

**MURIEL  
RURIAL  
2016**

## March 2016

I followed Major Tim's ascent and subsequent repair to the Space Station recently. You may recall from a previous "Voice" issue some years ago, I am interested in space travel and planets, an interest whetted by an introductory offer on the back of a corn flakes carton. "Powerful telescope, with stand and wall chart. Bring the planets into your living room. Send an eight pounds postal order and four Kellogs space tokens. Offer ends 06.04.02."

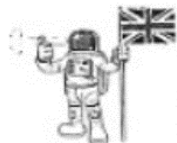
Well that was some while ago so, for those who don't know what happened, I'll tell you. I bought the cereal, for the tokens, and the postal order, sent them off and waited with anticipation. Eventually they arrived and I set the telescope up in the front bedroom and, with the aid of the wall chart, began identifying the planets. I was so excited, convinced I had discovered, clear as a bell, in record time, Pluto, Saturn and Mars. An astronomical hat trick. Of course I was new to this planet lark but I did notice that what I thought were planets, were remarkably similar to the markings on the curtains near where I had set the telescope up. Hmm?



Then, just as I was consulting the wall chart, convinced I had spotted Jupiter, I was interrupted by someone hammering violently at my front door. Oh dear, it was mad Marie from the house directly opposite. I opened the front door and she immediately launched into a tirade of abuse, calling me a blatant Peeping Tom. "I see you", she said, "with that telescope thingy, spying into my house. Well let me tell you Rurial I got receipts for all that stuff. Nothing stolen there. Everybody has several ipads, televisions, microwaves these days. You just watch yourself and don't be spying on me no more." And with that she put her face so near that our noses touched and I could smell the drink on her breath as she issued the threat that "if I see you and that telescope at your window again, I'll burn your house down". And with that, in true pantomime baddy style, kicked my milk minder over as she stormed off....

Now let us fast forward to current events. To astronaut Major Tim Peake and his achievements along with fellow astronauts. Wonderful, wonderful, but surely I'm not the only one to have noticed; come on everybody you must have noticed that the starring roles, the flyers, are all men. So sisters, we have got to address this issue. And with that in mind I begin to dream, to imagine. I can hear, and see, the television coverage on Channel Five news.

On this historic day for space travel, Major Muriel Rurial, astronaut, from Borough Green, area of outstanding natural beauty, became the first woman on the moon, when she touched down and then walked on the moon's surface before hammering in the Union Jack flag. Audibly reminding us as she does so that the hammer is sponsored by Kent



Aloominom (a coup for Richard at K.A.), first "club hammer" on the moon. Then unashamed, my dream of putting BG on the international space map continues as the commentator remarks upon the sponsorship motifs on my space suit (à la Formula One mode). Nisa and the Co-op, a sleeve each. Lloyds Pharmacy and the Opticians, a leg each. Shakti News and the Hospice shop share the two front panels while the full back panel is given to the message "We need the slip road"... Everyone's a winner, Yessir!

But soft what light through yonder window breaks? Well it's the master stroke. My finely rehearsed reply to the obvious post mission "How do I feel" interview. I adopt a serious facial expression, then a long pause, for effect, I begin. "Once upon a time, dinosaurs roamed the earth, life forms were primitive and no one had even heard of Ant and Dec. But look how we have progressed and yet, after all this time, we are still waiting for a slip road to ease the traffic volume through our lovely village, of outstanding what's it". Short and sweet, the interview ends and I head back to my rocket, wondering whether I have done enough to further the cause, that one day folk may cross, with impunity, the roads in BG. That our delightful shops will thrive and survive; while women astronauts regularly travel to the moon and beyond. Will those things come to pass. Whadaya reckon?



## April 2016

I was in Nisa, wondering what to have for Sunday lunch. I don't cook, I hate cooking. Loads of mess, lots of washing up. Time consuming. I'm too busy to cook and I find it boring anyway. I can't believe how many cookery programmes there are on the television now. Baking cakes. Foreign dishes. Cooking for nutrition. Specialist cooking for vegetarians, vegans, Librans, Sagittarians and Leos. What's going on? That's not entertainment. They'll have programmes on breathing next.

My meals come exclusively from tins, packets, cartons. Easy peezy! As my ol' Mum used to say "Muriel any silly sod can do things the hard way. Let's open a tin of soup." Wise words Mum and she offered me that pearl of wisdom over sixty years ago and it still holds good today. Yes a tin of soup, couple of crackers, followed by a portion of Greek style yoghurt sprinkled with almonds and honey on top. Let that go down, wash up, then relax in an armchair with a tea and four finger Kit Kat. All done and dusted, including washing up, forty-five minutes tops. Rest of the day free to work on another masterpiece or new invention.

Yes invention, I've got lots of amazing ideas and some prototypes around the house. Don't want to say too much at this stage, give too much away. I made that mistake a few years ago when I happened to mention, to someone I bumped into in Kent Aloominom, that I had an idea for a glass-sided toaster. The glass sides make the toast visible throughout. Simply pop the toast up manually if it looks done to your satisfaction but hasn't popped up yet. Well a year or so passed and there, in John Lewis, were glass-sided toasters for sale. Little did I know when I blurted my idea out in Kent Aloominom, a Dragon's Den entrepreneur was eavesdropping my conversation. A dragon with no shame, who would go on to pirate my genius and make fortunes.

And the practice of piracy has been prevalent throughout history. Let me go back as far as pre-historic times and Edward Wheel who is credited with the invention that bears his name. But it was the brainchild of the bloke in the cave next door, Thomas Ponsonby, wot invented it. Just like me, victim in Kent Aloominom, Eddie Wheel was eavesdropping his neighbour as he feverishly ran his idea past his wife. Ponsonby invented the wheel but died in poverty and obscurity, twinned with penury and destitution; areas of outstanding natural misery. Edward Wheel is immortalised in granite by way of a statue in the Municipal Gardens, Catford, South London. The statue is sometimes vandalised by Ponsonby's descendants but they have acknowledged it's an uphill struggle to educate the world that, in fairness, we should always insert the word ponsonby in place of wheel. But a four-ponsonby drive Land Rover, a ship's ponsonby or roulette ponsonby doesn't ring, does it...

But I've digressed and the midnight oil is burning low. Owls are hooting their plaintive calls for love. O'Sullivan has just potted the pink. The constellation is winking at me to come to bed, to the arms of Morpheus and to sum up, I think I can safely say the home made wine, disappointing at first, came to life with that gill of meths.

## May 2016

The Yellow-breasted Borough Green warbler. Its song a symphony. Its flight majestic. Its beauty sublime. A bird so rare, ornithologists doubt its very existence; claiming it is actually a mythical creature. But I have seen it. I was a child when I glimpsed it briefly in my garden. It sang to me, then it was gone. Gone save for the memory that time has not dimmed. I left bread and water, inviting its return but sadly t'was in vain...

These are events of a time long ago, but affectionate recollection has not distracted the physical truth. The bird and its song were real, just never repeated. Never repeated up until a crisp bright February morning this year, over sixty years on. It was fleeting but it was wonderful. The Yellow-breasted Borough Green warbler in full voice, full view. Dispelling any doubts I might have harboured that perhaps the wild imaginings of a child had conjured images and events unreal.

So here's the thing. I want you, dear readers, friends of the "The Voice", this column, of all things Borough Green, to help prove the existence of this wonderful bird. Go out into the wild, with your camera, iphone, whatever genius device you have and capture living proof, visual and audible, if fate smiles upon us. Then let doubt yield to celebration as we celebrate the life and introduction to the world of this glorious, elusive bird. The Yellow-breasted

Borough Green warbler.



[PLEASE SEND IMAGES OR DETAILS OF SIGHTINGS TO OUR TOP EDITOR, M.J.]

## June 2016

I've had an idea. Let me run it past you. It is widely acknowledged that Borough Green is an area of outstanding natural thingamybob but there is more to our delightful village than beauty alone. With that in mind I have hit on the idea of conducting local tours with commentary describing events, characters and locations that are the very fabric of Borough Green. My good friend Tim will be the official tour guide and, although he will wear a peaked cap as is traditional, the tours will be relaxed, informal and sometimes "embellished". But hopefully there will not be any heated "refund" disputes if Tim gets one or two dates and locations confused.

At the end of each tour passengers will receive a souvenir postcard, in sepia, of the village how it was in the eighteen hundreds. Refreshments will be included in the ticket price and served in Kent Aloominom, at the specially designated area between the pest control and goldfish aisles, following a whistle stop tour of that flagship store. A store well renowned and holder of the prix de pomme d'or for excellence in hardware. Then, just a few hundred yards from K.A, we can gaze upon the new A25 junction roundabout. Current holder of most accidents and audible expletives in North West Kent, nudging even the Bluewater site into second place.

Then it's just a short hop from there to our excellent village hall. A hive of activity seven days a week, celebrating diversity through politics, pilates, drama and much, much more, complemented by award winning public toilets adjacent. But then, the pièce de résistance and envy of villages throughout Kent, it's our library. Exemplifying traditional British values. Offering free access to books, the wonderful world of books, and photocopies still only ten pence a sheet. Incidentally the old, original Borough Green library was one of the first public libraries in England to offer for loan a copy of D.H.Lawrence's "Lady Chatterley's Lover". But people strongly denied moving here for that reason. Tim will be advised not to be risqué with his commentary at this point but of course he must mention it. An example that even then, all those years ago, B.G. was daring, exciting.



It is widely acknowledged that rural villages will always be home to one or two eccentrics and Borough Green is surely no exception. We celebrate them here. Those individuals who view life from an oblique angle. Nutters is how I've heard them described. Genius is what I call them. Tim would be testament to that in his livery, complete with peaked cap and enamel GUIDE's badge...

So, if the tour ever does come to fruition and you wish to be considered for a place on the maiden voyage/tour, then you must register with Richard at Kent Aloominom and, at the same time, confirm you would be happy with a cake choice from either coffee and walnut or Victoria sponge. Baked by our very own Daisy Peabody MBE (Marvellous Baking Expert). So watch this space, as they say, and as soon as the cost and feasibility has been assessed, Richard may well be open for bookings for Le Tour de B.G. (avec free commentary). Mmm the français makes it sound exotic, don't you think?

## July 2016

This month I would like to feature two poems from the pen of my favourite poet, Laurie Hatt.

### LIFE

From earthbound clay  
He furnished a pot

Then used that pot  
To carry water

Water,  
Gives life

A life  
To fashion pots

Now,  
He can't move, for pots.

### LONELY HEART

He would wear a uniform  
The man of her dreams

Hair slicked down  
Shoes polished

A prince  
Among men.

But she knew  
This could never be

And ate  
Another bun.

## August 2016

Timothy is nine years old. His passion is football. He watches mostly, rather than plays, as he tires easily. He goes to the hospital regularly for tests with his Mum and Dad. He makes very little progress as research requires funding and resources are limited...

In the village where Timothy lives there is a charity shop which is staffed in the main by retired women. They are volunteers who do sterling work for the charity which aims to raise money for their particular cause.

One day a woman entered the shop and donated several hard back books and an old necklace. The volunteer thanked the donor, put the books on the shelf and then priced the necklace up at six pounds before placing it in the display cabinet.

After a little while a man wandered in and went to the cabinet he bought the necklace and, after a cursory look at the bric'a'brac, he left. Some months later the gentleman sold the necklace, at auction, for eight hundred pounds. Friends unanimously congratulated him on his success. No one commiserated in respect of the charity's.