



Stokes Sauces

We visit the successful local business



The Warren then & now

Cottages through the years



The new Rec play area opens

Looks like it's a hit with all ages!

inside eyke

ISSUE 21 - SPRING 2016



Mervyn is 80!
The village celebrates

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TIM VISITS THE PAD OF A NOTORIOUS CHARACTER Bees and elephants mark May Day at the pub **MORE PICTURES ON FACEBOOK!**



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From the Editor's shed: Breakfast at the Narco Villa



Hello everyone, and thanks for taking the trouble to pick up this latest issue of Inside Eyke. We have quite a few village events to round up in this magazine, mainly because we haven't been able to put out an issue since Christmas/New Year (I'll explain why shortly). Chief among these were the 80th birthday celebrations of Eyke stalwart Mervyn Whitmore and the opening of the children's playground in the Rec, a project finally brought to fruition after long and patient work by Ron and Jude.

May Day was celebrated at the pub with Sandy's Bees and the ceremonial unveiling and naming of Elmo the Elephant (if you don't know what I'm talking about, have a look in the garden next time you're passing). We've got pictures of all these, plus a fascinating note about a bizarre event in the history of The Warren in Ufford Rd and an introduction to its new(-ish) owners, the Chapmans, Maria's farewell recipe as she leaves the School (sob!) and a behind-the-scenes despatch from Will Pooley's investiture as an MBE at Buckingham Palace.

We also have a report of a recent visit your editor and Simon Sutch made to check out Stokes Sauces in Rendlesham – and a most interesting and unexpected visit it was, too.

Why, I hear you cry, has Inside Eyke not dropped on to my door mat before now? Well, I've been on my usual extended trip to

South America, and this time I had a rather unusual experience that I'd like to share with you. I was invited to give some lectures at a university in Cali, Colombia.

It's a fantastic city, but one mostly known in the rest of the world as the HQ during the 1990s of the so-called Cali Cartel – a group of narco traffickers who at their height controlled 90% of the world's supply of cocaine. The university is set in lush greenery on the edge of the city; in the grounds there are streams and palm trees, and tropical birds and butterflies (along with the occasional lizard).

Early one morning I was asked, would I like to go and have breakfast with some of the staff of the languages department? Of course I said yes, and off we went, out of the office buildings into the sunshine, and through the grounds until we reached a sprawling set of buildings of white stone and tile, with a swimming pool in the middle and endless outdoor corridors and pathways, meeting

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rooms and cafeterias. Strangely, there was also a children's play area with an elaborate play house, a stone hopscotch game set in the grass, and near by, an enclosed grass compound and what looked like a platform or judging stand. Curious now, I asked what all this was doing in the grounds of the university.

My Colombian friends were very happy to tell me the whole story. This, they said, had been what they call a Narco Villa – the country estate, home and centre of operations of a cocaine trafficker. He had been known as 'The Horseman' because of his love of horses, and apparently horses used to wander more or less freely around the outdoor pathways and communal spaces. The games were for his children, and the compound and judging stand – where we had our breakfast in the open air – was where he put on horse shows and gymkhanas and the like to entertain his

family and friends (and presumably his – ahem – business associates). When the inevitable finally happened and he was arrested and extradited to the US, his property was seized by the Colombian government.

The university, sited right next to the estate and wanting to expand, asked if they might take it over. The government agreed, provided that the university would undertake to offer in exchange a certain number of scholarships or bursaries for students from poor families. And so it came about.

The gentleman in question continues to enjoy a long – a very long – stay in the United States, the university has grounds and offices aplenty, and your editor had his coffee and omelette under the tropical sun, looking at the swimming pool and play house and pondering on how far this felt from Eyke. * **Tim**



The new Rec play area

Around two years ago when the tree copse on the Rec was being planted, John Fleming, PC chairman, lamented the lack of a children's play area. Ron Cushing and Judy Clements took up the idea and it is largely due to their drive and determination that Eyke now has a wonderful new playground. Of course we must also thank our sponsors especially various village residents among whom were Oliver and Nicky Briggishaw who generously donated on behalf of Amaranth Ltd at Bentwaters. On 29th April, with the basketball post up in the nick of

time, quite a large crowd, including children from Eyke School, gathered for the official opening of the new play area and five aside football pitch. MP Therese Coffey was there for the occasion. She asked for a guided tour of the new equipment and remarked how wonderful it was to hear the happy sound of children playing. She then unveiled a plaque listing sponsors of the project.

It was an unseasonably chilly day and the refreshments served afterwards in the village hall were very welcome. * **Isabelle Abu-Hejleh**
Visit www.facebook.com/eykesuffolk for all the pictures from the day

Coronation Chicken Maria Hassan

Last term saw me serve up my last school dinner at Eyke Primary school. After much thought, I decided it was time to move on after 10 years. The children, the best part of the job, that's why I stayed there for so long. Yes I love cooking, but those little faces smiling back at me were worth those burns, cuts, endless washing, tired feet and heat exhaustion were all forgotten when the hall doors opened and they piled in eager to see what was on the menu. I'm not quite ready to move on completely, I am still a governor so they are not rid of me yet! As for this issue's recipe, Coronation Chicken is one of my favourites



Ingredients

- 6 skinless cooked chicken breasts
- 2 tsp mild curry powder
- 150 g (5oz) mayonnaise
- 125 g (4oz) crème fraîche
- 3 tbsp mango chutney
- 1 tsp Worcestershire sauce

- 2 celery sticks, finely chopped
- 75 g (3oz) dried ready-to-eat apricots, chopped
- 50 g (2oz) sultanas
- 50 g (2oz) flaked almonds
- Large handful fresh coriander, chopped

The Pooleys at The Palace

Friday, 29th January 2016 had been highlighted on the Pooley family calendar for some weeks, as it was on this date that Will, along with three guests, was invited to Buckingham Palace to receive the MBE awarded to him in the Queen's birthday honours the previous June. Along with Robin and me, Will's sister Jess made up the lucky threesome.

Many people wonder why there is such a gap between the awarding of an honour, and its bestowal. There are 25 investitures each year: one at the palace of Holyroodhouse, in Edinburgh, and the rest either at Buckingham Palace or Windsor Castle, and there are up to 120 recipients at each. With over 1,000 honours awarded, it is easy to see why it takes such a time to bestow them all. On this occasion, there were 87.

It was a grey and chilly day as the recipients and their guests, all dressed up in their finery, waited outside the gates, as everyone had their ID and the named invitation - unmissable on bright yellow card - checked by the police before being admitted. I looked around, hoping to see a well-known face or two, then my eye lighted on the invitation card being held by the woman in front - Kathryn Tickell, a folk musician we have heard play on several occasions at the Sidmouth Festival. She was being awarded an OBE for services to folk music.

Once inside, we were directed to the cloakrooms, and the very well appointed 'ladies', where Jess observed that dignity and decorum were unceremoniously dropped, as tights were hitched up, body shapers pulled down, make-up retouched and hair and hats reassembled.

Meeting up with our menfolk once more, Will was then directed one way to the recipients' waiting area, while we, having been given a programme of events, were

guided by uniformed Members of the Household to the Ballroom, where we were greeted individually by one of the Officers, who enquired whether we had come far, and then showed us to our seats.

The first impression of the ballroom was of deep rich red and gold. There is a domed red canopy at one end, and a minstrels' gallery at the other, where the Countess of Wessex's String Orchestra was playing, and continued to do so throughout the entire proceedings. The repertoire was designed to suit every taste, from Ave Maria to You Only Live Twice, from opera to film and ballet, and romantic pieces by composers such as Elgar, Sibelius and Debussy.

We were then told how the occasion would unfold: first to enter would be five members of The Queen's Body Guard of the Yeomen of the Guard, which is the oldest military corps still existing in the UK and dates from 1485 when it was created by King Henry V11 after his victory at the Battle of Bosworth Field. Prince Charles, who shares investiture duties with the Queen, would be escorted into the room by two Gurkha Orderly Officers - a tradition begun in 1876 by Queen Victoria and the national anthem would follow.

Each recipient steps forward, waits for his name and the achievement for which he is being decorated to be announced, then Prince Charles takes the medal from a velvet cushion held by a senior member of the Household. The Prince is also attended by an Equerry in Waiting, who reminds him of each recipient as he approaches.

As Will stepped forward and waited, he saw where we were sitting, and winked, totally relaxed in the grand surroundings. Then his name was announced: "William Pooley. For services to combating Ebola in Africa". It was a proud moment.

As Prince Charles pinned on his medal, and

chatted with Will for a short while, I felt a sneaking admiration for the heir to the throne, whose attention did not waver for an instant, even though Will's award was the seventy third he had bestowed that morning; he seemed genuinely pleased to have the chance to chat to each recipient.

That day, a few knights were created, and a Dame Commander, along with Commanders of other orders, but by far the most awards were OBEs and MBEs, given to people from every walk of life, who work in education, health, the arts, local government, children's services and the police service among others. One gentleman received an MBE for services to ploughing, one for services to Cambridge Search and Rescue, another for services to witnesses and victims.

The ceremony over, we made a fairly quick retreat: Will did not want to queue for the official photograph, and neither did he want to do an interview with Sky News, so we headed off to grab a bite of lunch in a local cafe, where he almost left his medal, now safely in its presentation box, on the seat as we departed. Fortunately, Jess spotted it - thank goodness for big sisters.

Jess's partner managed to take a very few pictures outside the Palace before the ceremony, and the one included here shows clearly the tie Will sported for the occasion: it is one he had made locally when he was in Sierra Leone for the second time, and seemed very appropriate for this event.

About 10 days later, Will left for Uganda, where he has been working in the outpatients department of Kamuli Mission Hospital, and is currently in paediatrics, until the end of June. He is gaining a lot of experience, and has dealt with cases of malaria, pneumonia, mostly with young children, septic arthritis in an 18 year old and a head injury which was the result of vigilante justice, amongst many others.



Being Will, he is also using his free time to full advantage, visiting national parks, seeing the flora and fauna of the country, and meeting the people. And what next? He has been accepted by Medecins Sans Frontieres, so where that could take him later this year, we shall have to wait and see. * Jackie Pooley

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Mervyn's 80th birthday celebrations

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Surprising Stokes

Our intrepid editor and photographer get saucy

The sign that says 'Stokes Sauces' is so small and discreetly placed – on the way out of Rendlesham towards Tunstall, at a lodge built at the entrance to the now-vanished Rendlesham Hall – that you could be forgiven for missing it entirely. If you do turn into the Rendlesham estate, though, and follow the lane down towards where the old manor house used to stand, you will come across a very surprising place indeed.

It is not the sauce factory itself that is the surprise, though it is quite a place in its own right. Stokes Sauces is a busy, bustling place, a cheerful jumble of gleaming, high-tech machinery, offices and Portakabins, all set amongst a rustic idyll of groves of trees. Inside the buildings, high-end sauces and

chutneys are mixed, cooked up, bottled and packed by a close-knit workforce of 55 people, many of whom have been here for years. While the local Suffolk accent predominates over the hum of production, there are people from many different parts of the country, plus workers from as far afield as Thailand, Portugal, Iraq and the Philippines, including a Kurd who just a year ago was stuck in the 'jungle' in Calais. 'They are all fantastic' says the owner – of whom more presently. Stokes has a turnover of £5m and is still growing – they export to 50 countries, and are now supplying Waitrose nationwide.

Once you get beyond the actual Stokes Sauces premises, it's rather like entering an East Anglian version of the Lost World. There

are wallabies (one even has a joey in her pouch). There are rheas. Perched on the high walls that once enclosed the kitchen gardens of Rendlesham Hall, there are azure and green peacocks. There are Californian redwood trees, and any number of other rare, ancient and non-native tree species (one has grown into the shape of a rhino's head, complete with horn). Near the remains of the bothy where the estate gardeners used to sleep, there's a huge, rickety tree house which instantly makes you wish you were a child again. Around our feet run chickens rescued from battery farms and other rescue animals, and tucked away in one corner is a quiet garden for meditation, home to a serene seated Buddha. It's a scene both homely and exotic, and it has Simon Sutch and me looking at each other in delighted amazement.

Presiding over both the sauce factory and the rambling gardens and animals is the engaging and original figure of Rick Sheepshanks. He founded Suffolk Foods here with his brother David (of Ipswich Town FC)

in 1990. By the time they sold the company – it was not, you feel, an easy decision – over half of all the sandwiches sold in the UK included their products. David went over to football ('there is no-one in the world more passionate about Ipswich Town') and Rick founded Stokes Sauces in 2004. He has ambitions to compete with the very biggest in the market – Heinz – though he admits it might not happen in his lifetime.

'I am completely unemployable' he says cheerfully, 'so I have to work for myself'. There is indeed a certain restlessness in his character, and he confesses to having been 'a bit of a bad boy' in his youth – while his brother went to Eton, he attended a total of twelve schools. He has held a fantastic variety of jobs, including sweeping leaves in Battersea Park, working in a wine cellar in Soho, labouring in West Suffolk and catching wild game in Namibia; he also has been a commando in the Rhodesian army, a lumberjack in Canada and a sheepman in New Zealand. Finally, though, he settled down back in Suffolk: he married at 47, and



had four children in five years.

Rick was brought up in Eyke, and proclaims himself 'a big fan' of the village. 'I had a very privileged upbringing', he explains, 'but I always preferred the company of farmers'. His father employed 40 people, mostly from the area, and his memories of village

characters past remain crystal clear: there was Tanner Collins from Friday Street, who always carried chocolate around with him ('want a bit of chocolate, boy?'), Lennie and Mrs Nunn, who lived on a corner of Sandy Lane, Mrs Fish, who used to clean for Rick's parents, Charlie Lay, who had been a POW in Japan, Don Howard, who built the wall around All Saints Church, and many, many more. The village, he says, 'was full of wonderful people'.

He used to run marathons at the weekends and smoke 45 cigarettes a day, but gave up both at the same time. Now, more than anything, he is dedicated to family, Stokes Sauces and the extraordinary menagerie-cum-arboretum that he has created in the Suffolk countryside. As he shows Simon and me around the grounds, his deep love of animals and trees is apparent at every turn. And while he loves the countryside, he is no lover of some country sports. 'I haven't killed anything for 30 years', he says. 'Why shoot an innocent bird?'

We leave with a tinge of regret, laden down with sauces and ketchups ('here, have a bagful!'). You could listen to Stokes' surprising owner all day. * **Tim**
PS: We'll be doing a piece on the history of Rendlesham Hall in a forthcoming issue, so if anyone has any memories of or stories about the estate, we'd love to have them

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The Warren Then & Now

We revisit the Eyke Book for a third time. Published in 2000, the Millennium Group assembled a living history of the houses of Eyke, and the people who lived in them



Phyllis Hatcher lived most of her life at The Warren, in Low Road (she told me it used to be called Pump Street, because before the wells were dug along Eyke Street, most people had to go down there for water).

Phyllis also told me that there was a story associated with her cottage which bore similarities to Mak the Sheepstealer.

A man who lived in the cottage went out onto the heath one night and stole a sheep belonging to Eyke Sinks. I believe that her story included the fact that it snowed while he was out, but stopped as he carried his booty home. His footprints were there for all to see in the morning and men went to his house where they found the sheep hidden up the chimney. He was tried for theft of a sheep, found guilty and sentenced to transportation for life to Australia.

As he was escorted away from home, to whatever conveyance waited for him up on The Street, along the lower lane between the hills (Wodger's Lane, then, apparently) and up Castle Hill, he was watched from the cottage at the foot of the hill by a girl who was ill. She saw him go, turned away from the upstairs window facing the hill, went back to bed and died. * **Robin Pooley**

WOODBRIIDGE GAOL BOOKS

Transportees 1825 to 1840 has a George Barber, aged 16, of Eyke transported in 1836 for life, for stealing a lamb. Further research shows George Barber, one of a large family of agricultural labourers in the village, was christened in Eyke Church in July 1819.

It is very tempting to think that this is the young man of the story, feeling impelled to steal to help provide for a growing and needy family; by 1835, he was the second eldest of nine children. Two more followed in 1838 and 1842. I hope he survived the journey, and somehow managed to flourish in an alien land. * **Jackie Pooley**



The boys look to see if there is a sheep up the chimney

Hello. We are the Chapman family. We moved to Eyke almost 2 years ago in July 2014 and live at The Warren. We moved from Ipswich and so although the move was not very far in distance, the change to our way of life has been huge.



Pete and I have been together for over 20 years and met at university in Plymouth. Following university, we moved to Ipswich and started our careers and family. I work part time in education locally and Pete works for an insurance company, commuting to Colchester or London. Jacob is now 6 and in Year 1 at Eyke CEVC Primary school. Edward (aka Eddie) is 4 and attend the Old Community Nursery in Eyke. He is looking forward to starting 'big school' in Eyke in September. In October last year, we brought home our black miniature schnauzer puppy, Otto, to complete our family.

Prior to our move to Eyke, we were originally looking for a house in Woodbridge to be closer to my parents who help look after the boys when we are at work. As part of the search, we discovered the house in Eyke and haven't looked back! The Warren is a pretty cottage set in a beautiful location. It

was extended by the previous owners and we have spent the last two years making it our home.

We feel very lucky to have found our home in Eyke and are really enjoying the community spirit and country life the village has to offer. Our particular Eyke highlights have been the Eyke and school Fetes, the Christmas Family Service at the church and the wine tasting night at the Elephant and Castle. We look forward to making many more happy memories with family and friends in the village and thank you for the warm welcome we have received.



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