THE BRITISH RED CROSS DEC\*  
UKRAINE APPEAL

\*DISASTERS EMERGENCY COMMITTEE

There was only time to rehearse the abridged play extracts on one occasion. Then we were rehearsing on our own.

Katie Leach, Duncan, Charity and Malcolm helped in a variety of ways to get the Church set up, decorated and posters put up. The first time the whole cast met was on the actual day itself, just before the show.

We were lucky to have Anton, a Ukrainian, make a short speech to start the show which was very moving. Katie followed, reading the first verse of the Ukrainian National Anthem, in English. Two Etonians, Bolun and Alban played the organ and performed magic tricks respectively and Charity accompanied by Alice Foxley, sang 'A Nightingale Sang in Berkeley Square.' Three play extracts of Oscar Wilde and Noel Coward performed by Louise Mappley, Mirjam and Jane. John de Bruyne read two poems and Charity had the inspirational idea of singing 'You'll Never Walk Alone', from the Rogers & Hammerstein 1945 musical 'Carousel.' There wasn't a dry eye in the Church. There were two interludes where Mirjam Kaerma played a couple of pieces of music, one her own composition, a world premiere.

Friends helped front of house, seating the audience and a retiring collection, which raised over £370, with the final amount raised being a staggering £1,553.40. Thank you to everyone!

Is it desirable to try to put on a show in just over two weeks? Bottom line no! But when you have communities like Eton Town and Eton College behind you, anything is possible.

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# Anthem for England

Since the 18th C Acts of Union, England has not been of itself an independent Sovereign Nation. "God Save the Queen (King)" is the de facto official Royal and National Anthem for the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and it is principally in that capacity that we celebrate Her Majesty's Platinum Anniversary.

With the future possibility that Scotland gains Independence and that Northern Ireland unites with the Republic of Ireland the existing Acts of Union would be repealed. England nationalists might then face the prospect of either adopting "God save the Queen/King" or perhaps choosing one of the other contenders below as its National Anthem, all of which either the writer or composer had a connection to Eton College.

(a) **"God Save the Queen/King"** On 21 September 1745 at Prestonpans in Scotland, the Jacobite army led by pretender Charles Stuart (Bonnie Prince Charlie) defeated the redcoat army supporting the Hanoverian line King George II. One week later at the Drury Theatre, London the resident orchestra gave the first ever performance of "God Save the King" led by musician/director of music, Thomas Augustine Arne (Eton 1720s), pictured right, in a patriotic gesture of support for the King and the Union. The words of the song had appeared earlier in the Society magazine "The Gentleman" for whom Samuel Johnson was a contributor as he also was for Drury Theatre and so an associate of Arne. As the Theatre archives were subsequently destroyed in an 1809 fire there is no formal evidence that Arne/Johnson were the composer/lyricist of the anthem so it remains speculative.



(b) **"Rule Britannia"** A poem by James Thomson with music composed by Thomas Augustine Arne in 1740 (Eton 1720s).

*"This was the charter, the charter of the land  
And guardian angels sang this strain  
Rule Britannia! Britannia rules the waves  
Britain never never shall be slaves!"*

# Brian Hoare

Former Eton Resident

## (c) "Land of Hope and Glory"

*"Land of Hope and Glory. Mother of the free..."*  
*"...God who made thee mighty make thee mightier yet"*

Written in 1902 by Arthur Christopher Benson (Eton 1875/80), photo right, and added to the music of Edward Elgar written in 1901 as part of his Pomp and Circumstance composition.

(d) "Jerusalem" was composed by Charles Hubert Parry (Eton 1861/66), photo below left, setting William Blake's poem to music.

*"And did those feet in ancient time*  
*Walk upon England's mountain green?*  
*And was the holy Lamb of God*  
*On England's pleasant pastures seen?"*

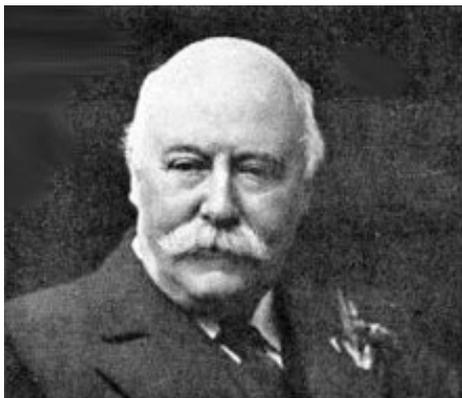
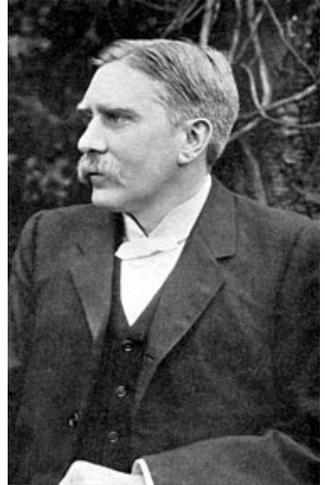
## (e) "I Vow to the my Country"

*"I vow to thee, my country, all earthly things above*  
*Entire and whole and perfect, the service of my love"*

Created in 1921 when Cecil Spring Rice (Eton 1872/77), photo below right, poem was set to music by Gustav Holst from the Jupiter movement of the Planet suite.

Why not let us know your favourite? Email [chairman@etoncommunity.co.uk](mailto:chairman@etoncommunity.co.uk)

References: Drury Theatre; Music and Musicians of Eton (A Mellor)



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# Kid's Play – A Gallop though Time

Finley – Age 9



How exciting – I'm going to this show in celebration of our Queen! My parents and little brother, with my granny and friends are going to an Italian restaurant before making our way to the show ground – the show starts at 8:30pm – we are going to be home late!



There are so many people and I have never seen the castle from this angle before. We climb up steps to our seats, which are like a mini football stadium, and wait for the fun to begin.

Writing this I have lost all recollection of the order of things but, apart from all the military bands, my favourites

were the ships representing the war between the English and Spanish Armada – with firing cannons! The huskies pulling sleds and the riders from Azerbaijan who jumped on and off their horses as they galloped around the ring!

There was a steel band from the West Indies and drummers from Switzerland whose drum sticks were burning!

My little brother fell asleep but was woken up by the sound of the cannons firing a salute– unfortunately they made him cry!

All in all I had a fabulous time and we didn't get home till 11:45pm!

I can't wait for the Jubilee weekend celebrations.



## Naturewatch – Herons, Storks and Cranes

Kevin McNally – Eton Resident

In the March edition of Eton Matters Naturewatch concentrated on Herons, specifically the Grey Heron (*Ardea cinerea*). These large beautiful birds you will recall are readily locatable by the river here in Eton – but should we be looking for Storks and Cranes as well – and how would we tell the difference should we spot one?



The White Stork (*Ciconia ciconia*) used to breed here in Britain (something had to deliver the babies...) but was hunted to extinction over 600 years ago. No one is quite sure why a once common bird came to this fate, however 'stork' did feature heavily on medieval banqueting menus. Efforts are now being made to reintroduce them (please don't eat one) and White Stork eggs were laid in Britain for the first time in 600 years in 2020. It would be wonderful to see these spectacular large birds commonly in our country again. By the way they fly with their necks stretched out in front of them and are therefore easy to distinguish from herons when flying. Their less common relative the Black Stork (*Ciconia nigra*), easy to tell apart, is an occasional visitor to the UK.

Moving on to my favourite large birds – cranes. Cranes are elegant birds often with attractive colouration and flamboyant head and tail feathers. There are only 15 crane species in the world, none are resident in Britain. We do have occasional visits from the Common Crane (*Grus grus*) however there is not much 'common' about it with its bushy tail, red head and crazy mating dance. Cranes also fly with their neck stretched out in front of them and therefore quite difficult to distinguish from White Storks when flying – shorter legs on the stork and good binoculars help in telling them apart. Efforts are again being made to introduce this stately bird to Britain as a breeding resident. Several countries have their local crane as a national symbol (e.g. China, Uganda, South Africa), and it would be lovely to think we could have one we could call our own.



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# Eton Porny School

*Katherine Russell*  
*Head Teacher*

Jubilee fever has swept through Eton Porny, celebrating Her Majesty's historic reign and Platinum Jubilee after 70 years of service! We've been busy celebrating and marking the occasion in a variety of ways.



A group of children from year 2, 3 and 4 took part in a collaborative art project with Mr Farley and some year 9 students from Eton College. They worked together to create a display for the window for the Eton Information Centre.



The whole school enjoyed competing in a sponsored Jubilee Jewels Dash.

The children had to 'dash' forwards and backwards whilst keeping 'jewels' safe on a cushion. It got super competitive and the winning house was Green!



Some children were very lucky to be invited to take part in the filming of a special Jubilee episode of 'Songs of Praise'. They had a street party and asked Professor Kate Williams some questions

about her new book. The children even managed to squeeze in a quick song for Aled Jones!



We rounded off the celebrations by holding a Jubilee Party. The children learnt a 'Platinum Jubilee Song' alongside other schools in Windsor and performed it beautifully for their parents. The school community then enjoyed taking part in a range of Jubilee themed activities including pin the jewel on the crown, decorating biscuits and catch the corgi.

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

# Eton Pre-School

Sue Clifford – Manager



Eton Pre-School is extremely proud to announce that following a recent OFSTED inspection we were graded outstanding, in all areas, for the third time in a row! This means we have been 'outstanding' since 2011 and puts us in the top 1% of settings in the country currently.

The report highlights how much fun the children have, the strong bonds they have with the staff and the excellent progress they make whilst being with us.

We are incredibly fortunate to have the most amazing staff team, parents and children but as the quote goes "It takes a village to raise a child" and we would like to thank the whole community for their support over the years.

The inspector spent the whole day with us and stayed to see our after-school club too, where one of our children insisted on speaking to her, to tell her how much he loved coming!

If you want to know more about us, please look at our website [etonpreschool.org](http://etonpreschool.org).

## Queen Elizabeth Arch



As a lasting tribute to Her Majesty the Queen's Platinum Jubilee the Town Council has decided to name the archway between 101 and 102 High Street that leads to Eton Court car park and the entrance to the Council offices, "Queen Elizabeth Arch".



Initially proposed by Eton's Deputy Mayor, Cllr. Malcolm Leach, and following obtaining all the necessary consents, Eton's Mayor, Cllr. John Lovell, cut the ribbon to mark the occasion of the naming just prior to our Platinum Jubilee Street Party.

# In His Presence

Rev. La Stacey

Vicar, St. John the Evangelist Church



This is the time of year in the church which starts off with 'Trinity Sunday' and then all the Sundays after that until the end of October are enumerated from this, so they're called 'Trinity 1-2-3' etc. right up to 'Trinity 18' and 'Last Sunday after Trinity'. You might get the impression that 'Trinity' is an important concept in Christianity! The Church spends half its year celebrating festivals based around the life of Christ, embedding the pattern of his life in our consciousness – so we have Advent and Christmas and Easter and Ascension and Pentecost. The next half of the year, this half called 'Trinity', is about us, the living church, inhabiting the possibilities that Christ's life has opened out to us. The Apostle Paul tried to explain this to the atheistic Athenians, saying that in God 'we live and move and have our being'. If God is Trinity, then maybe having a grasp of this might give us a clearer idea how to live. Is that why it is so important?

I remember having to write an essay on Trinity when I was at Vicar School. I remember sitting there with the books trying to get my head around the concepts and sighing deeply in hopeless incomprehension – until I read a book by Catherine LaCugna. I now

have quotes from this book stickered all over my Book of Reflections. Quotes such as 'Only in communion can God be what God is, and only as communion can God be at all' and 'The very nature of God, therefore, is to seek out the deepest possible communion and friendship with every last creature on this earth.' If this is the nature we mirror, then that is how we are invited to behave towards others too (to precis a longer quote!). In our living we are invited to follow the self-giving but not self-abnegating pattern of Christ. Welcome to the season of Trinity!

Do come along to Eton Church on the 1st and 3rd Wednesdays of the month at 10am. We usually have coffee beforehand, enjoying social communing before we receive our spiritual communion using the old Book of Common Prayer service. All are welcome.

With summer blessings.

## St. Mary Magdalene Apostle to the Apostles



*There will be a special service*

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**Friday 22<sup>nd</sup> July**

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Mary Magdalene, Boveney

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# Diary

## Jul

6th 18.30 – Eton Community Association meeting – Hop House, The George PH

11th 16.45 – ECA Walkway walk & Talk – Hugo Vickers – ECA Secretary

22nd 16.00 – Apostle to the Apostles – St Mary Magdalene Church, Boveney

## Aug

17th 18.30 – Eton Community Association meeting – Date tentative, Hop House

25th 16.00 – ECA Frogmore House Visit – ECA Secretary – Fully booked

## Sept

17th 11.00-1600 – Eton College Action Fair

28th 18.30 – Eton Community Association meeting – Hop House, The George PH

## Nov

2nd 18.30 – Eton Community Association meeting – Hop House, The George PH

## Regular and Social (Eton & Eton Wick)

**Council Office** – Eton: Tues-Fri – 08.00-13.00 (in office Tuesday & Friday)

**Eton Town Council Meeting** – 19.00 – First Thursday of Month – Eton Council Offices

**Eton College Museums** – Every Sunday – 14.30-17.00 – Free entry

**South Meadow Strollers** – Tuesdays 10.00 – South Meadow, Eton

**Eton Armchair Theatre** – 4th Wednesday –

**Coffee Morning** – Wednesdays 10.30-12.00 – St. John the Baptist Church, Eton Wick

**Crafty Creations** – Alternate Wednesdays 14.00 – St. John the Baptist Church, Eton Wick

**Baby & Toddlers** – Thursdays 10.00-11.30 – St. John the Baptist Church, Eton Wick

**Open Church Drop-in** – Fridays 9.00-15.15 – St. John the Baptist Church, Eton Wick

**Churches** (regular services)

**St. John the Evangelist, Eton (C of E) Services**

1st & 3rd Wednesdays – 10.00 – Communion (said)

Tuesdays 19.00-20.00 – Bible Study

(Sundays – 11.00 & 16.30 Services – St. John the Baptist, Eton Wick)

**Our Lady of Sorrows (Catholic)** – Service – Sundays – 09.30

## A Big Thank You...



... to all who helped to organise the excellent Platinum Jubilee Street Party especially Christine Barber, Philip and Lynne Highy and ECA Chair, Ros Rivaz. Also to everyone who helped on the day including Rotary Windsor St. George and especially to everyone who came along on the day and made this the most successful and enjoyable party.

## Useful Numbers

<b>Churches</b>	St John the Evangelist (Vicar)	01753 852268
	Our Lady of Sorrows, Eton Court	01753 542862
<b>Community Warden</b>		01628 685636
<b>Council Offices, Eton</b>	Bob Austen, Town Clerk	01753 860377
<b>Councillor (RBWM)</b>	Samantha Rayner	07811 974442
<b>Emergency</b>	Fire/Ambulance/Police	999
<b>Eton College</b>		01753 370100
<b>Eton Community Association</b>	Chair	07734 073117
<b>Eton Porny School</b>		01753 861995
<b>Eton Pre-School</b>		01753 850842
<b>Healthcare</b>	Fast Medical Help, Non-Emergency (NHS)	111
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	(Appointments)	01753 832332
	Eton Pharmacy	01753 863819
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	Prince Charles Eye Unit, KE VII Casualty	01753 636359
	Wexham Park Hospital	01753 633000
	Wexham Park A& E	01753 634017
	Upton Hospital, nr Slough – Walk-in unit	01753 821441
	Heatherwood & St. Marks Minor Injuries units	01753 877805
	Heatherwood Hospital	01344 623333
	St. Marks Outpatients	01628 632012
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	Renewal Hotline	0303 123 0035
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<b>Police</b>	Crime in Progress	999
	Non-Emergency	101
<b>River Authority</b>	Environment Agency (gen. enquiries)	03708 506 506
	Floodline	0345 988 1188
<b>Royal Borough Of Windsor And Maidenhead (customer care)</b>		01628 683800
	24 hour line for key services – report illicit actions, late night noise, dangerous structures, etc.	01753 853517
<b>Swan Support</b>		07968 868172



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# Taking Council

*Bob Austen, Town Clerk, Eton Town Council*

*Tel: 01753 860377*

*email: clerk@etontc.uk*



May I first of all wish everyone a happy summer and the hope of long hot sunny days to come.

Eton Town Council has been actively pursuing how we can make better use of our facilities to serve our communities. A Facilities Management Working Group has been established and a number of opportunities have been identified:

## **Council Offices – Council Chamber:**

The Council Chamber is currently used primarily for full Council and committee meetings, and various local charitable and residents' groups use the facility on an ad hoc basis. It has been proposed that this could be extended to include commercial lettings which would bring in an income that would benefit the community. A feasibility study will be made to ascertain what improvements would be required to make it an attractive option for businesses, for example IT, décor, lighting etc.

## **South Meadow Lane Pavilion:**

This structure has been in a dilapidated state for many years and the Council is progressing a redevelopment that would include options for community use, as well as its prime function as a football pavilion. The building has to remain within its existing floor plan due to Lamma's land requirements, however more efficient use of the space is being investigated to determine the possibilities.

## **Eton Town Council Sports Hall:**

This little-known building in Eton Wick is owned by RBWM but through a lack of promotion and investment has been largely ignored over the years. Eton Town Council is negotiating with RBWM with a view to taking on the management of the facility and creating a valuable resource for both Eton Wick and Eton residents.

## **Eton Wick Meeting Rooms:**

These rooms behind the library at Eton Wick Village Hall had been leased by RBWM Youth Services for Eton Wick Youth Club. The cessation of funding for this service meant the Youth Club had to close, however Eton Town Council is negotiating with RBWM to manage the Rooms so that the Club can reform.

## **Sports and Social:**

The Facilities Management Working Group is looking closely at our three recreation grounds to determine how they can better serve the communities in terms of wider sports and social usage, especially for younger people.

We hope that these schemes will come to fruition and residents of Eton and Eton Wick will benefit from our efforts.



## *Eton within the Borough*

*Samantha Rayner*

*RBWM Councillor for Eton and Castle*

As we celebrate the Platinum Jubilee of Her Majesty the Queen, Eton is looking amazing for the celebrations this year with decorations and flowers in view of Windsor Castle. The 70 years of public service and dedication to our country is a huge moment in history that we are fortunate to celebrate this year.

Eton's High Street is a thriving High Street and is so important to the Royal Borough.

Thank you to everyone for changing the way you dispose of household waste. This has resulted in a significant successful increase in weekly recycling rates.

We are really delighted with the recent improvements in Eton including the installation of a new electricity supply to the High Street which will help with future plans.

The council continues to invest in making services better and directed at the need in the Borough. This is being achieved by digital transformation and cultural changes. The recently adopted Corporate Plan is our blue print for policies and strategic direction. Covid has really informed a lot of changes in how we do things and also what residents and businesses need. This challenge is also the biggest potential for creating a sustainable borough of opportunity and innovation.

For the third year in a row the council has delivered accounts which are better than the budget. This means the councils continue to build its reserves which were low and now it's given the council a more stable and resilient future.

Thank you to all the fantastic local groups in Eton. It's been truly a team effort with everyone which allows us to do the work we do, and it is a huge honour and privilege of serving Eton.

Please do get in touch if we can help you.

### **Contact your Councillors**

Cllr. Samantha Rayner	email: <a href="mailto:cllrS.rayner@rbwm.gov.uk">cllrS.rayner@rbwm.gov.uk</a>	phone: 07811 974442
Cllr. John Bowden	email: <a href="mailto:cllr.bowden@rbwm.gov.uk">cllr.bowden@rbwm.gov.uk</a>	phone: 07905 906957
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# *Eton Celebrates....*



Photos: Peter Eaton



## Town & Gown

Peter Bridgwood – Old Etonian



Now 91 years old, Peter, a former Eton College Chorister and Oppidan, finds our weekly Shout Out, or Newsletter, helps keep in touch with local events in Eton that he otherwise would have missed from his home in Sydney.

Peter grew up in Uxbridge where in 1942, using his words, he fluked a place at the Eton College Choir School when Dr Henry George Ley was the Precentor...it was of course war time but the bomb that had shattered College Chapel windows had already done its damage and the bricks to rebuild the wrecked College buildings were stacked ready for use...and School Yard really was 'cobble-stones'. Peter's mother couldn't understand why his school shoes were so scuffed at the end of the day until she walked in the yard herself.

Peter says: "They were a wonderful two years at the Choir School where a whole new world of amazing music opened up for me...I just soaked it all up and over that period. Another fluke; Eton College was looking to experiment with a new concept and offered me a bursary to become an Oppidan – I was the guinea-pig and privileged in more ways than one!"

As a chorister Peter caught the 457 bus to and from the College, it used to run through Eton High Street, over Windsor Bridge and from memory terminated below Windsor Castle outside the Windsor Rep Theatre, now the Theatre Royal. The Bridgwood family emigrated to Brisbane, Australia in 1960, living there for 18 years, moving to Sydney in 1978, where Peter still lives.



Peter has recently weathered Covid, introduced into the house by his wife who picked it up singing Messiah in her church choir; perhaps there's a lesson here, he says? Fully recovered he and his wife have re-joined aquarobics, which his two metal fake-knees enjoy! Alas the loss of hearing is not much enhanced by hearing-aids but at least the mishearing, when unravelled, often causes much hilarity! The OE Sydney-siders, numbering around twenty, assembled recently to celebrate the famous 4th June – surely this is one of the traditions that is well worth safe-guarding and long may it remain so...!



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# Raising the Alarm



Hearing the sound of air raid sirens from Ukraine on the news earlier this year reminded me of my childhood in Eton in the 1950s when they used to regularly test the siren that was initially installed for warning of air raids in World War II. It was sited on the rear of what are now the



Council Offices on the ground floor, but at that time was the Fire Station, and the platform that supported it still remains high up on the building but the siren has been long gone. These sirens, nicknamed Moaning Minnies, wailed up and down to warn of a raid and then at a continuous tone to inform of the all clear so life could resume. To me at that time as a kid it was

an eerie sound but I can only try to imagine the fear that ran through the community when it sounded during the war and which some older residents may still remember.

This Fire Station, at 102 High Street, was the 3rd that Eton had over the years being designed and built specifically for Eton Urban District Council and opened in 1904. The current design of the front windows of the Council chamber reflects the shape of the original fire station doors.



Initially there were two engines which would have been horse drawn and on the wall of the yard behind the rings can still be seen where the horses would have been tied up although most of their time would have been spent grazing in the fields around Eton.

## *Peter Eaton – Eton Resident*

Little is known of the first fire station in Eton but it is assumed to have been near the site of 45/46 High Street as on an 1839 map reference is made to an engine house. The second however, is known and occupied the building on the right of the arch into Eton Porny School. The site is believed to have been acquired by the Parish Council in 1869 and cost them nothing as it was the dried up bed of a stream and belonged to no-one. Only 10 feet (3m.) wide and 20 feet (6m.) long although a further 15 feet (4.5m.) was borrowed from the plot next door also part of the old stream. The site was so tight that they had to take the engine out into the street to clean it.

It was a rather long-winded process then to raise the alarm of a fire. A watchman was either told or saw a fire, he then sent a messenger to the waterworks to prepare for filling the engine and another to get the fire engineer who sent to one of four places (Porny School, the Crown & Cushion, the Christopher or Baldwin's Bridge Trust) for the station keys. Then messages had to be got to the firemen at home or work. By then someone with luck had got the horses from the fields and the tank filled at the waterworks. It is a wonder they arrived in time to be any use but the Eton Volunteer Fire Brigade were a fine body of men, very proud of their job and the town was proud of them.

A motorised engine was purchased sometime in the 1920s, and the brigade was amalgamated into the National Fire Service in 1942 with the Eton Fire Station being closed in 1946. The Eton Urban District Council took over the building as their offices shortly after. I am not sure when the siren was removed sometime probably in the 1970s but now just the platform remains as a reminder of its existence. However, we are not completely immune to a similar sound as Eton College has a similar sounding alarm system which sometimes we hear, thankfully so far only when tested.

(Acknowledgement: A Town Called Eton – Selina Balance)



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# Ducks (and Drakes)

*Ben Underwood – Eton Resident*

Who knew, in addition to all the illustrious features and landmarks, Eton is also home to a rare waterfowl collection.....

I had a strong interest in natural history from a very early age, but the fascination with waterfowl began when I was seven when my parents gave in, and I got my first ducks. A trio of Aylesburys from a local farm. At the age of ten, I got my first incubator. The collection grew, as my mother's beloved garden was increasingly taken over by duck pens and ponds!



The interest has never left me, and I always had visions of living in a rural location with plenty of space to fulfil my waterfowl interests. That never quite worked out, but I do count myself very lucky to now live in Eton where my wife Soozy runs the Barker Gallery. Not to be deterred by a relatively small urban garden on the High Street, in lockdown I built a large aviary and pond and set about

introducing my first residents, a pair of Ringed Teal that originate from the tropical swamps of Bolivia and Brazil. They are about a third of the size of the mallards that you see on the Thames and very adept at perching in the trees. They settled in well and the collection expanded with the addition of a pair of Hottentot Teal from Madagascar, the smallest duck species in the world.

As the collection grew and much to Soozy's exasperation, I built another aviary, housing Cinnamon and Blue Winged Teal from North America. As I write, one female is on a nest, so fingers crossed for ducklings soon. It's not only the birds that fascinate me but planting up, maintaining, and nurturing the environment they live in, all adds to the interest. To be able to break from work and children, grab a beer and head off into the aviary for a while is the perfect tonic for me.

I am happy to bore anyone who is interested in taking a look. Eton wine and waterfowl club anyone?

## *Defying Gravity*

*Derek Ledger – Eton Resident*



In 2001 Eton College decided to collect modern art in its various forms from the best living contemporary artists. In the following year Antony Gormley was commissioned to provide a statue in human form for the college to display. It was he who created the massive Angel of the North statue and many other items of sculpture, some rather controversial, others a delight to the eye. As a condition of accepting the commission he stipulated that he would choose where the statue would be displayed.

For anyone who does not know the exact location of the statue, titled *The Edge*, it would be almost impossible to find it as Gormley decided that it should be positioned horizontally high up on the wall of Common House in Common Lane where it remains to this day gazing down upon the students as they scurry to and from their classes.

Former Provost of Eton Eric Anderson said that: "For a school keenly interested in rank, relative position and the long strive upwards, his presence above the street is a reminder of another way of looking at the world".

The statue has begun to tilt, just a little, towards the ground, perhaps so that it can have a closer look at the young men, some of who will be destined to become leaders in commerce and politics.



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