



# Odds and Ends from Keepers Cottage

Spring 2024



Welcome to odds and ends from Keepers Cottage, a collection of useful tips on living well, interesting collections of poems and prose from various sources and of course little clips of gamekeeping life, past and present.



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# Introduction

Our house martins are back this week to a wild and windy climate but at least there are plenty of puddles to build their nests from!

In a Spring which is almost unprecedented for constant rain there is always an up side though it might be hard to find for the farmers and those working outside at the moment. A little sunshine works wonders, and we think this photo taken at a recent roadshow with some very well-behaved children is guaranteed to make everyone smile.

Don't forget its not long till the Game Fairs and events that brings people together, and don't forget either that we will reimburse anyone who requires a wheelchair or buggy to get about during the day. We also have our memory packs, ladies' packs and all sorts of information and support available –if you can't find anything –give us a call. Meantime we know we are battling with a large proportion of the population who don't understand our way of life and even less interest in finding out more. There are some real heroes working out there for Learning Moor and Educating children both in the countryside, in field sports and eating game. There is such a joy in being outside, hearing birdsong or the sound of a river, or just listening to silence. There is such joy in being with a working companion, dogs, horses or livestock, and there is such joy in being with others who feel the same or who can take in a little of the passion we have for our rural environment and rural communities.

There is loneliness and isolation too and that's why we are continuing our "Check in with a Mate" campaign. Just being kind or smiling at someone costs nothing and I think this has been forgotten in a post covid arena. Let's lead the way again as we did then and be more tolerant and listen, really listen to our friends, our family and those who don't purport to understand our rural life, whether a visitor, a politician –you never know, they might just listen and hear what you have to say. We can hope!

Remember the Gamekeepers' Welfare Trust is here to listen, to hear and to help, anytime, anyhow and anywhere...





Department  
for Work &  
Pensions

# *Throughout 2024 and 2025*

The Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) intends to begin the process of moving people on legacy benefits onto Universal Credit during 2024/2025. There is an exception for people who get income-related Employment and Support Allowance and do not get tax credits. They will not be moved onto Universal Credit until 2028.

## **February 2024**

Carer's Allowance claimants in Scotland will be transferred to Carer Support Payment from February 2024. Carer Support Payment is replacing Carer's Allowance in Scotland.

## **March 2024**

The government has extended the £2,500 surplus earnings threshold within Universal Credit until March 2024.

## **April 2024**

Working parents of two year olds will be able to access 15 hours of free childcare from April 2024. You can find current available help with Childcare costs on our website.

# The Wildfowler

## By Wild Hermit

The skeins flew over, six then seven  
The wildfowler was in heaven  
Yet was in awe  
He'd never seen so many geese before.

This man was new to wildfowling  
All dressed up in his waterproofing  
He'd just acquired a Webley and Scott  
But on this day, the barrels weren't going to get hot.

It was too wet and muddy  
To use his expensive Purdey  
So he'd make do with his dad's old gun  
Whilst sitting in his hide, eating a bun.

The geese landed on the marsh  
Their call was loud and harsh  
Not a shot was fired that day  
Not at the geese anyway.

While the geese flew past the sluice  
He was dreaming of a Christmas goose  
And if the story would be a howler  
Wondering if he'd ever be a wildfowler.

# Origins of sayings

## Diehard

While it typically refers to someone with a strong dedication to a particular set of beliefs, the term “diehard” originally had a series of much more literal meanings. In its earliest incarnation in the 1700s, the expression described condemned men who struggled the longest when they were executed by hanging. The phrase later became even more popular after 1811's Battle of Albuera during the Napoleonic Wars. In the midst of the fight, a wounded British officer named William Inglis supposedly urged his unit forward by bellowing “Stand your ground and die hard ... make the enemy pay dear for each of us!” Inglis' 57th Regiment suffered 75 percent casualties during the battle, and went on to earn the nickname “the Die Hards.”

## White elephant

White elephants were once considered highly sacred creatures in Thailand—the animal even graced the national flag until 1917—but they were also wielded as a subtle form of punishment. According to legend, if an underling or rival angered a Siamese king, the royal might present the unfortunate man with the gift of a white elephant. While ostensibly a reward, the creatures were tremendously expensive to feed and house, and caring for one often drove the recipient into financial ruin.

Evan Andrews



## John Wheeldon lived near Belper and worked for the Midland Railway Company

Travelling along the lines as a ratcatcher. He is the only person known to have trained foxes to catch rats for economic purposes. He claimed they were better than terriers because they could hold up to five rats in their mouths at a time. He had to be quick because the foxes would not immediately kill the rats.

Such was his fame he was described in a book as a great sportsman and Englishman. He was also a talented gardener with prizes won in the local cottage garden society. He died aged 73 in 1924.

Extract from Belper and Proud facebook



## Azerley Tower was built in 1839 for Robert Crompton of Azerley Chase.

The single storey cottage, from which the tower rises, may have been a banqueting house and the 120 steps lead to the observation platform from which the hunt could be viewed. More likely, it could have been a game-keeper's cottage and elevated look-out to watch the game birds and poachers.

## *Eating in the 50's*

For those of you who are old enough to remember, enjoy.

For the rest, treat this as a history lesson!

Very surprising how time and memory has taken its toll.

Have things really changed this much in our time?

### **EATING IN THE FIFTIES –CONSIDER THAT:**

Brown bread was something only poor people ate.

Oil was for lubricating; fat was for cooking.

Tea was made in a teapot using tea leaves and never green.

Cubed sugar was regarded as posh.

Eating raw fish was called poverty, not sushi.

Only Heinz made beans.

Pasta had not been invented.

Curry was a surname.

A take away was a mathematical problem.

A pizza was something to do with a leaning tower.

Bananas and oranges only appeared at Christmas time.

All crisps were plain; the only choice was whether to put salt on or not.

Rice was a milk pudding and never part of our dinner.

Condiments consisted of salt, pepper, vinegar and brown sauce.

Frozen food was called ice cream.

Prunes were medicinal.

None of us had heard of yogurt.

Healthy food consisted of anything edible.

People who didn't peel potatoes were regarded as lazy.

Indian restaurants were found only in India.

Seaweed was not recognized as a food.

Pineapples came in chunks in a tin; we only saw photos of a real ones.

'Kebab' was not even a word, never mind a food.

Water came out of a tap, suggesting bottling it and charging for it, would have become a laughing stock.

The only thing that we never ever had on our table were elbows!

Your State Pension age depends on various factors, and it's essential to know when you can start receiving your State Pension. Here are some key points:



### **1. State Pension Age:**

The current State Pension age is 66 years old for both men and women

However, this age may change in the future due to regular reviews

You can check the most up-to-date information on the GOV.UK website.

### **2. Claiming Your State Pension:**

You won't automatically receive your State Pension; you need to claim it.

Around 4 months before you reach State Pension age, you should receive an invitation letter from the Pension Service.

### **3. Eligibility:**

To claim the new State Pension, you must have at least 10 years of National Insurance contributions.

The eligibility criteria are as follows:

If you're a man born on or after April 6, 1951.

If you're a woman born on or after April 6, 1953.

Remember that you can continue working after reaching State Pension age, and there's no longer a forced retirement age (previously set at 65)

Additionally, make sure to check your State Pension forecast to understand how much money you'll receive when you claim it.

The full rate of new State Pension is £221.20 a week. Your amount could be different depending on:

- if you were contracted out before 2016
- the number of National Insurance qualifying years you have
- if you paid into the Additional State Pension before 2016



# Mick's Diary



The clocks went back recently so although mornings are temporarily a little darker the evenings are longer and we can get on with jobs which need doing – there are always jobs!

Black headed gulls are a menace at the moment, driving the ground nesting birds away, both through their aggressive behaviour but also sheer numbers and of course taking any insect life available. At the same time, it was on the radio this morning that we all need to protect falling numbers of gulls! What?

Fallow deer on the estate are also causing concern as they are prone to TB and where there are dairy herds there is risk. However lovely to see – their numbers need to be controlled both for those reasons and tree damage caused in new plantations.

There are some very fit and fat pheasants around, so fingers crossed for wild pheasants though again there is concern over huge rat populations everywhere, at the moment. When out with the lamp or thermal it is quite alarming. Lots of reasons through mild winters, crop damage during the autumn which left maize and corn on the ground and pig and poultry farms which are also a draw.

It is delightful to see and hear the chiffchaff back again, such vocal little birds; there is a good population of barn owls around and our curlews and oystercatchers are back amongst us.

There is a major salmon symposium to be held locally this week. Well done to the organiser Dave Bamford who is passionate about salmon as we are, and increasingly alarmed at the number of seals moving up the rivers as well as other predators. With fluctuating river levels, pollution and so much more against aquatic life there needs to be action and soon.

Easter holidays recently, which offered an opportunity for our youngsters to get out and about; for those in farming or on estate/shoots – helping out is usually a favourite occupation. It is also planning time for the organisations to encourage children to learn whether "Let's Learn Moor" or "Open Farm Sunday" and many more fantastic initiatives. The grandchildren are immersed in country life and like nothing better than getting out on the farm or going out with Dad, Grandad or Uncle to help. Classrooms are less attractive I am afraid!

# Children's quotes and stories:

“Tha know where thy are we' ferrets. Ya never know where ya are we' lasses”

In the Home Corner, in an infant school classroom, a boy and girl, rising five, were arguing-stabbing the air with small fingers, jutting out their chins, and stamping little feet.

'Oh, do shut up!'

'No, you be quiet!'

'No, you shut up!'

'Oh, do shut up!'

'I'm sick of you!'

'What's all this?' the teacher cried.

'And I'm sick of you!'

'We're playing mums and dads,'

'Oh, just be quiet!'

the infants both replied.

Little stars: The stories of a schools inspector in the Yorkshire Dales

The new Chairman of the Education Committee was a man of striking appearance, with his red cheeks and great walrus moustache.

We were visiting a village primary school together when he was approached by a little girl called Tracey who stared at his drooping moustache for a long time before asking

'What is it?'

'What's what?' asked the visitor.

'That on your face.'

'It's a moustache.'

'What does it do?'

'It doesn't do anything.'

'Does it go up your nose?'

'No.'

'Is it alive?'

'No, it's not alive.'

'Can I have one?'

'No little girls and ladies don't have moustaches.'

Tracey paused, tilted her head on one side and delivered her winning shot, 'Well my grannie's got one.'

Gervase Phinn





## Ingredients

### For The pigeon

4 Willo Pigeon Fillets  
(2 fillets per person for a main course or one fillet for a starter)

4 Strips of Pancetta

1/4 of a Chorizo

2 Sprigs of Fresh Thyme

1 tblsp Rapeseed Oil

### For the Pesto

1 Handful of Pine Kernels

1 Handful of Pistachio Nuts

1 – 2oz Fresh grated  
Parmesan Cheese

1 Handful Fresh Basil Leaves

Sea salt and Black Pepper

1 – 2 Tblsp Rapeseed Oil

A glug of White wine

A dash of Basil or Lemon  
Oil

# Pan Fried Wood Pigeon Fillet with Pesto and linguine

By Ralph Skripek – The Wild Chef

## Method

### For the Pesto

Place the Pine Kernels and Pistachio nuts in your grinder ( a small coffee bean grinder will do) and Blitz.

Add the Parmesan, Basil leaves, Sea salt and Black Pepper and Rapeseed oil and Blitz.

Taste and then add the White wine and a dash of your chosen flavoured oil and blitz.

### For the Pigeon

Wrap the Pancetta around each pigeon fillet.

Heat heavy frying pan and add 1 tblsp of Rapeseed oil. Heat until smoking.

Place the pigeon fillets into the pan and seal on both sides approximately 1 1/2 minutes each side.

Remove from the pan and place in a preheated oven 160 c to keep warm.

Now place the linguine in a pan of salted boiling water and cook for 8 – 10 minutes.

Add the Chorizo and Thyme to the frying pan and cook for 2 minutes adding some chopped Pancetta half way through.

Remove the pigeon fillets form the oven and add to the frying pan.

Over a high heat bast the pigeon with the juices in the pan from the Chorizo and Pancetta.

Remove the pan from the heat and leave the pigeon to rest while you prepare the Linguine and Pesto.

### To Serve

Drain the Linguine and place in a bowl.

Add some Pesto to the Linguine and toss so that all the pasta is covered.

Place the pasta on a plate.

Put the Pigeon fillets on top of the Linguine and pour over the Pan juices including the Chorizo and Pancetta.

Serve with a crisp green salad.

This delicious dish is quick, easy and healthy. The pesto can be frozen or stored in the fridge for other meals.



Helpline: 0300 1233 088

# A Thing of Beauty

By John Keats

A thing of beauty is a joy forever  
Its loveliness increases, it will never  
Pass into nothingness; but will keep  
A bower quiet for us, and a sleep  
Full of sweet dreams, and health, and quiet breathing.



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