



Summer salad

Feed your gardening habit this season



A French getaway

The Rabson's tales from a Gallic idyll



Happi Days are here

How pampered pooches are moving in!

inside eyke

ISSUE 9 SUMMER 2012



Looking up

The skies are alive with the sound of Spitfires

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NEWS & EVENTS**

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EDITOR'S letter



Living in Eyke one could not fail to see and hear the WW2 Spitfire flying out from Bentwaters. To me, and I'm sure to other old codgers, the sound of the Spitfire's Merlin engine is really evocative. So we are very pleased to have the Grace Spitfire as our centrepiece.

The Spitfire plane was an icon of the Second World War, indeed on 27th April 1944 Flight Lieutenant A.F. Martin Dale dived a PRX1 - EN409 at Mach 0.89, that's about 680mph! Just thought you might like to know that.

The Jubilee Celebrations start off on Friday 1st June at the school with Sports Day and a school lunch party in the playground to which all villagers are invited. Maria will be doing the food so you know it will be fantastic and all for the cost of £3.17 - not to be missed! So please contact the school telephone No 01394 460328 by Monday 28th May. The more people who join in the fun the better the Jubilee celebrations will be.

A warm and hearty welcome to Tim Marr (above) who will be the new editor for Inside

Eyke. Tim is a writer and lecturer in linguistics. He and his wife Ana (who is originally from Peru) have been in the village since 2006. They live at 3 Ufford Rd - one of the row of redbrick cottages at the bottom of the hill. You can contact Tim on the usual email address, insideeyke@hotmail.co.uk.

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Volunteers and contributions to
Tim Marr 3 Ufford Road,
Eyke
insideeyke@hotmail.co.uk
Next edition August
Final date for submissions
1 July 2012
Design Aardvark Multimedia
www.virtualaardvark.com
Printing Gipping Press



Spring Supper.

The village Spring Supper held on the 17th March 2012 in the village hall was a huge success with the usual high standard of cooking by Sandy Such and her crew of helpers. Everyone enjoyed chicken and leek casserole with jacket potatoes and vegetables followed by a selection on yummy puds. Mervyn ran the raffle in his inimitable way and enjoyment was had by all.



Road accidents in the village

An accident happened on Monday 12th March at about 3pm. when a car lost control and crashed in the area where there is no footway for pedestrians. Fortunately no one was walking in the road at the time. But Walter's wall is down again!!

There was also an accident out side the shop on Sunday 4th March when a tractor with a trailer hit a car causing considerable damage.



Coronation Chicken

Maria Hassan



With the school celebrating the Queens Jubilee, we would like to invite you all once again to come and join us for lunch on 1st June. Weather permitting we will be having a party lunch in the playground with the children, parents and hopefully a few locals. The menu will be Coronation chicken sandwich, sausage roll, cheese straw, carrot and orange jelly, jam and apple tart all served with homemade lemonade. The cost is £3.17 for adults and £2.10 for children. We look forward to seeing you. Please call the school on 01394 460328 to book. This recipe is one of my favourites and just in time for the Jubilee parties.

Ingredients

100g (4 oz) mayonnaise, 75g (3 oz) mango chutney, 1-2 tablespoons korma curry paste, 1 dessertspoon lime zest, 4 tablespoons fresh lime juice, 1/2 teaspoon salt, 100g white or red grapes, 500g (1 1/4 lb) skinless, boneless chicken breast fillets - cooked and diced, flaked almonds to decorate.

Preparation method: 15 mins

In a large bowl, whisk together the mayonnaise, chutney, curry paste, lime zest, lime juice, grapes and salt. Add chicken and toss with the dressing until well coated. Cover and refrigerate, just before serving decorate with flaked almonds.

Tip: Use half mayonnaise, half crème fraîche for a lower fat version of this recipe.

Brass Monkey

One more: bet you didn't know this!

In the heyday of sailing ships, all war ships and many freighters carried iron cannons. Those cannons fired round iron cannon balls.

It was necessary to keep a good supply near the cannon. However, how to prevent them from rolling about the deck? The best storage method devised was a square-based pyramid with one ball on top, resting on four resting on nine, which rested on sixteen. Thus, a supply of 30 cannon balls could be stacked in a small area right next to the cannon.

There was only one problem....how to prevent the bottom layer from sliding or

rolling from under the others. The solution was a metal plate called a 'Monkey' with 16 round indentations. However, if this plate were made of iron, the iron balls would quickly rust to it. The solution to the rusting problem was to make 'Brass Monkeys.' Few landlubbers realize that brass contracts much more and much faster than iron when chilled.

Consequently, when the temperature dropped too far, the brass indentations would shrink so much that the iron cannonballs would come right off the monkey. Thus, it was quite literally, 'Cold enough to freeze the balls off a brass monkey.' (All this time, you thought that was an improper expression, didn't you.)

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Karen's Garden: summer salad

Karen Watson

If you haven't got room in your garden for a small vegetable area it's not all bad as pots and planters of different salad leaves and herbs can look very effective placed in a corner near the house or on a patio.

We have a really wide range of salad leaves that can be planted these days and it is so rewarding to go out into your own garden

to pick salad rather than purchasing it from the supermarket (you also know that it has not been sprayed with anything horrid).

If you go and choose your selection of salad and herb seeds from the garden centre they can be sown in trays then grown on until large enough to transplant into their final pots. The seeds will need to be thinned and pricked out as they grow so that the strongest plants can grow on. If you choose to grow from seed it can be really cost effective as you can sow as much or as little



as you like and keep repeat sowings going all summer to replace the salad you consume. Of course, plug plants can also be bought from the garden centres and grown on similarly.

Lettuce loves rich soil and plenty of moisture so use a good compost mix - soil based + soil less + water retaining granules. Don't stand the pots in a

place where it will get very hot all day as the lettuce will wilt - they will do best in semi-shade or where the sun can get to them for part of the day.

Try salad varieties like 'Salad Bowl,' 'Rocket' (pictured), 'Tom Thumb,' or an oriental mix - even mixed mustard leaves, some have very distinctive flavours and are a pick and come again variety so that if you cut the leaves from the plant instead of removing the whole lettuce they will grow back again.

Bon appétit ❁

JOBS FOR JUNE

Remove side shoots from corden grown tomatoes and train plants up supports.

Harvest strawberries and first early potatoes.

Sow runner beans into rich ground at the bottom of supports.

Mow lawns regularly but leave the grass longer in hot spells.

Cut down any remaining spring bulb foliage.

Tie in climbers.

Trim back Clematis 'Montana' if needed.

Cut back old leaves and stalks from hellebores.

Take softwood cuttings of fuchsia and pelargoniums.

Water plants in the early morning or evening when the sun is not at its hottest.

Garden visits

Hyde Hall near Chelmsford is a delight at this time of year when colour from the early flowering plants comes to life.

Eyke Jubilee Hog Roast, Saturday 2nd June 2012 at the Rectory Gardens

It seems a long time ago that the Parish Council first started discussions about funding an event so that the village could celebrate together the Queen's Diamond Jubilee - and now, here we are.

The Parish Council was given the responsibility of allocating over £1400.00 left over from the Chain of Oaks organisation, now no longer in existence, and, having made donations to the school and playgroup, decided that the rest would be best used to support the Jubilee celebrations, along with help from the Parish Council funds.

The Millennium Group started the ball rolling, at a meeting in February attended by eighteen people, when it was agreed to arrange a hog roast, as reported in the last issue of this magazine.

Two further meetings later, and we are planning the final details.

Four of us made a "site visit" last week to The Rectory gardens, which Nicky and Oliver Briggins have very generously made available to us: it is a beautiful spot, and familiar to us all as the location for the village fete every year.

Dingley Dell, from Campsea Ashe, is providing the hog roast: the bread and apple sauce they use are all sourced locally, too. A group of keen volunteers will provide the accompanying salads, and a mouth watering array of desserts: cheesecake, trifle, fruit flan, pavlova, crumble, lemon meringue pie - and a couple of others not decided on yet! There will be a vegetarian option - but vegetarians please call Jackie Pooley on 461275 at least two days before so she knows how many to cater for.

Alongside the food, there will be live music,

supplied by The Alibi Club, a local five piece ensemble, who will play music to reflect what we are celebrating: sixty years of the Queen's reign.

To entertain the youngsters, - and probably a few older ones too - there will be a selection of large garden games to test our skill: amongst them Jenga, Connect 4, and Skittles.

The costs of putting on the event are really high, but thanks to the financial support we are getting, the tickets are just £3 each, with under 5's free. All you need to bring is your own choice of drink and glasses, plus something to sit on. It is hoped that lots of people from the village will want to come, and make it a real family occasion. Mervyn Whitmore is in charge of ticket sales, and has reported that about one third of them have gone already - so if you want to come, get in touch soon, as there has also been a great deal of outside interest - and once they're gone, they're gone! ❁

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A French cottage, a digger and a missing cedilla

The Rabson's newly refurbished cottage

TWhen Georges Delcros was a lad, he spent his summer holidays in an old cottage in the Morvan region of Burgundy. When he retired in the 1990s, he and his wife Carmela bought the cottage and commissioned a dream home on the site.

But “new build” is the exception here. Buying a ruin for a song and spending a sonata and several years doing it up is more usual. Long gone are the glory days when we renovated our old farmhouse in Suffolk. We did not wish to repeat the exercise in the Morvan; and when the Delcros moved to something smaller, we took up residence in summer 2005.

Word got around. Like Bilbo Baggins, we are fond of visitors, but people we scarcely knew solicited free board and lodging on their way to or from their hols further south. Hospitality rules OK – one might be “entertaining angels unaware” – but I began

to consider welcoming invited guests in the main house and putting up the uninvited ones in the cottage. It had electric light and a cold-water tap, but no sanitation; however, it had Possibilities...

Our neighbour Pierre, who in true local tradition had spent 10 years doing up his home, agreed. Together he and my husband John demolished a (blessedly non-structural) wall between the two tiny rooms in the cottage. I considered an Elsan for cheapness, but John put his foot down and a new septic tank was installed. So far, so good; then Pierre collapsed with a pulmonary embolism, while John had a close encounter with prostate cancer. Enter Jean-Yves, who had laid our patio with beautiful local stone. When he set up his own business, Maçonnerie du Morvan, we hired him.

Thereby, as the Bard says, hangs a tale. Maçonnerie is masonry: work with bricks

and mortar; a maçon is a mason or builder, whereas Macon produces Burgundy wines. The cedilla on the “c” is crucial because a bowdlerised translation of connerie is “cock-up” (hence Sean Connery often being called “James Bond” in France).

Well, J-Y’s business card lacked that vital cedilla. Potential clients of “My Cock-up in the Morvan” seemed intrigued rather than deterred.

Then we bought a mechanical digger. Maçonnerie du Morvan needed one for its main activities, but could not afford to buy. The local plant hire outfit was hopeless and J-Y suffered endless frustration and loss of earnings. We had a brainwave. “We’ll buy a digger and you can reimburse us with your labour while we pay for materials. Make sure you square it with le fisc” (like HMRC, but friendlier). For two memorable years we owned a digger, nicknamed (inevitably) Rosy, stabled at J-Y’s place and for hire with J-Y as driver.

We commandeered half the adjoining woodshed to create a bedroom with a splendid French window (echoes of Gerard Hoffnung’s “There is a French widow in every room, affording delightful prospects”), and J-Y hacked tons of stone from the 2ft-thick dividing wall to create a doorway. He worked for us when foul weather prevented the outdoor work that was his bread and butter. He was primarily a builder, but could turn his hand to plumbing; electrics he delegated to his buddy Hans.

Progress was slow because, on fine days, J-Y was busy on outdoor work. At 7am on a rainy day, the phone would ring. “May we work in the cottage today?” He and his sidekick always shared our lunch. I do a nice boeuf bourguignon, but on principle I dished up British grub: cottage pie, toad-in-the-hole (crapaud dans le trou), stew with dumplings or, of course, curry. Our timing was spot on: starter, main course, cheese, dessert and coffee consumed in precisely an hour.

Two years passed. The entente remained

cordiale. J-Y and his family entertained us at nearby Montreuilon, where J-Y had transformed a row of dilapidated cottages into a spectacular house, a fitting advertisement for Maçonnerie du Morvan – not a connerie in sight...

By February 2012, J-Y had paid off his digger and his work was almost done. He and Hans arrived to build two steps up to the French window and put the finishing touches to the electrics. The new lavatory was flushed with pride, the lights were lit and we waved goodbye to J-Y and Hans, with a promise to invite them to the grand opening later.

DIY Was Us before advancing age and stiff knees slowed us down. This time we decided to PAM (Pay a Man). I buttonholed a neighbour in the supermarket checkout queue and inquired about a spot of painting and decorating. He declined, but the next person in the queue knew a man who could. You don’t need the web in the Morvan – you just ask around. Paul had – surprise, surprise – renovated his own house. He made light work of our cottage.

Now I had the fun of furnishing my very own life-size dolls’ house and equipping it down to the last teaspoon. When friends christened our cottage Le Petit Trianon after Marie Antoinette’s playhouse, I had another brainwave. I had no wish to run a commercial gîte. What about encouraging congenial visitors and asking them to donate to our favourite good cause?

Combat Stress helps servicemen and women whose wounds are not visible. Donations from UK taxpayers can also attract Gift Aid, which means that HMRC contributes too. Combat Stress is running The Enemy Within appeal – read about it on www.combatstress.org.uk.

So, why not come to Burgundy, with its delectable wines, scenery, châteaux, archaeological treasures – and even the Magny-Cours motor circuit? ❄️
Email us on rosemary.border@numeo.fr or john.rabson@numeo.fr.



THE GRACE SPITFIRE & CAROLYN ITS REMARKABLE PILOT

One morning several years ago, Ron raised his head to the skies. “That’s a Merlin engine,” he pronounced. Being a Battle of Britain boy as well as the son of an RAF officer he knows about these things.

That was when Carolyn Grace first flew her ML407 Spitfire over the village - doubtless, its unmistakable sound bringing back memories for older residents.

Since then “Carolyn’s up again,” has become part and parcel that adds to the pleasure of living in Eyke, but how much do most of us know about the Spitfire or Carolyn?

The Grace Spitfire is an aeroplane with a great history and a very competent pilot in Carolyn Grace. Carolyn is the only current female Spitfire pilot in the world. She has been flying it since 1990 and has amassed a great deal of hours and experience.

Carolyn is an Australian, brought up on a property 120 miles south of Sydney, who later married Englishman Nick Grace. She achieved her private pilot’s licence in 1978 in the Channel Islands, with the majority of her flying being done in her Stampe bi-plane.

The Grace Spitfire ML407 has a remarkable history. Built at Castle Bromwich as a single seat low level Mark 1X fighter, it served in the front line of battle throughout the last twelve months of WW2. It was delivered into active service in April 1944 by the famous lady ATA pilot Jackie Moggridge to 485 New Zealand Squadron at ALG Selsey into the hands of Flying Officer Johnnie Houlton DFC who was accredited with shooting down the first enemy aircraft (a Junkers 88) over the Normandy beachhead just south of Omaha Beach on 6th June 1944 ‘D day. ML407 did a total of 176 operational sorties,

predominantly ground attack. It flew with 485 New Zealand Squadron, 349 Belgian, 345 Free French and 332 Norwegian Squadrons, returning to 485 New Zealand Squadron at the end of the war. That’s some going!! In 1951 Vickers Armstrong in Southampton was commissioned by the Irish Air Corps to convert twenty Spitfires to the trainer configuration – ML407 was one of them, serving with the Irish Army Air Corps until 1960. It subsequently went until mothballs until Nick Grace came along.

Nick Grace was an exceptionally talented individual who achieved more in his short life than most. He, along with his father and brother built their own sailing boat, similar



to a Laser, which they sailed it at their favourite family holidays spent at Brancaster Staith. Nick went on to be a BSA works rider, following his time in the Parachute Regiment (where he was Champion Recruit) which included deployment in the Suez Crisis. Nick became associated with the

development of the Ginetta G4 car with the Walklett Brothers.

He moved to Australia where he designed, built and successfully raced his own Brolga race car following which he started building luxury yachts before coming back to the UK and starting his own yacht building company in Guernsey, building 40 foot yachts to the Van de Stadt designs. In 1979 he

sold this most successful company with which by then he had also built a 9 metre racing yacht that won the Dutch National Championships. In late 1979 he found two Spitfires for sale at Strathallan Museum in Scotland and set about his meticulous 5 year rebuild of the Grace Spitfire.

The Spitfire took to the air again in April 1985 in Nick's most capable hands, his wife Carolyn in the rear cockpit. Nick flew at many air displays as well as for films -

In 1990 Carolyn decided to learn the fly their Spitfire and to keep it operational with a Grace in the cockpit

including 'Perfect Lady' and 'Piece of Cake.' Tragically, he was killed in a car accident in 1988; he had been displaying the Spitfire for three years. In 1990 Carolyn decided to learn to fly their Spitfire and to keep it operational with a Grace in the cockpit in memory of Nick and in recognition of his outstanding achievement, also for their two children Olivia and Richard, then aged five and four. She learned under the skilful tuition of Peter Kynsey who trained her to achieve her aerobatic and formation display skills. Carolyn now has 850 hours on the Grace Spitfire.

For over 21 years Carolyn has been displaying to Proms Concerts, choreographing the display to suit the music being played - often William Walton's Sptifire Prelude and Fugue, Holsts's Jupiter, Elgar's

Nimrod and other such emotive combinations - above many stately homes. She has performed numerous seafront displays, requiring additional disciplines to land based displays. She performs solo aerobatic displays showing the Spitfire in all its angles for photographers in the crowd as well as formation displays, often with other Spitfires as well as Hurricanes. This takes a great deal of dedicated concentration and training. She will fly at corporate promotions, for family special occasions and even performs an 'In Memoriam' display at funerals. The Grace Spitfire featured in the Channel 4 series called 'Spitfire Ace' and more recently it has been on the Top Gear programme, featured in Top Gear Magazine, James May's Toy Stories and with Sir David Jason in the ITV Battle of Britain Documentary.

The Grace Spitfire is now based at Bentwaters, Suffolk and is maintained by a team of engineers in their maintenance facility there. The Grace Spitfire is a family business - Olivia Grace designed the Grace Spitfire Website www.ML407.co.uk while Richard Grace has his own display team - the Trig Aerobatic Team. Richard also now displays the Grace Spitfire and is an engineer in the family business. Carolyn, Olivia and Richard wish to keep the Grace Spitfire operational for generations to come.

So next time someone says "Carolyn's up again" we will all know just a little bit more about that outstanding plane and its exceptional pilot. ✨

Here's the stats, fact fans!

- MK IX Spitfire = Total built: 5,665. Wingspan: 36ft 10inches.
- Length: 31ft 4inches.
- Weight empty: 5.800lbs. Weight loaded: 7.296lbs.
- Engine: Roll-Royce Merlin 61, 63, 65A, or 66.
- Max power: 1,475hp-1,650hp.
- Max speed: 408mph at 25,000ft.
- Service ceiling: 43,000ft. climb to 20,000ft = 5 minutes 42 seconds.
- Rate of climb at 20,000ft: 3,950 ft per minute.
- Typical armament: four .303 browning Mk II machine guns and two 20-mm Hispano cannon.

EYKE PRIMARY SCHOOL

My days at Eyke School

What a school! I have great fun here!

I love the theme weeks we have every term and the one that really sticks is definitely SCIENCE WEEK with exploding coke bottles

The lunches are delicious and really fun when we have visitors eating lunch with us.

Our lessons are so much fun too. Overall Eyke School is BRILLIANT!

By Boogie Thompson
Year 6

Clearly, Boogie Thompson will always have happy memories of Eyke village school. Several families living in the village have seen three or more generations of pupils go to Eyke School and a few have shared their memories with us.

Frank Pooley was a pupil at Eyke School during the 1920's. At the time he lived in Croft Cottage, Bromeswell and walked to school every day with two of his brothers, Ray and Sam. They walked about one mile along the track from Bromeswell Church, coming out opposite Swann's Nursery before turning to walk to Eyke. As they got older they cycled. There were around 72 children in the school in Frank's day all of whom learned only to read and write. There was no playground at the school so they played games like football and cricket on the recreation ground - in fact Frank was captain of the football team. The girls played netball at the rec. Frank and Lennie Green had the job of pumping water daily from the 70 foot well for both the headmaster and the school.



The boys were taught wood carving by Reverend Darling, carving the pew ends for Eyke church and becoming highly skilled.

It was little different in the 1930's when Judy Larrett started school at five years old. She remembers that all the small children were in the 'little room' with the older children in the 'big room.' Because there were two separate classes held in the 'big room' it became confusing as you could hear two teachers talking at the same time. During the war years the school was very crowded with around 90 children because the village was full of evacuees. There were no school dinners in those days so children that lived too far away to go home took sandwiches. All the children had milk at mid morning which was put around the huge stove during the winter. Judy remembers the teachers as being 'nice but strict' and you definitely got into trouble if you misbehaved. All the pupils left school at 14, many of the boys going to



work on the land in local farms, or in forestry, hedging or ditching. Everyone had a day off on Empire Day when the flag was raised and there would be prayers and hymns.

In the 1940s things had moved on a little and pupils left Eyke School at 13, continuing their education in Woodbridge or elsewhere. School dinners were available, which were cooked at Rendlesham and brought to Eyke village hall, which was an old wooden hut from the war. David Fisk remembers the meals as 'not being very good but you would eat anything as food was on ration. The worst thing was the semolina which was like eating sand with custard!'

David recalls that Mr. Snell the Headmaster was very strict and would take a 10 minute walk around the school gardens before lunch. 'After about 5 minutes he would look in through the big bay window and heaven help you if you were not at your desk and working,' David reminisced. He remembers that 'Mr. Snell's wife must have owned a fridge because on hot days she made ice

cubes and handed them out to the children. Despite having no flavour they were a great treat.

The school had gardens which the pupils worked in. David believes this was a good practice that should still happen as today children are no longer taught the practical skills of life. He remembers stealing gooseberries with a friend from the school garden. Both boys were caught and caned for stealing - sadly, the gooseberries were not ripe, tasting sour and awful so it wasn't even worth the pain, though David never stole anything again. 'It taught me a lesson, I think the cane should be brought back as there is little discipline in schools today,' David says. His class went on a school outing to London, visiting all the famous places but David's abiding memory is of having an ice cream - it was the ice cream he wrote about after the trip!

By the 1950s and 1960s children left Eyke School at 11, some travelling by bus or bicycle to Butley School to continue their



Mr Snell the Headmaster was very strict and would take a ten minute walk around the school gardens before lunch

education. Eyke School still had the 'little room' and the 'big room' and the Headmistress was Mrs. Finnemore who kept corgis. In those days Miss Lyon, who lived in Mill House, used to teach needlework to the girls.

But things change. Today Eyke Primary School hosts 149 pupils, mostly from outlying villages such as Rendlesham, Snape, Butley, Tunstall and Campsea Ashe. Children no longer have long walks to school instead they are bussed in from their home areas. The 'little room' and the 'big room' are long gone instead the school boasts 6 classes with a classroom and teacher for each one. There are classroom assistants to help pupils, especially those with special needs. They still have school gardens and year 2 particularly participates in sowing seeds to grow vegetables such as beans, carrots and



lettuces which are used in the school kitchen. This year fruit bushes which were bought by the PTA were planted and are flourishing.

They also have school outings and this year Year 5 and Year 6 went on a residential educational visit allowing 3 days in London to see such sights as the Tower of London, Olympic Stadium and the Science Museum. They also enjoy residential visits to North Norfolk where they can learn about wildlife. Other classes have day visits to such places as Foxborough Farm. In May years 3 to 6 enjoyed a Greek day with visitors and events to highlight the Greek theme. There is a covered, heated school swimming pool which every class enjoys once a week from April to October.

There are many different clubs such as Drumming Club, Sports Club and Cookery Club for the children to participate in. And as for school dinners - well, I think Boogie has said it all.

The children I met at Eyke Primary School were happy and confident, the school bustling, colourful and fun with a great atmosphere. Long may it last. ❄️





Cottage, situated on the edge of the village. With new fencing and gates Helen and Chris have doggie proofed their own patch of woodland, as well as creating a luxury canine bungalow for four with under floor heated bedrooms so that Happi Days customers can go for their holidays. With nearly three acres of land being fenced the canine customers will

have plenty of room to have safe

HAPPI DAYS ARE HERE

Being a dog can be really good news these days. No more waiting for your owner to get home from work, probably stressed, probably busy, with no time for 'walkies'.

In today's world you can go to the dog creche, play all day and sit on the sofa watching TV in the evenings, completely chilled.

Happi Days is based at Bentwaters Parks and has been operational for four years. But now things are changing because Happi Days is extending its services.

Most of us will have seen the work going on at Elm

off lead walks in the woods. The doggie bungalows are really spacious and luxurious – not like kennels at all – with a run at the back leading straight from their accommodation. And all that is besides the woodland playground!



The Happi Days centre at Bentwaters has 10,000 square feet of playground areas and another 10,000 square feet of large, open plan, indoor cosy areas to cater for all dogs'

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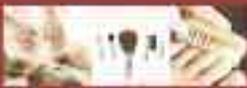


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surroundings. Clearly, Helen, her husband Chris and all the staff are crazy about dogs and just want them to be happy. It was lovely to see notes on the whiteboard such as 'Rusty needs his nails clipped tomorrow' and 'Wini is full of energy so lots of play when she first arrives.' Each dog is an individual to the staff of Happi Days and each dog receives lots of love, attention and cuddles.

needs. In other words it is a supervised playground for dogs – and they love it! They have rest areas to take life easy and supervised areas to run and play with large, safe dog climbing equipment, ball pools and paddling pools. There is plenty of staff on hand to play tennis ball, toy games, cardboard box finding games and bubbles. Even the most active dog must feel like a snooze after all that. Comfy padded sofas and duvet filled dog beds abound, so no quarrels about who sleeps where. All the play areas are completely secure so the visitors are entirely safe.

The idea of a supervised playground for dogs came from Helen's years of dog walking as a child, experience as a pet and house sitter whilst at university, followed by Happi at Home - her dog care and house sitting business. This new project has proved to be very popular. Many of her customers use the centre while they are at work, others when on a long day out or some who want to work on the home and garden without the aid of four legged friends.

Helen also helps dogs with separation anxiety, lazy or overweight dogs and dogs that need to be taught the skills of socialising. She particularly enjoys seeing dogs with nervous dispositions learning to have more self confidence and enjoying their

I don't know about you but I'm planning to book myself in to Happi Days – it sounds like a lot of fun and a lot of pampering. I'm not sure how good I'll be at the cardboard box finding games though!

You can contact Helen or Chris on 01394 420468 or take a look at their web site at www.happidayscentre.co.uk . ❄

