



The Flame

*Have a Joyful Christmas and
a Healthy and Peaceful New Year*



Romsdal, Norway - Photo by Otilie Bergmaier December 2021



DEAR FIREBIRDS,

Collecting material for The Flame makes me anxious and, as always, I would like to thank all the contributors for filling our newsletter with lots of interesting articles.

Following Cop26 in Glasgow recently, I encouraged articles related to the environment and global warming. Please read Georgina Hall's article about the importance of managing water and Nicola Barclay's contribution. Nicola tells us about an experience at the Hubbard Glacier and you can find out more about the Hubbard Glacier at [Glaciers and Climate: Hubbard Glacier \(usgs.gov\)](https://www.usgs.gov/science/glaciers-and-climate/hubbard-glacier).

The photo of the Hubbard Glacier on the right was taken by Nicola from the boat.

Vicky Nugée reminds us of the London Fog, which brought the city to a near standstill, and was conquered by the regulations introduced in the Clean Air Act in 1956 - a turning point in the history of environmentalism.

We are all saddened by Rue Hoddinott's sudden death. She will be missed by many people, including the Firebirds Committee. As our Firebirds Secretary she was a very loyal and supportive member. Sarah Mosse, who knew Rue for many years, has written a very fitting tribute and has kindly agreed to succeed Rue as our new Secretary.

I hope you will enjoy reading this edition of The Flame and I wish you a very happy Christmas and a healthy and successful New Year.

With best wishes

Erika Gloyn

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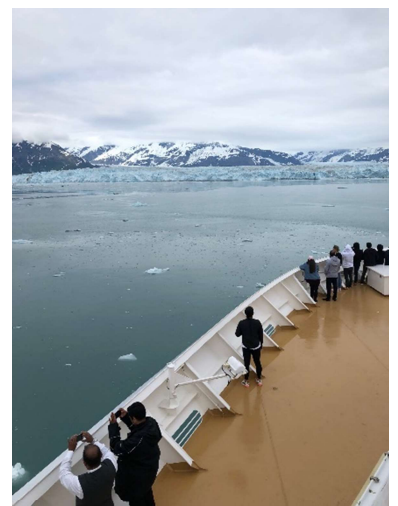
FORTHCOMING FIREBIRDS EVENTS 2022

Monday
21st February 2022
**Firebirds Annual
General Meeting**
To be held at the
Farmers' and Fletchers'
Hall at 12 midday

Monday
9th May 2022
**The Phoenix lunch on
HQS Wellington.**
Firebirds are invited.

MOST RECENT

Monday
13th December
**Christmas tea at
Fenwicks**



VISIT THE FIREBIRDS
WEBSITE
on
www.firebirds.london

The views and opinions expressed by the authors and those providing comments are theirs alone and do not reflect the views and opinions of the Editor or the Firebirds Committee.

CHRISTMAS TEA AT FENWICKS

Monday 13th December 2021

by Erika Gloyn (Masons)



I was sitting on the Central Line on my way home from the Christmas Tea at Fenwicks and I couldn't stop thinking about how nice it had been to catch up with so many Firebirds. Despite the new anxieties about Covid, there were 17 of us, including our President Juliet Mountevans. Unfortunately, our Chairman Vicky Nugée, had to cancel last minute, because of – yes – dreaded Covid in the family.

Apart from the pleasure of seeing each other, we also enjoyed the bubbly, sandwiches, scones and cakes, even the gluten and dairy free variety.

I also enjoyed the lights on Oxford Street and Bond Street and my quick stroll through John Lewis.

Sincere thanks to El Moss for organising this great Christmas event.



NULLA VITA SINE AQUA

By Georgina Hall (Water Conservators)



'NULLA VITA SINE AQUA' - No Life Without Water - is the motto of the Worshipful Company of Water Conservators. In the Southern Global region we are already seeing a serious shortage of water caused by climate change and extraction. Droughts are a major global threat to peace and stability.

Here in the UK we are blessed with plenty of rain in the winter and climate scientists predict that our winters will get wetter and our summers drier. We need to store this winter rain, which will, in part, lessen flooding and take us through the drier months. It can take 15 years to build a reservoir - ten years to get planning permission, two years to build it and three years to fill it. In the South East the problem is acute. Before the 2012 Olympics we had experienced a dry spell and with the extra demand for water around the Olympic site, Thames Water were concerned that there would be a water shortage on the Opening Day. Water

bowsers were made ready to be deployed, but fortunately it rained the day before and the local shortage was averted, but it was a close call.

Imagine for a minute that you are responsible for bringing fresh water and getting rid of waste water to the South East. What is your planning framework - 5, 10, 20 or 50 years? Bear in mind, the Water Companies are currently replacing Victorian water and sewage pipes, over 100 years old. Plans up to 2099 would be reasonable, with the rate of building in our area. For example, in the Old Oak Common Area, development is planned over the next 20 to 30 years for 25,500 homes over 640+ hectares. Extraction from water courses has had a serious effect on our rare chalk streams; many dry up in the summer, damaging the ecology

When we learn of local housing plans we are quite vocal for the need of infrastructure to support the development, i.e. schools, roads, surgeries, hospitals and transport links spring to mind. Do you ever wonder where the water will come from or go to? The supply and uses of water needs to be a major part of these plans.

We can help! At the local and national level we can support the water companies' plans for reservoirs, dams and flood alleviation schemes and by insisting that all new building developments have state of the art water saving devices. Contact water companies, local planners, MP's, newspapers and social media with your support for sustainable water structure plans. Spread the word!

In our homes water-saving tips are well documented - ask your primary aged grandchildren. Check out: www.ofwat.gov.uk/households/conservingwater/watersavingtips/.

The following tips you may find more difficult and socially unacceptable. Seriously consider if our water use is for hygiene or psychological needs. My grandmother had neither bathroom nor washing machine and she raised four very healthy children.

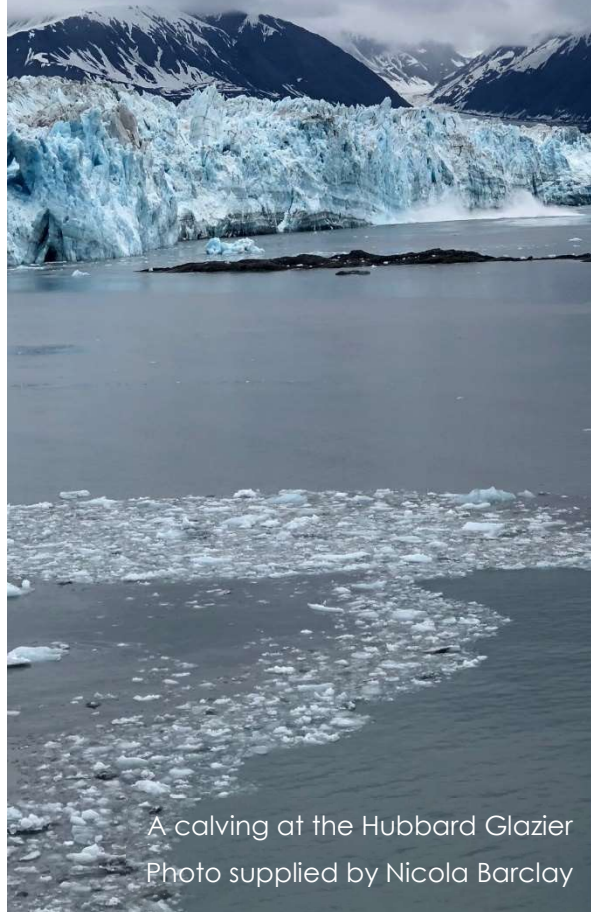
For your consideration:

1. Don't wash your clothes after one wearing, sponge the fabric with water to freshen the garment.
2. Do you have to change and wash sheets every week, how about just turning the duvet over?
3. Instead of a daily bath or shower have one once a week, for the rest take a sink wash and just 'top and tail' if you are at home all day. Exceptions for manual workers and medical personnel!
4. Do you have to flush the toilet every time when you are home? Flush as infrequently as possible, (keeping the lid down when you flush).

Finally, remember the drought of 1976? You could follow the advice of one of the slogans from that time: 'Save Water, Bathe with a Friend'!!!

NO MAN IS AN ISLAND

By Nicola Barclay (Saddlers)



A calving at the Hubbard Glacier
Photo supplied by Nicola Barclay

'The calving process begins when a rift opens in the edge of a glacier, caused by wind or water erosion, melting ice, or other events that cause the glacier to become unstable. This crack in the ice ultimately causes a block to break away from the land and form an iceberg, which falls into the ocean'

Before the pandemic I remember standing at the back of the Queen Elizabeth watching the Hubbard Glacier when a roar hit my ears. Huge chunks of ice were falling into the sea in front of me; an enormous continuous roar. My heart was suddenly chilled. My first thought: Climate Change is here in front of me and we are too late

I don't always manage to clean the baked bean tins for recycling, I withstand the shame of our bottles being on the kerb for all to see. Yes, the Barclays sometimes resort to using a Dolmio sauce (the empty Napoleon brandy was used to feed the fruit cake!). There are more trips to the recycling centre, because many builders now leave that to you; they can't spare the time or the money they are charged for using the business service. There is certainly more fly tipping – something wrong there. We recycle clothes, not just through Charity Shops but Charlie wears his father's stiff collars, Henry wears his grandfather's school uniform for weddings and Charlie's suits made by a Gloucester tailor in 1986. Bea wears my Laura Ashley dress from 1989 for Henley, where they require below the knee garments for ladies. Intelligent machines are nearly ready to redesign and rework our clothes to reuse them, but I love traditional 'recycling'.

Furniture we no longer need is given to our colleagues via a school site. We have low energy bulbs, our walls

are insulated and the wood for our burner is kiln dried. Our washing is done on low temperatures and dried on a line when possible. Our food is predominantly vegetarian and much of it local. Charlie often walks to work and I expect we will get an electric car when they are affordable and the technology allows us to travel more than 100 miles without queuing for a charging point. We aren't there yet.

I follow *Boyan Slat* and *The Ocean Cleanup* on Facebook and 'like' his posts. I follow *Packaging Not Included* on Facebook and 'like' their contribution to cutting down on wasteful over- packaging of products.

I thought we were contributing as best we could, but after the Hubbard experience I can see it's not enough. It's not enough by a long stretch.

The pandemic has shown me that science is up to solving worldwide problems. But then I look at all the arguing; each country doing things to suit themselves and believing that if their country is protected, that is all that's important, and I despair! Politics keeps getting in the way. We all need to be pushing in the same direction. No man is an island.

There is no time for bumbling and promises, the roar of the ice falling from the Hubbard is still ringing in my ears and that thought: We are too late! I do so want to be proved wrong.



LONDON FOG

by Vicky Nugée (Weavers)

London has always been susceptible to mist and fog because of its geography. The Thames basin, hemmed in by low hills, tends to be prone to lingering dampness and mist. But true London fog, thick, yellow and crunchy between the teeth, was born in the 1840s when the city's rapid expansion multiplied the number of domestic coal fires and their smoke mingled with the noxious emissions of factory chimneys and workshops in the early days of the Industrial Revolution.

Once it became established as a regular phenomenon, it was necessary to give it a name. There was much discussion as to whether it was fog or smoke (the term smog came much later, and originated in America). It was referred to as November's Mantle, or a Deleterious Vapour; but it was its unique colouring, mainly yellow, but also orange, brown and even black, that gave rise to the term 'pea-souper', referring to the dried, yellow peas which were then much more common than fresh green ones. Charles Dickens, in *Bleak*

House, coined the term 'London Particular', emphasising that though other cities also had their industrial fogs, none were as colourful, dense, impenetrable, grimy or choking as London fog.

In December 1873, the Smithfield Club held their annual Cattle Show, where the finest examples of all the breeds were on display. According to the *Daily News* 'The unpleasant thickness and pungency of the fog-laden atmosphere bore heavily on the fat cattle which stood openly panting and coughing in a very distressing way.' Several died directly and a further 50 had to be slaughtered. People were badly affected too, especially those who had respiratory problems already. One week-long fog in 1891 was thought to have caused 700 deaths.

Accidents in the fog also claimed lives. People fell into the river or walked into the path of unseen vehicles. In the dark pall of the fog criminals could operate unhindered, and even linkboys, who carried a flaming torch and could be hired to light the way through the fog-darkened streets, were known sometimes to lead people into alleys where other criminals would lie in wait. The fog was also thought to sap the morals of society, keeping them unhealthily indoors and inclining them to alcoholic stimulants 'to keep the fog out'.

In a severe fog in 1882 trials were suspended because witnesses were unable to find their way to the courts. Careless opening of doors and windows enabled the fog to penetrate even indoors. In that same fog of 1882, a theatre performance had to be abandoned because the audience could no longer see the performers. Cabbies walked and led their horses, themselves lost. Omnibuses sent their conductors to walk ahead of them, carrying a flare. Trains were stranded at stations. The last great fog occurred from December 4th – 8th 1952. The press reported a plethora of bizarre and tragic accidents. A fireman whose train had broken down during the fog fell to his death from a viaduct when he left his engine in order to lay detonators on the track to warn other trains of the obstacle ahead. Birds got lost in the fog, and it was reported that a Slavonian grebe was found in the middle of Regent Street, having been 'unable to see the ground or the stars'. An accident reminiscent of the nineteenth century occurred when a man walked into the Thames with his bicycle at Richmond (fortunately he was rescued). Even the Christmas tree sent annually from Norway for Trafalgar Square was delayed by the fog. Criminal activities also featured heavily in the reporting of the fog. In one incident the police were called to the house of a woman who reported a masked man trying to break into her house (it proved to be her husband who had lost his keys and was wearing his scarf across his face to protect himself from the dirty atmosphere).

This proved to be the last of London's pea-soupers. Four years after this lethal fog, the British Government passed the Clean Air Act in 1956. Change was gradual and another smog crisis in 1962 caused the authorities to apply the Clean Air Act with greater rigour. The combination of moving heavy industry out of the capital, the use of cleaner electricity and smokeless fuel eventually caused the demise of the 'London Particular'.

REMEMBERING RUE HODDINOTT

by Sarah Mosse (Broderers)

As you will know, one of our Firebirds, Rue Hoddinott, has sadly lost her fight with the horror that is Motor Neuron Disease



Rue was born in Queensland, Australia, in March 1942. She was No. 11 of 12 children, 8 of whom are still living. Her father was a sugar cane farmer and when she left school she went to train as a nurse. Having qualified she flew down to Sydney to start her training as a midwife. Around this time a young red-headed Naval Officer also arrived in Sydney. After a very short romance, about 3 months, they got married. This was all in 1965.

He whisked his new wife back to the UK along with a lot of teapots as the Aussies knew the Brits drank a lot of tea. Rue set up home 16 times in 28 years. These homes were in Hawaii, Rome, Faslane Scotland, Brussels and Washington DC among others. During this time she also produced three children Kimberley, Charles and Giselle.

She loved to entertain and this made her a great Captain's and later Admiral's wife. If she had any free time she filled it with doing a bit of teaching, or being a medical receptionist and would run family planning clinics in her kitchen for young sailors' wives who were afraid to tell their husbands or go to the doctor. On many occasions they would be seen leaving her house clutching a clandestine bottle of so called 'Aspirin'. During The Falkland War 1982, when both she and I were Captain's wives, I remember well the coffee mornings we would hold to keep our other young wives and families in touch with what was going on, that was if and when we were told anything.

As Mistress Fan maker she and Paul were at a Palace Garden Party when Prince Philip noticed Paul's beautiful Master's badge and went over to ask about it. He then turned to Rue and asked who she was "I am just his mistress" was her reply. He thought this very amusing and roared with laughter.

She was a very active fund raiser for Save the Children and raised thousands of pounds for them. She loved her bridge evenings, was an accomplished flower arranger and was the Boss of Flowers at St Peter's, Petersfield, where her service was held. She loved cooking and could rustle up a great meal for visitors at short notice, especially when Paul forgot to tell her there would be guests for dinner.



Rue and Paul had managed to celebrate their 56th wedding anniversary and only four days later Rue very sadly died. It was lovely to see so many Phoenix and Firebirds at her funeral. She was carried from the church to Waltzing Matilda, very appropriate for a wonderful Aussie Lady. She will be greatly missed by many people.

This poem by Joyce Grenfell was on the service sheet. I feel it was so very Rue.

If I should die before the rest of you
Break not a flower nor inscribe a stone
Nor, when I'm gone, speak in a Sunday voice.
But be the usual selves that I have known.
Weep if you must
Parting is hell.
But life goes on.
So sing as well.



CALL FOR TALENT!!!

CAN YOU SING, DANCE, ACT, CRAFT, STEWARD, SEW?

'THE BECKET PAGEANT FOR LONDON' NEEDS YOU!

www.becketpageantforlondon.com

The Becket Pageant for London and Livery Crafts Fair is a spectacular outdoor entertainment to be held on **17/18th June 2022**, which will bring together the Livery and wider City Community. We are now looking for volunteers from all Livery Companies to join us in a number of exciting ways. We would love to hear from YOU so do get in touch!

PERFORMING IN A NEW MUSICAL The centrepiece of the Pageant is a brand-new piece of musical theatre by Emmeline Winterbotham (Past Master Skinner and Phoenix) with music by Vahan Salorian, celebrating the life and legend of St Thomas Becket, former Patron Saint of London, called 'London's Turbulent Son'. It will take place in Guildhall Yard, at the heart of the City on Friday 17th and Saturday 18th June in front of a seated audience of 750 and will feature a live band, choreography by Sian Williams, and high spectacle including a giant parade finale. Inspired by a huge Becket City Pageant staged by guildsmen in 1519. 'London's Turbulent Son' will offer a playful interpretation of one of the most controversial dramas in our history and bring a lost open-air theatrical tradition back to the City for the first time in 500 years. In keeping with the spirit of the original, a talented chorus of twenty volunteers, drawn from all Livery Companies of the City of London, are invited to join the professional cast. Auditions will be held in mid to late January 2022 with rehearsals mainly at weekends and evenings between Feb-June. Previous stage experience essential. Age 18 upwards.

BACKSTAGE SUPPORT Previous experience required. For more information on performing or backstage support please contact The Creative Director at becketpageant@gmail.com

COSTUME MAKING The Costume Team are now looking for livery members, residents and City workers who enjoy sewing and crafting to join them to help create some of the costumes. Sewing Bees will be organised in City locations during the Spring 2022. Professional Costume Designer Sasha Keir will lead The Sewing Bee sessions, which are intended to be fun and sociable and an opportunity to learn new crafting skills. No previous experience required. For the more confident there will be an opportunity to work with the Costume Designer in her Shoreditch studio.

GIANT PUPPET MAKING There will also be an opportunity to work on the creation of a giant puppet, representing the Spirit of London, under the direction of a specialist puppet theatre company, which will be paraded in the show's finale.

STEWARDING /FRONT of HOUSE and GENERAL SUPPORT Stewarding and Front of House training supplied May/June 2022.

To register interest in costume or puppet making, stewarding or general support please contact: Barbara Tysome, becketpageantcommunity@gmail.com or Maria Schlee, info@becketpageantforlondon.com

El's RECIPE

If you need a rest from the Christmas turkey and the mince pies.

CHICKPEA AND SPINACH CURRY

Easy and delicious

Serves 4:

250 g packet frozen spinach, thawed
2 tbs rapeseed oil
1-2 tsp finely chopped ginger
1-2 tsp finely chopped garlic
1 med-large onion, finely chopped
2-3 tsp curry powder (mild or hot)
2 tsp garam masala
½-1 tsp cumin seeds, optional
2-3 bay leaves
400 g can chopped tomatoes
310 g chickpeas, drained
½-1 tsp salt
Black pepper
2 tbs chopped coriander leaves



Heat the oil in a large pan, add the ginger and garlic, using the amounts you like, and add the onion. Stir-fry until the onion has softened and is turning clear. Add the curry powder, garam masala, cumin (if using) and bay leaves. Cook for 1 minute and then add the spinach, tomatoes and chickpeas. Simmer the mixture gently for 15 minutes, adding a little water if the mixture begins to look too dry. Season to taste with salt and pepper and add the chopped coriander leaves.

This is also delicious with mango chutney.

New Every Morning

by Susan Coolidge

Every day is a fresh beginning
Listen my soul to the glad refrain,
And, spite of old sorrows
And older sinning,
Troubles forecasted
And possible pain,
Take heart with the day and begin again.