EPSOM & EWELL TIMES
For the community, by the community. A not-for-profit service

12th November 2026

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One way to learn collective nouns

8 August 2023

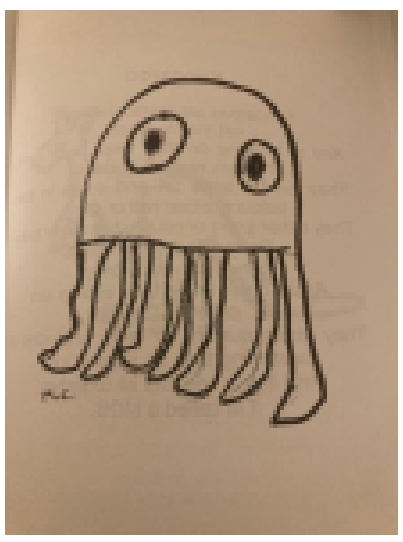
Last Monday, 7th August, **Epsom Library** invited **Frances Cohen** to come and read some of the poems from her recently published book: "**A Prickle of Porcupines – Really!!**"

The added attraction was that the poems had been illustrated by five of her 7 grandchildren, three of whom go to local schools in Epsom. Wallace Field Juniors, and Rosebery.

Frances is a 74 year old widow, and during the many COVID lockdowns she decided to use her talent for writing poems and using the different, and sometimes very amusing "collective nouns" she had discovered for animals and birds, which she had taught to her grandchildren over the years.

The poems are educational, including some interesting facts about each animal or bird, and really can be enjoyed by children of all ages, and adults alike.

Jellyfish have been around for millions of years,
They are 95% water, and have no brains, bones, or ears,
Even though they have long tentacles, they are not very smart,
They also have no eyes, and not even a heart.
150 million people get stung by them every year,
So they are not very popular when, near your beach, they appear.
So if you see them coming, you better draw back,
And if there are lots of them together, it is called a SMACK



The book is available on Amazon, and some Waterstones Shops

Image: Frances with and left to right: Oz, Billie, Mya and Jacob.

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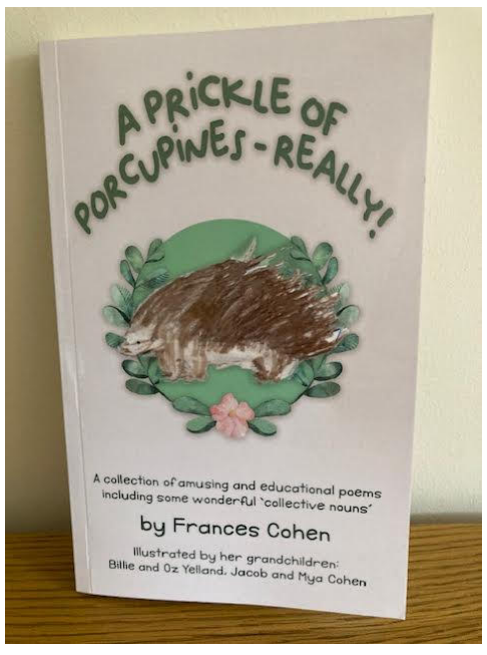

An Epsom Christmas poem

8 August 2023

Christmas comes early in the month of December
But preparations start as early as September
Toys appear in the shop and the store
And children’s expectations start to soar

Adverts appear in the News and TV
Of miraculous games for all to see
Visions of food and decorations so high
Make us all wish that the time was nigh

But leaves have not fallen from the trees
And flowers are still buzzing with the bees
Why are we tempted in this way?
When the Christ child’s birthday is still far away

Have they forgotten that the presents we bring
Are only reminders of the presents for Him
Of frankincense and myrrh and gold
Foretelling the scriptures story of old

And when finally the great day is here
Let us remember, amidst our good cheer
As we celebrate around the table,
The baby Christ child, born in a stable

Michael Barber (first published in 2012)

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Michael moved to the Wells Estate in 1966 for his first family home. He continues to live there to this day. He has lived in the Borough for all of his 87 years as his parents lived in Stoneleigh. His connections with Epsom have been as President of the Epsom Cycling Club from 1981 to 1991, and he joined the Epsom Male Voice Choir in 2010 and continues to be a keen and popular member of the choir. He started writing poetry seriously when he became treasurer of the Headley Poetry Group. This group meets monthly to read and share poetry – Michael has had poetry published in the Epsom United Reformed Church Newsletter, the Mickleham Parish Magazine and the Brooklands Museum Volunteers Newsletter.

Notes authored by Audrey Ardern-Jones

Epsom Clock Tower image source: Clive Darra – https://www.flickr.com/photos/osde-info/4252252710/

Epsom Common Bird Walk Poem

8 August 2023

It’s an early start, binoculars in hand,
we follow the winding path through the trees;
all shades of green surround us as we stand
dawn chorus resounds, distant bird calls tease.
On the pond, moorhen chicks scoot by
like wind-up bath toys, black pompoms of fluff,
Mandarin watches with her exotic eye
her dainty brood will follow soon enough.
Whitethroat, blackcap, greenfinch all sing,
a galaxy of colours – different notes hard to hear;
cuckoo calls abound, their voices herald spring
we look skyward and see one fly near.
All this the buzzard sees, soaring overhead,
every inch of the common easily heard and read.

K. Wiseman – local resident “who loves the Common”.

Do you have a poem you would like Epsom and Ewell Times to publish? Send it in!

Other stories on Epsom Common:

Flagging Up Epsom Common

Storm Eunice

White Roses

8 August 2023

By Audrey Ardern-Jones

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White Roses

(for my mother)

She never spoke about her early life in Lwów,
She told me about shocks that numbed the pain,
how she left at midnight, a last minute tip-off,
escaping under sheets in pelting ice-cold rain.
She told me about ECT that numbed the pain,
she left without giving a kiss to her mother,
escaping under sheets in pelting ice-cold rain
fearful about the fate of her missing brother:
She left without giving a kiss to her mother,
rushed outside by her father, no time to pack,
fearful about the fate of her missing brother,
a young trainee doctor who never came back.
Rushed outside by her father, no time to pack,
She fled a flowerless city where thousands died,
a young trainee doctor who never came back,
she said a rosary at night, lit a candle and cried.
She fled a flowerless city where thousands died,
she'd high cheek bones, blue eyes, blonde hair,
she said a rosary at night, lit a candle and cried
no mementos of her family to help the despair.
She'd high cheekbones, blue eyes, blonde hair,
she said a rosary at night, lit a candle and cried,
no mementos of her family to help the despair,
she never spoke about her early life in Lwów.

Audrey Ardern-Jones

(Published by Indigo Dreams in 'Doing the Rounds' in 2019)

Білі троянди

(для моєї матері)

Вона ніколи не розповідала про своє раннє життя у Львові,
Вона розповіла мені про шок, який заглушив біль,
як вона пішла опівночі, повідомив в останню хвилину,
тікала під простирадлами під льодяним дощем.
Вона розповіла мені про електрошокову терапію, яка заглушила біль,
вона пішла, не поцілував своїй матері,
тікаючи під простирадлами під льодяним дощем
охоплена страхом, дізнавшись про долю свого зниклого брата:
Вона пішла, не поцілував матері,
Вибігши на вулицю перед батьком, не встигши зібрати речі,
була охоплена страхом, дізнавшись про долю свого зниклого брата,
молодий лікар-стажист, який так і не повернувся.
Вибігши на вулицю перед батьком, не маючи часу зібрати речі,
Вона втекла з неквітучого міста, де загинули тисячі,
молодий лікар-стажист, який ніколи не повернувся,
промовила вночі молитву, запалила свічку і заплакала.
Вона втекла з неквітучого міста, де загинули тисячі,
у неї були високі вилиці, блакитні очі, світле волосся,
промовила вночі молитву, запалила свічку і заплакала

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немає таких спогадів про її родину, щоб полегшити відчай.
У неї були високі вилиці, блакитні очі, світле волосся,
промовила молитву вночі, запалила свічку і заплакала:
немає таких спогадів про її родину, щоб полегшити її відчай,
вона ніколи не розповідала про своє раннє життя у Львові.

Translation by **Darina Dvorinchenko**

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