

APRIL 2024

The Rousdon Estate Owners' and Residents' Newsletter

BEACH PATH 'OFF LIMITS'

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For advertising details and rates contact Sylvia Stride on 01297 443718

As Rousdoners will know, the Beach Path was closed a few weeks ago because of a major landslip where the path goes along a short boardwalk over a stream. A big section of cliff has collapsed and the problem is that the whole area around the slip is still very unstable.

Judith Ellard, chair of Allhallows Ltd who has the responsibility for the upkeep of the Beach Path told The Rousdoner 'We can't do anything to repair the path until the land down there stops moving. And while it continues to rain the land just keeps on slipping. We can't survey the damage properly until it is stable again.'

It is highly dangerous to go down the Beach Path at present. Because it is so wet there is the possibility of trees coming down as well.

Natural England has opened the main South West Coast Path but that does not go past the landslip that is affecting our Beach Path.

Judith said 'Unfortunately there is no timeline for repairs to the path because everything is dependent upon the weather. We've got to be sensible about this and find a suitable solution at the right cost.'

So until further notice, the Beach Path has to remain 'off limits'.



FROM THE CHAIR by ROAR Chairperson Glynis Preshaw

Dear Rousdoner

I hope you and your families have had an enjoyable Easter break despite excessive rainfalls and windy days. Certainly the winter/early spring storms have taken their toll on trees, beach huts in Seaton and landslips along the coast, our own Charton Beach currently no longer being accessible from the beach path. Many thanks to all those on our Estate who work so hard to remedy the destructive effects of our inclement weather.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank our Social Activities Group for organising a very interesting visit to the Norman Lockyer Observatory in Sidmouth which was very well attended. As well as learning about Sir Norman Lockyer and touring the Observatory I learnt about The Astronomer of Rousdon. Charles Grover was a working class self educated astronomer who travelled in 1882 as the assistant of Cuthbert Peek, son of Sir William Henry Peek to Australia to observe the transit of Venus. In 1883 Grover and his family moved to Rousdon where he was appointed resident astronomer at the Rousdon Observatory established by Peek on the Estate, as well as curator of Peeks private museum. He is buried in the grounds of St Pancras Church.

Sylvia and the Social Activities Group also arranged a most enjoyable Skittles & Supper Evening in March at The Tuckers Arms in Dalwood. Sadly my skittles skills show little sign of improvement! The Social Activities Group are in the process of planning activities for the forthcoming summer months.

It is good to see that Jurassic Discovery in Seaton, next to Seaton Tramway, has now opened its doors, initially to a Soft Play Area and Cafe. I am looking forward to taking our 5 year old grandson there. They offer 2 hour play sessions for children between the ages of 2 to 12 years. In the summer they will be opening an interactive exhibition which will take visitors on a journey through time showcasing the incredible diversity of prehistoric life and featuring animatronic dinosaurs.

The ROAR AGM is to be held on Sunday 2nd June. If any residents would like to become members of the ROAR Committee please contact Jill Tollafield, the Secretary, for a nomination form or if you would like to find out a little more about what it involves first, then please either contact me or one of the other members of the Committee.

Best wishes

Glynis

FROM THE EDITOR by Taylor Downing

There seems to be a lot going on around the Estate at present. The winter storms, continuous rain and strong gale force winds are reported by Pluvius as always on the back page. But some of the consequences of this are featured on the front page with the Beach Path closure and on p. 11.

There's an interview with Mike Hansell after his successful Easter Quiz with a Will He? Won't He? ending; a thoughtful and thought-provoking piece about Artificial Intelligence from Chris Bryan; and there are lots of reports and accounts of what Rousdoners have been up to recently.

I have a new book coming out in May to mark the 80th anniversary of D-Day - one of the great turning points of the Second World War. I'm grateful to the ROAR Committee for allowing me to include an extract in this issue. This forms part of a feature coming out in the Sunday Times Magazine in May.

Many thanks to everyone who has contributed to this issue. Please keep words and pictures coming in to: taylordowning@flashbacktv.co.uk
Many thanks. Taylor

This copy of The Rousdoner, as always, has been printed locally and we would like to reassure readers that the printers have observed all government guidelines on health and safety. The World Health Organisation has confirmed that porous surfaces carry the lowest risk of contracting Covid-19 and so the risk of contamination from paper delivered to your home is infinitely small.

ROAR COMMITTEE NEWS



Following are the *edited* Minutes of the ROAR Committee Meeting held on 8 April at 7pm. Full copies of the Minutes are available on the Rousdon website: www.rousdonestate.com

Present: Glynis Preshaw (Glynis) Chair; Anne Fleming (Anne) Vice Chair; Sylvia Stride (Sylvia) Treasurer; Warwick Bergin (Warwick); Jeremy Powell-Tuck (Jeremy); Jill Tollafield (Jill) Secretary. Apologies had been received from Graham Mackrell. Alex Preshaw (Alex) was co-opted for a part of the meeting to represent Allhallows Ltd

Open Forum: Laura O'Rourke and David Whalley were present to ask for corrections to be made to the Minutes of the last meeting. They had hoped to be at this last meeting but were too ill to attend so had sent two letters instead. Firstly, the event in Laura's letter about Sunday working in Stable Courtyard did not refer to an emergency as the Minutes claimed. They would never attempt to prevent work on an emergency. Secondly, Laura pointed out that in her Covenants it said that only cars and not vans could enter the Courtyard. She asked for clarification. Alex explained that the Covenants related to owners of properties whereas Allhallows as the owner of the common parts was not subject to the same restrictions but must use their reasonable endeavours to keep everything in the best order. He agreed that, of course, owners had the right to privacy and to enjoy the use of their property. It was recommended that as a courtesy, owners should be informed if Allhallows had authorised commercial vehicles to be present near their property. David complained that the account in the Minutes of the dog attack upon him had not been recorded properly. He wanted it to be made clear that neither he nor Laura wanted dogs to be kept on a lead at all times on the Estate but that they should be kept under control. This was agreed by the Committee. Graham Mackrell had also requested that the Minutes recording the reported dog attack be changed as comments about the incident at the last meeting had been made by persons who were not present. It was agreed that these comments should be taken to amend the relevant sections of the previous Minutes.

Correspondence: Glynis read out a letter from Katy Ponsford asking for clarification on an issue. The website makes it clear that large vans and commercial vehicles are not allowed on the Estate. Katy wanted to know if this related to delivery vans and to people renting properties on the Estate who might own a van. Alex explained that whilst it was Allhallows intention to keep the Estate 'Residential' Allhallows had no problem with delivery vans coming on to the Estate. The more difficult issue was to decide what constituted 'a commercial vehicle'. He also pointed out that because of how the previous owner had sold properties on the Estate, not everyone shared the same Covenants. The Committee agreed to ask Allhallows for clarification.

Sylvia also reported that Anne Collier had thanked ROAR for their Christmas presents.

Estate Matters: Glynis reported that the Beach Path was currently closed because of a landslip [see front page].

ROAR Finances: Sylvia reported on the bank balances: Current A/c £714; 100 Club - £1,656; Bonus Saver A/c - £8,876 (this included £1,464 from the 100 Club for the year 2023-24 that had not been spent as yet). Sylvia urged Rousdoners to renew their 100 Club payments or to join if they were not members.

Social Activities: Sylvia reported there would be a visit to Beer Caves on 20 May. And there would be a charity Garden Party on the afternoon of Saturday 29 June at North Lodge. The monthly coffee mornings at Koffie had been popular but would not be continued through the summer when Koffie was busy.

Sylvia also said that Mike Hansell was hoping to organise more Skittles Evenings at Peek Hall and hopes to get more people to help raise funds towards repairing the bell tower. Warwick said that he hoped it would be possible to organise a BBQ by the lake at some future point.

Environment: Anne reported that over the last few months the Environmental volunteer team had concentrated on evaluation and laurel clearing, focussing on Ladies Walk. However, the heavy rains of recent months had made most clearing work impossible. It was hoped to resume the laurel clearing and continue work on controlling ground ivy on the Main Drive when the weather improved. Alex confirmed that Allhallows had approved the idea of an orchard and tree nursery, but work had not begun yet.

Website: Chris Perrett had reported that the merging of the two websites had gone ahead successfully and he was updating the site when he had information to post.

Any Other Business: Jeremy reported that he was having difficulty with ordering the renewal of supplies from Calor Gas and he was interested to know if others were having similar difficulties.

The date of the next meeting was set to precede the AGM on Sunday 2nd June 2024.

With no further business, the meeting ended at 9.10 pm.

THE ROUSDON QUIZ

Mike Hansell organised another excellent Quiz Evening on Easter Saturday. The Rousdoner met Mike to ask about the past - and the future - of the Rousdon Quiz



Winners for the second year running - Team Tate: Freda Tate, Emma Wilkinson, Terry Ramsey, Julia and Dave Evans, Dave Tate, Brian and Sue Rowe. What's really in those bottles?!

Rousdoner: So when did the Quiz begin?

Mike: The first was in 2009. Then there was a gap for a few years. In 2013 I had a bad accident on the Estate and the ambulance came but as I was in such pain they called out the Air Ambulance. I was taken to the Royal Devon and Exeter where I was sorted out. After a few days I rang the Devon Air Ambulance to thank them but they had no record of the incident! Apparently they had been called out half an hour beforehand. But we're very lucky here in Rousdon because we're also covered by the Dorset and Somerset Air Ambulance and it was they who had come out for me. I thought I'd like to do something to raise money for such good causes as the two Air Ambulances and so decided rather than just to make a personal donation, to use the Quiz to raise some funds. The next Quiz in 2014 raised £331 for the two charities. From then onwards I've always split the sums raised between the two Air Ambulance charities. Since 2014 the Quiz has become an annual event, except of course during the pandemic, so we didn't have quizzes in 2020 and 2021. We didn't have a quiz either in 2022 but we did collect money and we had a Draw that year.

But you donate the prizes?

Yes I provide the prizes each year. Champagne for the winners and this year it was three John Lewis vouchers for raffle winners of £200, £100 and £50.

And where do the questions come from?

I make up about 90% of the questions. The rest come from other quizzes. The idea is not to show people up but to have good fun and it's interesting that most of the teams are fairly close in terms of final points - this year there were only 38 points between those who came first and those who came last. Some of the questions are repeats of questions I've asked before!

Do you have any favourite questions from over the years?

Oh yes, plenty! So, for instance: Why was King George V the only king to reside in York? Because *King George V* is a Great Western Railway steam locomotive that is now at the National Railway Museum in York! I always used to put in a railway question for Mick Stride and Roy Jones and whenever I asked the railway question I'd glance up to see if they had got it!

SOME STATS FROM THE 2024 QUIZ:

Winners: Team Tate (opposite) with 172 points

Second: Team Downing with 163 points

Third: Team Perrett with 155 points

**There were only 38 points between those who came first and last
£1,318 was raised for the Devon Air Ambulance and the Dorset and
Somerset Air Ambulance**

**Since the beginning of of the Quiz the grand sum of £13,062
has been raised for the two charities**

Any more favourite questions?

Well, how about this one: What do Olympic medal winners Sir Jason Kenny, Sir Mo Farrah, Sir Chris Hoy and Sir Steve Redgrave have in common?

Answer: They all have the same birthday - 23 March!

Brilliant! And have there been any hot disputes over answers?

Yes, there have been a few. I was once caught out by not distinguishing between fluid ounces and dry ounces. Musn't do that again! And in fact you caught me out once - I said 'king' or 'queen' and you said it should have been 'monarch'!

Ouch! But the big question is, are you going to do any more Quizzes?

Yes and no! I'm not going to do it again without support. I want to build up the *Beyond the Gate* Skittles Evenings. I want to make them more of a community event. We'll serve food, probably just

Lasagne and Salad, not fish and chips. We'll serve Draft Beer and you'll be able to bring your own wine. There's only one alley at Peek Hall unlike at Dalwood where ROAR have had their Skittles Evenings where there's two. But we can make that work. There will have to be fewer rounds but there will still be the Killer which everyone enjoys. We'll need to charge a fee to join in, of course. We'll raise a small amount of money for charity but the Skittles won't be a big fund-raiser. I really want to see the Skittles Evenings work, and to get more people coming regularly to the *Beyond the Gate* Skittles at Peek Hall.

I'm not clear, then. Is that a 'yes' or a 'no' to another Quiz?

Well, I'll do another Quiz if people support the regular quarterly Skittles evenings. It's really up to all Rousdoners, everyone who reads this magazine.

BELOW: 2024 RAFFLE PRIZE WINNERS:

Dennis O'Connor won first prize of a £200 John Lewis Voucher but wasn't present.

David Tollafield took second prize of £100 voucher and

Jan Myers took third prize of £50 voucher.

Presented by Mike Hansell and Alison Kendell who was score-keeper.



ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE by Chris Bryan

It's called AI and its coming your way, if indeed it hasn't already. How will you recognise it and what will it do for you or indeed to you?

By 2030, you're going to encounter AI every day of your life for good or for bad, let's hope it will be for good. Let's also call it the Coming Wave. Firstly though, let's take a look at what it is and how it's going to influence your life.

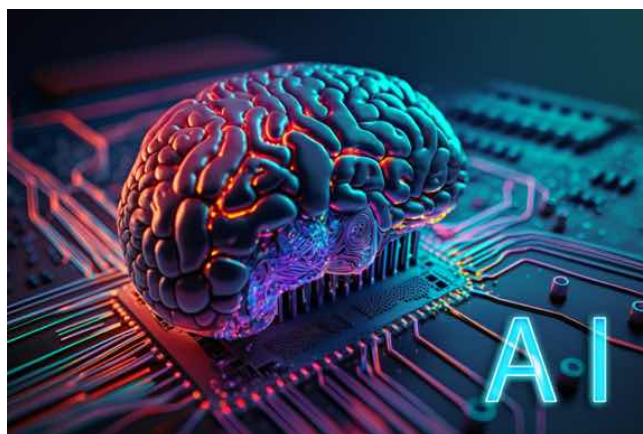
Artificial Intelligence is better described as Machine Learning, where a computer or robot learns from experience. It's not a case of a programmer that programs a computer to do something such as play chess, it's much more. The computer actually learns from its interactions with another computer or the information that you use to interact with it, such as Googling or interacting with a website to buy a product or service such as a holiday in America. It will understand your intent and your likelihood to buy.

Let's look at how it does that. A year ago in March 2023, Open AI launched another chatbot, Chat GPT4 which stands for Generative Pre-trained Transformer. It uses a Large Language Model or LLM that is trained on trillions of words. Imagine digesting the full Wikipedia, millions of legal contracts and hundreds of thousands of books and indeed the New York Times' website of articles from over decades of news reporting and features. Using Neural Network technologies, an LLM can understand not just the sequences of words and their meanings but also understands writing styles so that it can then write articles in a massive range of authors' styles. Ask it a question and it will respond in Shakespearian, modern day English or indeed in the style used by Americans. Of course if it is let loose on a number of abusive and racist websites without control it may well come back with some very unpleasant answers to genuine questions, these are known as 'AI hallucinations'.

Taking this a stage further, some years ago Deep Mind beat the world's greatest Chess and Go players at their own games. Soon after, it learned these games again from scratch, just by viewing thousands of games through which it grew to understand the moves made by the pieces, the rules and successful strategies of the games and the objectives of the games such as killing the King or conquering the largest area of the board. It is not difficult to see how it can learn from your activity on a given website and predict your next moves in terms of interest in products and services and influence you when you're most likely to purchase.

One of the most striking examples of its potential to improve the productivity of business activities is its ability to listen to a meeting, such as the quarterly ROAR meeting and record all the comments, assertions and agreements made throughout the meeting. Within a few minutes it will produce the Minutes for the meeting quoting the names of the people that spoke and the agreements made, almost certainly something that will be used within the next few months here in Rousdon.

Another exciting challenge facing AI is how long it will take to win what is called the Turing 2 Test. The Turing Test, originally called the Imitation Game by Alan Turing in 1950, is a test of a machine's ability to exhibit intelligent behaviour that is indistinguishable from that of a human. That has now been achieved, so the new test is to find the first AI system that when given \$100,000 is able to devise a wealth



ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE cont...



creating idea and set up a business entity that would be able to generate \$1m of wealth honestly and sustainably. Think just how much wealth could be made and lost!

One of the most anticipated applications for AI is of course the driverless car. But before we get carried away though, think for a moment of Elaine Herzberg of Tucson, Arizona. She was the first person killed by a driverless car, the first Uber victim, so was AI accountable? In a litigious country such as the USA, who would you prosecute? Would it have been appropriate to have swerved and killed another person instead, perhaps an older person. To what extent will AI based machines and indeed robots become immune from prosecution and even jail? Will humanity limit the application of AI centric machines and tools? And if so, how? We'll come back to that question later.

Robots will become almost ubiquitous within the next decade or so as social care for the elderly and the infirm becomes increasingly difficult and expensive to provide. These robots are already becoming household friends in the same way as pets. They will be able to cook meals, clean the house, cut some flowers and even cut the lawn. They will also deliver medication and provide clinical services and minor operations using real-time clinical diagnoses with

online doctors that will of course be AI driven chatbots. With the continued introduction of AI technologies these robots will have a three dimensional avatar on their video-screens, potentially that of a family member. It will learn the person's speech, characteristics and values. Take that a stage further and one could select any number of people to talk to and enter into discussions with Albert Einstein, John Kennedy or even Jeremy Paxman. You'll never be alone!

As long ago as 1942, Isaac Asimov postulated three laws of robotics that would collectively guarantee the safety of humans in any potential situation. These three laws build upon each other to ensure that a rogue robot will always have a kill-switch to disable it within its software. But what if it is designed to track and kill perceived threats to the State? AI based robots will become much cheaper and expendable than a trained soldier. So we now enter the realm of autonomous robots where they make their own decisions to kill or disable.

One of the most potentially sinister elements of AI is that its computation, learning and decision making such as in a game of chess or on a battlefield is completely unintelligible to a human. It becomes impossible to review the steps taken by an autonomous robot to decide to take a particular course of action that may lead to a kill. What we do know however, is that it can review potential actions and decide on which to take, staggeringly quicker than a human now or will ever be able to.

Guardrails or Containment Laws for the development of AI are being urgently discussed at Governmental and UN levels these days. Nuclear power stations have an astonishing level of security and safety based upon Containment Laws and safety processes that have proved successful over the past 50 years. In the same way these principles and laws will be required to underpin the safety of AI applications. It can be done, but the necessary speed of decision making that is required is at a far greater pace than currently evident.

So, finally, did you find this article interesting? Have you already asked yourself, was it written by an AI powered chatbot or was it written by a human being? You really don't know...or do you?

WHAT'S ON

Compiled by Jill Tollafield

ACTIVITIES AT PEEK HALL

Peek Hall Social Club is open as advertised on the club door. Visitors and new members are welcome. Bar prices are reasonable and there is a skittle alley.

Classes: Taekwondo, spinning and life drawing classes have been running for years. There are also various craft classes for adults and children (contact Gillian on 07751 765578 or reespiritcreations@hotmail.co.uk).

More information and a timetable for all classes is on the hall noticeboard.

LADIES' LUNCH GROUP

This group of ladies hails from both the estate and elsewhere in Devon and Dorset. They meet on the first Wednesday of every month visiting a wide variety of local cafes and restaurants. New members are always very welcome. Please contact Jane Healy (janehealy5@sky.com) if you would like to join the group and for more information.

SERVICES AT COMBYNE CHURCH

Services are held at 10am on the first and third Sundays of every month The first Sunday being Holy Communion and the third being Morning Prayer.

COFFEE MORNINGS AT KOFFIE

The coffee mornings at Koffie on the 2nd Tuesday of the month will cease for the summer months. That doesn't of course stop us getting together with friends for a coffee. Arranged get togethers will continue later in the year when it will be quieter.

Saturday 27 April 10.00am to 4.00pm

Colyton Grammar School Garden and Food Festival

Held by Colyton Grammar School PTA, there will be art and craft stalls, plants for sale and food vendors.

Sunday 5 May at 3.00pm

Blessing of the boats outside the RNL boathouse at The Cobb

A traditional family service during which wreaths, including one from the Royal British Legion are blessed and taken out to sea by the lifeboat where they are laid to commemorate those lost at sea.

Sunday 5 May at 3.00pm

RSPB International Dawn Chorus Day

Visit the RSPB website for more information about the Dawn Chorus Festival.

April to June

Jazz Jurassica

Various events for Jazz fans. Full details from jazzjurassica.co.uk

Saturday 18 May at 3.00pm and 5.30pm

Music from the Caves

A concert with Seaton Acapella and Sea Gals Sea Shanty Band, with food and BBQ available and licensed bar, to raise money for the RNLI . Tickets £10 available from Seaton Print & Design, Seaton (cash only) or from Beer Quarry Caves 01297 680282

Monday 20 May at 10.30am

Beer Quarry Caves

A ROAR event. A group visit has been arranged for Rousdoners to have a guided tour of Beer Caves. We can share transport when we know who is coming. The cost is £11 or £9 for 65 and over. Please contact on sylviastride@gmail.com or 01297 443718 to book your place.

Friday 24 May 8pm to 10pm

Bat Walk at Seaton Wetlands.

A guided walk. Tickets from wildeastdevon.co.uk

Thursday 23 to Monday 27 May

Sidmouth International Jazz and Blues Festival

With headline evening concerts and 3 days of live music on the outdoor performance stage. More information on line at sidmouthjazz.com.

Sunday 2 June 11.00am at Peek Hall

ROAR AGM Coffee and biscuits will be served.

Saturday 22 to Sunday 23 June

The Axe Vale Show at The Showground, Axminster

A full programme of displays, entertainment and shopping. Tickets £12 on line, £14 at the gate, children 5-16 £1 and under 5s free. Tickets available on line.

Sunday 29 June 3pm to 5pm

ROAR Garden Party at North Lodge

Garden Party in aid of Charity at North Lodge. Pimms, tea, coffee, cream tea and cakes. £7.50 per adult. Children free. No dogs please. If anyone could help with making scones or cakes it would be appreciated. Please contact

sylviastride@gmail.com to book your ticket. Payment to ROAR.

For information and details of upcoming events please check:

www.rousdonestate.com

Please note: The Owners and Residents Committee does not automatically get email addresses of new residents. If you do not get any emails from ROAR and would like to receive notification please contact Sylvia Stride (sylviastride@gmail.com)

Please note: This list is based on information currently available but check details of some events with the relevant Tourist Information Centre. If you know of any events that others may enjoy, please let Jill Tollafield know at jilltollafield@gmail.com

'BEYOND THE GATE' SKITTLES EVENING

A *Beyond the Gate* Skittles Evening took place on Wednesday 7th February at Peek Hall.

Fourteen people turned up and the low scoring pairs match finished up as a tie with Mike Hansell & Sylvia Stride and Barry Moore & Bumper Nation finishing up on 64 points.

Sylvia and Bumper representing their own teams then played off to find the winner using the best of 3 balls – this also resulted in a tie!

So Barry and Mike decided the game on the best score from one ball each – Barry won by 4 skittles.

Top score of the night was by Sylvia who achieved 13 from 3 balls. She therefore won the ladies prize of chocolates - kindly donated by Dave Heneghan.

“Killer” was played over four lives as usual and the winner was Dave Tate who defeated Bumper Nation as the last man standing – Dave won the wine kindly donated by Dave Heneghan.

A donation was taken in support of the Peek Hall Spire fund and £60 was raised.

Many thanks to all those who gave so generously.

Mike hopes to make the *Beyond The Gate* Skittles Evenings into regular community-wide events (see the interview with Mike on p. 7).

The last ROAR Skittles Evening was held on 23rd March - see page 14.



THE ROUSDON WEBSITE

Make sure you keep up with all the latest news on the Beach Path and anything else relating to the Estate, on:
rousdonestate.com/news

Read the latest Minutes in full and catch up with ROAR notifications and details of the 100 Club on:
rousdonestate.com/roar

ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES - Signs of Climate Change

It will not be a 'spoiler alert' to any Rousdoner that Pluvius reports 40% more rainfall over the last three months than is usual for this time of the year (see Pluvius on the back page for a full analysis of rainfall figures).

This has left the ground waterlogged and the water table very high.

Many sessions with the Volunteers on Saturday Mornings have been cancelled due to the wet, muddy and difficult conditions. The first session was called for Saturday 13th April and it is hoped they will be able to continue on a more regular basis. Work has been going on to clear the laurel along Ladies Walk. And the next project will be to clear and control the ground ivy alongside the main drive. The organiser/ convener of these Saturday Morning sessions is Adrian Littler. Please contact Adrian at The Farmhouse if you would like to join the group.

Also, many Rousdoners will have noted an outburst of *Trentepohlia Aura* along various wooden fences around the Estate. This is a species of alga and the orange coloration results from carotenoid pigments in the algal cells. Presumably this is caused by the excessive rainfall and dampness. If you know any more about this alga and why it has suddenly appeared please let the Editor know (contact details on p. 2).



Of course it's not just excessive rain that we have been enduring in the south-west over recent weeks but it's high winds as well. Storm Nelson on the evening of Thursday 28 March (Maundy Thursday) caused heavy destruction among the Beach Huts on Seaton beach. Clearly the wind in places along the front whipped up into mini-typhoon type conditions. Beach Huts were thrown about the beach, many being blown from their neat lines, and some were smashed into pieces. Owners blamed East Devon Council for erecting the Huts too early in the season. The Council said they were trying to make them available before the Easter Break. Not much of a holiday it turned out to be for those whose Huts were wrecked.



'THE ARMY THAT NEVER WAS' by Taylor Downing

The Editor has a new book out in May to mark the 80th anniversary of D-Day. It tells the remarkable story of the great deceptions the Allies played on the Germans. Here is a brief extract, soon to appear in The Sunday Times.



General Hans Cramer was a German officer of the formal, Prussian school. Strict, proud and rigid, he did not take kindly to surrendering. So, when he was forced to admit defeat in Tunisia after his troops had literally fought to the last shell and could fight on no longer, he was not a happy man. Despite the fact that his army had disintegrated around him, Cramer insisted on wearing his finest dress uniform. He and the General accompanying him when they surrendered to a British officer were dressed immaculately in long-waisted tunics, green breeches and highly polished riding boots. When asked to hand over their pistols, they contemptuously threw them down at the British officer's foot.

However, on arrival in Britain some weeks later Cramer was in a rather better mood when he was sent to Trent Park, a magnificent Georgian mansion to the north-east of London near Cockfosters. The senior Wehrmacht commanders incarcerated there lived in some luxury in grand country house surroundings.

They were served good food, were permitted to take walks in the spacious grounds and allowed a ration of whisky every evening. Cramer had his own bedroom, sitting room and a batman to attend to him. The grandeur of the surroundings played on the captured general's sense of self-importance. No wooden huts and barbed wire for him.

Moreover, Cramer was encouraged to listen to BBC radio and to talk freely with the other senior Generals. But there was method in the madness. The house was like a large studio set and was full of hidden microphones behind every painting, inside every plant pot and even under the floorboards. British intelligence officers listened in as the senior German officers discussed many aspects of the war. The post-prandial conversation of these German commanders yielded many fascinating gems of Intelligence about future military plans and new scientific projects that some of them thought would help rescue the Third Reich.

In the spring of 1944 Hans Cramer was mysteriously transferred from Trent Park to a camp in Wales. Then in May, as he was in failing health, it was decided to release Cramer as part of a prisoner exchange. He would be repatriated to the Third Reich via the Swedish Red Cross. On the day of his release a car came for him with a driver, a guard and two British officers as an escort. The journey from Wales to a port on the south coast from where he would sail to Sweden was long. The two escort officers were extremely friendly and chatted amiably in German with the Prussian general. Soon they found themselves surrounded by huge numbers of Allied troops, American and British, all clearly preparing for a major event, the invasion of occupied Europe.

'THE ARMY THAT NEVER WAS' cont...

Cramer grew wide-eyed at the scale of activity that he saw out of the car window. He was also amazed at how indiscreet the chatty officers were. Another sign of the lack of soldierliness of the British, he thought. The two officers let it be known that they were driving through Kent. As all road signs had been removed years before to confuse the Germans in the event of an invasion, Cramer had no reason to doubt what he was told.

In fact the two officers were not army officers at all. They were from MI5 and were part of what was known as the Double Cross team. The whole event was another element in the pre-D-Day deception. Cramer had seen genuine troops preparing for a real invasion. But he had not been in Kent. He had been driven through the south-west of England near to the coast in Devon and Dorset where Allied troops were amassing before D-Day.

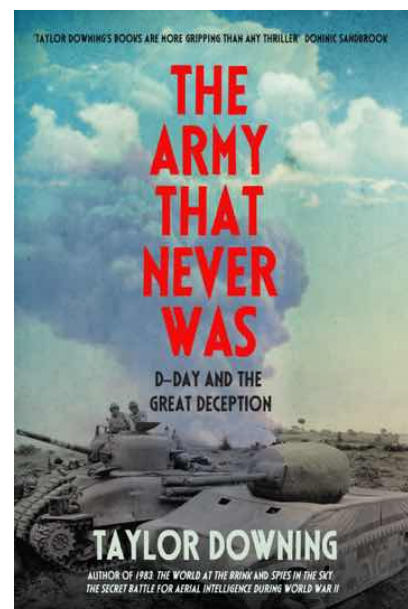
Below: Troops go ashore on D-Day. The Allies managed to deceive the Germans into thinking that the invasion was coming along the Pas-de-Calais and not in Normandy. So the Germans kept tens of thousands of troops in the wrong place for several weeks at what was a critical time. The Deception helped win the war.



On returning to Germany, Cramer was soon telling his old boss, Rommel, that he had seen evidence of a large army in Kent preparing for an invasion across the Channel to the Pas-de-Calais. Then he was rapidly whisked away to Hitler's mountain retreat in Berchtesgaden where he repeated the story of what he had seen and heard to the Führer. How could Hitler fail to be impressed by the report of one of his most decorated generals of what he had seen with his own eyes?

Misleading General Cramer into believing that the invasion of Europe was coming in the Pas-de-Calais, rather than in Normandy, was an ingenious piece of play-acting from inventive minds within British Intelligence. The Germans had already fortified this stretch of coast from Dunkirk to Boulogne and it was vital for the Allies to deceive the Germans into keeping tens of thousands of troops in the wrong place when the invasion was finally launched. But it was only one of many different deceptions to fool the Germans about Allied intentions preceding D-Day.

*The Army that Never Was:
D-Day and the Great Deception*
by Taylor Downing
is published by
Icon Books in May.



WHAT HAVE ROUSDONERS BEEN UP TO?



ROAR SKITTLES COMPETITION

Saturday 23rd March

40 Rousdoners turned out on a cold and blustery night to the Tuckers Arms in Dalwood for an evening of great skill, wonderful athleticism and fine showmanship [are you sure? Ed] The Killer round ended in a tense play out between the Heneghan brothers. Mick was the winner but the cup was in for treatment so Sylvia had to present him with a pint of beer!

ROAR Vice Chair Anne Fleming draws the April winners for the ROAR 100 Club.

The new financial year has started. So for all members of the 100 Club it's time to renew your membership, please.

And if you are not already a member, it's definitely time to join!

£24 per number per year - for payment details see the box below.



ROAR 100 CLUB

Winners of the latest draw made in December were:

1st: Adrian and Lynn Littler £183

2nd: Paul Cleaver £122

3rd: Mike and Mary Hansell £61

SUBSCRIPTIONS FOR YEAR 2024/25

Time to renew for the new year - £24 per number, see below.

If you are not a member do please join up as not only might you win a good sum of money but the 100 Club contributes immensely towards the Estate. Last year the ROAR 100 Club donated over £2000 towards buying new trees, stakes, protectors and ties.

Each number is £2 per month payable annually. So please join up and pay £24 to ROAR: ROAR 100 Club; 60 13 57; 51050439

Or contact: Sylvia Stride on: svlviastride@gmail.com




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The Full ROAR Committee meets quarterly and individual committee members take responsibility for key areas of activity between meetings. If you have any issue to raise please contact any committee member or the website:

<https://www.rousdonestate.com>

The Full ROAR Committee:

Glynis Preshaw
Sylvia Stride
Anne Fleming
Jill Tollafield
Jeremy Powell-Tuck
Warwick Bergin
Graham Mackrell

Chair:

Glynis Preshaw

Vice Chair:

Anne Fleming

Treasurer, Membership Secretary and 100

Club:

Sylvia Stride

Secretary:

Jill Tollafield

FINALLY, THE WEATHER by Pluvius

As another named storm arrives, Storm Kathleen, it's been one of the stormiest seasons on record. It's also been one of the wettest with over 14ins of rainfall over the past three months, that's around 40% above the long term average for the time of year. With the wind coming predominantly from the southwest, at times from as far away as the Tropic of Cancer, it's been a very mild winter with temperatures as high as 60°F (15°C) in mid February.

Despite a bountiful collection of areas of low pressure from the Atlantic, with the lowest recorded on February 9th at 28.82ins Hg (976mb) here at Rousdon, there were a few periods of anti-cyclonic driven cold dry air from the northeast. The lowest temperature recorded was 24°F (-4°C) on January 18th. The last ground frost occurred on March 3rd.

Unsurprisingly the Jet Stream has been responsible for the near continuous trail of low pressure areas in February and late March, many

of which have tracked across the Atlantic, but an interesting trend has arisen where they have tracked northwards to the west of France and across Ireland and sometimes the southwest peninsular and then across Britain to the North sea. Whilst being unusual, they have driven tropical air across Britain. One such storm at the end of March stayed almost stationary continuing to develop over the course of a week to form a massive area of low pressure near the southwest driving mild winds and sustained rainfall.

We move on to the monthly rainfall totals, 2.71ins fell in January, 7.80ins fell in February and 3.94ins fell in March that's 14.45ins during the first three months of the year.

Looking forward to the quarterly forecast through to the early summer, it appears to imply a return to much drier weather in May and June and with it more sunshine whilst it will become warmer than average. So it's looking like a Staycation Summer for us along with all the migratory tourists that now prefer the Southwest to mainland Europe.