

BOROUGHBRIDGE MAYOR'S DIARY

Councillor Geoff Craggs's Weekly Diary

2 September 2011

I hope you all had a good Bank Holiday- we spent Saturday morning at Scuba Diving For All's Raft Race in Ripon- a great event, and I hope the organisers made a great deal of money for their very worthwhile cause, which gives so much freedom and joy to everyone who goes diving with Yvonne, Ali and their dedicated band of helpers. Having been "volunteered" to take part in the Mayors' swan race, I duly did so, coming last after my crew and I managed to ram the wall and had to reverse for what seemed like a nautical mile before we could regain steerage way- not helped by a severe bout of "bellows to mend" from the writer....and I thought I was fairly fit! However, we finished and a cup of tea worked wonders . A great day, Ripon and thanks for the opportunity to take part (I think).

Our other engagements over the weekend were unofficial, but very worthwhile; after the Raft Race we called in on the Boroughbridge and District Horticultural Society's Show in the Social Club, to be amazed by the size and quality of the vegetable and flower exhibits, and the enthusiasm and dedication of the members. After the Show most of the exhibits were auctioned off and we came home with enough vegetables to feed a small army for a month- five of us sat down for dinner on Sunday and along with the usual "meat and veg" only managed to consume a quarter of one of our cabbages!

On Sunday we went to the united service at St. Andrew's Aldborough, which we were delighted to see was packed not only with local folk but friends from parishes all around to welcome back Canon Nick Horton on a brief return visit and also the Rev. Jim Foster who was celebrating the 25th anniversary of his ordination- both reverend gentlemen were accompanied by their wives and censors. Our own vicar Philip had a very easy time in the role of MC. An excellent and inspiring service, and how good to see so many young families in Church. After the service we went to the Allotment Society's Open Day and we were truly impressed with the way in which the venture has progressed in such a short time; at the official opening in May the plots were well established- on Sunday one could have been forgiven for thinking most of the plots had been worked for many years. Another inspiring visit, and we even won a raffle prize (thankfully a bottle of wine and not another cabbage).

That was all the "good stuff", but now for the "not so good". Along with my fellow councillors I am continually being contacted by residents and visitors who are justifiably distressed by the "couldn't care less" attitude of many dog owners who allow their animals to mess our pavements, grass and rights of way, making no attempt to obey the law and pick up the excrement. This is downright anti social and also very dangerous for the health of our children- most of us are aware that dog excrement can contain very nasty bugs which can cause blindness in children through accidental contact. The other "hardy annual" complaint to councillors is the anti social behaviour of a very small minority of our young folk, and I can do no better than to quote from a letter which I received today from a local resident, who moved to Boroughbridge not too long ago because of the perceived quality of life here:-

" On Tuesday morning this week my husband and I were walking on the river bank between Boroughbridge and Aldborough when we were met with a scene of total devastation. Almost opposite the end of Ings Lane there was litter of cans, bottles, empty lager boxes and carrier bags everywhere. There had been a fire in a farmer's field too; in amongst the bales of straw and judging by the large round burn in the field one bale had been burned. We picked up seven carrier bags of bottles, cans and boxes including a smashed broken bottle which for us was the worst part- imagine some poor dog or child falling or leaping on that. My husband nearly fell in the river dragging out an old tent which had been thrown partly into the river. With the help of a local lady we carried the bags and tent to the entrance to the field just into Aldborough Road from Boroughbridge where we know the dustman piles his sacks to be collected. Unfortunately they are still there for some reason but we hope they will be collected. Also amongst the debris were opened condom packets".

The lady goes on to say that she is continually picking up and disposing of "dog poo" and "we hope we don't come across as "do gooders" but we love Boroughbridge and the beautiful surroundings with a passion and want it to remain so for our grandchildren to enjoy"- amen to that, and thanks for writing in. If you read this and you know anyone responsible for this type of anti social behaviour, please don't "pussy foot" around, but phone the Police and Harrogate Borough Council Environmental Health Department.