

The Hedgerow



Issue 37, Summer 2016.. *a tangle of words from local writers...*

The Hedgerow, a free publication from writers in the Epping Forest area, is distributed in libraries and bookshops from east London to Epping. Thank you to everyone who sent in submissions or helped with this edition. If you would like to write for *The Hedgerow* we would be pleased to hear from you. This issue of *The Hedgerow* is also available on-line at www.penny-freeston.com.

This edition celebrates 15 years as a publication. Our theme '*Simple Pleasures*' includes contributions from members of our original writing group.

Simple Pleasures

Looking in the fridge, using up all the left overs and making a tasty and delicious meal.
Seeing my grandson smile and hearing his laugh. Hearing him talk and say funny things.
Seeing the beauty of nature without looking for it. The full moon on a clear night, flowers blooming, sunsets, ripples on the sand, a rainbow, dramatic clouds. Hearing thunder and seeing lightning.
Seeing the birds enjoying the food on the birdfeeders. Watching parent birds responding to the begging of their off-spring and feeding their demands.
Putting on well-worn and comfortable slippers.
Wearing clothes that make you feel good.
A smart haircut that turns heads.
A hot drink at the perfect temperature.
Hearing your favourite music playing when you least expect it.
Eating your favourite food.
An impromptu invitation.
A warm hug from a friend.
Feeling the warmth of the sun.
Smelling the scent of flowers as you pass them by.
Discovering a readable book from which you learn a lot of history.
Watching someone dance perfectly.
A feeling of empathy during a conversation.
Finding a bargain.
Learning a surprising fact.
Finding the very book you want in the charity shop.
Seeing a sleek animal move gracefully.
Marmalade and cheese on toast.
Seeing bees hovering in plants and hearing their buzz.
Taking a meal you have previously prepared out of the freezer, and making the dinner quickly.
Seeing an insect you have never seen before.
Seeing an animal in the wild that you have never seen before.
Having a meal cooked for you.
Sitting in front of the coal fire on a cold night.
A hot bath in winter. A cool shower in summer. Your favourite fragrance in the bath.
Eating something utterly delicious.

Rhonda Anderson

Baby-watching

Shock of dark hair
eyebrows, faint lines,
lids fluttering open
blue focused stare
button nose
peach cheeks
lips working shapes
neck in hiding,
all declaring,
I am me.
Who are you?

Hazel Dongworth

Lullaby

Baby's in bed
sleepyhead,

sucking your dummy
popped in by Mummy,

losing the fight
lids closing tight,

hands held by Mum
rubbing your tum,

whispering "there there"
Mum's gentle care,

soon not a peep
baby's asleep.

Hazel Dongworth

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The Hedgerow has grown from a Writers' Circle, established through the Friends of South Woodford Library.
Editor: **Penny Freeston**

Knickerbocker Glory

As a nine-year old I can always remember my birthday treat. It was going to the theatre, followed by tea at Lyons Corner House in Charing Cross for a Knickerbocker Glory. We set off for the theatre in the morning - a musical or a panto. At the side entrance would be a row of stools and a man selling tickets at 2s 6d for a seat in the gallery. These were redeemed half an hour before the performance.

We then made our way to Trafalgar Square to eat our sandwiches (egg and tomato) with tea from a flask. There was much to see – even though it was wartime – especially the pigeons. Time went so quickly, and all too soon we were off to collect our tickets. How I loved the chorus girls and their high kicks.

But always on my mind was the Knickerbocker Glory. I just couldn't wait. When we arrived at the Corner House it was wonderful. We were shown to our seats near a small orchestra – three people playing popular tunes of the day. I didn't know how they knew, but they played Happy Birthday just for me. I knew it was me because they included my name. It wasn't until a long time afterwards that I realised it was Mum who had told them.

Then a waitress in cap and frilly apron put the Knickerbocker Glory in front of me. I had to kneel on my seat and use the long spoon to reach the red and yellow jelly and then the ice cream in the tall glass. After all these years I can still remember that first mouthful, worth every penny of the one shilling and sixpence. It still brings a smile to my face.

Colleen McMath

A Simple Pleasure

It was once said of a friend that 'he takes his pleasures sadly'.

That might be said of me.

Take the other Friday: Midsummer Day and the Christian celebration of Saint John Baptist's birth. So, rejoice and be glad and enjoy . . .

But, no. It was Mother's birthday. No longer with us, she went to her rest 25 years ago. I set off to view the entry in the Book of Remembrance at the City of London Cemetery. Four buses were needed from outlying Chingford to the borders of Manor Park.

A stopover was scheduled at Chingford Green to see Tara at Co-operative Funeral Care. A cheery chat as future arrangements were carefully checked, and I emerged some £4,000.00 lighter in pocket. That's that, I thought, as I stepped briskly to the bus stop for the next stage of my journey. My funeral is now done and dusted.

Gastric juices began to work ever so slightly as I savoured refreshments at the cemetery café. But no such luck: the café closed its doors to the public last March.

Ah, well . . . Off I went to the Columbarium. I read the entry several times over, immersing myself in pleasurable sadness:

'Lilian A. "Pat" Wetton; b. 24 June 1901; d. 20 January 1991;
and Mabel "Nana" her mother; b. 21 June 1881; d. 25 October 1957.

Love, joy, peace, now and always.'

Amen to that.

Michael Wetton

The Danes Have A Word For It

The word is hygge (pronounced hue-gah) It can be used as a noun, an adjective or a verb and comes originally from the Norwegian for wellbeing, but the Danes have now claimed it as their own. Essentially it is a welcoming, unsophisticated cosiness. A feeling that may be experienced while at home wrapped up in warm comfortable clothes with plenty of colourful rugs underfoot, the coffee brewed (or perhaps the mulled wine prepared) ready to be enjoyed while alone, or with a few good friends. It could include comfort food, such as rice pudding sprinkled with cinnamon - even the thought of which gives you a warm glow during dark and gloomy weather.

The nearest we get to it in English is the word 'hug' and that is said to be from the 16th Century, probably – surprise, surprise – of Scandinavian origin.

Candlelight can be an added ingredient of hygge. The Danes burn more candles per head than elsewhere in Europe.

Hygge works best in a small intimate space with nothing to distract from its simpleness. At its best it is a good moment, a nourishment of the soul. The Danes are said to be less materialistic than other cultures. Does that explain why they are reputed to be one of the happiest nations on earth, despite our misconceptions fuelled by our Scandi crime?

As we approach the Autumn/Winter seasons may I wish you some good hygge moments.

Monica Mukherji

Thoughts from Madeira

We climbed the garden path, for all paths need climbing in Madeira, formed as it is from clusters of extinct volcanoes which have provided a fertile soil. Level with Casablanca the frost free climate makes it a gardeners delight. Plants from all around the world have flourished in these ideal growing conditions.

The Lobster's Claw from New Zealand was in full bloom, its orange red claw shaped flowers and dark green leaves emerging from a froth of tiny white blossoms. Frangipani from Brazil, the symbol of life mingling its fragrant scent with the Popcorn Bush aptly named and evoking the smell of cinema visits and the crunching underfoot of spilled popcorn.

Milkweed is poisonous to humans. but is the bread of life to the Monarch butterfly, we admired their wings making a kaleidoscope of orange colour as they flew around the garden seeking the succulent milkweed and also to mate.

Over the Chinese Hibiscus hedge we looked down to the Avenida do Infante, each pavement lined with the Brazilian Jacaranda trees flowing like a blue river down to the Promenade where liners dock to enable people to see this beautiful island.

Over the years many people have come to this island and prospered. Madeira was the nearest place to Europe warm enough to grow sugar, the trade being so profitable the sugar was called white gold. The English developed the wine trade and a Scots lady the lovely embroidery a valuable source of income for women working from home.

In recent years , people from Northern Europe stay in Madeira to benefit from the warm winters and to enjoy the care and respect given them, particularly the elderly. The Madeirans benefit in return from the employment so many visitors provide. Would that this were so worldwide.

Marilyn Hawes

Although we are unable to publish everything we receive, poetry, prose and fiction submissions for the next edition are invited. Ownership of copyright remains with the author. Please do not send original manuscripts, only copies. Manuscripts may be retained for inclusion at a later date. Typed manuscripts, with name, address and telephone number should be sent to: The Editor, The Hedgerow, c/o 67, Derby Road, South Woodford, London, E18 2PY

Small pleasures

I find that small pleasures are scattered across my day, waiting to be gathered up.

Using all my senses, I become aware of birdsong, the velvet petals and delicate fragrance of lush, red roses and the glorious sunrise.

I am grateful for these gifts, but the ones closest to my heart are the tiny flowers peeping out between the cracks of a stone wall, after a long, hard winter.

Do they wait for me each year? I like to think they do.

Valerie Haddad

Looking Through an Atlas

My aunt travelled extensively in her lifetime and I grew up listening to stories about New York and Washington after the War. When I was 12 years old she gave me a hardback atlas for Christmas. My New Comparative Atlas, published by Oliver and Boyd, was purchased in Selfridges where she bought all her Christmas presents, and cost 11 shillings and sixpence. Little did I know then how much pleasure it would give me for the next 50 years; it has to be one of my best-loved books. It doesn't matter that the place names are out of date: Ceylon is now called Sri Lanka and Bombay, Mumbai.

What I love is turning the familiar pages, recognising places I have visited over the years or planning another route for another year: how close is Shanghai to Beijing? Could I take a train from Cologne to Bonn? This book, still in remarkably good condition, has been my aide-memoir, my stepping stone to travelling round the world. Without it my passion for travel may not have been kindled. It will remain my faithful companion, reminding me of what it was like to be young with my whole life spread before me in search of exotic names: Kathmandu, Istanbul, Marrakech. Now familiar, I hold their memories close to my heart.

Penny Freeston

Simple Pleasures

The view from my living room window is a constant delight, especially in the evenings. Living near the top of a hill, I can see over Roding Valley and beyond to the ridge at Chigwell, and when the sun is setting I often sit watching the gilt-edged, rosy-pink clouds moving across a cerulean sky above fields and trees below. For a while the whole scene appears to be bathed in golden light, which gradually fades into a more realistic vista before slowly disappearing as the sun sinks behind the hill. A bit like life, I sometimes think, as my mind wanders back over the years.

After the War Dad bought a car and took us for 'rides out' on Sundays, which was my first experience of 'the country'. I clearly recall the bliss of lying on cushiony, sweet-smelling grass watching gliders float across a huge expanse of cobalt sky above Dunstable Downs and, another time, laughing at the 'white horses', as Dad called the foam-topped waves chasing each other to the beach. That was a day we took a longer trip to the seaside when the whole world seemed drenched in sunlight, a complete contrast from the dark, crimson-streaked clouds hanging over London bomb sites of my early childhood.

Now I often see rainbows from my window and try to gauge where they end. Is there really a pot of gold there? Fantasy and memories – the evening of life can be so pleasant when you are sitting quietly, gazing at a view through a window and dreaming.

Pam Eaves