



A smile from Nishta, one of our team leaders out in the garden in the sunshine.

It's summertime!

Summer is here! Very much so! Winter was nudged aside by spring, and spring ushered in the summer. Our coats, scarves and jumpers are mothballed for a good few months, and our lighter and brighter clothes help cheer us all up. And what a lot of sunshine we've been having! Sunshine is synonymous with happiness, of course. Cheerful people have sunny dispositions. When we smile it's as if the sun comes out. It's remarkable how much more attractive we are when we smile!

In addition to the good weather, something else to smile about is that the summer issue of the *Beth Ezra House Journal* is out now. As a change from *This and That*, our regular feature about activities on page 2, we have the first part of a guide to some of the places local to Beth Ezra worth visiting. This is from Peter Southgate. Then on page 3, Ruth Perfitt tells us of her arrival back in England after her family's time in Canada in another *Extract From a Life*. Lots of things have been going on under the sun, and you'll find that our *Thought for the Season* on the back page is about **everything** that goes on '*under the sun*'. All of it! And it's more than meets the eye. Finally, also on the back page, there's news from the Trustees about some work that needs to be carried out sometime soon on our ageing lift. Yes, the care home itself needs caring for, too! And so does the garden...

Breaking new ground

We've had the landscapers in. They've been busy working on the stretch of what was once unutilised ground running alongside the fence leading up to the summerhouse. Concrete was broken up and some soil was brought in, enabling trees and shrubs to be planted, making the area a lot tidier and easier on the eye, as you can see.



Out and about from Beth Ezra (Part 1) As a change from our usual activities roundup, Peter Southgate tells us about some places to visit locally.

Although Beth Ezra is situated in a built-up area, there are many green oases in the region and places of historic interest that provide relief and seclusion from the world around, additional to the home and garden itself. *Peter writes:

Heading north – lavender fields and Oaks Park



An Oaks Park vista

Turning left out of the Beth Ezra car park we proceed until we come to a crossroad, where we turn left along a pavement with green fields opposite. Soon the pavement gives way to a narrow path that threads its way through trees lining the road. This winding path eventually reaches an incoming lane, at which is the entrance to the famous lavender fields, where in spring and early summer visitors can see a beautiful



The lavender fields

display spread over the large fields. Continuing along the path beside the main road takes us to a pedestrian crossing where the path continues on the other side. This leads to the entrance to Oaks Park, a beautiful open space with lovely trees, wildflowers, a more formal Rose Garden, and, more importantly, a very popular café!



Oaks Park café

The Webb Estate: Woodcote Park



Woodcote Green

Directly opposite Beth Ezra is a turning that leads to Woodcote Green, a large open space in one corner of which is the Lord Roberts restaurant and coffee shop which is very popular as an escape from hustle and bustle of the surrounding area. On the far side of the Green are the gated entrances to the exclusive Webb Estate, a residential conservation area. Originally agricultural land, the estate was purchased by a local estate agent William Webb in the late 1890s. He then developed it as an exclusive housing area with a 'gardens first' policy. It has matured into a very peaceful and beautiful area. Its 200+ detached residences are set in large gardens full of stately trees and beautiful shrubs. The estate's grass-bordered roads meander through the 625-acre site until exiting near the main Brighton Road at Purley Cross.



The Lord Roberts

Coulsdon and the highway men

Turning right out of the Beth Ezra car park the road leads down to Coulsdon, once an isolated village on the way to the South Coast. In earlier days the triangle formed by the Brighton Road, Chipstead Valley Road and Lion Green Road was the village Green, with the Red Lion Inn on the site of the present Aldi store. Some of the lampposts around this area have plaques commemorating an event that took place there in 1749. James Cooper, once a respected grocer from Essex, fell into hard times and became a highwayman. He and an accomplice, William Duncalf, waylaid two horsemen on their way through Coulsdon from Croydon. The robbers pulled the two travellers from their horses, relieved them of their valuables and left them fatally wounded. The assassins then fled back to London. There they were arrested, put on trial at the Old Bailey and sentenced to death by hanging. The gallows was erected on Lion Green. Today the event is commemorated on a series of plaques on some of the lampposts in the area. It is also commemorated by large boulders recently placed on the pavement at each corner of the triangle which once formed the Green, each having a plaque giving more details of the incident.



A finial depicting James Cooper

**Slightly edited for the page*

Extracts from a Life –

Ruth Perfitt shares some memories* Part 8 **Return to England*



We arrived home in England exactly two years after we left in April 1969 to a very warm welcome, and our extended family came to Don's parents' house for a family party on our first Saturday at home. Rosy-Ann and Haydn, now six and three years old, were the star attraction because of their Canadian accents. Rosy-Ann lost hers within a couple of weeks but because Haydn had learned to speak while we were away his accent was much more secure, and other children found it quite fascinating. One memorable exchange came over a cup of tea. Tea bags were already in use in Canada and Haydn was fascinated to see Grandma pour tea through a strainer, and was heard to say, 'Mommy, Granma has flies in her tea!'

The people who had rented our house while we were away had already moved out, so over the first two weeks, we gave the interior a much-needed coat of paint before moving back home. We never regretted our two years away and adjusting to a different culture was a valuable experience, but also we never regretted coming home. Although Don and I may have left a bit of our heart in that wonderful country, we have returned thirteen times over the years since and cemented the relationships we made with our church friends there. It has been our pleasure to welcome many of them and their children and grandchildren to visit us in England since then.

In the two years we had been away our lives had moved on and it was quite an adjustment just to settle down again. Certainly for a while we felt as if we were living mid-Atlantic, and some things had to start from scratch. Rosy-Ann was enrolled in the nearest village school, which was only a mile-and-a-half away. Here we made friends with the Beckley family who had a girl and a boy who actually matched our two in ages, and having settled the two girls in school, Diana Beckley and I started to rent the village Hall in Yelverton and began a playgroup where Haydn and Giles Beckley soon found new friends.

Don went back to work on Grange farm because by now his oldest brother Berwick was setting up his own farming enterprise on New House Farm at Kirby Bedon. The two farms worked in together in the busiest times, like harvest, when it helped to share equipment and manpower. It was about this time that they purchased a brand-new yellow, very shiny New Holland Combine Harvester, and in order to keep this expensive equipment in use for as long a season as possible they offered harvesting services to all the local small holdings around. Berwick specialised in rearing pigs on New House Farm and I remember one day pulling into his yard on my way home to find my nursing skills in demand. Berwick showed me a small piglet who had been trodden on by his mother. This had resulted in a small triangular tear one inch in each direction on his right flank, causing a great deal of squealing. Attendance by the vet would probably have cost more than the little piglet was worth at that stage, so Berwick was happy for me to have a go at stitching him up. We boiled a needle and strong thread in water for five minutes and with Berwick holding him firmly in place ignoring the squeals, I put three stitches in each side of the tear. We sprayed it with antibiotic seal and he scampered off to his mother none the worse for the ordeal.



Grange Farm continued with a dairy herd for some years and this presented me with my only other excursion into veterinary medicine. One day the vet attended a cow who was struggling in labour in the barn and he decided it was worth a try at a Caesarean operation, and he was pleased to have a willing helper. As a theatre nurse, I was a little disconcerted at opening up the abdomen and the womb when a cow was surrounded by straw with no sterile gloves or towels in sight. The vet was a bit surprised to find that I knew he would need the different sutures in a certain order, but the outcome was a live mother and a live calf, so a successful outcome all round.

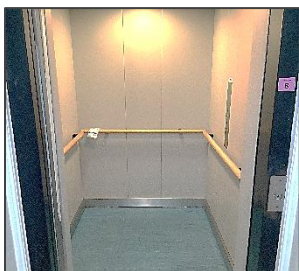
Thought for the season: Everything under the sun

Quite a few expressions we use come from the Bible. The phrase ‘under the sun’ is one of them. It’s used a number of times in the Bible book of Ecclesiastes, which is generally reckoned to be the work of King Solomon – one of the wisest men ever. Though, of course, the book’s inclusion in the Bible means that it’s more than the wisdom of Solomon, but the result of divine inspiration – of God speaking through him. So, Solomon’s thoughts on everything that goes on ‘under the sun’ are not exclusively his own, they were guided by an even wiser mind. But Solomon doesn’t use the phrase ‘under the sun’ to conjure up any happy times people might enjoy out in the sunshine. Far from it. He uses the phrase to distinguish what is from down below from what is from high above – or what is earthly, human and imperfect from what is divine. He describes our human experience ‘under the sun’ as mostly ‘vanity and vexation of spirit’ (Eccles. 1:14). By which he means that life down here is both brief and troubled. No-one can argue with that! He writes about many of the problems we have. But not to depress us. He shows us how to make sense of this broken world so we can spend our days enjoyably and to good purpose. He concludes that the very best use of our time is for us to live with a proper regard for God, and to follow God’s instructions about how to live. Because, despite how random and unfair life appears, God is looking on to ensure that everything works out fairly and justly for everyone (Eccles. 12:13–14). In short: the good and the bad all get exactly what they deserve. Which is something to smile about for everyone ‘under the sun’ who has the right attitude to God and who accepts the guidance He offers us!



Lift work and appeal (from the Managing Trustees)

After more than thirty years of reliable service, the lift in our residential care home has reached the stage where modernisation is both necessary and responsible. Over time, mechanical systems naturally experience wear and tear and, although regular maintenance has allowed the lift to continue operating safely, the age of the equipment means that parts are becoming more difficult to source and the risk of unexpected breakdowns increases. In an environment where residents, staff, and visitors depend on safe and reliable access between floors every day, it is essential that we invest in modern equipment that meets current safety standards and provides consistent performance.



The project is now at the tender stage and this is advance notice of future works in the latter part of 2026. This will take several months to complete but we will endeavour to ensure that inconvenience such as noise and other disruption is kept to a minimum.

We have launched an appeal to cover the cost of the programme including all ancillary works, fees, permissions and approvals, and the installation of a stairlift on the back stairs for use while the main lift is out of operation. This will cost in the region of £125,000. While this may seem very expensive, it is considerably cheaper than installing an equivalent, brand

new, lift. Your donations are most gratefully received. We can accept cash, cheques and direct bank transfers to: Account name: Beth-Ezra Trust, Account number: 13719480, Sort code: 20 63 25.

Contributions welcome Please send to Ruth Perfitt, The House Journal, c/o Beth Ezra, 52 Smitham Bottom Lane, Purley, Surrey, CR8 3DB. Comments and suggestions and/or short articles, poems or puzzles welcome. The editors’ decision about what to print is final. **The next issue will be out in Autumn 2026, God willing, so items for consideration should reach us by September 2026 at the latest.**

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You can also send pieces and/ pictures to Colin Attridge’s or Ruth Perfitt’s email address:

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You may also like to visit the Beth Ezra website: www.bethezra.co.uk