

READERS' LETTERS

We don't start with a level playing field

Dear Messenger — I was disappointed to read the article 'A Murmur - on the use of language' printed in the last issue of The Messenger.

Simon Turnbull's view is based on a premise - to expand his sporting metaphor - of a level playing field. Sadly this is an inaccurate starting point.

Our world is rife with inequality. Currently 8 million people live in poverty, a child dies every minute as a result of HIV and AIDS, thousands of babies die as their parents do not have access to clean water.

We are bombarded with these images by the media, and we know that the people experiencing this inequality are not white.

We also know about the historical legacy of colonisation. The British Government was responsible for shipping between 11 and 30 million black Africans to the Caribbean to work as slaves on the British sugar plantations. African Caribbeans today choose to be described as such in recognition of their roots.

But inequality still pervades our culture; it can be no coincidence that the appallingly inadequate response from the US government in the wake of the devastation caused by hurricane Katrina was for people who were in the majority poor and black.

I very much doubt that the parents of Stephen Lawrence and Damilola Taylor would find jokes about the colour of their skin particularly funny.

I agree it is patronising to suggest that certain groups are 'incapable of possessing the strength required to stand up for themselves', but the problem in assuming that such groups should be able to 'give back as good as they get' is that what they are getting is far from 'good'.

Of course black people can stand up for themselves, but let's not take advantage of our colonial past by insulting them.

Please keep this sort of thing out of the Messenger, and allow it to represent the tolerant and diverse Wiveliscombe of which we can be proud.

Marian Mann

A wonderful festival

Dear Messenger — To all concerned with the 10 Parishes Festival, I would just like to say how much we enjoyed the two week art extravaganza.

In all we managed to squeeze in 25 different venues - it became very much a treasure hunt.

I am definitely not an art buff but found the work was stunning - Joyce Rowsell's miniature oils, Sally Mear's pottery, Trish Perrins' photography, Angle Gibbs' delicate flowers, Jos Holloway's pottery, the young talent of artist, Katherine Dixon, Jenny Dutton's amazing sculpture, Avril Silks' stained glass, all the work at Stawley Wood and at The Bear in Wivey, The Art Workshop and Exhibition at Brompton Ralph, and the 'Singing Horse' at Chipstable Church was not to be missed.

Both myself and my daughter were knocked over by Emily Hare's portraits at Stawley Mill which were striking. If anyone missed her out I strongly advise you to see her next time!

I would like to thank Pauline Homeshaw and her helpers for setting up such a wonderful festival.

Both my daughter and I gained from the festival. Sarah gained artistic knowledge which is helping her now with Art A Level, and myself, well, I found seven different ways to get lost in Appley and Stawley, and that's after living in Wiveliscombe for over 25 years!

Mary Greenslade (and Sarah)



Where in the World is Wiveliscombe? (5)

Ergonomic disaster

Dear Messenger — I have to agree with a previous correspondent (Speaker's Corner). Over the past year I have conducted a survey of Wivey residents and I have yet to find a person that finds the latest designed benches in the Town Gardens comfortable. Ergonomically the design is a disaster.

In my humble opinion, I believe comfort was the last thing on the designer's mind.

Who were the individuals who approved the design of these benches? Did anyone sit on a prototype and find it comfortable?

The old style, in contrast, that are still in the gardens are restful and painfree to the body. Why was not cognizance taken of the comfort of the old design? The artistry could have been added.

Alan Zulman
(of the numb bum)

Dear Messenger — Who in their right mind would have approved the benches in the Jubilee Gardens? As a posture specialist I would say they are badly designed.

Could it have possibly been the same persons who approved the pathetic 'totem poles'?

Guests of mine, many of whom come from all parts of the globe, on entering Wivey and on seeing those 'totems' think that they are entering some kind of 'mini' Disneyland.

Was someone in 'high' places 'friendly' with the 'artist'?

Name withheld

Disappearing dog bed took the biscuit

Dear Messenger — Because we have been blessed with so many apples in what seems to be a bad year, we have put boxfuls and plastic bags out on 'freeserve'. We have been pleased that so many people have helped themselves.

One of the containers was a large plastic dog bed and someone has helped themselves to that as well. We are not too upset about the dog bed but wish they hadn't tipped all the apples in the road.

We hope some very big dog is enjoying new-found comfort.

Christine Brooker
Lower Langley

Goodbye from the Fosters

Dear Messenger — Goodbye from the Fosters - we are off to New Zealand on December 25th and wanted to take the opportunity to say goodbye to all our friends and acquaintances in the Wivey area where we have lived for the past 15 years.

Collectively we have worked at Kingsmead for 35 years! Maya started as a textiles and home economics teacher in 1986 and I was appointed Head of Creative Arts, three years later.

The school and our department (Art and Design) has changed quite a lot in that time but we have both enjoyed working in what is a very special school.

What makes it so special is the children. The Kingsmead 'kids' are, on the whole, a really friendly bunch. It is always nice when we meet individuals and groups in and around Wivey and get a big smile and a "Hello Miss/Hello Sir".

Likewise, when we bump into ex-pupils, even after a long period of time, they are always very positive about Kingsmead and often have anecdotes that make us laugh about events and characters we have long forgotten.

The sense of community and belonging in Wiveliscombe is also something that we will miss a great deal.

We are moving to the North Shore above Auckland and will be able to enjoy the close proximity of fantastic beaches, stunning scenery and what we are told is a very cosmopolitan city, but we know there is nowhere quite like 'Wivey'.

There is too little space here to mention all the things that make it special - the Saturday morning queue in Thorne's Butchers; a bacon butty from Whelans; great local beers; rugby at the Rec in winter and swimming in the open air pool in summer; the lovely Somerset accent; and so on. Just recently, events like the 10 Parishes Festival and 10 Radio have confirmed that the town is a thriving centre for the arts and entertainment.

Our daughter Molly is really going to miss her primary school - she has been lucky to have started her education at such a super place.

We would like to pass on our thanks to all the staff who have taught her for the last five years. She is really going to miss her friends and will leave with fond memories of a succession of great teachers.

There are few places that can offer the unique blend of people, places and events that 'our' town can and if, as we have been told, New Zealand is a bit like Wiveliscombe then we know we will be very happy there.

We will keep in touch and, if it doesn't live up to expectations, we will be back!

Mark Foster

A long time coming

Dear Messenger — Excitement was running high in Rotton Row this morning - November 7th - when half a dozen men in Deane yellow gear turned up and set about resurfacing the appalling mess that's been the pavement across from the church gates these many years.

If I said that residents gathered in groups to discuss arrangements for the celebration party you'd be

Retiring from B & B

Dear Messenger — We will be retiring from our B & B business in May 2006. We moved into Clerkspool in August 1981, and started work on the house. We opened for business in April 1982, and have been open, more or less nonstop, ever since.

We've had a wide variety of guests from many countries. The vast majority have been fine, with just a few scoundrels! We've made many friends some of whom we keep in touch with.

So we say thank you to those of you who have provided us with customers and have all helped us to make a living here.

When we retire, as far as we know, we won't be moving from Wivey, or even from Clerkspool. We do love living here, and have made so many good friends.

So, you haven't got rid of us yet!
Terry and Elisabeth Pearce

right to accuse me of exaggeration, so let's just say that we're very happy about it.

More importantly, there's far less chance of someone suffering a fall because it really has been highly dangerous.

Despite pressure from powerful people - I cite your correspondent Jas - it has taken years to get the job done and it's been galling because if it had been anywhere else in the town it would have been put right long ago.

Jim Whyatt,
Rotton Row.

Searching

Dear Messenger — I recently visited Wiveliscombe, hoping to find a trace of information on my family tree, unfortunately without much success.

A lady in the local library was very helpful and suggested I write to you as maybe one of your many readers can help.

I haven't got much to go on, just that my nan's name was Beatrice Rice Sully. She was born in 1879 - I only know she had some sisters and a brother who died young. When married her name was Parsons. She moved to Glamorganshire.

That's it really, not much I know. Can anyone help?

Sue Smith,
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