



UP2DATE



ISOLATION EDITION NUMBER EIGHT

The Pyracantha photographed above is one of three given to me by my Mum when I moved into this house nearly thirty years ago. Luckily, I took this photograph a month ago, there is hardly any berry on it at all now, the birds have stripped it.

My holly was also full of berry, all ready for Christmas, but this too is slowly being stripped. In this case, not just the birds but the squirrel who visits my garden regularly. I've never noticed a squirrel on the holly before but this one definitely is making sure he/she is getting its five a day. Interestingly the squirrel approaches the berries from the middle of the bush and is therefore able to get berries the birds can't reach.

Talking about Christmas, I am planning to produce another Isolation Special before the end of the year so if you have any contributions, especially ones with a Christmas or New Year theme, please let me have them.

Thanks to everyone who has sent a contribution for this magazine. Please keep on sending them, as I have said I will produce a magazine when I have enough. The addresses to send them to are below.

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Finally,

EVERYBODY TAKE CARE AND STAY SAFE

MUDLARKING

“Mudlark: A person who scavenges for usable debris in the mud of a river or harbour. Also a street urchin; a messy person, esp. a child.”



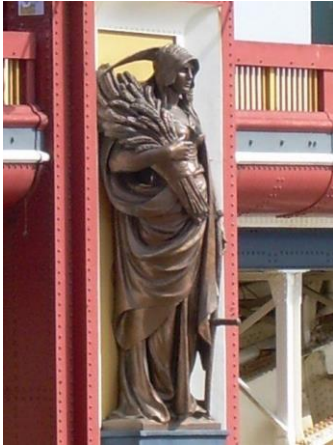
When I was lent a book called “Mudlarking” by Lara Maiklem I was expecting a book with a social theme about the poorer classes in Victorian England. I had not realised that mudlarking has become a popular pastime on the banks of the tidal reaches of the Thames in London, which includes anything to the east of Teddington lock. Modern mudlarkers fall into two categories, the hunters and the gatherers. Hunters include the metal detectorists and those who use trowels etc to dig for their finds whereas the gatherers just search on the surface of the beaches newly revealed by the tides for their finds. Both methods are permissible but by digging below the surfaces some “finds” not of interest to the metal detectorists could well be lost when the next tide cleans the surface. All people who mudlark need a permit and finds need to be reported to the Museum of London.

Lara, the author, has mudlarked on all stretches of the river, the finds can be varied, and cover all aspects of London’s history, from Roman near the site of London Bridge, Elizabethan in the vicinity of Greenwich and more modern ones towards the Thames estuary. In addition to telling stories about mudlarking and the many things she finds, Lara also tells of the history of her finds and many facts about the River Thames.



Clay pipes are plentiful, parts of pipes and sometimes full pipes can be found anywhere on the river banks. However, the early pipes were tiny, leading mudlarkers to call them “fairy pipes”. They were small because they were produced when tobacco was new. It was first introduced into England in the mid 16th century and very expensive. As smoking gained in

popularity not everyone was a fan. James 1st disliked it and wrote “A custome lothsome to the eye, hatefull to the Nose, harmefull to the braine, dangerous to the Lungs, and in the blacke stinking fume theof, neerest resembling the horrible Stigian smoke of the pit that is bottomeless”. What a shame he didn’t manage to influence the smokers of the day.



A different view of London can be seen from the river bank. Vauxhall Bridge is, when seen from the land, an ordinary bridge but from the Thames and its banks it is possible to see eight figures, all women, representing industry. They are the largest bronze figures in London and represent Pottery, Engineering, Architecture, Agriculture, Education, Fine Arts, Science and Local Government. (For those of you, like me, who have not seen London from the river, these statues are well worth a Google).

An unusual view of Tower Bridge taken from the foreshore of the Tower of London. In 1934 1,500 barge-loads of Essex sand were spread here to form a beach, the brainchild of the vicar of All Hallows church. King George V assured local children they “would have this tidal playground as their own for ever” and it was a great success offering children who had never seen the sea a taste of a visit to a beach. It was closed down during the WWII but then reopened and remained popular until concerns of pollution, safety and the cost of running caused it to be closed down in 1971.



So all in all a very good read on all levels, I would recommend it to anyone. I'll end with a quote from the beginning of one of the chapters.

"I have seen the Mississippi. That is muddy water. I have seen the St. Lawrence. That is crystal water. But the Thames is liquid history."

John Burns, Liberal MP 1892-1918

Ruth Faulkner

Pictures from Google

(Quotes in this piece were all taken from the book, "Mudlarking, Lost and Found on the River Thames." by Lara Maikem.)

STOP PRESS



You only have until the end of October to get your order in for the special Covid edition of our u3a calendar for 2021.

If you would like a calendar you need to send your order with your payment of £5 to Ron and Beryl Emerson. You will have their address from the email sent by Gill. If not contact me and I'll give you the details.

A VERY LONG TAIL

The "Powerballs" are nibbled.
I wonder who has been?
The culprit must be desperate
But inside, squeaky clean.

Squeaky is our first big clue.
Investigation must be the key.
Perhaps we ought to buy a trap
And then just wait and see.

So it's on to Amazon straight away
To see which trap to try.
Alas, no good old wire ones so
Plastic we are forced to buy!

Initially cheddar is the bait.
Just watch the darlings feast.
They gobble up immediately
And just wait to be released.

Through morning into evening
And always overnight,
They keep on being captured
And set free, to their delight!

Perhaps we should be marking them.
Let's dab with dots of paint
Then we can keep a tally
Of the ones with no constraint.

The marked ones soon desert us.
They somehow don't return
But send their friends and family
Who queue and wait their turn.

For four days we've been trapping.
Now two traps on the go.

Still they keep returning,
Their numbers grow and grow.

Let's keep them all together
And then we'll let them go.
Our legs are tired and aching
From going to and fro.

But one jumps and escapes us,
It hides in the garden shed.
At one a.m. this morning
We shoot up out of bed.

The house alarm is blaring!
Forgive us neighbours please,
Our small friend is exploring.
He's seeking yummy cheese.

The shed is clean and tidy.
We've moved the things around
All hiding places have been searched
No furry thing was found!

The windows were propped open,
But can they jump so high!
Their climbing skills are ample.
Did this one say goodbye?

The garage holes have been secured
So access is denied.
The grid is blocked with concrete plug
We know, for sure we've tried!!

Hello to number 32.
Welcome to the feeding station.
Won't someone tell us what to do
To halt this infestation.

And so it goes time after time,
There's always another taker.
We feed them up to set them free
Don't send them to their maker.

Of course we know what we could do
But we love these furry creatures.
Big ears, bright eyes and twitching nose
Their most endearing features.

No poisons here, no painful death
Their route to rodent heaven.
The motto here is let them go!
And just wait for 37!!

Our lives are dull. It's over now,
The high highlight of our lockdown.
No more we greet our customers
So cute, so sleek, so brown.

Those welcome friends don't visit now
Their absence breaks my heart.
Did Boris Johnson lock them down?
So we must keep apart.

Ann Jones.



Another gem from Judith Sumner

COVID 19 SELF TEST

A new and easy self-test for the horror of Covid 19 is doing the rounds and it's simple, quick and positive (or negative, if you see what I mean).

Take a glass and pour a decent amount of wine into it; then see if you can smell it.

If you can, then you are halfway there.

Then drink it.

If you can taste it then it is reasonable to assume you are currently free of the virus because loss of the senses of smell and taste is a common symptom.

I tested myself 7 times last night and was virus free every time, thank goodness.

I will have to test myself again today because I have developed a throbbing headache which can also be one of the symptoms.

I'll report results later.

Thank you, Judith, keep up the good work.



www.u3asites.org.uk/stockport

Don't forget you can always keep up to date if you use our website. Please keep on checking the website, even though now we are understandably not meeting, because there may be information from the many group leaders. Please encourage any members you speak to, to continue checking the website.



MOVING HOME

As you will know from the email sent by Gill in late September, we have to say farewell to Trinity Church as it will no longer be available for our monthly meetings. Our move to Trinity was reported in the June edition of Up2Date in

2012.

We have had some excellent speakers and happy times at Trinity including our thirtieth birthday in September 2015. Here are some photographs of our time at Trinity sent by Vivian.



The mayor cutting the birthday cake and Isabella with the banner which celebrated many of the groups in earlier days.





The Choir singing at (probably) a Christmas meeting.



Very brave volunteers dressed up to illustrate a talk.

“However, we have been able to make other arrangements and have booked Brookdale Club for when we are able to resume meetings”.



(Anyone with any memories they would like to share of our time at Trinity please let me have them for a future edition.)

WHEN WILL WE ALL MEET AGAIN

“When will we all meet again,
In thunder, lightning, or in rain?”

“When the hurlyburly’s done,
When the battle’s lost and won”.

In these times of stress and strain
Many turn to poetry again.
Poems learnt in school, for some a chore
Come tripping off the tongue once more.

So, keep a diary of these days
Future children to amaze.
“You lived through the pandemic?” they will gasp
To them it will seem far in the past.

Or put these memories down in rhyme
There’s never been a better time
(A budding Shakespeare could emerge)
Oh, scoff ye not, it’s not absurd.

“I must write to Uncle Bill
Lest he forget me in his will.”
(You’re thinking I’d do better than that)
So come on, don your rhyming hat.

Don’t let your talent go to waste.
The poetry group could be your place.
Hear a poem, perhaps read a few.
(You get a biscuit and a brew.)

Next year when meetings WILL resume
(Some say it’s not a day too soon.)
Do come and join our friendly group
We’d love to keep you “in the loop.”

Bernadette Wiltshire (Poetry Group Leader)

A quote used in a previous edition of Up2Date which for me is very apt
at present.

Marcus Tullus Cicero 106-43 BC

“If you have a garden and a library you have everything you need”