



# LAKE NEWS

**Lakes News and the Hampshire Lakes Residents Association wish everyone a happy, healthy and prosperous 2025.**

Doesn't time fly - already a quarter of the way through the century?

TIME FLIES?

YOU CAN'T. THEY ARE TOO QUICK

## New Year's resolutions

In the Wellness Centre we have all the opportunities to keep us on track to fulfil all those resolutions we'll make on January 1st. You know the ones about getting fitter and keeping active!

To help us we have two excellent personal trainers in Annemarie and Nathan. Did you know you can book a personal training session with them? They will help you balance better and improve your fitness. They are both kind and understanding but have high expectations of you so you will find them exercising muscles you didn't even know you had.

Even if you go to regular classes, one-to-one classes help you by making sure that the exercises you do are using the right technique and posture. Most importantly greater muscle strength helps everyone of us avoid falls and recover faster from surgery. It is even thought muscle strength helps us to avoid memory loss.

Classes like these would cost you a fortune in a commercial gym but here they're covered by the service charge!

*Jenny Hydes*

## Welcome

. . . to Ronnie Perera, who moved into 69 Oakleigh Square in mid-December.

**Hampshire  
Lakes  
Entertainment**



A big thank you to all of you who supported our **Christmas Raffle**, the amount raised was £440. We have donated £200 to The Phyllis Tuckwell Hospice Fund and the remainder will enable HLE to offer the best service we can to the village.

What is this money used for?

The Winchester and Kingston visits went ahead even though they were under subscribed, as were some evening events during the year. Last summer, the wonderful Jazz evening when six musicians gave us such great entertainment, was made possible by HLE part funding.

Also, from time to time, we offer a complimentary aperitif before a meal, as well as providing things like decorations. We were pleased to subsidise the Christmas Tea Party along with HLRA.

This **January** HLE is not offering its usual Burns Night Dinner with a Piper, due to rising costs, but the Bistro will be taking over with a special meal instead, on the 25th January.

Theatre Together are off to see War Horse at Woking on 15th January.

Recent visits to London Theatres have proved very popular although we offer performances in Woking whenever there are suitable shows.

We wish you all a very happy New Year and thank you for all your support.

*Joan Russam*

## HLRA

The next committee meeting will be on **January 11th** at 10.30, back in the Library again. **Note: this is a week later than normal.**

## David O'Toole

We have a lifelong athlete amongst us. David's apartment in Oakleigh Square has an interesting display of some of his awards.



Although he started with football, his working life was in the Army Physical Training Corps, specialising in running. He spent much of his service life at the Army School of

PT in Aldershot and took part in many



competitions, including marathons. Small parties can visit this facility by arrangement.

He served for some time in Northern Ireland, too. Wherever you go, there is an Army Gymnasium. In Ireland he was able to help the local children in the gym: keeping them occupied as well as fit. The life of soldiers there was always at risk - David once avoided being shot only because locals assured the gunman that he was helping them.

On retirement he started the civilian Sandhurst/Camberley Joggers. He and his wife Teresa, who now lives in Willow Gardens, started an Army swimming school, too, again aimed at interesting children in sport.

David still aims to run a few miles each morning - you may see him around if you are an early bird. *Based on a chat with David*

## Village 'Lake'

The village lake renewal project has been successful completed thanks to Ben and Nathan from Clearwater.



Before and after.



Once the muddy water settles we should be able to see the fish which are still in the lake. Two small islands have been left which should hopefully encourage the moorhens and other wild life to return.

The water aerators have been repaired. There is a short video on the village website ([www.hlra.info](http://www.hlra.info)) which shows the major effort required to clear the reeds. *Kieth Hall*

## Books

The next meeting of the Book Club is also a **week later than normal**, on **Thursday 9th January in the Library at 11 am**. I thought the 2nd would have been a bit close to the New Year. Please join us. We welcome all residents. *Diana Duckworth*

## Condolences

... to the family and friends of Brenda Payn.

**Gaye** is to introduce to the village a book of condolences so we can record and remember those residents who have died.

## Micaela Dell'Osso

Most of us at Hampshire Lakes are British. Although Micaela has documents calling her British she usually says she is from Italy. She no longer has a British passport or driving licence. But she was born in Belgium! This came out as I was driving her to the hospital in Guildford and made me want to dig deeper. Luckily she was willing to co-operate.

Her father was a Romanian diplomat based in Brussels with his Italian wife and family. Micaela was 8 when the second world war reached Belgium, in 1940. They were given three days to leave for Paris but the Germans were already bombing Brussels and Micaela remembers having to go into the cellar for protection.

There were some notable problems with the move to Paris. They would have to go by car, so there was room for only a few essentials – everything else was left behind. Then Micaela's father, with his diplomatic status, had always had a driver and never needed to learn to drive. There was still his regular driver, you might think, but he was Belgian and was immediately called up for military service! Luckily, Micaela's 18-year-old brother had just learned to drive. Even then it was not a straightforward journey.



The roads were full of people fleeing, some carrying their belongings in pushchairs or on horses and carts. Stuka dive-bombers attacked vehicles on the road so when one was

heard approaching everyone dived into the roadside ditch.

When they reached Ostend they checked into a seafront hotel. Its restaurant had enormous glass windows which, of course, were shattered as soon as bombs started falling. This was traumatic for Micaela. Her family were safe but her father happened to be visiting another hotel at the time. They heard that one of the Ostend hotels had been completely destroyed and so they were very worried until they found out that it was not where he had been.

So when, at another of their stops, the building had a glass-covered atrium the young Micaela was scared again. They continued dodging Stukas until they got to Paris.

After Paris they went back to Bucharest on the very last Orient Express. The Fascist government supported the Nazis so Micaela's mother and siblings were able to travel to stay with her brother near Milan for the summer. The family postings were then to Lisbon for a couple of years and then on to Rome.

Her father was involved with a secret meeting between the President of Romania and Mussolini in Venice. After the meeting her father's train crashed and he was badly injured. They all moved to Lake Maggiore while he recovered.

During all these moves the children continued their studies, doing very well and speaking several languages.

In Rome the bombing had started again - but this time it was by the Allies. Pope Pius XII made an unusual brief excursion outside the Vatican to console affected people.

At the end of the war the now-communist Romanians would only let her father move back to Romania if he left his wife and daughters behind. When he refused they confiscated all his Romanian assets and took away his passport, leaving him stateless. Luckily he had some savings in Switzerland. Although the rest of his family were OK in Italy, Micaela, born in Belgium, had lived there for less than the necessary ten years. So she too was stateless. It took over a decade for her to establish a nationality.

The family remains in Italy but Micaela has lived in England since 1979.

*Based on a chat with Micaela*



## Magical, Musical Vienna

Many people know about the annual New Year's Day concert by the Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra featuring music by the family of Johann Strauss and its contemporaries. However Vienna is also famous for other musical greats, Haydn and Mozart to name but two. Did you also know that every year Mozart's death in the early



hours of December 5th 1791 is remembered by a performance of his Requiem in the Stephansdom (St Stephens Cathedral)?

I had the privilege of being a member of the

170 singers from 'The Really Big Chorus' who were invited to sing it this year in Vienna. Our conductor for this performance was the Choirmaster of the Vienna Boys Choir – Oliver Stech. We arrived in Vienna on Tuesday 3rd December and had our first rehearsal that evening in the cathedral. Outside was a magical scene with Christmas market stalls around the cathedral, people enjoying their glühwein, and the cathedral lit up. In the afternoon of the next day we had another rehearsal in the cathedral but this time with the soloists and the Wiener Domorchester rather than a piano (see part of the setting in right-hand picture).

Then at midnight on 4th December we started singing to a packed audience. We all sang our hearts out to this glorious music written by a genius in the final weeks of his life – an absolutely amazing experience. Then when we finished at just before 1.00am, the time when Mozart died, there was no applause. Led by Gerald Wirth (the Artistic Director of the Vienna Boys Choir) tolling a bell, the clergy followed by all the choir processed off. It was incredibly moving. One of those experiences never to be forgotten.

To add to our enjoyment we were also invited to hear all about the Vienna Boys Choir at their concert hall – 'The Muth' - in the Palais Augarten. Then to observe one of their rehearsals. The boys had beautiful voices but

sometimes looked a little uncomfortable at being watched in this way. The boys come from all different parts of the world and one of the group we saw was a Ukrainian refugee. The choir has also very recently started a girls group and are in the process of deciding how to integrate this.



A wonderful experience in an amazing city. I will be returning in September but this time to sing some Haydn.

*Jo Taylor*

## Blind 'em with science Making people think

Did you see the weakness last month (falling leaves making winter days shorter)?

Here's a topical one. Do you remember that when we were young a roof with snow on was a sign that the occupiers were not well enough off to afford heating. Nowadays it's a sign that they are rich enough to afford insulation. Will the withdrawal of the Winter Fuel Payment affect this?

*Come on! Let's have some more questionable ideas.*

*Sam Dauncey*

**Lakes News** is written by "ordinary" residents like you and printed and delivered for us by the administration team.

We want it to inform, entertain and help keep everybody involved. Content is based on articles and stories **sent in by residents**. Concerns? Compliments? Requests? News? Interests? Suggestions? Offers? Photos? Ideas to make people think? We fill the gaps!

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**Your contributions are our life-blood.**