

EASTER TRAIL FUN IN IWADE



As the owner of my own small business 'Claire Louise Creative Designs', I am regularly coming up with creative ways to make my customers' visions come to life. This Easter, I set about making a little idea I had turned into a fun activity for villagers.

I initially put a message on my Facebook page asking if anyone would be willing to display an Easter poster in their window as part of a trail idea I had in mind. The response from fellow villagers was overwhelming, the trail could have been even longer thanks to the incredible community spirit and willingness to participate, but 30 houses seemed like a good place to stop.

After designing numbers 1-30 in an Easter theme, I set off with my children to deliver them to all the lovely participants. We then plotted the houses involved on a map, made a trail sheet to go with it and we were ready to go! The trail ran across the Easter holidays and the response was incredible! We added a little competition into the mix by randomly selecting winners from the completed trail sheets – as we go to print the trail is still running but the winners will now have been announced on my page!

Claire Louise Creative Designs is based here in Iwade, with almost ten years' experience in designing and creating. As my customers know, it is really hard to say in a nutshell what I make as I rarely turn down a challenge! Greetings cards, business stationery, prints, cake toppers, stickers, experience vouchers, Disney reveals, all things Christmas...the list doesn't really end so please support local I am already brainstorming more ideas, it's amazing what we can achieve together so keep a look out for future plans! Thank you for making it an Easter to remember.

SWALE LADIES WHO LATTE

By Rachel Chapman.

At our March meeting we had Sophie Spillet talking about Imposter Syndrome, which many of us could relate to at various points in our lives.

We also celebrated a couple of the ladies, Clare Stokes and Sophie Spillet, as they won awards at the Kent Women In Business Awards.

We meet every third Wednesday of the month from 10-12pm at the Barn. We are always welcoming new ladies. It costs just £3 to include hot refreshments.



**SATURDAY 10TH
MAY 2025
12:00 - 21:00
IWADE BARN,
ME9 8FP**



The Iwade Observer

MAY 2025

21 YEARS OF VERY HAPPY DAYS



By Caroline Wiles

As May blossoms, we are indulging ourselves with a brief walk down memory lane reflecting on our last 21 years of service to the families of Iwade.

Sue & Collette first established Happy Days Nursery in 2004, opening the doors on 4th May to welcome both their very first cohort of little ones plus Sarah, our Nursery Manager. There have been many changes over the years but, despite the current vulnerability of the Early Years sector, we are just as committed to our vocation today as we were 21 years ago; working with young children is both our passion and our privilege.

Variety is definitely the spice of life at Happy Days, especially when welcoming special guests. As always, it was a pleasure to see parents join us for recent Stay & Play sessions. Bumblebee mummies, nannies & aunts were treated to a fairly unique pamper experience plus an afternoon tea prepared by Chef Simon. Some of those nails were quite a sight and the painting most definitely unique. Speaking of unique, a recent visit from Blizzard the Lizard piqued the children's curiosity no end. They weren't at all squeamish to hear about Blizzard's diet or skin shedding. I am sure the parents are grateful Blizzard's

visit didn't coincide with theirs so there was no danger of the children offering their parents cricket sandwiches for tea!

Spring is such a busy time, with our Bumblebees diligently working on their vegetable plot. So far, they've planted a variety of vegetables & salad items. They are carefully watering the soil beds and patiently waiting in anticipation for those first shoots to appear above ground and wondering when the munching can begin. In the meantime, our Bumblebees have been out and about exploring Iwade in the sunshine. Who doesn't enjoy a spring scavenger hunt challenge, especially when it ends at the park?

We are not wishing the year away but are conscious that the autumn term will be with us before we know it. As September brings an extension to funded hours for many parents don't forget to check your eligibility at www.childcarechoices.gov.uk before the deadline of 31st August 2025. Remember, you can't obtain a code and use it in the same term. If you are interested in a place for your child at Happy Days Nursery we would love to hear from you. Call the office (01795 424348) for more details or use the contact form on our website www.happydaysuk.co.uk.



SPEEDWAY GEARS UP FOR LEAGUE RACING RETURN

By *Paul Heller*

Work continues apace at Sittingbourne Speedway's circuit just off Raspberry Hill Lane as the Club prepares for the first league match of the season featuring the newly formed Kent Eagles team.

On Sunday 23rd March the track held a practice session for the Eagles team riders and a few invited guests, it was a chance for the riders to test their equipment and get used to the track. The track was very wet due to the recent rain but it was rideable and everyone had an enjoyable afternoon.

On Saturday 5th April the Kent Eagles held their official press and practice day where supporters had their first chance to see and meet the riders and see them in their new race suits. The team members all had a few spins around the track and posed for publicity photos to be taken.

Apart from a few track modifications to be carried out everyone is eagerly looking forward to the Kent Eagles first league encounter which will be against the Leicester Fox Cubs on April 13th and are hoping for a bumper crowd to kick the new season off.

Sandwiched between these events the Club have been able to look after the flat track riders by hosting a couple of practice sessions for them. A detailed Kent Eagles match report will follow.



Beacon lighting to celebrate VE Day

The village beacon will be lit to celebrate VE day on the 8th May at 21:30. The Barn and bar will be open from 19:30, offering food as well.

A PLEA FOR HELP

The Iwade Observer Team is looking for somebody to take over as the newsletters' editor. I have done this for almost ten years now, but will soon be moving to Faversham.

For obvious reasons, it would not be right for somebody living in Faversham to be 'doing' The Iwade Observer. Not only this, but the fact I have done this for nearly a decade perhaps makes it a good time to introduce some 'fresh eyes' and bring on new ideas.

The Observer is run by a very small team of just two people, myself and Kayla Harriss who does a fantastic job each month of preparing each issue for the printers.

If you fancy giving it a go please get in touch and we can talk things over – email me at

The.iwade.observer@gmail.com

Rynn Kemp

Iwade Reading and Book Group

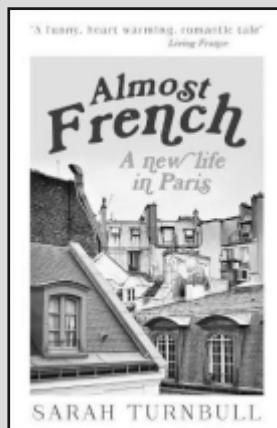
By *Karen Blunden*

Our book for April was *The Memory Collector* by Fiona Harper.

Most members enjoyed it but a couple of members could not get into it so consequently did not finish it.

It's about a girl called Heather who doesn't want to remember her childhood as her mother's extreme hoarding casts her family life into disarray. The book is a powerful and poignant story about mental illness, love, loss, hope and moving on.

Our next meeting is on May 13th when we will be reading "Almost French" by Sarah Turnbull chosen by Maureen. The meeting starts at 10.30am in Iwade Barn ... new members are always welcome, come along and give it a try, make new friends and enjoy refreshments over a yarn about your latest favourite book!



EXPECT A MIRACLE

Last month, on the great Christian festival of Easter Sunday, I had the ineffable joy of baptising my youngest grandchild: Eleanor Jane Kimiko. It was an unexpected miracle for three reasons ...

First of all, Ellie is a long-awaited miracle child for my son Ben and his wife Kyoko. Ten years in the making, there were times when we doubted God would answer our heartfelt prayers. But He did!

Secondly, when I retired 5 years ago, I didn't expect to conduct another family christening, although I baptised my other three grandchildren, married my two children and even buried my mum and dad. But by the grace of God and the kind permission of the local rector and the wider diocese of Canterbury, I was indeed able to carry out this very special occasion.

Thirdly, this was miracle for me and my family because just sixteen months ago I was diagnosed with prostate cancer, my PSA level being ludicrously high. Prostate cancer is the most common cancer in men, being recently highlighted by the immensely brave Chris Hoy and it is finally beginning to receive the vital attention it needs. Again, by God's grace and the expertise of nurses, doctors and specialists of the NHS, I was spared and am now deep into my challenging post-procedural care. Another miracle! Miracles are more common than you think, you know. The phrase Expect A Miracle means just that. The Latin includes the idea of *ex* or out (as in Exit) and *spectate* so it literally means that we should actively *look out* for Miracles in our daily lives. They may not always be as dramatic as a long-awaited birth or delivery from a life-threatening illness but they can be life-affirming and life-changing nonetheless.

If you need confirmation of this just look around you at the now well-established evidence of spring - the flowers the trees, the birdsong, the lighter days. Yes, I know they are part of the ongoing cycle of nature but they are no less miraculous for that. Consider how wonderful it is that the miracle of life is hidden in a tiny seed or bulb. Something so small that will grow to be so much bigger.

Our war-torn world seems currently so dark with conflict and chaos all around; natural disasters and evil individuals dealing death and despair. Yet this present darkness can actually serve to highlight those small points of light springing up all around us, just like the stars that shine the more brightly for the dark background of space. And they're there for all to see if we take the time to look.

Take a moment dear reader. Look out for the light. You may need to wait, even "push" a bit, but it's there.

Expect a Miracle!

God bless you

John x

IWADE VILLAGE CLEAN UP

Sunday 4 May 2025 - 9.30 a.m. to 12.00 noon

The Village Clean up starts at 9.30 am, and ends at 12.00 noon, helpers to report to the Village Hall to collect black sacks and sign in.

Please come along and help tidy our Village

If you have any questions, please contact the Clerk: clerk@iwade-pc.gov.uk

CLAIRE LOUISE

CREATIVE DESIGNS

Find us on Facebook

PASTORAL LETTER

Dear Friends,

As we continue our journey through this Easter season of reflection, we are invited to pause and consider the deeper truths of our faith, particularly in moments when we face struggle, confusion, and disappointment. As I write this letter, I find myself reflecting on a powerful story from the Gospel of Luke, chapter 24, the story of the two disciples walking the road to Emmaus.

These disciples were experiencing profound disillusionment. They had placed all their hopes in Jesus, believing that He was the one who would redeem Israel. But now, after His death, it seemed as though their dreams had been shattered. As they walked, weighed down by their sorrow, they struggled to make sense of what had happened. It was then that a stranger approached them on the road. This stranger, as we know, was Jesus Himself, though they did not recognize Him at first.

The journey of these disciples, both physical and spiritual, mirrors so many of our own experiences. How often do we, too, walk through seasons of sorrow, grief, and confusion? Our hearts can become heavy, and our minds clouded with doubt. Yet, in the midst of such darkness, the risen Christ is walking beside us, even when we do not immediately recognise Him.

Jesus listens to the disciples' pain. He engages with them, opens the Scriptures to them, and helps them see how all that had happened was part of God's divine plan. It was only when they invited Him into their home to break bread with them that their eyes were opened, and they saw Him for who He truly was. And in that moment, He vanished from their sight, leaving them with hearts burning from the encounter.

This moment offers us a powerful reminder that, even when we are uncertain of God's presence, He is with us. In times of sorrow or confusion, we may not always recognise Jesus right away. Our hearts and minds are often clouded by our own hurts, expectations, and disappointments. But the truth remains: Jesus is walking alongside us. His presence is often not revealed in dramatic moments, but in the quiet, subtle ways, through the Scriptures, the love and support of those around us, and those small moments of peace amidst the chaos. It's only in hindsight that we often realise He has been with us all along, guiding us, comforting us, and revealing His plan for our lives.

I encourage each of you to take time during this season to reflect on your own journey. Are there moments when you have felt alone, or uncertain of where to go next? Like the disciples, perhaps you have struggled to recognize Jesus in the midst of your pain. Take heart, He is there with you, just as He was with those two disciples on the road to Emmaus.

May this season be one of deep reflection, renewed faith, and a growing awareness of Christ's abiding presence in our lives.

Rev'd Robin Selmes

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Do something amazing today!

Volunteer with us

Demelza delivers extraordinary care to extraordinary children who are facing serious or life-limiting conditions, throughout Kent, South East London and East Sussex. Each day our volunteers make a difference to the lives of thousands of children and families.

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If you can spare some time, please get in touch
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demelza.org.uk

See YOU at the next

ASSEMBLY on SUNDAY



Songs, stories, cakes and biscuits, meet new people!
Children, parents, grandparents, family and friends.

All welcome!

Sunday 30th March
Sunday 11th May
Sunday 8th June
Sunday 13th July

in Iwade School Hall at 3.00pm

ASSEMBLY ON SUNDAY is supported by
All Saints Church and the Poorne Alliance Multi Academy Trust.
Further details from: John Guest 07710 353461

IWADE TOURS – A QUICK UPDATE



Welcome everyone, in particular a special welcome, to all of the new people who have signed up to join our monthly newsletter circulation. We are very pleased to let you know that we have arranged two more upcoming outings; The New Forest on the 23rd of June and another to Tiptree Jams in Essex on 23rd of July, both of which are already selling well.

Our first coach excursion to have sold out was a visit to see one of London's best Elvis Presley tributes on Wednesday 5th March 2025. On board the moored Teresa Joanne in King George V Dock (part of London's Royal Docks), we all had a lovely time singing along with Scott Elvis and dancing, all complimented by a two course meal. The location gave us excellent views of the planes taking off and landing at London City Airport plus the Canary Wharf skyline. Thank you so much for your support.

Please remember all of our outings start and finish at our **only** coach boarding location which is Woodpecker Park bus stop, Ferry Road, Iwade. You may find cheaper outings but you will not find better, as we offer

excellent value for money. So, what are you waiting for?

(Editors note - sorry folks that's all we could fit in this month from Iwade Tours, but if you want to know more then get in touch with Elizabeth or Matthew Richards at 20 School Lane, Iwade, ME9 8SE Telephone number (01795) 558001, mobile 07746 893993, or email Iwadetours@gmail.com)

IWADE PARISH COUNCIL MINUTES WEDNESDAY 12TH MARCH 2025

We - The Observer - usually publish the approved minutes of the Parish Council each month. This month though we are really struggling to find space and so as not disappoint other contributors we have decided not to publish the minutes in full. However, one item discussed at the March meeting (last approved minutes) is very pertinent to all residents of the village and the local countryside, namely the proposed development of land at Bobbing:

1. 22/503654/EIOUT: Land To The West Of Bobbing Sittingbourne Kent ME9 8QL. Outline application (all matters reserved except for access) for a mixed used development comprising up to 2,500 dwellings, a 5.21 ha commercial employment zone including doctors' surgery, a 4.35 ha sports hub (and sports pitches), 3FE primary school, community facilities, local retail provision, public open space, children's play areas and associated parking, servicing, utilities, footpath and cycle links, drainage, ground and other infrastructure.

This was discussed at length and we felt residents needed to be aware of this huge development. To see the full details of the meeting and more information about this development you can find the minutes published at: <https://www.hugofox.com/shared/attachments.asp?f=e5ad2238%2D3e9e%2D4996%2D84dd%2D0c0f64927d92%2Epdf&o=Minutes%2DMarch%2D2025%2Epdf>

Well worth a read!

The Iwade Observer Team

DESSERT DIRGE

By *Andrea Van Schalkwyk*

‘The Romanovs were murdered in 1918. How can there be any family left... I mean wasn’t the entire family killed by the Bolsheviks?’ my mother asks. ‘Well, there was some extended family who escaped. It was rumoured many did so by taking on new names and personas, as in this case. Dimitri was a third cousin of Nikolai Romanov. He was fourteen when the royal family were executed and twenty-five when he married Maria,’ he says. ‘Do you mean my father was a Romanov?’ I ask. ‘Well, it seems so according to the records we’ve found, and we know that they had a baby with them on the freight. It shows up in the ship’s records,’ he explains. I recall my dream I had before waking. My mouth goes dry. I taste sand and salt. The west wind is now whipping sand into our faces. My eyes are watering from the sandy blasts. My mother was savvy enough to wear her headscarf which is now wrapped Bedouin style around her head and face. I only brought a hat to shield me from the scorching desert sun. Professor Meisen has dressed in archaeological gear, well protected. We get out of the Land Rover and walk over to the dig, all the while Professor Meisen is explaining how they found the site, relying on the account of the sailor who tried to rescue them. How Ivor had found them, dead. Ravaged by the desert elements, lying in their Russian dance attire, which he found odd at the time. Maria, my mother had her Cossack style hat on, as did my father, to try and shield them from the blistering sun. ‘They were extremely emaciated... had likely been living off a few roots they had dug out and perhaps eaten desert insects... in a sorry state,’ he continues, ‘and you Rita were found relatively healthy, as your mother had probably been breast feeding you and shielding you by keeping you covered by a scarf she used over a crate. They must have recovered the crate from the freight’s wreckage, that had washed up on the beach.’ ‘Mein Gott,’ my mother is weeping now. I reach out to her. ‘Mama,’ I say, holding her.

‘Can I go over and help with the excavation?’ I ask. ‘Sure Rita. I’ll pour your mother and me some coffee,’ he turns to retrieve a flask from the back of the Land Rover. I approach the dig. The archaeologist looks up at me. ‘Rita?’, she asks, ‘I’m Hannah.’ ‘Yes. Guten Tag Hannah,’ I say as I climb in beside her, ‘Can I use this trowel?’ ‘Ja, and here’s a dust brush so not to damage any finds,’ she says handing it to me. I delicately start to push away the sand. It feels like a futile job as it just slides back. ‘Here. Use the water to wet the sand so you can keep it out,’ she says handing me a 2litre can. ‘Danke,’ I say. ‘I’m going up on a break now. You good to be here by yourself? The rest of us have been here overnight so we are heading back to town,’ she says, dusting herself off, looking up to where the rest of the team are waiting for her. ‘Ja, alles gut,’ I reply. I look up and see my mother chatting to the team that were getting ready to leave. I reckon they are curious to meet my mother with her reputation of being a first-class lecturer in her time. They wave to me as they drive away, ‘Good luck with finding anything,’ says Hannah. I carry on digging. I stop, put down the trowel. I want my hands in the sand. I start to scoop out the sand. I don’t use the water. It is dry, grainy. I am recalling my dream. A sudden gust of wind startles me from my digging. I look up and there is a dust storm hurtling towards us. Professor Meisen, still standing next to the Land Rover, is urgently beckoning me back, shouting at me to hurry. I see my mother is already in the vehicle. It is too late. An orange dust cloud swarms over us. I’m in the dust storm but, it’s clear around me. Am I in the eye of the storm? I see my hands digging frantically. Then I look up and the dust parts. There, just in front of me, I see two figures. It’s the figures from the photos. Dancing free to the rhythm of the desert winds. Celebrating life and their love. Whirling and turning. Jumping and kicking. Laughing and loving. The sand sifts and sags around their feet. The only drumbeat: their heartbeats which I hear as if I’m pinned against

PART TWO - CONCLUSION

their chests. They are twirling round and round. The world becomes a merry-go-round. The blue sky their stage backdrop. The desert their stage. Red and brown, black and crimson robes burn like flames. Dusty desert dunes gaze on in awe of their vibrancy. Their hair harnessed by the desert winds and their graceful motion: pivoting pirouettes. A delightful dancing duet. Their last dance: a desert dirge. I’m enraptured. Their beauty, their grace and poise. They look towards me. I realise I am their audience, just me. My hands touch something. It’s hard to break away from their performance but, I look down. A skull, no two, next to each other, facing each other. A humerus bone, two, seem to be overlapping, as if holding each other. There is a scarlet scarf. They were holding me in those last moments. A glint of silver catches my eye. I pull at it. It’s a tiny identity bracelet with a broken clasp. I turn it over and find a nameplate: Ekarita Maria Anastacia Nikolaevna, 12 December 1929. ‘Rita!’, my mother says, suddenly standing over me. Her mouth drops. ‘What have you there?’ My mouth is dry, gritty. I struggle to speak. I look up, past my mother. The figures have vanished. I clutch the bracelet. I taste sand and salt, gritty on my lips. Professor Meiser stands behind my mother. ‘Romanov!’ he spits out. My mother turns to stare at him. His face is puce. There’s a sudden flash of red and a black Cossack boot. Professor Meisen suddenly drops to his knees. A whirlwind of sand engulfs him. Two hands reach out to me. I take their hands. I reach for my mother’s hand. We run for the Land Rover.

Commodore Dieter Meisen was sent out to South West Africa to execute me. The locket had been ripped off my mother by him in a struggle after he had tracked down my parents in Moscow. They had managed to escape with the help of the Kasyan Goleizovsky Dance Company. He had foolishly gone alone that night, without any thought given to the many strong dancers who strong-armed him, holding him back while they fled. They had taken him down to the OGPU, the police at the time, who he could not disclose his identity to for intelligence reasons. They let Meisen off with a reprimand. The dance company hid my parents and helped plan their escape. Meisen’s only prize from that failed attempt was the locket. It was with that locket that he had looked up my birth records. He later received intel that my parents had fled the country on a Soviet Freight sailing to South Africa. He had been sent to South West Africa/ Namibia two years ago to try and find them, and me. Fortunately, my adopted parents had registered me as Rita Holzmann with no known date of birth. Professor Meisen had collapsed in the desert that day later to be found by the authorities, as he didn’t return to the university. We later heard he had been arrested as a Soviet Spy and sent to Cape Town to be prosecuted. My mother never reported the incident. We just packed up and left for Australia where we had family. I hold onto the locket knowing that I am one of the last Romanovs and... well, I’m leaving it to you, the reader to decide. What exactly happened that day? I still to this day, have dreams of them always dancing. In these dreams they dance with me.

The next Parish Council meeting will be on Wednesday 14th May at 19:30 in The Barn, All Saints Close.

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