



# THE SIGNAL

A Community Newsletter for  
KINNERSLEY-SARNESFIELD-LETTON- NORTON CANON- BROBURY  
STAUNTON-ON-WYE-MONNINGTON-ON-WYE-MOORHAMPTON

NO. 49

JULY 1986

PRICE 12p

## A Forgettable Day

THE best family outings should contain some ingredients which create memories to be recalled in the future. After visiting the National Garden Festival at Stoke-on-Trent I do not think that much actually connected with gardens is likely to be remembered.

The day was exceptionally windy, the price of entry (£4.50) a shade expensive, and the guide book at £1.95 a let-down. If the festival had perhaps been held later in the year it might have been more rewarding, with colourful displays such as those illustrated in the guide book more apparent.

As regards local features the guide book waxed lyrically about 'the Herefordshire Cider Garden by the County Council' (not, you will note, the Hereford and Worcester County Council) 'combines peaceful herefordshire' (small 'h') rural scenery'. It goes on to mention the bowling green where you could play or watch the summer-long tournament. If you had intended to play you would have had to take your own woods, for I did not see any - nor any likely players.

As for the advertised display of local industries and craft demonstrations in the hop kilns, the effects of recession must have been more dramatic than I had realised, for the display was non-existent. Never mind, we thought, let's sample some of Bulmer's Original Cider in the black and white marquee. Sorry, it's off - only Woodpecker from 'original' taps. Not the best advertisement - although the 'Sally' trees, apple trees and hops looked fine.

The advertisements said 'See the festival site from Britain's longest cable car run' - unfortunately not on the day we were there due to the wind.

I suppose a garden festival is the obvious place to buy a garden chair, but when you have to buy seven chairs which you must either take with you or collect before 7 pm it can be rather inconvenient and matters were not helped by the garden chair stand being almost the farthest point from the exit. It ended up by seven people carrying a chair each with an eighth clutching a mini-mattress. Fortunately they were light and easy to carry - in fact I would almost go as far as recommending visitors to carry a garden chair around with them at such events. You could then stand in comfort in the inevitable queue and have impromptu sit-downs whenever necessary. So, while some members of the

PLEASE NOTE THAT COPY FOR THE AUGUST ISSUE OF 'SIGNAL' SHOULD  
REACH TRISANNA, STAUNTON-ON-WYE (PHONE MOCCAS 517) NOT LATER  
THAN THURSDAY, 10TH JULY, 1986.

family are turning over every item on the jewellery or crockery stall you can sit down and enjoy a snooze.

The guide book map indicated a craft demonstration located on top of the giant mound which dominates the site near the Kenyan village. On the day we were there the occupants of the village must have fled at the sight and sound of the hordes charging up the slope waving their chairs. No occupants and no craft demonstration. After an impromptu sit-down and much studying of the map the horde proceeded to the only building anywhere near that located on the map. It was the right building but the craft demonstration had been cancelled through lack of support. But instead you could see The World's Smallest Horse, which since our visit has produced a foal about the size of a large cat. Very cute - presumably the idea is for everyone to have one in their garden.

The best part of the day came when we encountered the smell. We were just agreeing that we ought to be on our way home when the smell was wafted towards our nostrils and there around a corner was the doughnut stall - they were delicious. I shall long remember the doughnuts but I doubt if I will remember any of the gardens.

Rod Kilvert

### KINNERSLEY SUPPER DANCE

About three hundred people attended the supper dance at The Parkes Farm, Kinnersley on Saturday, 7th June. Dancing was to the Trevor Adams Country Band. Comedian Jerry Thomas gave a non-stop performance which was greatly enjoyed.

The event is expected to have raised nearly £1000 for Kinnersley Hall Trustees.

When a man steals your wife there is no better revenge than to let him keep her.

Sacha Guitry

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### LETTON CHURCH FLOWER FESTIVAL 12-13th JULY, 1986.

The festival will open on Friday night, 11th July with a Cheese and Wine Party at Old Letton Court (by kind permission of Mr. & Mrs. Cowap) commencing at 8 p.m. During the evening the Grand Draw will be made.

The church will be open from 11 a.m. onwards on Saturday and Sunday.

An extension of the festival will be a number of stalls including cakes, produce, 'Treasure and Trash,' and in particular an exciting and wide range of plants.

Strawberry and cream teas will be available on both days.

Ample car parking available adjacent to the church.

The final event of the weekend will be the Festival Service commencing at 6.30 p.m. which will be attended by the Hereford Church Singers.

Any further information about the weekend can be obtained from Mrs. S. Cowap, telephone Moccas 235.



## NORTON CANON LADIES' SOCIAL CLUB

AT our meeting in April - a cold evening - we thought that by June the weather surely would have improved enough for us to have a picnic at Bulmer's Lake. We imagined a balmy, light evening and all of us eating and drinking by the lakeside. How wrong can you be??

We picked a very wet evening (in case anyone has forgotten, it poured with very heavy rain, not just that evening but all night too.)

However, ten intrepid ladies decided that they would not be deterred and duly arrived at the lake complete with food, wine - and umbrellas!!

Due to the kindness of Mr. and Mrs. J. Worle we had the use of the chalet (hut isn't a good enough word at all) without which, of course, the picnic would have had to be cancelled.

Inside the chalet we were very cosy, and even though the rain was bouncing on the lake, with a great selection of food and wine spread out, we were snug and dry. In fact, by the time some of the food had been consumed and several bottles of wine sampled, the elements did not seem to matter.

As so few members were present we decided not to cut the cake so kindly presented to us in May by Fred Green at RAF Credenhill, but to wait until our next meeting.

We usually go out for a meal in July and have decided to visit the 'Salutation Inn' in Weobley to sample the excellent cold buffet there. This is usually served only at the weekend but as several members have tried it, we can thoroughly recommend it and hope that as many members as possible will come - and then we can sample the cake too! (Beside the cold buffet, other meals are available of course.)

It would be appreciated if some idea of the number of ladies attending could be given, so please let Mavis Stevenson (Weobley 318274) know if possible before 10th July.

We are looking forward to an enjoyable evening, so make a note in your diary of Monday, 14th July, 8.00 to 8.30 p.m. at the Salutation Inn in Weobley. (Anyone needing transport, please contact Weobley 318274.)

### JARVIS CHARITY, STAUNTON-ON-WYE

Almshouse to let.

Apply to the Clerk, Jarvis Trust Boardroom, Staunton-on-Wye.

The proceeds for Dr. Connor's Diabetic Clinic from the sale from a Car Boot in Kimmersley amounted to £62.81.

We extend our very best wishes for a speedy recovery to Mrs Louisa Hills of Morning Watch, Norton Canon, who is currently in hospital.

O God! Why did'st thou make the Vale of Pennant so lovely and the life of an old shepherd so short?

(From Welsh poet Eifion Wyn and quoted by Lloyd George.)

## ROYAL BRITISH LEGION EARDISLEY BRANCH

Two coloured television sets will give pleasure to residents at Crosfield House, the Royal British Legion Residential Home at Rhayader. They were donated by Eardisley Branch and Poppy Appeal helpers.

The President, Mr Jim Morgan, presented the sets at a social gathering at the New Inn, Eardisley, where members of the Eardisley Women's Section, Poppy Appeal helpers and branch members entertained some of the residents of Crosfield House. The branch Chairman, Mr D. Lavers, introduced the visitors.

Mr J. Cornelius, the manager of Crosfield House, described the work carried out at the home and expressed his most grateful thanks, as did a member of the House Committee who received the sets.

The next branch meeting will be held on Wednesday July 2nd commencing at 8 pm. This meeting will be held at the New Inn, Staunton-on-Wye (not at Eardisley) and it is hoped that as many as possible of service and ex-service personnel will attend.

### Poppy Appeal

The total raised in the district from June 1st 1985 to May 31st 1986 was £2,091.96. The Poppy Organiser, Godfrey Davies, wishes to thank everyone who helped in any way whatsoever to raise this record sum. In addition, the sum of £131 was raised and given to the branch towards the cost of the two television sets donated to Crosfield House.

The national total collected for the appeal was an all-time record - somewhere in the region of £8 million.

The next Bingo session for this appeal will be on Saturday July 5th. Eyes down at 7.45 pm in the Curzon Herrick Hall, Eardisley.

### COPIES OF 'SIGNAL'

'Signal' is available at 12p for each individual copy from:-

- Kinnersley Shop
- Moorhampton Stores
- Staunton P.O. and Stores
- The Old Corner House, Weobley
- Canon Motors, Norton Canon

## SALTMINE

Preliminary notice for September - but please keep reading!

An enthusiastic team of young people called Saltmine are visiting Weobley during the weekending 19-21st September.

Please keep your diary free.

The joint Churches have organised various events ranging from a Garden Party, Barbeque, Sports Afternoon, Supper and Joint Harvest Celebration.

All welcome.

Details of the many activities will be posted nearer to the time.

**WATCH THIS SPACE!!**

### ARROWVALE WINE CLUB

We had a most intriguing presentation by Mr. Duckett on 'British Telecom and the Community.' He evoked a magic response. In all my years with the Circle never have I heard such an animated question and answer session.

Only goes to show I suppose that if you want a lively subject choose one in which everyone is involved. It was an evening I shall not forget easily and one can only hope that our wine deadened any feelings by Mr. Duckett that he was under personal attack. He wasn't and he must come again.

Gareth Evans

Never speak ill of yourself; your friends will always say enough on that subject.

Talleyrand

All tragedies are finished by a death, all comedies are ended by a marriage.

Byron

## READER'S LETTERS

In the article by Richard Pantall about the goings-on in the Wild Westcountry in the early Middle Ages, he mentions the 'raid' by Eardisley notables, including the vicar, on Miles Pychard's property and servants, and the subsequent Judicial Commission which was set up. He may not be aware that a decision was reached by the Commission, or at least it would appear so from the final few words in the Patent Rolls - 'By fine of 20 shillings.' If this was the punishment handed out then, even by the standards of the time, it was well below the level expected and does suggest some degree of coercion was exerted by the defendants on the Commission!

There is the faintest of echoes of this dreadful act still to be found in Eardisley by observant visitors to Eardisley church. Most people miss the oldest gravestone in the building which possibly forms the link. It lies in the floor of the east end of the south aisle and is that of Edmund Fitz. The lettering, which has been broken, indicates a Norman-French inscription, and it may be that Richard Fitz le Vikere could have been of the same family. Exactly what ecclesiastical standing, if any, belonged to Richard is very

much in doubt for there is no such name in Bishop Swinfield's Register as vicar of Eardisley. However, it was not unusual for quite unsuitable, untrained persons to be appointed as priests, vicars or rectors. In fact around the same time as the raid one of the Eardisley Baskervilles, a lad of 16, was presented to the rectory of Weobley. Fortunately for the inhabitants of Weobley the Bishop of Hereford refused to admit the boy to this important post.

David Corvett  
Eardisley

Re: Thoughts from our A.G.M.

Just one provoked reaction from me - anti, I'm afraid. That 'there should be regular monthly articles on gardening and cookery.'

Every magazine one picks up contains these subjects and there are local clubs and W.I.'s which specialise in them.

Surely as rural inhabitants we can try to 'keep our horizons wide.' \*

Rose Whalley

\* From Greer Garson's advice to model girls - 'keep your horizons wide and your hips narrow.')

### COFFEE EVENING

A total of £242 was raised at the Coffee Evening in aid of St. Mary's Church Staunton-on-Wye held on June 12th. The Parochial Church Council extends most grateful thanks to the many people who helped to make the evening such a success, whether as donors, purchasers or organisers - in particular the helpers who came over specially from Weobley.

The sum of £20 has also been donated to the church from the collection taken at the funeral of Mr Jim Price on May 29th. The remainder of the collection, amounting to £60, was donated to Cancer Research.

### THOUGHTS FROM THE SADDLE

When walking in the school  
I sit upright and look cool.  
My trotting is supreme  
And I canter like a dream.  
Hacking around the road  
I observe the highway code,  
And my cross-country and eventing  
Are very, very tempting.  
Then you should see me in the menage  
At my super-classy dressage -  
But I am at my most able  
When the horse is in the stable!

A Rider



## PATHFINDERS NEWSLETTER

At the AGM held on 12th May at Almeley School, Andrew Johnson was elected as co-ordinator for a final year, and Rosemary Wolstencroft was elected as treasurer.

A summer walk programme was arranged as follows:

Sunday 13th July: Meet outside the Kinnersley Arms at 11 am. Walk to be led by Andrew Johnson (tel: Eardisley 344)

Saturday 9th August: The annual barbecue walk! Meet outside Almeley School at 6.30 pm for a walk led by Cyril Walker (tel: Eardisley 575) with a barbecue en route at Little Logaston at roughly 8 pm. This year we will make a charge for the barbecue, for which members will pay less - so pay your membership if you haven't already.

Sunday, 7th September: Meet outside Almeley School at 2.30 pm. Walk to be led by Fred Rose (tel: Eardisley 523.)

### Other activities:

We will request a batch of 10 or so signposts to erect around Almeley Parish as a start to fulfilling the County Council's responsibility for carrying this out. Later in the year we may request a further batch.

Andy Johnson will produce a letter we can send to landowners/farmers who have problems on paths which cross their land and who may therefore want to carry out a waymarking scheme.

We will be printing a further 100 copies of our pamphlet as these have sold well, but this will still leave us with £50 or so in the account, and this amount should increase as sales of the pamphlet continue. So let us have your ideas as to how we should spend this money.

## WEOBLEY AND DISTRICT LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY

ON 13th May quite a number of members were able to take advantage of a fine spring evening to visit both the Black Hall barn at Kings Pyon and a reconstructed cruck barn in Eardisland. Although the former was bigger by far, the problems involved in its transfer to Weobley would be much the same as those experienced by Mr. John Green - a builder/architect who had rescued the barn, scheduled for demolition in Hay-on-Wye - and re-erected it in his orchard in Eardisland where it became an integral part of his home.

The History Society members were encouraged to wander at will through the building and to ask pertinent questions which Mr. Green was only too pleased to answer and allay some of the doubts consequent on this domestic tour.

The whole evening was a pleasant and thought-provoking experience posing as many questions as answers.

For the future the next expedition will be an afternoon visit on 9th July to Moccas Court followed by tea and viewing at the Wormhill Farm museum near Eaton Bishop. Those interested should get in touch with Mr. D.T.R. Dighton at Claypits Cottage, Yazor, Hereford HR4 7BB. Tel: Weobley 318116.

From 4th-13th July an extensive exhibition depicting the history and development of Hereford Cattle will be held in the Willow Gallery in Weobley when various documents, paintings etc. will be on display.

Thieves respect property. They merely wish the property to become their property that they may more perfectly respect it.

G.K.Chesterton

## BIRTHDAYS

## Church Notices

A VERY HAPPY 18TH BIRTHDAY TO SHARON SWEET OF NORTON CANON ON 16TH JULY, TO ANGELA PUGH OF MONNINGTON-ON-WYE ON 28TH JULY, AND TO ALISON MORGAN OF MONNINGTON-ON-WYE ON 18TH JULY.

### JULY

#### Norton Canon

Gail Griffiths 2nd July  
Lucy Hewett 6th "  
Hannah Wrixon 23rd "

#### Sarnesfield

Colin Phillips 2nd July

#### Moorhampton

Sarah James 8th July  
Terna Evans 24th "

#### Kinnersley

Lynne Sutton 10th July  
Michael Hemming } 16th "  
Sarah Hemming }  
Sophie Jacobson 20th "  
Joseph Phillips 20th "  
Andrew Parish 30th "

#### Staunton-on-Wye

Andrea Spragg 14th July  
Johanne Bool 19th "  
Diana Davies 21st "  
Stephanie Arthur 26th "  
Helen Stokes 27th "

#### STAUNTON-ON-WYE

#### ENDOWED PRIMARY SCHOOL

On Saturday July 12th we are holding a Summer Pete on the school playing field. Not only would we like you all to come, but we would also welcome anyone who would like to run a stall for the school fund, either one of their own or to help with stalls we have already planned. If you would like to help in any way, ring me at school and I can tell you when the next meeting is. The school telephone number is Moccas 331. I hope I am inundated with phone calls!

M.B. Tipton  
Head Teacher

#### Sarnesfield

10.00am

13th Holy Communion  
27th Morning Prayer

#### Norton Canon

9.00am

6th Holy Communion  
13th Morning Prayer  
20th Holy Communion  
27th Family Service

#### Staunton-on-Wye

11.00am

6th Holy Communion  
13th Morning Prayer  
20th Holy Communion

#### Byford

9.30am

6.30pm

10.00am

6th Holy Communion  
20th Evening Prayer  
27th Family Service

#### Monnington-on-Wye

9.30am

13th Holy Communion

#### Letton

6.00pm

13th Flower Festival  
Evening Prayer  
27th Evening Prayer

#### Kinnersley

10.00am

6th Holy Communion  
13th Morning Prayer  
20th Holy Communion  
27th Family Service

## HAVING PROBLEMS WITH YOUR CAR?

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# Herefordshire's Stately Homes

by M.B. COLLINGWOOD

(Concluded from June issue)

It is impossible in a short article to mention every notable mansion or country house in Herefordshire, but the following is a list of what may be considered to be the most outstanding examples:-

Berrington Hall near Eye. Built by Henry Holland between 1778 and 1781. It has a seven-bay front with a tall portico. One of Herefordshire's finest mansions, it has beautiful grounds designed by Capability Brown and is owned by the National Trust.

Brinsop Court. A 14th century house of sandstone with later timber-framed work. It was at one time the home of Wordsworth's brother-in-law, and the poet visited it on more than one occasion.

Brockhampton Park near Bromyard. An 18th century house of red brick, now used as offices. Its outbuildings are in the process of being converted into an imaginatively-designed housing estate. A National Trust property set in a beautiful park which is open to the public, as is the picturesque Lower Brockhampton Manor a mile distant, flanked by a moat and gatehouse, the whole being one of the most frequently photographed buildings in the county.

Croft Castle. Still inhabited by the Croft family who built it in the late 14th century, it is now a National Trust property situated in an extensive park. One of Herefordshire's most popular houses from the visitor's point of view.

Dinmore Manor on the slopes of Dinmore Hill. A modern house on mediaeval foundations, with fine gardens open to the public on occasions.

Downton Castle. Built by Richard Payne Knight in the 1770s in mediaeval style in a commanding position overlooking the River Teme. The romantic castle par excellence.

Eastnor Castle by Sir Robert Smirke. Built around 1812 for the Somers family who still own it. Similar in style to Downton Castle, it was used in the early 1970s as the setting for the TV film 'The Pallisers'.

Eye Manor. Built in the 1670s. Rather plain on the outside, but has beautifully decorated plaster ceilings.

Hampton Court near Hope-under-Dinmore. Originally built in the 1430s but extensively remodelled around 1700. The gatehouse is the most important surviving 15th century building.

Gatley Park, Leintihall Earls. Romantically situated in a wooded valley. 17th century with 19th century additions.

Lucton School. Founded as a school by John Pierrepont in 1708, it has a fine statue of the founder over the doorway. Following the recent closure of the school the future of the building is uncertain.

Garnons, Byford. Built about 1860 as an addition to a house designed by William Atkinson in 1815. It was originally considerably larger than it is at present. The grounds were landscaped by Humphry Repton.

Moccas Court. Built in the 1770s by Anthony Keck to Robert Adam's designs. A red brick house in a fine position overlooking the Wye. The grounds were landscaped by Capability Brown.

Pembroke Castle near Llanrothal. A well-preserved border castle dating from the 13th century with 17th century additions.

Treago Castle, St. Weonards. The home of the Mynors family since the 14th century. Extensively altered in the 17th, 18th and 19th centuries.

Nearly all the above houses are still inhabited, but there are other good examples which have been put to other uses, including Canon Frome Court (a school), Holme Lacy House (a hospital), Kinnersley Castle (a retirement home) and Pudleston Court (a school).



Among the smaller mansions and manor houses perhaps the most noteworthy are Almeley Manor, Amberley Court, Bollitree Castle near Weston-under-Penyard (a 17th century house with bizarre Gothic outbuildings), Lantley Court (with its picturesque dovecote), The Butthouse, Kings Pyon (with its half-timbered gatehouse), Burton Court, Bardisland, Hellens near Much Marcle, Court of Noke near Staunton-on-Arrow (the grounds of which are carpeted with daffodils and narcissi in early spring) and The Ley near Weobley, a 16th century house which exhibits the black and white half-timbered style at its most lavish.

## July in the Garden

THIS month we can begin to enjoy the fruits of our labours in the vegetable garden. To keep in peak condition after gathering put cauliflowers, lettuce, peas or beans into a polythene bag to avoid dehydration and store in the frig to keep cool. Always try to gather crops early in the morning.

To keep a succession in your vegetable plot French Beans, Beetroot, Spring Cabbage, Lettuce and early varieties of Peas should be sown this month. Cabbages for autumn and Leeks and Broccoli for winter and Spring harvesting can now be planted.

Potatoes are ready for the final earthing up and a spray against blight is advisable. I have found that this blight attacked outdoor tomatoes so I always spray my tomato plants when spraying potatoes. Aphids are now in full cry and need to be kept under control.

If the promised dry spell does arrive make sure that French and Runner Beans are kept well watered. A mulch around the roots will help to conserve moisture.

In the Ornamental Garden we can now increase the number of our favourite shrubs. Take half ripe cuttings of forsythia, philadelphus, potentillas and weigelas. Choose short lateral growths of young wood just growing hard at the base; pull off with a heel and cut off the very soft tip and put in rooting medium (see below.) Cuttings of heather (*Erica carnea*) can also be taken as soon as the young growths are 1" long.

This week on Gardener's Question Time a question was asked about the value of rooting cuttings in 'Gel.' The panel agreed that this new gel was very good but expensive and a cheaper and equally effective alternative is a container of perlite and water. I have tried the gel and found it good but shall certainly be trying the suggested alternative.

Spring flowering bulbs will have died down and now is a good time to lift, divide, sort and grade them. Replant the large and medium bulbs for your display next Spring and plant the small ones in a spare piece of ground to grow on until they are larger. Do dead head as regularly as possible. This not only improves the look of your garden but also promotes the growth of more flowers.

There are still more tasks in the greenhouse and fruit garden and so the list continues. I find that by writing these articles I am reminded of all the gardening tasks that lie ahead in July and hopefully shall become a better gardener myself.

One Green Finger

## RECIPES

### BEEF LIVER IN WINE SAUCE (Serves 4)

- 1 lb. beef liver
- $\frac{1}{2}$  pt red or white wine
- 5 tbs oil
- 1 tsp marjoram
- 2 sliced onions
- 2 oz flour
- 1 tsp salt
- $\frac{1}{2}$  tsp black pepper

Slice liver, marinate in 3 tbs oil, wine and marjoram. Stand for 1 hour. Meanwhile lightly brown onions in 2 tbs oil. Remove liver from marinade, dry, coat in flour, season, sauté with onions till brown. Add marinade and cook over low heat until liver is tender and sauce has thickened.

### MANGO MEATBALL APPETIZERS

- 2 lbs good minced beef
- 1 inch green root ginger, grated
- 2 onions finely chopped
- $1\frac{1}{2}$  cups fresh breadcrumbs
- 2 tbs lemon juice
- 2 tbs oil
- 2 tbs chopped mint
- 2 cloves garlic crushed (or to taste)
- $\frac{1}{2}$  tsp salt and pepper
- 2 beaten eggs
- 1 extra cup of oil

Combine all ingredients except the extra oil. Roll into small balls and fry in the extra oil until golden brown. Serve on a toothpick with this sauce as a dip:

#### Mango Sauce

- $\frac{1}{2}$  cup mango chutney
- $\frac{1}{2}$  tsp curry powder
- 200 g carton natural yoghurt

Combine all ingredients in processor (or beat well) until smooth.

Barbara Ridge

## KINGTON AND WROBLEY DEANERY

### FAMILY FUNDAY

AT

EARDISLEY

SCHOOL AND CHURCH

Saturday, 9th August, 1985.

10.30 am - 5.00 pm

E	Entertainment
A	Art
R	Religion
D	Displays
I	Inspiration
S	Speakers
L	Literature
E	Education
Y	You Need Us
	We Need You

Light Refreshments Available

Bring a picnic Lunch

Contributions to Cover Cost

Heard at a party: 'What does your husband want to do when he grows up?'

'Hello dear. One of the ducks you were out shooting yesterday called and left her number.'

'Ten years ago I married a girl who looked like a siren. Now she just sounds like one.'

#### NIGHT ADVENTURES

At night owls come out and fly about,  
The stars peep and children sleep,  
And mice creep and foxes leap,  
And the flocks creak.  
What's that? It's a rat!  
The cats cry and bats fly,  
Moths fly around a candle light,  
And owls' eyes are bright,  
And sleepy heads are in their beds.

Penny Compton (aged 7)  
Byford



## ROMEO AND JULIET UP-TO-DATE

by Cathy Evans (Aged 15)

MY idealistic images of Romeo and Juliet were shattered when I saw the modern production of this play in Stratford-on-Avon. I used to think of Romeo as a dashing, romantic hero as brave as he was handsome, who knelt beneath his dearly beloved's balcony professing his undying and devoted love.

I imagined Juliet as a beautiful young maiden with long flowing tresses wearing gorgeous, elaborate ball gowns, totally engulfed in love for her precious Romeo.

At Stratford Romeo was portrayed as a puny little weed who looked as if he was in dire need of a crash course in weight training. Juliet teetered on stage in high heels and a mini skirt. I half expected her to murmur on the balcony 'Romeo, Romeo, where the 'eck are you?'

It was strange to watch because of the extreme contrasts - ultra modern costume and old fashioned, lyrical language.

Mercutio zoomed around stage on a huge trendy motorbike. Unfortunately, not all of the actors had such superior style, most preferring to whizz around on bicycles and rollerskates.

At the Capulets ball, the dancers raved it up with rock'n roll music. Tybalt proved he was not just a pretty face and played the blues on the saxophone.

Romeo and Mercutio nursed their king sized hangovers with black coffee and Rennie's indigestion tablets.

Tybalt made a spectacular entrance with his Mafia-type gang. He drove a flashy red sports car and he wore tight black leather and stud belts. He and Romeo fought with chains and flick knives. (I think it was a miracle that repellent Romeo managed to eliminate tough Tybalt at all.)

Lord Capulet ordered his entire household to jump at the mere press of a button. This was possible with the aid of his Intercom system.

In this weird and wonderful play, Romeo did not gulp down the traditional poison as expected. He decided to liven things up and inject himself instead. However, this did not fit in too well with the rest of the play, because Juliet tried to frantically kiss him to salvage some poison (what poison?) from his lips. It wasn't quite so romantic when she began to suck his arm!

After the lovers had been despatched to their great honeymoon in the sky, the Capulets and Montagues finally became reconciled, and two golden statues were erected in honour of their children.

Perhaps the production was not as romantic as more traditional versions. Maybe the acting wasn't wonderfully brilliant, but the play was completely new and different.

The moral of the story is: Do as your parents say, and not as they do, or you'll wind up in a tomb!

## ON HEROISM

THESE days it is with trepidation that I even open a newspaper or switch on the TV - the news is so grim and depressing. Nuclear disaster, rampant unemployment, murder, civil war, child abuse - it never seems to end. How marvellous, therefore, to discover that all is not gloom and doom as this splendid tale of human grit and courage will, I am sure, prove. May it cheer you up as much as it did me.

Peter Brooke (61 and an ex-RAF fighter pilot) had just retired from ICI when, with his wife Rosemary, he decided to travel to New Zealand to stay awhile with relatives. It was on this trip that tragedy struck. No one even now seems sure of the cause but, soon after arrival in New Zealand, Peter contracted an illness which necessitated the urgent amputation of both legs as well as some of his fingers.

In the face of such an appalling personal catastrophe it has been the reactions of both Peter and his wife that have impressed me so much. I cannot do better than put everything into their own words:

'We have had the most wonderful care here in Dunedin Hospital and what has impressed us most has been, not only the help from our own families in UK, but also the marvellous kindness of everyone we have met here in New Zealand.'

'I know that I now have to do things that will help me to keep going mentally. It's a matter of finding out just what I can do. I've simply got to face up to things because it's no good harking back and saying 'If only....' It's been pretty lazy lately and it's only when you find that you can no longer pick up a glass or get out of bed that what's happened really hits you.'

'I've got a lot of hard thinking to do. Life does have these outrageous bits in it and, if you are one of the unlucky ones, you just have to deal with them as they occur. I do bitterly regret the things I'll never be able to do again but there are others to enjoy and I'm going to concentrate on those. I've had an adventurous life which I have taken to the full so I don't feel I can really complain. And what I shall always remember is the marvellous help and kindness Rosemary and I have received - from both ends of the earth.'

This really is heroism and if any of you out there know of any similar example do please tell us. You'll cheer us all up.

Jack Whalley

(P.S. You may like to know that Peter now drives a specially adapted car, oil paints, keeps bees and still goes on overseas holidays. Some people you just can't keep down.)

When a man tells you that he  
'doesn't suffer fools gladly'  
what he really means is that he  
always makes a point of being  
rude to anyone who doesn't think  
as he does.

(Rose Whalley)

Cats look down on you  
Dogs look up to you  
But pigs is equal.

(Bernard Miles - Country  
Sketches)