



by Sir Richard FitzHerbert



Power to the people... and the Royal Mail

My article in the October edition of this magazine mentioned the sorry state of our two village post boxes. This galvanised the locals to email in to Royal Mail to get them re-painted. No sooner had the issue been released than an artisan and his paint pot turned up to rejuvenate our postal pediments. As you can imagine the village greeted this with delight and I further discovered that the paint pot had been busily at work elsewhere in our DE6 postcode. Getting the directional white lines highlighted on the main road is our next objective. People power at its most productive!

A PISCATORIAL JINX

A trip to Scotland for two days fishing with the former High Sheriff and his gang brought with it a lot of laughter and banter but sadly no fish. It is now 18 years since I landed my only fish, a small grills, on the Tulchan Estate north of Aberdeen. Discussions over dinner and breakfast centred round a plethora of subject matter that could provide a whole tablemat set of modern day Bateman-style cartoons. My final day in the Highlands consisted of a busman's holiday trip to see the amazing Gordon Castle east of Inverness. Reaching the roof of this Gordon-Lennox stronghold was a feat in itself but the investment and the vigour poured into the estate by Angus and Zara was impressive to say the least! I came home with supplies of their plum and raspberry gins and much to ponder over on their plans for their own wedding venture. Needless to say, the morning I left two salmon were landed with a further dozen in the subsequent four days! I may be asked again but I fear I'm the unlucky mascot!

Lost lives

I never knew that our family had any connection with the public school Wellington College in Berkshire but a letter from their Head of History, Ben Lewsley, revealed that a former old boy, Arthur Richard FitzHerbert, had died 100 years ago in 1917 as a result of wounds received in the Great War. The school was attempting to contact relatives of all their OWs (Old Wellingtonians), 'to join the College in its annual Act of Commemoration on 11th November which the college has been organising since 2014 as part of our commemoration of the centenary of World War One.' After some research by my chief archivist the fascinating story of Arthur was revealed. Born in 1853 at Nettleworth Hall, Warsop, the son of Colonel Richard Henry FitzHerbert, the family in 1871 had moved to The Hall, Somersal Herbert where the colonel's description in that year's census was 'retired officer, landowner'. But young Arthur Richard, then 17 years old, was at Wellington College with the intention, probably, of graduating to nearby Sandhurst. The next mention of him is



of his death in action. Strangely he was not an officer, just a trooper in the New Zealand Army – the Wellington Mounted Rifles. (Did he fail to get into or make it through Sandhurst or is there some other explanation?) He had enlisted in August 1915, embarked in October 1915 and was mortally wounded in Gaza on 26th March 1917. He died of gunshot wounds to the face. He is described as a farmer, five foot seven inches, dark complexion, hazel eyes and iron grey hair and he was C of E. What is most fascinating about Arthur is why he was 'just' a trooper since at the time of his death he was 63 years old. My archivist surmises that perhaps he had had a career as an officer but when he volunteered in 1915 he had been regarded as too old for an active service commission. A century later one can only admire such bravery!

CHRISTMAS IS COMING

This year our Christmas theme will be 'Beauty and the Beast'. Since September David Walker from the village's Edward & Vintage sweet shop has been dressing our home for our great festive extravaganza. The ideas have been collated in his mind over the last year paying tribute to the story that 'is older than time itself', namely the unlikely bond between Belle and the Beast, a tale that has been translated into many languages and into several TV and film versions. Why not come and see David's interpretation... we shall be opening for the three weekends 18th-19th, 25th-26th November and 2nd-3rd December from 11am-3pm. Do join us.

Summer swansong

I breathe a sigh of relief as we bid goodbye to our final bride of the season. Weddings seem to take over our lives in the summer as we host 25 ceremonies. Each big day usually begins at 8am with myself letting the bride and her cohort into the Hall for hair, make-up and giggles over prosecco. After drink, dining, cake and entertainment the day ends with escorting the happy couple back to the Bridal Suite! It's been a happy summer for both our hard-working team and the newly-weds. Already we have a further 24 booked for 2018.

