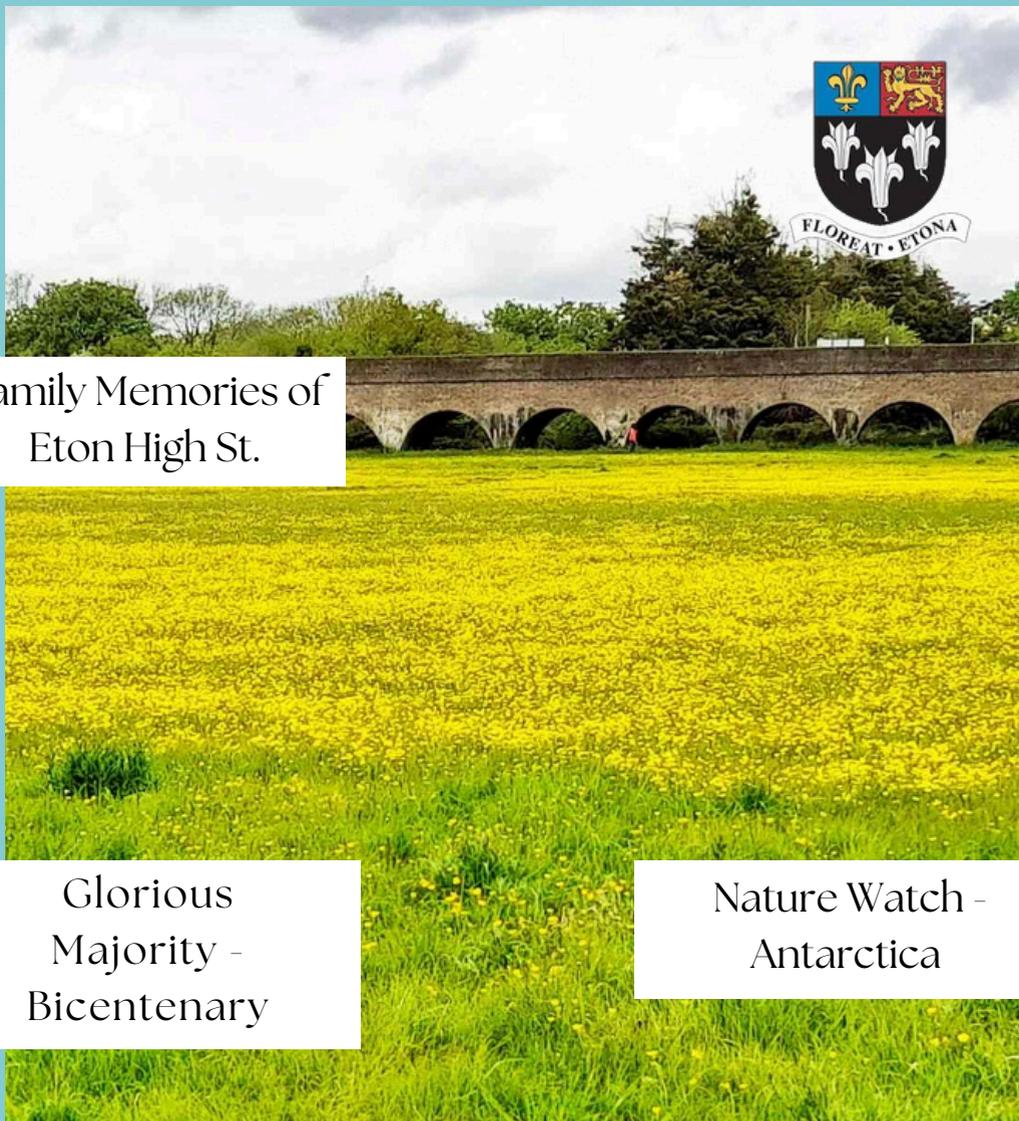


Issue 39

ETON

Mar 2026

MATTERS



Family Memories of
Eton High St.

Glorious
Majority -
Bicentenary

Nature Watch -
Antarctica

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CHAIR'S CHAT

ROS RIVAZ - ECA CHAIR



Thank goodness for the lighter evenings!

The months since the last issue of Eton Matters have been wonderfully eventful. The ever-popular Christmas lights switch-on was, as always, a highlight. Huge thanks go to Stephen, Karen, Ben and Paul Roach (despite his new role), as well as Steph and Robyn, who began taking on the RBWM elements of both the Eton and Windsor events.

We remain grateful to Eton College, Baldwins Bridge Trust and Eton Town Council (ETC), along with local businesses and residents, for their continued support. Special guest Kevin Cruise brought his usual sparkle, and contributions from Father Christmas, local schools, music ensembles, dancers and stallholders made the event a true community celebration.

This year we worked even more closely with ETC, as the lights, mini trees and decorations are their assets and now require replacement. Together with Lamps & Tubes, we are helping balance essential maintenance with the need for ETC to build funds for future replacements.

Christmas Dinner at The Christopher took on a new format, encouraging more of you to join, mingle and enjoy the evening. Many thanks to Graeme, both Manager and ECA committee member, whose DJ'ing created a fantastic atmosphere. Our High Street looked stunning too—congratulations to the three display winners, and thank you to Oxana at Tastes for providing the prize. We've held meetings at the Hop House of The George and two more "all welcome" drinks at The Christopher, including on Christmas Day. 20–30 of you typically join! Regular litter picks continue in partnership with Eton College, with Eaten Café's bacon and egg butties always appreciated.

Heartfelt thanks to our committee for leading so many successful events. Feedback on the fortnightly ECA Newsletter (our "Shout Out") and "Eton Matters" has been excellent—special thanks to Russell and Rosie. Sign up at www.etoncommunity.co.uk

Finally, don't miss the Eton Information Centre Ball on 21 March, or Eton Arts Week from 23–31 May. The EIC continues to support our community warmly, offering information, conversation and a welcoming space for all who drop in. email them at info@visiteton.info.

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, Welsh and Jeffries, Warren Property, Vario Press, Eaten Cafe, Susan Handy Dance, Eton College, Castle View and Great Park Care Home.

Rosie Maggs, Editor

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Eton Arts Week



ETON ARTS WEEK 2026. CREATIVITY AT THE HEART OF OUR COMMUNITY

Dear Fellow Eton and Eton Wick Residents,

Eton Arts Week returns this spring, bringing nine days of creativity, colour and community spirit to our town. From 23–31 May, residents of all ages are invited to enjoy a vibrant programme of exhibitions, affordable talks, hands-on workshops and small group classes led by local artists and makers.

Whether you're a seasoned art-lover, looking for something to do with your kids or grandkids during the May half term, or simply curious to try something new, there will be something for everyone - adults, children, families and complete beginners alike. Every ticket purchased, no matter how small, directly supports our Eton Information Centre, helping us continue the work that keeps Eton connected, informed and thriving.

We hope you'll join us in celebrating the talent within our community and making this year's Arts Week our most inspiring yet. Your participation truly makes the difference.

Please "mark your diary" and stay tuned for further updates at www.etonartsweek.co.uk

Simon Carpenter
Eton Information Centre

Scan the QR Code for more information



23-31 May 2026

Eton Arts Week

Arts Trail along the High Street

Eton En Plein Air

Workshops, Talks & 3 Art Exhibitions

Children's Classes and Free Activities

NATURE WATCH: ANTARCTICA

A CONVERSATION WITH PAULINE HERBOMMEZ

STEPHEN TEBBUTT

After returning from a two-week expedition to Antarctica with explorer Robert Swan, my colleague Pauline Herbommez, Director of Environmental Education at Eton College, spoke to me about what she observed on one of the most fragile places on Earth.

What struck you first about Antarctica?

“Antarctica immediately felt different—not just remote, but carefully protected,” Pauline explains. “At Union Glacier, the environmental standards are extremely strict. All human waste is removed from the continent. Liquid and solid waste are separated to make transport easier. It’s a reminder that Antarctica is governed by international agreements designed to keep it as untouched as possible.”

What did you notice about the people working there?

“We met scientists who were devastated because their research funding had been cut—this was their final season. Others spoke about how quickly conditions are changing. Guides told us that, for the first time in their careers, they were climbing without gloves. That alone tells you something is wrong.”

Was climate change visible during the expedition?

“Very much so. We prepared for temperatures between -11°C and -25°C , but most days were around -5°C . We filmed in a single layer and never forgot sunscreen. When Robert Swan first travelled there in the 1980s, temperatures were closer to -22°C . Antarctica is warming at roughly twice the global average.”

She explains that this warming has consequences far beyond the continent itself. “Sea ice is disappearing, which removes the algae beneath it. That algae feeds krill, and krill feed penguins, seals and whales. When you remove the ice, the entire food chain is affected. If both polar ice sheets were to melt completely, global sea levels could rise by around 60 metres.”

Did travelling there raise ethical questions for you?

“Constantly,” Pauline admits. “Each participant generated around five tonnes of carbon emissions—roughly the annual footprint of five Indian families. Even with carbon offsetting, the tension remains. How do we justify travelling to places that are already under pressure?”

She believes the answer is not to stop caring, but to be more deliberate. “We need to slow down, avoid fast travel where possible, and ensure that when we do travel, it has meaning. We must make our carbon count.”

What stayed with you most after leaving Antarctica?

“The scale of what’s at stake. Greenland’s melting ice is already opening new shipping routes and commercial opportunities, yet instead of alarm, there’s competition. Nature is resilient—but not limitless. Antarctica makes that impossible to ignore.”





85TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE BATTLE OF BRITAIN : REMEMBERING ONE OF ETON'S 'FEW'

SARAH WARREN

A Service of Commemoration was held in St John's churchyard, Eton, on 15 August 2025 in remembrance of Old Etonian Flying Officer Basil Mark Fisher (H.E.E.H., C.R.N.R., 1935), who was killed in action during the Battle of Britain.

The ceremony was held on the 85th anniversary of Basil's death and the service was conducted by Revd. (Sqn. Ldr.) Andi Chapman TSSF, Station Chaplain to RAF Northolt and Northwood HQ.

Air Specialist Class 1 (AS1) Joshua Graham laid a wreath on behalf of the RAF, and the Last Post and Reveille were played at the graveside. At 23 years old, AS1 Graham is the same age as Flg. Off. Basil Fisher at the time of his death in 1940.

In attendance were members of the Fisher Family, including the nephews of Flg. Off. Basil Fisher, Mark and Mike Fisher also both Old Etonians), friends, and an ambassador from the Battle of Britain London Monument.

Representing the College were Sarah Warren (School Librarian) and Kate Pierce (Head of German), who have looked after the war graves in the cemetery for many years.

Flg. Off. Basil Fisher was serving with 111 Squadron alongside his brother Plt. Off. (later Sqn. Ldr., Sir) Antony Fisher (H.E.E.H., 1933) when his Hurricane was hit by return fire from a German bomber on 15 August 1940; encouraged by his brother to bale out, Basil's parachute was on fire, and he fell to his death at Selsey, witnessed by Antony.

The funeral for Flg. Off. Basil Fisher took place in Eton College Chapel on 20 August 1940, and a recently discovered newspaper article from 23 August 1940 states that the service was taken by his uncle Rev. T.L.T. Fisher and the Conduct of Eton, Rev. B.W. Harvey, with the Head Master (Claude Elliott), the Vice-Provost (Mr. C.H.K. Marten) and his former House Master (Mr. C.R.N. Routh) in attendance.

FAMILY MEMORIES OF ETON HIGH ST.

GEORGIA COLERIDGE

I was brought up on stories of Eton. Long before I came to live in the heart of the College, I knew that it was a special, golden place.

In 1918, my grandfather and his two sisters moved into a pretty, double-fronted Queen Anne house – number 90 Eton High Street. They were the children of an Eton Beak, so had lucky lives, experiencing the joys of both the town and the College. All three of them wrote their memoirs, but my Aunt Penelope Mayalls book “*An Eton Childhood*” is particularly charming and evocative.

Number 90 had holes in the roof, rudimentary plumbing, and in those days, rats ran freely through the houses of Eton High St, like the mice in the Tailor of Gloucester. But the first-floor nursery windows had a ringside view of the town. Most traffic was horse-drawn, and on the best days, the whole street was full of jingling, snorting cavalry horses from Windsor Castle. There was a muffin man with his tray, and also a lamplighter, who came every morning and evening. The baker next door delivered hot loaves straight through their kitchen window. The draper on the other side, kept beehives in his back garden. Mr Suckling, in the dairy, shaped his butter with wooden paddles.

The children watched a moving torchlit Peace Procession from this window, to celebrate the end of the First World War. From here, they also saw the King of Japan on horseback, and later, Mahatma Gandhi (though this time in the Provost’s Garden). Queen Mary was a frequent visitor to the local antique shops, and she and King George V also regularly attended Eton College Chapel services.

Sometimes, the children would see the “tiny fairy-like figure” of Princess Elizabeth, smiling and waving from her horse-drawn dog cart.

To the children, even the floodwater from the Thames was exciting. Before the Jubilee River, the inhabitants of Eton could expect floods almost every year. One “thrilling” year, the family arrived home to find all their furniture in the drawing room was floating.

The shopfront of number 90 is now part of the Box Sash Windows Company offices, but the nursery windows overlooking the High Street are still there. Every time I walk to Windsor, I look up at them with affection.

Lady Coleridge is married to the Provost of Eton



Penelope, Lees and Elizabeth Mayall. c. 1926.

Susan Handy

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GLORIOUS MAJORITY - BICENTENARY

PETER EATON

The 1st May this year marks the 200th anniversary of the defeat of the Eton Inclosure Bill in Parliament; the reason why we have so much undeveloped and protected land between Eton and Eton Wick. Made up of the Little and Great Commons and Lammas Grounds, probably the largest area of Lammas Grounds remaining in the country, it is all registered under the Commons Registration Act 1965. The main benefit today being protected public access and the requirement to gain consent under the Commons Act 2006 for development from an Inspector for the Secretary for State of the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, in addition to local planning consent. Development in this instance has a far-ranging definition being anything that impedes access to or over the land or alters the surface of the land. If granted consent, then it is most likely the landowner will have to transfer the Lammas status to an unregistered piece of equivalent land. A register for these transactions is maintained in this area by the RBWM.

Commoners' rights were allocated to a property not the owner or tenant and gave an allocation



Castle view from South Field,
Eton Wick. Lammas Grounds

of animals that could be grazed on the Commons and additional rights like gathering firewood. Lammas, an Anglo-Saxon religious ceremony held on the 1st August to celebrate harvest, later became the date on which townspeople and villagers were allowed to put animals out for a period to communally graze on the meadows and arable land after the crops had been harvested and known as Lammas land. In this area this was from the 1st August to 31st October.

From the 16th century the open field system of farming, where villagers were given, as tenants, unfenced strip or strips of land, within large fields to cultivate to feed themselves were coming under threat from landowners because it was considered inefficient. Landowners wanted to enclose the fields, which concerned villagers as they would lose their way of feeding their families.

In Eton this came to a head in 1826 when Lord of the Manor, John Penn, after successfully enclosing his land in Stoke Poges, presented the Eton Inclosure (Enclosure) Bill to Parliament. In an attempt to appease Eton's villagers, the Great Common had been omitted from the Bill, however this failed and villagers led by Henry Emlyn (Eton builder) and William Cutler (Eton Waterworks) presented a petition to Parliament with over 180 signing or making their mark.

It appears Penn made one serious mistake in not consulting the Crown and when Officers of the Crown became aware it was too late to do anything but oppose the Bill. Eton College was originally interested in Penn's proposals as tithe-owners of land, much of which was leased from the Crown which possibly influenced them to change sides. Equally they also had the potential to sway the vote in Parliament as many Members were old Etonians.



The true story will never be known as most of the records were lost in the Great Fire of Parliament in 1834. The Bill was defeated by 173, "The Glorious Majority" on the 1st May 1826 and celebrated by bonfires and feasting in the local inns. To celebrate this victory a banner of blue silk with a painted design was made which still hangs in the Eton Town Council offices.

On the front of the banner in gold "MAY ETON FLOURISH AND EVER PROTECT HER RIGHTS"
and on the reverse "THE
GLORIOUS MAJORITY - 173 - 1st MAY 1826".

To mark the bicentenary Eton Town Council has prepared a report and a survey of our registered Common Land as of November 2025 which will be accessible on their website and information panels showing a map and the story will be installed in each of the recreation grounds. We owe it to those who fought in 1826 against enclosure to ensure our access rights under Commons law continue to be protected and that the vast area of land between Eton and Eton Wick remains open, accessible and undeveloped.

We'll be celebrating 200 years of The Glorious Majority at the Eton May Day Fete. Come along and celebrate with a full programme including historical exhibitions, live performances, children's activities, and refreshments. Monday 4th May, noon to 4pm, at the Pavilion, Eton Recreation Ground, South Meadow Lane, SL4 6EW.

ETON RECREATION GROUND, SOUTH MEADOW LANE, ETON, SL4 6EW



ETON MAY DAY FETE



CELEBRATING THE 200TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE GLORIOUS MAJORITY

4TH MAY 2026
12 NOON – 4PM

MORRIS DANCERS, CLASSIC CARS, FUN DOG COMPETITION, ANIMAL FARM, PUNCH & JUDY SHOW, STALLS, MUSIC, TUG OF WAR AND MORE!

RAFFLE PRIZES TO BE WON!
DELICIOUS FOOD & DRINK STALLS

GRAND OPENING OF THE PAVILION & UNVEILING
OF THE LAMMAS LAND BOARDS AT 12:15 PM



THUNDERBIRDS

JOHN KEATING

I was 15 and a Mod. Who remembers the Mods and the Rockers? It was 1966. I needed a job to get funds to buy the clothes I wanted to wear, so off I went to find a job.

I was offered one at £8/week to work on the Thunderbirds set. I can still remember the woman who interviewed me: blonde hair with a pink Sunbeam Alpine parked outside. She was the inspiration for Lady Penelope!

However when I went next door to the Foundry they offered me a job for £10/week so I took that instead! Mind you I'd lied about my age; said I was 18. They sacked me after a week!!!

Just think what might have been! Mind you I've enjoyed very many happy and successful years (actually decades) doing special effects working with amazing super star actors and actresses. Maybe my Thunderbirds "near miss" somehow set me off in my career path!



COINCIDENCE OR DESTINY?

JANE SPELLER

I recently discovered more about an ancestor of mine, namely a James Upton MA, who was an English clergyman, schoolmaster, and literary editor.

John was born in Wilmslow, Cheshire on 10 December 1670 and was educated at Eton College, thence to King's College, Cambridge, where he was elected a Fellow. He left Cambridge in 1701, aged 31, to return to Eton as an assistant master at the request of John Newborough, the then headmaster of Eton College.

In 1704, at the request of Lord Poulett and others, John Upton moved from Eton to Ilminster Grammar School, Somerset. In 1712, he was appointed headmaster of Taunton Grammar School, which became the largest provincial school of its time in England.

After Taunton he became vicar of Brimpton, then Monksilver; before moving in 1731 to his final parish of Bishop's Hull, Somerset. He died in Taunton on 13 August 1749 aged 79. John Upton married Mary Proctor of Eton, in Old Windsor on 20 December 1697, and had six sons and two daughters. When my family came to Eton in 1959, we had no idea that an ancestor of ours had attended or taught at Eton College. Nor was my uncle aware, when he acted as a sideman in Bishop's Hull church centuries later, of any family connection. So, coincidence or destiny?

Perhaps there are still descendants of Mary Proctor living in Eton? If so, please do get in touch!

ETON WITHIN THE BOROUGH

CLLR MARK WILSON

The role of the elected representative involves much problem-solving, and either sign-posting residents to the answer, or negotiating and liaising between residents and council officers or other public services, to find optimal ways forward. Sometimes a problem can be solved with a simple Report-It request to RBWM. Sometimes one person's solution is another's problem! And sometimes sadly a solution is out of reach for a variety of reasons.

For me, the challenge of picking up a new problem and working with residents and whichever other parties necessary is intriguing and potentially rewarding and satisfying work. For example, the issue of anti-social behaviour from the use of catapults has been evident for many years in RBWM. We've previously visited locations where property has been damaged and people have been threatened and endangered, and it was clear the police or wardens had a big challenge on their hands to do anything, unless they witnessed the activity – which of course would be rare.

Attending the meeting with Swan Support at Eton Town Council last April, with the Police, the MP and the King's Swan Keeper, it was clear action was needed to combat the menace of misuse of catapults, especially as the national campaign to outlaw catapults faltered. The concept of a Public Space Protection Order was raised as a possible helpful tool. To me it was a very clear decision personally as to whether to take this on – with the

exception of anglers and bait-launching, I cannot see a reason why anyone should have a catapult on them in public areas – so I took the request and ran with it. The immediate challenge was data – RBWM had little actual data on incidents. It is critical nowadays to evidence decisions, so the next challenge was to get data! The police were able to provide some after a time, and along with wildlife crime data from Swan Support and further lobbying across Eton & Castle, Datchet Horton & Wraysbury and Old Windsor, I gained unanimous support from councillors in support of a suitable PSPO.

Officers prepared the necessary documents and evidence, and the obligatory consultation was released in the late Autumn. It closed in January, with nearly 1,500 responses and a 97% agreement rate. Note that a consultation is not a referendum, and I now await the officers report on the substance of replies, however I think I have a sense of the answer..! Next, the officers report will be considered by Cabinet for approval – all being well, I am aiming for implementation within the next few months.

While this may not totally solve the problem, it should provide a powerful tool to the enforcement officers and act as a major deterrent to those who think it is OK to cause harm for fun. That is a worthy problem to be working hard to solve.

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ETON INFORMATION CENTRE WINS TOP AWARD

The Eton community is extremely proud that our very own Information Centre was awarded Gold, at the 2025 Beautiful South Tourism Awards for Excellence in the Tourist Information Service category.

Run by Tourism South East, the Beautiful South Tourism Awards celebrate excellence in tourism and hospitality across the South East of England.

We couldn't be more proud of the exceptional service the Eton Information Centre provides to the community and visitors alike. Being recognised by the prestigious Tourism South East organisation is icing on the cake for our fantastic team!



ETON PORNY SCHOOL

EMMA STANFORD-SMITH
HEAD TEACHER



Did you know that 2026 is The National Year of Reading? It's the biggest campaign in a generation designed to help more people (re)discover the joy of reading and make it part of their everyday lives.

Learning to read takes effort. It's difficult. As such, it's easy for children to start seeing reading as nothing more than a chore to be ticked off. The key to changing this is to foster an interest in and love of books; to engage children in reading, we need to make it something for them to cherish.

Reading expands our world and sharpens our minds, yet fewer people are making time to read. It supports success in school, work and in life, boosts wellbeing and brings people together.

At Eton Porny School we develop a love for reading by supporting all children to make good progress. The children love to read with 'reading buddies' each week and share books together. We are also extremely lucky to have some amazing volunteers in school who support a number of children.

How can you help? Buy a book from our wish list to support our school.

<https://amzn.eu/gAtKk7d>.

Volunteer your time to support children in your local area with 'ABC to read'

Share your passion for reading with others - particularly by reading for pleasure with any children in your life.

Together, we can grow a generation of readers so that no child is left behind!





You are invited to the annual

ETON SPRING BALL
&
GRAND AUCTION

on

SATURDAY MARCH 21ST 2026

A
Night
at the
Opera

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WINDSOR AUCTIONS

at

THE CASTLE HOTEL, WINDSOR

Proceeds to support the Eton Information Centre

Tickets: £85 per person

Available from the Eton Information Centre

Or contact finance@visiteton.info



7pm Reception
Carriages at Midnight
Black tie or lounge suits



Scan to
purchase
tickets

Phone: 01753 868344 Email: windsor@cotc.co.uk

Diary

Upcoming meeting dates for ECA -

March

1st Sunday Litter Pick. From 10.30 meet at 102 High Street

4th Wednesday ECA meeting. 6.30pm at The Hop House, behind The George

21st Saturday Eton Information Centre Fundraising Ball. 6.30pm at the Castle Hotel , Windsor

24th Tuesday Eton College “Elemental” exhibition for ECA/ Eton Information Centre. 6pm Verey Gallery

April

15th Wednesday ECA AGM and meeting. 6.30pm at The Hop House, behind The George

May

4th Monday Eton Town Council celebration of the Glorious Majority, securing Lammas Land for the people of Eton and

Eton Wick. 12-4pm Eton pavilion and recreation ground

23rd – 31st Saturday- Sunday Eton Arts Week

June

10th Wednesday ECA meeting. 6.30pm at The Hop House, behind The George

July

22nd Wednesday ECA meeting. 6.30pm at The Hop House, behind The George

Regular and Social (Eton & Eton Wick)

Council Office – Eton: Tues – Fri – 09.00-13.00

Eton Town Council Meeting – 19.00 - Second Thursday of Month - Eton Council Offices

Eton College Museums – Every Sunday – 1:30pm - 4pm – Free entry

Eton Information Centre - Call in for a chat with friendly staff, find out more about all things local and tell us your memories of living in Eton - Monday - 11:00 am -3:30 pm, Thurs-Sun- 10:30 am- 4pm, closed on Tuesdays and Wednesdays.

Churches (regular services)

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

2nd and 4th Wednesday every month Holy Communion followed by tea, coffee and biscuits. 10am

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

Useful Numbers

| | |
|---|---------------|
| Our Lady of Sorrows, Eton Court | 01753 917030 |
| Council Offices, Eton Anna Perets, Town Clerk | 01753 860377 |
| Emergency Fire/Ambulance/Police | 999 |
| Eton College | 01753 370100 |
| Eton Porny School | 01753 861995 |
| Eton Pre-School | 01753 850842 |
| Fast Medical Help, Non-Emergency Services (NHS) | 111 |
| Eton Pharmacy | 01753 863819 |
| King Edward VII Hospital | 0300 247 3000 |
| Wexham Park Hospital | 01753 633000 |
| Wexham Park A& E | 01753 634017 |
| Natural History Museum Eton (curator) | 01753 370602 |
| Non-Emergency | 101 |
| River Authority Environment Agency (gen. enquiries) | 03708 506 506 |
| Floodline | 0345 988 1188 |
| Royal Borough Of Windsor And Maidenhead (customer care) | 01628 683800 |
| 24 hour line for key services – report illicit actions etc. | 01753 853517 |
| Swan Support | 07968 868172 |
| Eton Information Centre | 01753 852588 |

NOBEL LAUREATES OF ETON

BRIAN HOARE - RETIRED BUILDINGS BURSAR, ETON COLLEGE

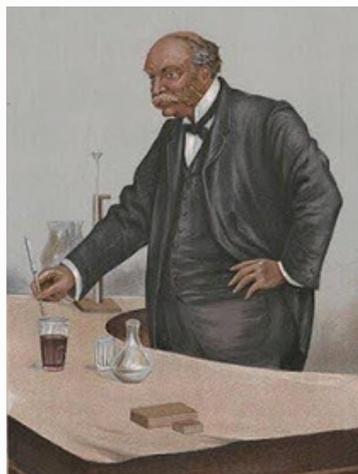
It is perhaps universally acknowledged that the current President of the United States of America is in want of and openly covets the prestigious Nobel Peace Prize. Barely trumpeted, so much less well known is the fact that an Etonian was awarded the same Laureate Peace Prize accolade and that two other Etonians won Physics and Physiology/Medicine Nobel Prize Awards.



1). JOHN WILLIAM STRUTT 3rd Baron Rayleigh (1842-1919)

Awarded the Nobel Prize in Physics 1904 for his meticulous investigations of the densities of the most important gases, particularly Nitrogen, and consequent revolutionary discovery of Argon, a previously unknown noble gas that arguably transformed the understanding of the Periodic Table.

JWS (in the Eton style) was born into the Victorian aristocracy and became the 3rd Baron Rayleigh by which name he was subsequently most recognised. A prolific researcher, he published over 400 scientific papers including works on sound and light.



2). ROBERT CECIL, Viscount Cecil of Chelwood (1864-1958)

Awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 1937 for tireless efforts in diplomacy and disarmament.

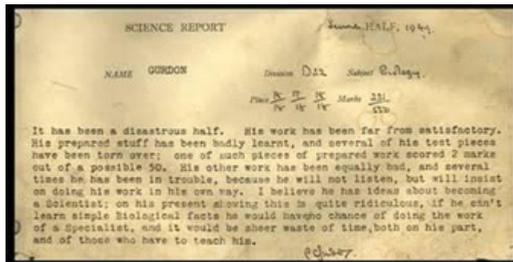
Following the end of WWI Cecil became the principal architect of the newly established League of Nations, the precursor to the United Nations

Cecil's passionate work for peace transformed him from an Eton alumnus of privilege into one of the 20th century's most influential advocates for international cooperation showing that diplomacy could prevent the horrors of war.



3). JOHN BERTRAND GURDON (1933-2085)

Awarded the Nobel Prize in 2012 in Physiology/Medicine for his discovery that mature, specialised cells could become pluripotent - capable of developing into any cell type in the body. JBG arrived at Eton with a keen interest in lepidoptery via his collection of butterflies and moths. He naturally opted for the sciences and principally Biology. However, he was the recipient of an excoriating subject report from his biology master and was removed from that as a taught subject for several years but continued his interest single mindedly. JBG signified his resilience and determination by gaining entry to Oxford and his world acknowledged status. He proudly had his Eton masters report framed for display in his laboratories. His achievements represent one of science's most inspiring redemption stories.



Reference Sources: Nobel Prize Official website, Rayleigh: proceedings of the Royal Society, Cecil R: Jonathan Cape, Gurdon J B: Journal of Embryology, Wikipedia, Gamma AI was used for some of the research for this article.

ASHES, ATTENTION, AND THE CALL TO SEE ONE ANOTHER

ANDREAS SISTIG

Dear friends,

Each February, Ash Wednesday quietly marks the start of Lent, drawing us with the simple yet powerful reminder: “Remember that you are dust, and to dust you shall return.” The ashes traced on our foreheads are more than symbols of mortality; they invite us to reflect on our vulnerability and our need for God.

But what is the real invitation of the ashes?

Some years ago, I read about an Ash Wednesday service held outdoors in Philadelphia, attended mostly by people experiencing homelessness. Communion was shared on a makeshift table, and a man named Tyrone read a poem repeatedly stating, “No one really knows I’m homeless.” His words captured both the hardship of life on the margins and the deeper pain of being invisible in a crowd. For those living on the streets, the reality of life’s fragility is keenly felt every day, far more than most of us can understand. This raises a question for those of us gathered in comfort: what do the ashes really mean for us? Are they merely a religious ritual, or are they a genuine call to change?

In the Gospel for Ash Wednesday, Jesus speaks of three essential practices: giving, praying, and fasting. Yet he warns against reducing faith to hollow gestures, disconnected from genuine compassion and justice.

The prophet Amos echoes this, declaring that God desires justice and righteousness, not empty ceremonies.

The ashes on our foreheads are not an end in themselves. They are a sign, meant to prompt us to live with purpose and attention. They remind us that our lives matter — not simply because they will end, but because of how we choose to live them now.

The challenge of Ash Wednesday, then, is to allow these ashes to open our eyes. To notice those who are often overlooked: the person on the street, the lonely neighbour, the struggling family. True faith is not about outward display but about walking alongside others, listening with empathy, and working for a just and compassionate society.

Tyrone’s hope, “Perhaps tomorrow a blessing will come,” reminds us that blessings often arrive through the actions of others. As we begin Lent, may our ashes lead us beyond the familiar boundaries of ritual, moving us to generosity, sincere prayer, and self-denial that makes room for compassion.

May this Lent be a time when we not only wear ashes, but also see one another with new eyes — discovering that God’s grace is already at work when we choose to notice and respond.

Yours in Christ,
Andreas Sistig



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ETON PRE SCHOOL

SUE CLIFFORD

We are delighted that after some successful fundraising we have been able to reintroduce playball Windsor to our weekly schedule. The children absolutely love their sessions with Tyla and are learning a whole range of skills which will support their overall development. Playball is great for hand eye coordination and foot eye coordination. Not only are our children benefitting from the gross motor skills, but this will support their core strength getting them ready for school later on. The children do lots of coordination, balance and games as well as throwing catching and ball control too. The children really look forward to Playball Wednesday. Want to know more about playball? You can contact them windsor@playballkids.com



ETON BY ELISA AGE 8

Hello my name is Elisa and I am 8 years old.

I live in Eton with my mum and dad. My mum is from Sardinia and my dad is from Sicily. They moved from Italy to England before I was born and now we live in Eton.

I go to Eton Porny School and I am in year 3. I love playing the piano. This year I took part in a music festival and proudly won a trophy, 1 silver medal and 2 gold medals. I could not believe that I got a trophy.

I remember standing on Eton Bridge when I was little, listening to someone play the piano. That day I asked my mum if I could learn how to play the piano.

My dream is to play for Eton community one day and inspire other people and make my village proud.





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Community Updates from Eton Town Council

As we step into a brand-new year, Eton Town Council is excited to share that a host of ambitious projects and fresh initiatives are already in motion.

Eton May Day Fete

Eton Town Council warmly invites residents and friends to join us for a major community celebration on Monday, 4th May 2026, marking the 200th anniversary of the Glorious Majority. This historic milestone commemorates the moment in 1826 when the commoners and villagers of Eton and Eton Wick successfully defeated the Eton Inclosure Bill—brought to Parliament by John Penn, the then Lord of the Manor—by a majority of 173, a result proudly remembered as “The Glorious Majority.” This victory secured the Lammas Land for the people and laid the foundation for the right to enjoy the Commons and Lammas Grounds, today.

To honour this significant anniversary, we will also unveil a new commemorative sign and officially open the newly refurbished Pavilion at Eton Recreation Ground, South Meadow Lane, Eton SL4 6EW. The day promises a vibrant programme including historical exhibitions, live entertainment, children’s activities, and a variety of food and craft stalls.

New Online Booking System for Eton Wick Sports Hall

We are pleased to announce the introduction of a new online booking system that will make securing time at the Eton Wick Sports Hall easier, faster, and more convenient. Residents will now be able to check real-time availability and make bookings electronically from any device, eliminating the hassle and delays often associated with manual enquiries. The new system provides a secure and streamlined process, ensuring users can manage their bookings with confidence and ease. We hope this improvement will encourage even more community use of the hall and enhance everyone’s overall experience.

New CCTV Installation to Boost Safety in Eton

I am pleased to share some positive news on our ongoing efforts to keep our community safe and welcoming. We have secured funding for a new CCTV camera to be installed near The Watermans Arms, following reports of anti-social behaviour and minor crime in the area. This addition will support both residents and visitors by helping to deter nuisance activity, while enjoying our beautiful town. We’ll keep the community updated as work progresses.

Thames Valley Police Surgeries

Thames Valley Police will be holding a series of community surgeries, offering residents the opportunity to speak directly with Police Community Support Officers on a one-to-one basis. These sessions are an ideal chance to discuss any concerns, including domestic or neighbour disputes, cybercrime, anti-social behaviour, crime prevention, and general safety matters.

Upcoming Dates:

4 March, 18 March, 25 March, 15 April, 29 April
11am-12:30pm at the Council Offices, 102 High Street Eton.

Don’t Forget:

Book Exchange. With a diverse collection ranging from novels and science fiction to history and biography, there’s something for everyone—adults, youth, and children alike.

Join Your Council Meetings Eton Town Council meetings are held on the second Thursday of each month at 7:00 PM at the Chamber, 102 High Street, Eton.

Community Use of the Chamber: If your group is looking for a space to host a community project or event, the Chamber may be available. Please get in touch.

To raise an issue or learn more, please email:
clerk@etontowncouncil.gov.uk



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Audrey is so grateful for the flexibility of our service which enables her to maintain her busy social life, whilst ensuring Arnold always has the highest level of our trusted care. She says, "**Great Park Homecare are brilliant with the care support that they give me. The service they provide is always on a very flexible and personal level and the Carers they use are so kind and friendly. They have made it possible for me to still enjoy so many different aspects of my own life whilst knowing that Arnold is being so well cared for.**"

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AN UNEXPECTED WAR MEMORIAL

SIMON CARPENTER

If you have been fortunate enough to attend one of the Eton College Musical Society's concerts in the Salata Auditorium of the School Hall, you will doubtless have enjoyed a sublime experience and marvelled at the talent and virtuosity of the boys. As the music washed over you, you may also have been struck by the majesty of the hall itself - its Neo-Classical architecture with grand Ionic columns supporting the barrel-vaulted ceiling create an elegant symmetry and grandeur that allow the music to soar.

As you sat, perhaps lost in the intricacies of a Beethoven symphony, your eyes may have wandered to the bust of Queen Victoria half-way down the auditorium on the left side. And below that to the inscription which reads:

The first stone of this Building erected in Memory of Etonian who fell in South Africa in the Years 1899 – 1902 was laid on July 29 1905 by H.R.H. Princess Alexander of Teck

FLOREAT ETONA

At which point you realise that the School Hall and adjacent Library are a war memorial, and therefore not just a venue for fine music but also a hallowed and dignified place of reflection and gratitude.

That may set you wondering about the South African war in which 1,470 Old Etonians fought, and of whom 129 died and are thus memorialised.

The South African war of 1899 – 1902 (often called the Boer War in South Africa) is sometimes referred to by historians as "Britain's Vietnam".

Like so many wars, its proximate cause was a battle for resources. In this case gold and diamonds. Two independent Boer republics, the South African Republic (Transvaal) and the Orange Free State controlled the diamond and goldfields of South Africa causing long-standing

tensions between them and Britain's imperial and economic ambitions.

Many British settlers (known as "Uitlanders" by the Boers) joined the goldrush but were denied voting rights in the Boer Republics. Citing the political rights of its citizens (rather than its real aim of control over the region's massive gold and diamond resources) the British government began massing troops on the Republics' borders.

On October 9, 1899, President Paul Kruger of the South African Republic issued an ultimatum demanding that Britain withdraw its troops from the borders and return any reinforcements currently at sea. When the 48-hour deadline passed without British compliance, the Boers declared war on October 11, 1899, and launched pre-emptive strikes into British colonies (Natal and Cape Colony) to forestall what they viewed as an inevitable British invasion.

Thus began Britain's most expensive war between Waterloo and World War I. It is likened to Vietnam because, despite having a massive 5 to 1 numerical advantage of 450,000 British troops against 50,000–88,000 Boers, it took over two and a half years until the war was ended on 31 May 1902. Britain lost 22,000 soldiers in total, meaning Old Etonians represented a notable proportion of casualties – especially officers. The memorialisation of these deaths by Eton College School Hall and School Library reflects the school's deep ties to imperial service and the British officer class at the turn of the 20th century.

But, apart from its sheer cost and ties to Eton, the South African war is also known for the involvement of key historical figures and some interesting aspects that foreshadowed World Wars I and II.

Birth of the Boy Scouts: During the 217-day Siege of Mafeking, Colonel Robert Baden-Powell recruited local boys aged 12 to 15 into the Mafeking Cadet Corps as messengers and scouts. Their resourcefulness later inspired him to found the Boy Scouts movement.

Winston Churchill's Daring Escape: As a war correspondent, Winston Churchill was captured by Boers after an ambush on an armoured train. He famously escaped from a prison in Pretoria and hid in a coal mine for several days before smuggling himself onto a freight train to reach safety.

Gandhi's Role as a Stretcher Bearer: Future Indian leader Mohandas K. Gandhi served as a volunteer in the Natal Indian Ambulance Corps. He led a team of roughly 1,100 Indian stretcher-bearers.

Huge Animal Toll: The war was devastating for animals. It is estimated that between 300,000 to 350,000 horses and 50,000 mules died from disease, exhaustion, and lack of food.

Catastrophic Losses in Concentration Camps: Around 26,370 Boer women and children died in British concentration camps, along with more than 20,000 Africans in separate camps — a humanitarian disaster the British public was largely unaware of until Emily Hobhouse, a British welfare officer, visited the camps in 1901.

Sherlock Holmes at the Front: Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, the creator of Sherlock Holmes, served as a volunteer doctor at a British field hospital in Bloemfontein. He later wrote *The War in South Africa: Its Cause and Conduct* defending the British conduct of the war to counter international criticism.

Disease Was the Biggest Killer: While roughly 8,000 British soldiers died in combat, over 14,000 died from diseases like typhoid and dysentery caused by poor hygiene and contaminated water.

Warfare Changed Forever: The South African war was the first major conflict where the combined lethality of smokeless powder, machine guns, barbed wire and trenches fundamentally changed modern military strategy, prefiguring the carnage of World War. The use of smokeless powder by the Boers was a particular shock to the British. Because there was no puff of smoke to indicate a sniper's location, British soldiers were often pinned down by "invisible" fire for hours. This, combined with the Boers' use of khaki-coloured clothing for camouflage, rendered the traditional British "Thin Red Line" tactics suicidal and led to the British adopting khaki uniforms.

Coming as it did at the turn of the twentieth century, the South African war foretold the shape of the World Wars to come (especially the cost to civilians and on military tactics) in which Old Etonians would continue to serve and sacrifice. It also left an enduring impression on both South African and British society.

For those who holiday in South Africa this writer strongly recommends taking some time to do a guided tour of the Boer War battlefields — particularly in KwaZulu-Natal (formerly Natal) site of the battles such as Spionkop, Ladysmith and Colenso — a far cry from the green fields of Eton.

ETON AND THE SPANISH CIVIL WAR

ROSIE MAGGS

July of 2026 marks 90 Years since the beginning of the Spanish Civil War. You may be thinking, how on earth is that related to Eton, but in my time as Editor of Eton Matters, I have discovered most events can be linked back to Eton somehow!

I won't go into detail on how the civil war started, but it was a fight between the right-wing forces led by General Francisco Franco against the left-wing forces of the Spanish Republic. The Eton connection to the Spanish Civil War comes from the author George Orwell.

Eric Arthur Blair - known as George Orwell - attended Eton between 1917 and 1921. His academic reputation at Eton was somewhat mixed, but it was noted that he was apparently extremely argumentative! One of the records available at Eton shows that Orwell scored in the Wall game during his final year, one of the few in the game's history to do so.

After Eton, Orwell did not go to university like most; he joined the Indian Imperial Police in Burma in 1922, but retired from his position in 1928 to become a writer.

Orwell went to fight in the Spanish Civil War in December 1936. He was anti-fascist and wanted to try to aid the Spanish Republic in fighting off fascism, not just for Spain but for the whole of Europe. Orwell joined the anti-Stalinist regiment, POUM. The civil war had become a mess of factions and political infighting. Orwell didn't see much action at first and was even caught up in the messy infighting. Lies were spread about the POUM regiment that Orwell had joined; the press branded them as fascists, which went on to influence his views on communism and their control over the press, a theme he would later explore in his novels.

Despite POUM being ruled as 'fascist', they were still keen to have Orwell back at the front. But it didn't last long; Orwell was shot in the neck in May 1937. Orwell was six feet, two inches tall - significantly taller than Spanish fighters, and he was warned about standing against the trench parapet.

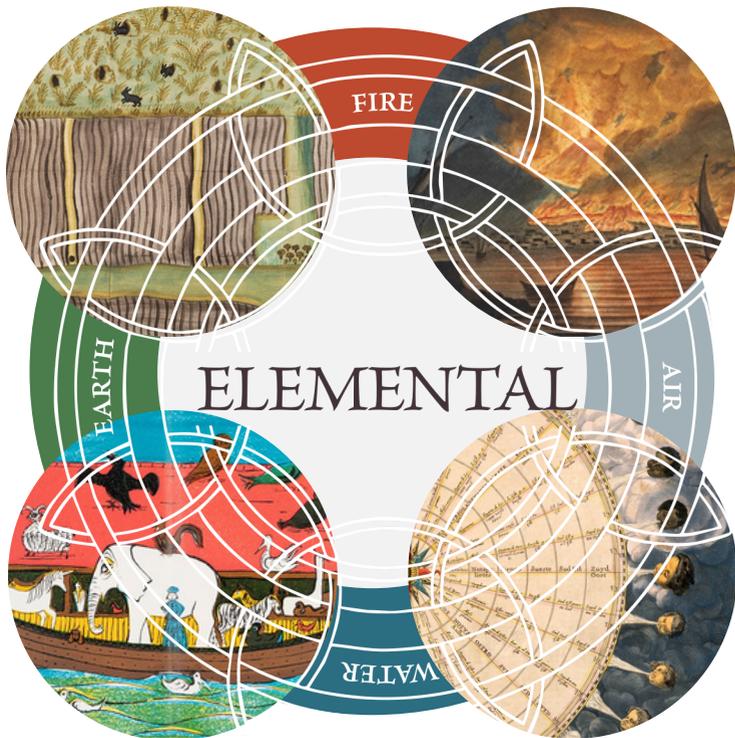
Orwell was rushed to the hospital, and miraculously, the bullet had missed his main artery. He was sent to a sanatorium outside of Barcelona to recover and declared unfit for further military service.

The Spanish Civil War shaped Orwell's ideas, although he would not write his most famous novels, *Animal Farm* and *1984*, until after the Second World War.

After the publication of *Animal Farm*, his Eton tutor, A.F. Gow, asked Orwell for a copy of the book. Orwell duly obliged, but rather than sign the copy 'Eric Blair', as Gow would have known him, he signed it 'Geo. Orwell', leaving his Eton days behind.

Orwell died in 1950, from complications of tuberculosis, which most historians suggest he likely caught in Spain whilst in recovery from his neck injury.





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