



Rosie's Robin.

PLEASE FEED THE BIRDS
THIS WINTER ESPECIALLY
IF THE WEATHER TURNS
COLD.

A serious predator of
birds in the garden is
the domestic cat.
Please feed the birds
where they are less
likely to be surprised.

INTER PARISH QUIZ - we
are to play DIPTFORD at
home on Friday 13 January
not an unlucky day we hope.
Diptford are a new team so
please come and support us
and give the visitors a
warm welcome in the W.I.
Hall at 7.30 p.m. M.W.P.

RAINFALL: 5 December -
2 January 1 ¹/₄ inches.

PARISH COUNCIL

At a special meeting, on 20 December, the Parish Council considered three planning applications. It was decided that the revised plans for the reconstruction of the Dolphin Cafe at Challaborough should be supported - with certain modifications. The plans for an extension to the Beach Bar, which included sound-proofing of the entertainment area, were also supported. A revised plan for a bungalow in the garden of "Tosca" was opposed, for similar reasons to those for which the original plan was rejected. In addition, the access was considered to be even more dangerous than that originally proposed and it was thought that the development would inevitably lead to the destruction of the trees almost opposite the Church.

The next meeting of the Parish Council will be at 7 p.m. on Tuesday 10 January. Among the matters to be considered will be a plan for the part of the Orchard which has not already been discussed and also a proposal that a four bedroom bungalow should be built alongside the proposed new farm buildings for Lower Manor Farm.

WOMEN'S INSTITUTE

The speaker at the next meeting, at 7.30 p.m. on Thursday 12 January, will be Mr. Chris Broomhead. Mr. Broomhead, who is a thatcher, made the beautiful straw pheasants for the roofs of "Walnut Tree Cottage" and "Cumberland Cottages". He will demonstrate the making of such objects from straw.

The next afternoon meeting, at 2.30 p.m. on Wednesday 25 January, will also be in the W.I. Hall. Mrs. Ann Walker will demonstrate the drying of flowers and the arrangement of dried flowers. Mrs. Pam Brunskill will have materials available for our Church runners and will be able to help with any problems. It is hoped too that Mrs. Mary Parry, who has had a great deal of experience with embroidery, will give us some hints on achieving the best possible results.

ROYAL BRITISH LEGION

The February meeting will be at the Reading Room Kingston on Friday the 3rd.

MEALS ON WHEELS

Coffee morning at Summerdale 11 a.m. 18 January to make up the new rota.

HISTORICAL SOCIETY

The Society's Annual General Meeting was held on Thursday 27 October and was fairly well attended. The Chairman, Col. Grimshaw, gave his report on the past year's activities; the Committee was re-elected as before, with the exception of Mrs. Sally Davis, who stepped down. Dr. John Parry was willing to stand and was elected forthwith. After the business had been concluded, Mrs. Eileen Noakes gave a talk on her latest visit to Russia, illustrated with slides. Future dates: Mr. Len Copley will make a return visit on Thursday 19 January 1989 at 2.30 p.m. to give a talk on "Warreners of Dartmoor". This is an open meeting at the W.I. Hall.

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INN-SIGHT - THE JOURNEY'S END INN. WELL THE FESTIVITIES ARE OVER AND WE WOULD LIKE TO THANK THOSE OF YOU WHO CELEBRATED WITH US. THE CHRISTMAS DRAW NIGHT WENT WELL, WITH KENNY DANN AND JIM FREEMAN WINNING MOST OF THE PRIZES. NEW YEARS EVE WAS OUT OF THIS WORLD, WE ONLY HOPE TO BE ABLE TO MATCH IT THIS YEAR. THE FANCY DRESS WAS EXCELLENT, IT WAS A SHAME THAT WE COULD'NT GIVE EVERYONE A PRIZE. WE WILL BE HAVING ANOTHER FANCY DRESS PARTY TO CELEBRATE THE FIRST ANNIVERSARY OF OUR COMING TO THIS BEAUTIFUL VILLAGE, IT WILL BE SATURDAY 15 APRIL AND THE THEME, "CELEBRITY LOOK-A-LIKE" PUT YOUR THINKING CAPS ON NOW. OTHER DATES TO REMEMBER: SAT. 28 JANUARY - TRIVIA QUIZ YOU DON'T HAVE TO BE A BRAIN BOX, THERE ARE SPOT PRIZES TOO. ENTRY IS £1 PER PERSON WITH A MAXIMUM OF 4 TO A TEAM. SAT. 25 FEBRUARY - 60s POP QUIZ GET OUT THOSE OLD 45s AND MEMORISE THEM. ALSO ANOTHER PUB GAMES NIGHT IS PLANNED BUT THE DATE IS YET TO BE DECIDED. FINALLY, WORK WILL BE STARTING SOON ON THE NEW TOILETS;WEATHER, PLANNERS, AND BUILDERS PERMITTING. WE APOLOGISE IN ADVANCE FOR ANY INN-CONVENIENCE CAUSED. A HAPPY NEW YEAR TO YOU ALL.

RINGMORE SCHOOL

Mistresses:

Mary Jane Adams 1-12/1875
 Elizabeth Turner 1/1876 - 12/1877
 Edith Billing 1/1878 - 12/1879 (dismissed)
 Elizabeth E. Gay 1/1880 - 9/1881
 Susan Savery Barter (temp.) 9-12/1881
 Elizabeth Ann Lanyon (Mrs Martin) 1/1882 - 12/1889
 Nellie Giles 1/1890 - 1925 (retired)

The 1818 Parliamentary Return showed no school in Ringmore, but that for 1833 gave two, both supported by donations and fees, and each with about 10 boys and 10 girls, established respectively in 1826 and 1833. These would have been cottage 'dame schools', and how long they survived does not appear; but in 1863 a purpose-built Church schoolroom was opened and that year received a £2 grant from the Diocesan Board for books and apparatus. In 1870 it was reported as 290 square feet in area, and with 15 boys and 15 girls. It was not under a certificated teacher, and therefore not qualified for government grant; and the last dame was Mrs Mary Ryder, whom the Erme & Avon School Board (formed in April 1873 for Ringmore, Kingston, and Bigbury) at first kept on as teacher at £10 p.a., having rented the building, for school hours only, from the incumbent for £1 p.a.

But the Board's original idea of keeping on the existing Dames for Infants and erecting a central school for Juniors had to be dropped, since a Board could not legally pay unqualified and unsupervised teachers, and no government grant would be paid for such schools. It was therefore decided to abandon the new central school project, and to keep the existing schools in the three villages, but under certificated and grant-earning teachers. The Ringmore school was leased from the Rector for 99 years at £3 p.a., and £41 spent on enlarging the schoolroom, and each school was appropriately fitted and furnished.

The first qualified mistress, Mary Jane Adams, started in January 1875, and when HMI made his first inspection the following May he noted that 'one sees how much it was needed from the fact that children of 10, 11, 12, 13, and even 14 have been presented in the 1st and 2nd Standards' (normally for children of 7 and 8). The average attendance was then 34.

The Fee Scale adopted by the Board was, per week:

labourers	3-11 1d, over 11 3d
tradesmen	3-5 1d, 5-7 3d, 7-13 4d
farmers	3-5 1d, 5-7 3d, 7-11 6d, over 11 1s (which last exceeded the legal limit of 9d for public elementary schools, and soon had to be dropped)

Miss Adams lasted for only one year; but her successor Elizabeth Turner, in her second Report, received the quite exceptional encomium that: "It is scarcely possible to imagine a more satisfactory state of discipline and attainments than that shown in this little school". With her certificate confirmed and an endorsement to the above effect on her 'Parchment', it is not surprising that she soon left for a better post elsewhere. The next, Edith Billing, was of very different calibre, and after a couple of bad Reports was asked to go, receiving the significant testimonial: "She is a conscientious teacher, but she has not been as successful in her work as the Board could wish. The Board believes she will for the present be more usefully employed in an Infant school, or as a subordinate teacher in a large town school". At a time when Managers were wont to praise bad teachers in the hope of shunting them elsewhere, this was unusually frank.

After this unfortunate let-down the school continued respectably under Elizabeth Gay and Elizabeth Lanyon (who became Mrs Martin). For 1888/9 its income was reported as: Rates £32 18s 2d, Grant £22 1s 11d, Fees £13 0s 9d, making a total of £68 0s 10d for an average attendance of 35, slightly under £2 per head.

Nellie Giles, who like other mistresses here had trained at Truro, took office in January 1890 (at £35 + $\frac{1}{2}$ Grant) and remained until she retired in 1925. After some initial trouble with discipline, she conducted the school with fair efficiency and lack of incident. In 1890 the Kingston and Bigbury

masters demanded and got a £10 rise, and as a result of their initiative Miss Giles had another £5 - but with the proviso that 'no no future increase at any time to be granted'. But in 1892 the Kingston master got another £10 rise, and Miss Giles another £5. Shortly afterwards she demanded yet another £5, and the Board not surprisingly refused and advertised for a successor. But they got so little response that they bit the bullet and paid to keep her. By this time government grant was more generous, besides a new 10s p.a. per head of average attendance in lieu of fees. In 1899 her salary became £63 (without grant-share), which it was when the County took over the school in 1903. Average attendance was then 82 at Kingston, 35 at Bigbury, but only 22 at Ringmore - for which by contemporary standards the £63 was adequate. She then had, as assistant, a monitress paid £4 p.a.

The Ringmore school finally closed in 1929, as the result of rural depopulation. In 1871 the parish had had 237 inhabitants, but by 1931 this had dropped to 146. The school had had its hour of glory under Miss Turner, and of the reverse under Miss Billing, but otherwise its career was rather a case of no news being good news. There could still be local people who remember Nellie Giles.

R. R. Sellman 1988.



RINGMORE SCHOOL PUPILS
about 1927.

Back row 2nd from right BERTRAM TOMS. Front Row Far left Margaret Triggs (Lock)
4th from left Alice Farley (Mason).

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ONCE WILD, FOREVER WILD By Sophie Williams Aged 12

He was driven to trust us by the awesome cold. During the dark, snowy days, when he had not the strength to sing, we fed him on scraps and flakes in warm milk whenever he came to the window. We grew to expect him, and he to trust us, and a friendship was formed between us and the little cock robin.

He was the first robin we had ever had visit our garden. He had just arrived one cold, frosty morning, and stayed. We grew accustomed to his cheery song, and as the snowdrops took over from the snow, still he would come to our garden to eat the bread-crumbs and seeds we put out in the tree each morning.

But then the days became warmer and the cats stirred, and the redbreast had to play games of 'dodge the cat' to obtain his daily feast.

Soon, as both the food supply and cats became more plentiful, he took to staying away from the garden more often, in some temporary hideout of his own, always returning every so often, though.

It was a unanimous decision to put up the birdbox for him. We knew there would be a slight risk of his being caught by one of the cats, but our cats were always so slow, so dopey, such un-predator-like animals that we felt he could come to no harm.

So the nestbox was bought and fixed in the sweeping apple tree, one of his favourite places. The very next day he returned to see us. It was a gorgeous warm spring day in late March as he came flying over the back wall and alighted in the tree, uttering his piercing call. We all rushed to watch him as he fully investigated his new home. With a chuckle of satisfaction, he hopped inside and looked around, admiring every corner and nook. We left him, quite happy with our choice.

Two days later he returned with a mate. She was much shyer than he was and wouldn't come to us for food, preferring to inspect the nestbox. She, too, seemed fully satisfied, and was soon busy building a cosy nest inside. We now saw more of our robin and his wife as they flew hither and thither collecting all the soft bits they could find. We hung out some sheep's wool and hair on the fence for them.

Soon we saw very little of the female as she was busy incubating her eggs. Now and again we took a small peep at her, but were careful not to go too close. We helped the cock to find caterpillars and worms for his wife as she hardly left the nest. Then one day the five speckled eggs hatched, and both robins were kept desperately busy catching grubs and insects for the newborn chicks.

We still helped by leaving pieces of raw mince out to attract the flies and by catching gnats, but the robins had little time to be grateful.

Then, one awful, awful day I awoke and went to look for the birds, who were very early risers. I looked out of the window and a terrible sight met my eyes. A baby robin fledgling that had fallen out of the nest lay under the tree, nearly dead. It was being closely inspected by Jo, our cat. The two parents were desperately flying around her head, uttering little whistles. Then, before I could go to their rescue, Jo turned sharply around and grabbed the male by the neck. He must have died very quickly. With a yell I was down the stairs and out of the door, but nothing could save that robin now.

Jo, still gripping him firmly by the back, trotted off down the garden and through the gate. The robin hung, quite limp and motionless, apart from the constant shaking of his loose head. I was quite overcome with my emotions. I felt like killing Jo, but would that bring back our little robin? He, who had grown to trust and love us—we, who had enticed him all this way, well aware of the dangers. What was to happen now?

After rousing the whole household, we set about repairing matters a little. The fledgling was now dead and the distracted mother busier than ever, attempting to feed the remaining four chicks. We also tried harder than ever to collect all the grubs we could find, but it was no use. She would accept nothing from us.

So, all alone, she set about the task of keeping her brood alive, but it was, of course, an impossible task. Within the week we had a second fledgling to bury alongside its brother and father. And still the mother refused to take food from us. It was most depressing to see her fly to and fro, gathering all she could for those three chicks of hers.

After about two weeks of this agonising torture, she at last taught the juveniles to fly. The two remaining children, both looking alike, but very different from their parent, soon got the hang of flying, and that

very day their mother took them away. When they had gone we investigated the box and found the last fledgling, which had been starved by its stronger siblings.

The garden seemed so empty without the robins, their chirping song and flitting flight. We had never had a robin before, nor had one since, and all we've got to remind us of their memorable stay is the little grave under the tree.

But one cannot blame Jo, she who returned with her head held high and the dear robin still clasped in her jaws, expecting praise from us—a sorry sight.

We had learnt, through our short-sighted cruelty, that nature's punishment is short and sharp. We had brought about this tragedy in our neglect to see properly the dangers involved in luring a family of robins into the midst of our cats. We had overlooked the first law of nature, the law that Jo and the robins had never forgotten—that animals, however tame or friendly they may seem, through human eyes, in human presence, are all related to those beasts to whom killing or surviving is all a part of living and that this law has never changed, and never will—for once wild, forever wild.



Sophie Williams, winner of the 1988 BBC WILDLIFE MAGAZINE AWARD FOR YOUNG WRITERS aged 12 or under

“I live in Greenwich, London, and attend Haberdashers Askes Hatcham Girls School. My main interests are music, making things and writing. I prefer writing poetry to stories because I find it simpler and more rewarding. I often turn my poems into songs.

I play the piano and flute and enjoy both very much. My favourite subject is not English because I prefer putting titles to my stories rather than writing stories to titles, which is what we have to do in class.

I will give £20 of my prize money to the RSPB and £20 to a cats' charity—a bit towards helping both the hero and villain species of my essay.

I enjoy reading and walking in the countryside. I hope to be an author when I grow up, and winning this competition has really boosted my confidence. ♪