

The Bridge

Produced by Elmore Parish Council
Issue Number 36, November 2023



From the Editor or

Is there anyone out there?

During a recent conversation with an Elmore resident he asked me in all seriousness whether I thought anybody reads **The Bridge**. I had to admit that I have my doubts. I can only recall 2 ‘letters to the editor’ since 2014 when the magazine was first published and only a handful of people who have spoken to me about its content. I would love **The Bridge** to display more of your writing; I have appealed for material from you several times in the past and a few people have responded. I commended these people in the last issue. My email address is on the back page so if you feel moved to write something, please send it to me. If you want ideas I can always help.

Trevor Jones

The Old Woman Who Lived in a Shoe

It’s that time of year again! Oh yes it is!

Village Players’ 2023 pantomime is The Old Woman Who Lived in the Shoe.

Will Dame Dallymore, and her son Corydon be able to rescue the princess?

Will the Squire of Tumbledown manage to evict Dame Dallymore from his lovely cottage?

Will Corydon be able to win the heart of the princess?

There’s only one way to find out!

The Old Woman Who Lived in the Shoe runs from 23rd to 26th November and 30th November to 2nd December. Evening performances are at 7.30pm, with matinees at 2.30pm on both Saturdays and Sunday 26th. Tickets are £10.00 for adults, and £6.00

for under 16s. 23rd November is our Gala Night with tickets at £15 each including light refreshments and a bar. Tickets go on sale on 30th October and can be booked via 01452 722245 or [villageplayersbooking@outlook..com](mailto:villageplayersbooking@outlook.com). Why not give us a follow on Facebook and Instagram too, to get sneakily behind the scenes? We're @VillagePlayersElmore.

Book Reviews – The Island Book Club

Wide Sargasso Sea by Jean Rhys

Published: October 1966

Genre: novel, romantic historical fiction, a paradox: desire, hatred, life and death.

Prequel to Jane Eyre by Charlotte Bronte (published 1847)

Well written, some say “hauntingly beautiful” easy to read, but heart wrenching. Rhys tells the back story of an inconspicuous but daunting character from one of the classics.

It takes the reader to an island in the Caribbean and explores the trauma of black characters. Antoinette's life is shaped by her mother. She is neglected and discriminated against because of her Creole identity. We read of her pain, dislocation and identity crisis. The novel explores the power of relationships between men and women and discusses the themes of race, and the class discrimination towards the colonised in Caribbean society. Slavery, male dominance and displacement.

I loved the book and its poetic style. Although, sometimes I found it a bit disjointed, occasionally confusing and very sad.

Jean Rhys, a British novelist, was born in August 1890, in Roseau, Dominica and she died in May 1979, in Exeter; aged 88. Her father was a Welsh doctor and her mother; white Creole. She grew up in the Caribbean island of Dominica, until she was 16, from then she mainly resided in England. She went to Drama School, became an actress and spent time in Paris. She earned acclaim for her early works set in the Bohemian world of Europe in the 20s and 30s, then stopped writing for nearly 30 years, until she wrote a successful novel set in the West

Indies. "Wide Sargasso Sea" a post-colonial prequel to Jane Eyre, for which she is best known.

She had three husbands and one daughter, born in Brussels.

She loved her daughter very much, according to the many letters she wrote to her but was mainly an absent mother.

Liberation by Imogen Kealey Inspired by the incredible true story of WW2 heroine Nancy Wake. To the Allies she was a fearless freedom fighter, special ops super spy, a woman ahead of her time. To the Gestapo she was a ghost, a shadow, the most wanted person in the world with a five million franc bounty on her head. This is a thriller about one woman's quest to save the man she loves, turn the tide of war, and take brutal revenge on those who have wronged her.

Jazz on the Farm On 20th August The Island Reading Group held a charity jazz evening at Lake Street Farm courtesy of Mr and Mrs David Guilding. Around 80 people were entertained by the brilliant Jazz Friday Big Band while they enjoyed their picnics. There was also a raffle. The evening raised £700 for Read With Me, a charity which helps children in local schools with their reading.

Another Book Review

(Not by the Island Reading Group)

Many of you may have seen and enjoyed the film 'Master and Commander, the far side of the World' starring Russell Crowe and Paul Bettany. The plot of this film was a tiny part of a vast story in 20 volumes by Partick O'Brien, O'Brien died during the writing of the 21st volume which therefore was never finished. The story concerns the adventures of Jack Aubrey and his friend Stephen Maturin during the Napoleonic Wars and later in the struggle of S American countries for independence.

Jack is a naval officer who, in the first book, despite having an affair with a senior officer's wife, is promoted to Master and Commander and given his first ship. In a later book he is promoted to Post Captain. Throughout, he proves himself to be a very skilled seaman with a sixth sense of where the enemy is and what they will do next. He is also the master of deception and disguise to bamboozle his enemies. He is

wounded many times but makes a fortune in prize money at sea. On land he is far less astute and loses much of his fortune to card sharps, spivs, insider dealers and prospectors much to the dismay of his long suffering wife whom he meets and marries in one of the early books. Stephen Maturin is a medical doctor and natural philosopher of international repute, who is not only the surgeon on Jack's ship but also a volunteer unpaid intelligence officer much valued by the Admiralty. He is also loved by the 'foremast jacks' for his medical expertise and care. In an early book a 'common seaman' is knocked senseless by a large block falling from the rigging which causes a depressed fracture of the skull. Jack later tells all and sundry that Stephen 'roused out the man's brains and set them to rights before covering the hole with a silver 3 shilling piece beaten into a dome shape by the ship's armourer.'

The great thing about these books is that they don't just tell the story, they actually take the reader into the late C18th and early C19th – the food, the clothes, the attitudes, the language. My favourite character is Preserved Killick, Jack's Steward and servant on board. He is a very rough diamond who seeing Jack in his best uniform coat about to attack an enemy ship says things like 'Not in that coat you don't; fair 'acked it will be, 'acked to pieces and all that nasty blood; I'll never get it out; gaud what a life.....Sir'.

Each volume stands alone; I read them first in the random order I acquired them. But then I read them in chronological order and am now on my 8th read through. O'Brien has been variously described as 'the greatest historical novelist of all time' and 'Jane Austen sur mer'. I can't recommend these books enough.

The titles of the 20 volumes are 1 Master and Commander, 2 Post Captain, 3 HMS Surprise, 4 The Mauritius Command, 5 Desolation Island, 6 The Fortune of War, 7 The Surgeon's Mate, 8 The Ionian Mission, 9 Treason's Harbour, 10 The Far Side of the World, 11 The Reverse of the Medal, 12 The Letter of Marque, 13 The Thirteen Gun Salute, 14 The Nutmeg of Consolation, 15 Clarissa Oakes, 16 The Wine Dark Sea, 17 The Commodore, 18 The Yellow Admiral, 19 The Hundred Days, 20 Blue at the Mizzen.

THJ

A Jamaican Adventure

Having coffee one morning at Bridgemacote, I discovered from a chance remark that Graham Littleton had, as a young man of 21, spent 6 months in Jamaica. My editorial antennae immediately latched onto this as a potentially interesting article for **The Bridge**. So an appointment was made to meet Graham again and learn more about his experiences.

Graham was a keen member of the Young Farmers Club in the early 1960s. At the time the YFC County Organiser was Margaret Smith who was supported by Gloucestershire County Council and whose job it was to promote the YFC as a youth organisation. There was a 'Freedom from Hunger Campaign' and through this the National YFC adopted Jamaica to be helped. Jamaica did not have its own YFC but did have 4H which had links with the YFC in Britain. Originating in the early 1900's as 'four-square education', the 4-H's (head-heart-hands-health) sought to promote positive youth development, facilitate learning and engage young people in the work of their community and through the Cooperative Extension Service to enhance the quality of life. 4H is particularly strong in the USA and Canada. The Ford Motor Co. gave its one-millionth tractor to Jamaica through 4H.

Learning that there was an opportunity for YFC members to visit and help Jamaica, Graham approached Margaret Smith who gave him an application form and told him to fill it in. He was interviewed locally, then at District level and finally in London. Eventually was told that he and another YFC member from Yorkshire had been selected to go to Jamaica. The national YFC raised money to help pay for the trip. They were to travel to the Caribbean on the SS Golfita, a ship used by Fyffes to bring bananas to Britain. The Golfita was a large ship - 8687 gross registered tons, 448 feet long and capable of 17 knots. She was able to carry a vast 1750 tons of bananas (some 140,000 'stems'). She carried general cargo (GB produced goods) outwards and bananas back, but she also had 94 cabins for passengers.

When they arrived in Southampton to join the ship Graham's father was unimpressed with the accommodation, but the Captain, who was from a farming family in Ulster, upgraded the two YFC travellers to

first class once they were at sea, as there were few passengers on board. Graham told me he lived like a king from then on. They took 10 days to reach Trinidad where there was a one day stop over to load some cargo. The two men and a female medical doctor going out to practise in Jamaica, hired a taxi for the day to look around the island. Then a further 3 hot days on the ship took them to Kingston Jamaica. When Graham arrived in 1964, Jamaica had been independent for only two years but much of the old colonial system persisted. The best land was devoted to large banana, sugar cane or coffee plantations owned by foreign Companies. The ordinary Jamaicans, who were mainly black and descended from African slaves, had to try to make a living from small pieces of land. Many found seasonal work on plantations at harvest time, but otherwise had to subsist on these small farms, often little more than gardens.

The YFC and 4H purpose was for the YFC visitors from England to help to encourage improvements in practical farming and animal husbandry to grow their own food and make the best of these small pieces of land. Graham moved around Jamaica staying in hostels or sometimes with families giving talks in schools and even teaching children to milk cows by hand. He had taken a set of colour slides of his farm in Elmore which the school kids found particularly fascinating. Often he was welcomed to each district or parish by the 'Custos', who was an official appointed by the Governor General of Jamaica to represent the government locally. Most of the families he stayed with were white but he did ask to stay with a black family and this he did despite the misgivings of his white hosts. The black family lived in a wooden shack with an outside toilet, no electricity and none of the luxuries we take for granted, but they were very kind and hospitable.

After a busy six months, during which Graham admits he 'grew up fast', he travelled back to the UK on the same ship. At home he quickly settled back into the busy farming life at Bridgemacote but in his spare time he gave talks about his time in Jamaica to local YFC and, he remembers, WI groups.

THJ

From the Parish Council

Elmore Parish Councillors, following concerns from residents over the years, have been considering different options and strategies around trying to encourage everyone to drive/ride safely and respectfully while in the Village. In essence this means driving at a safe/sensible speed so that you can react to potential hazards and other road users. We all know that the legal limit is 60mph on the roads within the Village, but that this is probably excessive when you consider the width, number of bends, high hedgerows and the fact we have no pedestrian footpaths beside the roads. This is even more important now, as the number of vehicles/visitors has increased because the new venues/attractions within the Village. The newly erected gateway signs have a positive impact on potentially slowing drivers down when entering the village, as they think they are entering a populated vibrant village. Hopefully, you agree the gateway signs are a good addition to the village and they go some way to making people think about their speed. We have recently bought 40 mph stickers as research shows that drivers will sub-consciously slow down to around the speed of the stickers when they spot them on bins. The idea is for villagers to attach the stickers to the green and black bins so they will be visible once a week. The hope is this will encourage drivers of vehicles to think about their speed and slow down if necessary. The legal speed limit has not changed, the stickers are merely a visual sign to prompt drivers to drive at a sensible speed. Most residents will shortly receive two 40 mph stickers through their doors and the Parish Council politely ask that you stick them on your bins. Hopefully this will have the intended impact and make our roads safer for all users.

Fly tipping continues to be a problem in the Village, so please keep a look out for suspicious behaviour. Can I also ask you to keep on reporting dangerous pot holes. It doesn't matter how many times the same pot hole is reported. Please log onto the Stroud District Council (SDC) website to report any issues you see; links can also be found on the Elmore Parish Council website. It is a very simple process.

As I mentioned last time, if you fancy becoming a parish councillor, just contact any of the Elmore Parish Councillors for more information.

If you think the Parish Council can assist you in any village related issue, then get in touch via the details on the back page, or come along to one of the meetings. The dates are published in the Bridge, on the Elmore Parish Council website and posted on the village noticeboards.
Nick Meek (Chair)

Your Village Needs You!

Saturday November 11th @ 10.30, Elmore Village Hall

Following the success of the first village litter-picking morning on May 8th, we have decided to make this a twice-a-year event, subject of course to willing volunteers!

We will be holding the second Elmore litter-picking morning on Saturday 11th November, starting at 10.30am from Elmore Village Hall. Like last time, we will separate into groups assigned to a particular stretch of our roads. With thanks to Stroud District Council (SDC), equipment will be provided – hi-vis jackets, litter-picker tools and bags (there will be a limited supply of these so please bring your own if you have them). We aim to finish around 12.30pm.

This is a great opportunity for families to get together for the village, so please try to join us even if you can only spare a little time. And let's hope the weather is kind.

Any questions please contact Hamish Pitt at Shard Cottage, 01452 698526 / 07817 656236, Hamish.pitt@hotmail.co.uk.

We look forward to seeing you.

Elmore Toddler Group is looking for your help!

Elmore toddler group has been active for decades and is still very popular. We need someone to take over the toddler group (which happens in the Village Hall on Tuesday mornings 10am until noon, term time only) so that it can continue for many more years. Please contact Jennifer on 07502007028 for more information.
Thank you!

Village Hall Update

EVH 'new season' started at the beginning of September.

New window curtains are now hung. The committee would like to thank Clare and Dorie for their work in making possible this new improvement to the Hall.

Projects for 2024 will now be discussed at the next Quarterly Meeting in January.

Many thanks to all users and supporters of the Hall

John Hardisty (Chair)

Bookings and enquiries 01452 721798 or pikelett@hotmail.com

Church of St John the Baptist Elmore

Our Church services continue on the 1st and 3rd Sunday each month, at 9.30am, and at 4pm on the 2nd and 4th Sundays. Please do come and join us. When I see in the Church and national press news of country Churches closing down I do sometimes worry about Elmore. Allocating just an hour a week to take a step back and sit in the presence of God and be uplifted by excellent music and worship is of immense benefit to mental and spiritual health. Use it or lose it, as they say!

On **Remembrance Sunday 12 November at 3pm** at the War Memorial we will honour those who are recorded on our war memorial, and others who have suffered from war, and still do.

The **Christmas lunch** will be on Sunday 10th December, in the Village Hall from 12noon.

Christmas services will be as follows:-

Sunday 17th December, 6.30pm, nine lessons and carols – at Elmore

Saturday 23 December, 3pm Christingle service - at Longney

Christmas Eve, 11.15pm, Midnight Mass - at Longney

Christmas Day, 9.30am, Holy Communion - at Elmore

Sunday 31 December, 11.00 New Year service - at Longney

We are hoping to begin some repairs to our roof shortly, and to decide upon a replacement pipe organ.

Do please be in touch if you would like to book a baptism or wedding in the Church – if you live in the parish you have the legal right to do so and we would be pleased to help you make your life event memorable and meaningful. You also have the right to have a funeral in Church and be buried or have your ashes interred in our Churchyard. God bless you and all you care for.

Rev Richard Martin 01452 720015, vicar@hardwicke-elmor-longney.church

Severn Side Singers.

In July, with Cheltenham Youth Choir and a couple of Gloucester primary schools, we took part in a community concert as part of the Three Choirs Festival. We were asked to contribute a song on the theme of "The Lark Ascending" by Vaughan Williams. We spent 2 rehearsals composing it and this is what we came up with, to the tune of the Gloucester Wassail song.

Wassail and good health to all our lands,
To the river that flows from the sea to the towns.
She's seen many changes as the years they roll by,
But the lark she still rises high in the sky.

We see the sea is fed by the river.
We see the river is fed by the sea.
We feel the rush and hear the roar
Bringing salmon and elvers from far way shore.

Old Aust has a high tide that reaches to heaven.
There's only one other that matches the Severn.
The bridges are wide reaching Wales 'cross the sea,
And you once paid a fee to enter Cymru.

The river is powerful, flows past Berkeley Castle
Where history was made and small pox was cured.
Power stations two are easily confused
And few can remember when they were last used

And here we're at Slimbridge with ducks, geese and swans.
The wetlands around us but Peter Scott gone.
He painted the ne ne and so they survived.
Flamingoes and cranes can be seen from a hide.

Sabrina she rolls and swings round the bends
Shaped like a shoe from a horse with its sands.
From Hock cliff and under the huge singing wires.
Round Arlingham Warth but beware of the mire!

And here we're at Frampton, Fair Rosamunde's green.
A mistress to Henry but never a Queen.
There's no chocolate crumb but boatyards for all.
The two canals join at the junction by Saul.

The Bore is a spectacle many have seen.
It roars past the villages and rushes upstream,
With surfers in wetsuits fulfilling their dream,
And boarders and boaters weaving between.

And so we come to where waterways meet,
With dock and gaol and places to eat.
Where once sailing barges brought life to the fray
Now tall ships and boats of all kinds come to stay.

Gloucester Cathedral has secrets galore
From Dr Who films, Harry Potter and more.
To honour three counties young and old meet.
We come to this place for a musical treat.

Wassail and good health to all of our lands,
To the river that flows from the sea to the towns.
She's seen many changes as the years they roll by
But the lark she still rises high in the sky,
But the lark she still rises high in the sky.

It was a pleasure to sing to a packed audience in the Cathedral with professional musicians.

This term we are looking forward to learning harmonies to carols old and new and sharing them with a few of the local congregations at Christmas.

We are a community choir with a young enthusiastic music director, David Armstrong. We meet at Frampton Village Hall on a Thursday evening at 7.30 to 9pm.

If interested please contact Pam Greenfield on 01452740126 or pam.g@btconnect.com.

Elmore WI

In August we all enjoyed a friendly skittles evening and supper at the Anchor.

In September we started the festive period off early by making wooden decorations under the watchful eye of craft teacher Jackie Ginley. Jackie also held a felting workshop in the hall which was very much enjoyed by those taking part.

Our October meeting saw Laura Gardiner-Wedge give us the history of Pilates and members took part in some gentle chair exercises.

We are also running a workshop in October with Caroline Lambert to make flowers from glass and wire.

Our November meeting will be our AGM followed by an insight into 'Dressing a Georgian Lady' by Kate Peake.

December will be our annual Christmas meal prepared by the committee.

We are in the process of arranging next year's programme. Details of which will be in the next edition of The Bridge.

1st Elmore Guides

During the summer holidays we went on our 10 year celebration camp to Brownsea Island (near Poole, Dorset) to celebrate the unit's tenth anniversary and we all had a fantastic time. The Guides enjoyed paddleboarding, kayaking, geocaching and bird spotting, we were

even lucky enough to see red squirrels and deer. We all made lovely memories and learnt new skills.

We have returned back in September and have been involved in the Frampton Country Fair and Frampton Sheep Racing events. We have helped by litter picking after the Frampton Fair by tidying the car parks. We have had a go at rugby with a local referee and learnt about the Rugby World Cup. We are looking forward to working on our Aspirations badge this term where we will have some guest speakers joining us from a range of careers.

If your daughter is interested in joining Brownies (7-10 years), Guides (10-14 years) or if you would like to volunteer at Young Leader/ DofE Helper (14-18 years) or Adult Leader (18+) please contact Catherine on Istelmore@gmail.com.

1st Elmore Brownies

Since returning to Brownies after the summer break we have started working on our Stage 3 Communication Skills, Builder and Baking Badges. As part of the Baking Badge we have baked and decorated gingerbread people. We have had a visit from The Canals and Rivers Trust who did a workshop on water safety with the girls, which everyone enjoyed. This week (11th October) we visited Pets at Home to learn how to look after our pets, which included hamsters, guinea pigs, rabbits, fish and wild birds. The girls prepared bedding boxes for some new guinea pigs and enrichment boxes for them as well; we all enjoyed our visit and being able to stroke the really cute guinea pigs.

ROTARY in the SEVERN VALE

Despite the changeable weather and annual holidays, we have maintained our regular breakfasts and ongoing community activities and social events. Speakers at our breakfasts have been:

Peter Richardson, Project Manager for Galliford Try, the engineering Company working on the enhanced Stroud drainage system which is regularly overwhelmed by prolonged periods of rain leading to

localised flooding, due to the Victorian system of combining storm drains with conventional sewerage. Treating these separately can alleviate the problem. This involves 1.5km of tunnelling through the town and a further 1.6km of open cut pipework ending at the Ryeford treatment plant, a large engineering project for Severn Trent, Peter gave a very professional presentation leading to many questions at the end.

Ed Davies, a fellow guide of **Rob Toseland** at the Jet Age Museum. Ed spent 24 years in the RAF, latterly as a weapons armourer on Vulcan Bombers. He gave a well illustrated talk on the various weapons deployed, particularly on the nuclear bombs and their development over the years. He ended with a description of the Black Buck raid on Port Stanley in the Falklands, and the number aeroplanes it involved with mid air refuelling in order to complete their long range mission. Another very popular presentation.

Daniel and James gave a presentation on behalf of Caring for Communities and People (CCP), to which we have previously donated. Their mantra is '*Preventing the causes and reducing the effects of homelessness, family breakdown and exclusion*'. Founded in 1989 and based in Cheltenham, they now cover six counties from Worcestershire to Dorset providing accommodation services for homeless young people aged 18-25. They currently have over 150 in either their own purpose built accommodation or with host families. They also provide a range of community based services . . .Family Advocacy, Parenting Classes, Foodbanks, School Holiday Survival Boxes, Christmas Hampers, etc. Funding is primarily through local authority tender, often picking up contracts where existing services have broken down or funding withdrawn. A passionate presentation prompting a flurry of questions and was allowed to overrun by more than fifteen minutes.

Louise Cook and Sue Parres from Longfield Hospice spoke about the services they provide, focused on '*helping people to live before they die*'. They offer a Home Hospice service, a Wellbeing Day Centre with numerous activities, together with ongoing counselling supporting affected spouses, partners and families and the patients

themselves. They are not funded by the government or the NHS, and so rely largely on donations. Louise had checked their records and found that over the years Rotary Club of Severn Vale had contributed £25,000 through our various endeavours.

Community Service and Fundraising continues with volunteer support at Longfield Fete and Frampton Country Fair together with the running the Arlingham Walk and our very successful annual Motoring Event. Social activities included Boules matches, a family BBQ and a visit to a Wind & Solar Farm near Shrivenham, which was followed an enjoyable traditional pub lunch.

If you'd like to come along to one of our breakfast meetings on first and third Tuesday of the month at The Whitminster Inn at 07.15, are interested in attending one of our events or would like to volunteer with us for one of our chosen charities, please visit www.severnvalerotary.org.uk or email keith.rog@hotmail.com

A Local Limerick

A late Bore surfer from Elmore
Rode the wave for three miles or more
But he didn't oughter
Have swallowed the water
Which contained raw sewage galore

The editor would welcome any more Local Limericks for publication in **The Bridge** (a family magazine, remember)

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Upcoming Parish Council Meeting Dates

Monday 4th December 2023

Tuesday 19th March 2024

Tuesday 21st May 2024 (Annual Meetings)

Tuesday 17th September 2024

Monday 2nd December 2024

All the above are held in the Village Hall, 7pm

Copy Dates for The Bridge 2024

Friday January 12th

Friday May 10th

Friday August 3rd

Friday October 11th

Please send any copy to the editor on or before the above dates. Regular contributors will be warned of each of the dates 2 to 3 weeks in advance. Hardcopy should be sent to Rose Cottage, Elmore, GL2 3NS and electronic copy to rosecottage1818@gmail.com