

PROUD EAST MARSHIAN

DECEMBER 2020 ISSUE #9 FREE

News & views from the East Marsh - EMU/Sun & Moon Festival - online at www.sunandmoonfestival.org



Covid Christmas

I was driving home in the dark last night and saw several houses with flashing lights, trees and other festive decorations. It was November 19th yesterday and in previous years I might have thought wow, they're keen, that's a bit early! Not this year. This year, I thought wow, look at that, light in the darkness, hope at a bleak time. I've seen a lot of comments on social media about these early decorations - some quite sneery, but more and more that celebrate the arrival of light, cheer and fun.

We all know it's been an extraordinary year, full of worry and fear and loss. Everyone has suffered because of Covid and lockdown restrictions, people are tired and in real need of some winter cheer. Here at the Sun and Moon Festival, we applaud all the early trees, lights, dancing Santas and the rest of it. We stand with you and salute cheerfulness and attempts to bring the light into the darkness - let's leave it all up till February!

Looking back over this year we've faced a lot of challenges as we've tried to keep projects going and offer activities for our community. I am immensely proud of everyone in the team who has come up with fabulous ideas to keep everyone creative and there have been so many highlights. I have especially enjoyed getting to know some of our residents better and taking projects to them to complete at home. Most recently, we've distributed 24 lantern making kits and the pictures and feedback about those have been brilliant.

Obviously, we've had to cancel, postpone or change lots of activity this year. We have learnt so much and we are determined to bring to life lots of creative activity for the spring. In the meantime, we wish you all a very safe and happy Christmas, however you celebrate, and we look forward to seeing everyone again, when we can.

With Love and Light

Josie



04

Michael's family are preparing for Christmas

14

*Winter Solstice Festival 2020 -
Maria Garner*

18

*A Covid Christmas -
Josie Moon*

06

*Once Upon a Time -
Caroline Beeson Smith*

08

*The Girl From The Marsh -
Gordon Wilson*

12

*Book Review -
Jane Hyldon-King's 'The Girl From The Marsh'
reviewed by Gordon Wilson*

16

*V's Vantage Point -
Meet Sandi the Snail*

20

*Hidden Inside -
Michael Parker*

FAMILY



Michael and his family have been making some decorative jars with a Christmas theme. Plan A was decorating them with fir cones, but after trekking round Weelsby Woods they didn't find any big enough. So, plan B was put into operation and the glass-painted jars look fabulous!

Michael's Christmas traditions involve his favourite story of all time, A Christmas Carol, and his family try to watch as many incarnations of the story as they can. Christmas trimming day is always followed by the movie Elf, and another favourite is It's a Wonderful Life.

ONCE UPON A TIME, IN A TOWN NOT TOO FAR AWAY AWAY, THERE WAS A WRITING GROUP..

CAROLINE BEESON SPENCE

What I'm about to tell you is no fairy tale. Every week (restrictions permitting), in a room tucked away in the Courtyard on Freeman Street Market, there meets a very special writing group, one that's been carefully crafted and sprinkled in fairy dust. Here, surrounded by individually wrapped biscuits, lanterns and an endless supply of tea and coffee, we share ideas, imagine our worlds, write lots, and have a good old laugh.

As we moved towards the white winter months, our intriguing fairy tales started to take shape. Our stories are rooted in the East Marsh and as we were locked down, we hunkered down in our homes to weave our tales. The characters in our fairy tales became our best friends when we couldn't see our real best friends and families. The scenes which unfolded before us became our playgrounds.

Our tales traverse the East Marsh. Pat's girl is desperate to find happiness in the West Marsh across Corporation Bridge, but she has to gather lights, seven in total, before the Gatekeeper will let her cross. So, she sets about finding them all. The question is can she reach happiness and love over Corporation Bridge?

Paul's story tells a tale of the extraordinary-ordinary, with a young girl and her unexpected day off from school. A special encounter with a dog in Grant Thorold Park's playground opens a world of interest to her and when he talks to her, she never wants to go to school again.

Jack Frost and King Crab come out in the cold, white, winter months, getting up to mischief in people's gardens on Victor Street and Hope Street, taking treasured things. A local Prince leaves his home to solve the mystery of the thefts. Can he do it?

Ines' sacred oak stands proud in Grant Thorold Park. Couples who pledge their love beneath the tree will find eternal happiness in unexpected ways. The tree is only visible to certain people. Will you be able to see it?

Our East Marsh fairy tales will be ready for publication in 2021. Look out for them, we wrote them just for you.



THE GIRL FROM THE MARSH

GORDON WILSON



Former Mayor of North East Lincolnshire, Jane Hyldon-King was born in the East Marsh and reflects here on her enduring connections with the area.

Jane, the youngest of seven children, was born to Florence and William Hyldon in October 1950. Since then she has flitted back and forth across the haven from East Marsh to West Marsh, frequently returning at key times in her life. Though much of her adulthood has been spent 'over the marsh' and on the Willows', she has always maintained a network of family and friends on this side of the tracks. It is as if the East Marsh holds on to her like an uncut umbilical cord, feeding and sustaining her through the passing of time. As some might say, you can take the girl out of the East Marsh, but you cannot take the East Marsh out of the girl.

"My mum and dad both lived here all of their lives. My elder brothers and sisters were all born and brought up on the East Marsh and I

was born at 141 Kent Street in October 1950. I was two years old when my parents were told they had to move. The council said that the house was unfit for a family of nine and so we had to go. My dad didn't want to go. He had lived on the East Marsh all his life; he was born at 100 Tunnard Street in 1899. But even after moving we were coming back almost every day to see friends and family."

Jane's first Saturday job was on the legendary Frank and Edna's stall on Freeman Street Market in the early 1960s. "I really enjoyed working for them. It was great watching Frank at his best saying 'Here it is at six and 11, but no, you can have it for 5 and 11 this week,' and then he'd work the price down until all of the hands started going up. I also worked in the evenings, after school, washing up in the market cafés.

"Yes, I was always drawn to Freeman Street, to the market and the shops; to Marks and Spencer's and Woolworths but my favourite

was probably Boyes, I loved going there for the haberdashery, anything to do with sewing. Paul and I used to go to the pictures at the Tower when we were courting, and to the White Knight afterwards for a drink."

Perhaps nothing marks her frequent crossing of the Haven more than her marriage. It was in the lounge of The Mariner's Rest on the Oxford and Albion Street corner that Paul King proposed, presenting her with the ring he had bought earlier that day from a Freeman Street jeweller. And East Marsh matrimonial connection would not end there.

"On the morning of the wedding I popped onto the No. 1 bus to Humber Street and went to have my hair done in Victor Street; then I went back again to Corporation Road with a coronet in my hair before the wedding at St Michael's Church.

"After the service we all went back over the marsh again for the reception at St Andrews's Church Hall in Albion Street. It was all really wonderful. We had a band and lots photographs taken. Even my wedding cake was made in Oxford Street. It seemed very natural to do it all that way.

And when they made their own home and started their family, it would only be a stone's throw from the place of Jane's own birth. "We wanted to find a home and get that sorted before having children. We got on the housing list, but it wasn't until I was pregnant that they found us a home at Flat 91, the very top flat in Nelson House. At first, we thought that a flat would be better than nothing at all, but we were so amazed when we saw the modern bathroom and kitchen and all the wonderful things we hadn't had before. We were very happy. We stayed for nearly four years. It's strange now to think of how I went back there with my first daughter Jo to take her to the clinic in Hope Street where I had gone myself as a baby."

Second daughter Emma would arrive soon after a move to the Willows in 1974.

"If I was to put my hand on my heart and say what was the most important thing, to me, that I did in my Mayoral Year, it would have to be my invitation to open the Kent Street Resource Centre, (now the Val Waterhouse Centre). What better thing than to open a building a couple of yards from where I was born. I thought at the time, if my mum and dad had been alive, how proud they would have been that their youngest daughter was actually opening a building, let alone being a Mayor. That was something they never saw.

"I've done volunteer work since with the local history group at the centre and I'm looking forward to helping further as they develop a Kent Street project."

A fuller account of Jane's life on both East Marsh and West can be found in her newly published autobiography, *The Girl from The Marsh*. In that memoir she tells of the colourful lives of her family, neighbours and friends, school and workmates and colleagues while also charting her career in trade unionism and politics and how the girl from Kent Street came to be Mayor of North East Lincolnshire.





L-R with Nanna Lewis

On balcony, Nelson House 1971

Opening of Kent Street Resource Centre

**...how the girl from
Kent Street became
Mayor of North East
Lincolnshire.**



Jane with her book 'The Girl From The Marsh'



This memoir from Jane Hyldon-King is a labour of love in which she recalls her early years on the East Marsh and growing up on the West. It is an affectionate tribute to family and friends and a richly colourful portrait of neighbourhoods, schools, and workplaces.

Childhood games and rhymes are recalled, teachers and shopkeepers are remembered and rated, family and communities celebrated; and lost landscapes, for better or worse, revisited.

It is a story of family separated by demolition and reunited through schools and sport; a story of everyday working-class life in the 1950s and 60s, of bombed buildings, of playgrounds found and designed, of secret cinema going. Through her recollections of the places she has worked, Mrs Hyldon-King reflects a period of great social and industrial change offering a sensory tour of Grimsby's transformation.

Jane found herself at the centre of much in that shifting world. She was among the first pupils at Hereford, Grimsby's first comprehensive school. She witnessed the inequality of women in the workplace and was part of the process that worked to correct this in companies and trade unions alike. She knows where that search for fairness originates.

"My dad was a workaholic and a very caring person. I learnt from him a sense of fairness and justice. I wanted to be like him and to help others. That's what drives my work on the council."

Jane would go on to become active in the trade union movement and, eventually, in local politics, a journey that eventually led her to become one of the few women to hold the office of Mayor of North East Lincolnshire.

Her role in public life was perhaps predicted long before Jane even really understood what

politics was. As a nine-year-old in the crowd during the re-election campaign of Grimsby MP and future British Foreign Secretary, Tony Crosland, the candidate heard her singing.

Vote, Vote, vote for Tony Crosland

Who's that knocking at the door...

"Well, I was singing this along with lots of other kids in the crowd, but Tony pointed me out and said 'You've a good strong voice, will you do it again?' So, they stood me on a platform, gave me the microphone and I sang it again at the top of my voice. When I'd finished, Tony said to me, 'Well, young lady, I think we are going to see you in politics.' Of course, that meant nothing to me then, but I worked on later elections and campaigned for Austin Mitchell when he stood for Grimsby after Crosland died."

The rest, as they say, is history, all of which can be found in *The Girl from the Marsh*.

The voice of this book is unmistakably Jane's. Enthusiasm, affection and love spill from every page and the rich collection of photographs capture vividly the family and the town that she loves.

The Girl from the Marsh 160 pages - soft back.
£19.95 [plus £2.95 P&P]

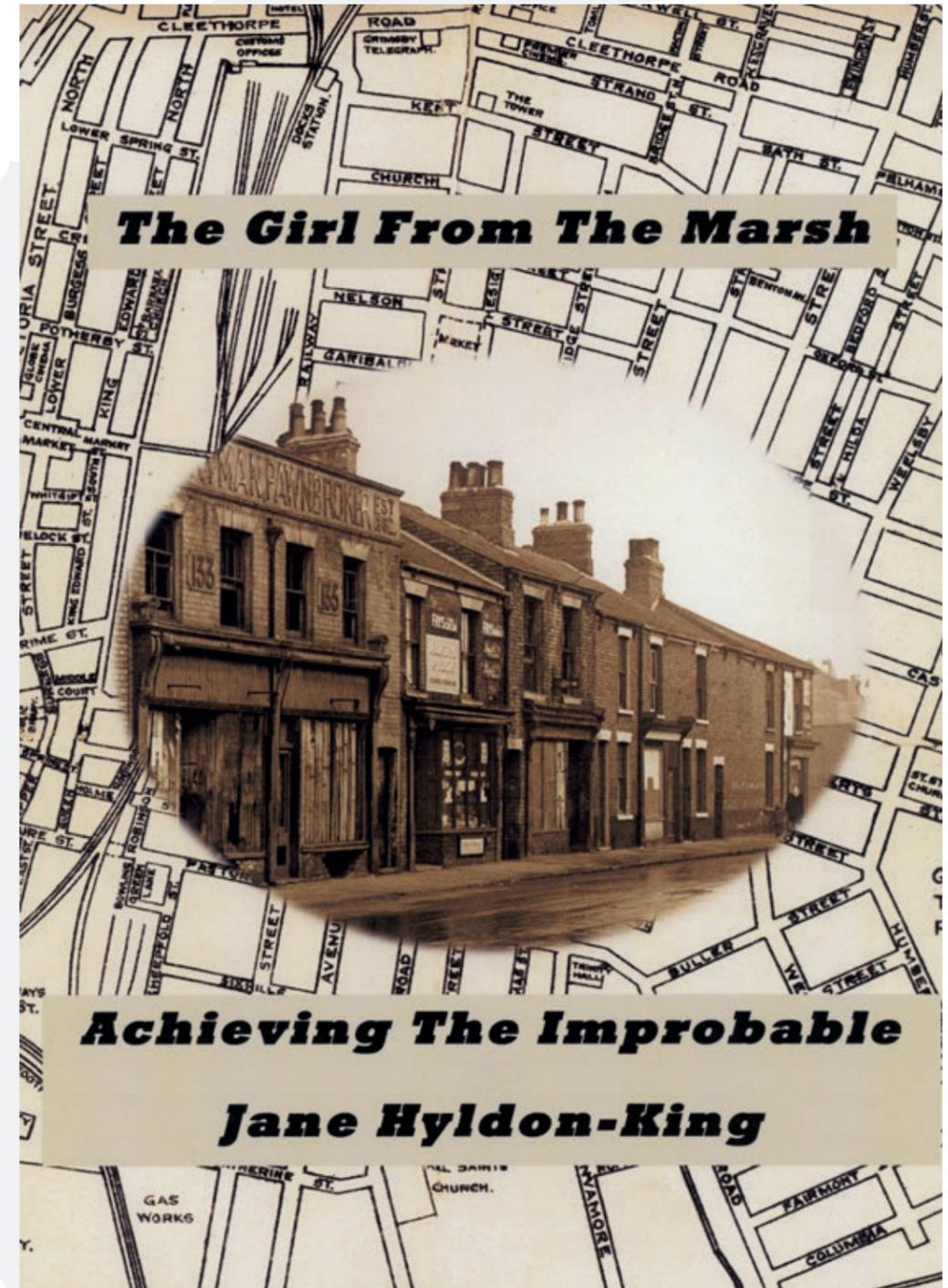
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WINTER SOLSTICE FESTIVAL 2020

MARIA GARNER

Here I am writing this in November and it doesn't feel like winter yet. We have had temperatures up to 16 degrees this week and there is less than a month to go until we reach the Winter Solstice. I find it comforting to think that on December 21st the sun will have reached its furthest Southerly point. It will then be heading back Northwards bringing more light and warmth to our days. In a year full of uncertainties, this is one thing we can be sure of. We may encounter some cold spells on the way but we know there are definitely sunny days ahead. It isn't misplaced optimism, it is a fact.

Likewise, all the fears and restrictions this year has brought us, courtesy of Coronavirus, will also give way to more carefree times. It's just that we don't know when. However, we do know that better days are yet to come.

Again, it isn't possible to join together and share our celebration. Last year when we met in The Courtyard at the Winter Solstice we sang the following chorus together:

**Red the berries of the holly
Fresh the perfume of the pines
Fear ye not of foe or folly
Now will be the best of times**

Little did we know what was heading our way! But we are here and we have to keep vigilant until the danger has passed. One thing is clear, we are all better prepared now than we were at the end of 2019 – even if it doesn't feel like it.

I find solace in my walks. The colours are different and there is a light openness to

the woods now. My boots get caked in mud and the wind bites some mornings but it still makes me feel good to be outdoors. The trees have shed most of their leaves and those with berries are laying on a feast for the birds to top up their rations. All of nature has made changes in preparation for Winter.

It is a good time to ring our own changes too. Everyone has different circumstances to deal with this year and it has had a profound effect on all of us. During this second lockdown I have reflected on what positives I can glean. It has definitely given me an opportunity to reassess what is important to me and I know I am approaching this Winter Solstice with a different set of values. Mostly I have missed hugs and smiles, sharing a laugh and enjoying time with the people I love. Technology will never take the place of the warmth of another human being but it can help us to stay in touch and I have been very grateful for it this year. Imagine a lockdown with no mobile phone!

I've also enjoyed having extra time to read and reread books by people who have inspired me. The great Maya Angelou, American writer, actor and activist, left us many wise and wonderful words to remember her by. Particularly relevant for these times is a quote from the first volume of her biography, *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings*, in which she says:

Hoping for the best, prepared for the worst, and unsurprised by anything in between.

Hoping for the best, being prepared for the worst, and unsurprised by anything in

between seems to me like a pretty good way to go through life.

We all feel a bit like caged birds this year but we can continue to do the things that free our spirits. We may just have to do them in a different way!

I was with friends in Cleethorpes on the first day of January a few years ago. As we walked along the endless beach, people were wishing each other Happy New Year and I reflected how at the start of the year everyone is filled with hope for the coming year. Later that day I wrote **Poem for the New Year**.

Stay safe and look after each other. Keep the hand of hope topped up!

With love
Maria Garner



Poem for the New Year

The hand of hope is full
It promises rebirth
Seeds wait the sun's return
Beneath the cold dark earth .

Trees bare limbed stand tall
And reach out to the sky
By day they seek the sun
At night the stars pass by.

Roots spread through the soil
And take a firmer hold
From winter's icy grip
New life will unfold.

I send Solstice Blessings and wish you a joyful season full of love and friendship.



V's VANTAGE POINT -

Sandi the Snail



I can hardly believe that I'm writing the last of this year's V's Vantage Point, and what a year it's been!

Firstly, I wish you all a blessed Winter Solstice.

As we hurtle towards the 21st December, the shortest day and longest night of the year, I know that Spring and the lighter days are coming.

I send best wishes to you all at this time, because it is an event that people of all faiths, and none, will experience. I believe we could all do with celebrating something that happens for all of us together on this beautiful planet, under our celestial beauties the Sun and Moon.

Secondly, meet Sandi, a character who is busy in 'A Covid Christmas, written by our Josie Moon, helping Carrie and Cosmo together with the Magic Garden Committee, all working hard to put smiles on everyone's faces this Christmas.

Sandi is a very sad snail indeed and he took a long time making it over to my house to have his portrait painted. But he finally arrived and kept nice and still for me to paint.

It was hard to paint Sandi crying as snails are not known for being sad and weepy, they tend to be quite jolly and use their liquid for making snail trails. Sandi says, "Snails like to decorate the ground as they wander." I must admit the trails do twinkle in the moonlight.

Last, but not least, I'd like to join with everyone here on sending all of you the very best of the season's greetings for whatever you celebrate and to wish us all a much better 2021.

Love V xxx



VIVIENNE MAY

Extracts From: The Magic Garden, A Covid Christmas
 By Josie Moon
 Illustrations : Vivienne May
 Design: Paul Davy

Extract One

It was a cold, early December afternoon. Cosmo and Carrie were walking home from school wrapped up in their winter coats. Carrie was almost buried inside her furry hood and her glasses were steamed up. 'I don't like the cold much,' she said, 'I like the summer and the sunshine best.' 'I don't mind the cold,' said Cosmo, 'and it's nearly Christmas, and Christmas is the best! Only not this year.' Cosmo loved Christmas. He loved putting the tree up, on December 1st and he loved Christmas lights, and parties and going to town to see Santa and the reindeer. Carrie reached for his hand and gave it a squeeze. She knew Cosmo was worried because Christmas was going to be very different this year. He was putting on a brave face but she knew he was sad. Carrie liked Christmas, but it wasn't one of her best things. Carrie liked the summer and adventures, and solving problems and making up brilliant games with Cosmo. But she didn't like to see her friend sad and wondered if she might think of something to keep Cosmo busy and not worrying about Christmas.

Extract Two

The animals all listened in solemn silence as Notwhat the owl read the serious news aloud in his most dramatic voice. 'It is with great, great, great sorrow and sadness, that I must inform you all,' he paused, for effect as all eyes were upon him. 'Great, great sorrow, that I have learned, just this very night, via dispatches from the snowy owls of the north and their cousins from across the sea,' again he paused for effect. Barry sighed a cross sigh. 'I have learned, this very night, that Santa Claus, yes, Santa Claus,' yet another pause

followed. 'Santa Claus is not able to deliver the presents this year. He and the reindeer are being forced to isolate in the North Pole. Due to his great age, Santa has been ordered to stay at home.'

Extract Three

The next morning there was a beautiful white frost on the ground when Carrie met Cosmo at his gate. She was wrapped up in her furry hood and snow boots but Cosmo could see her eyes were shining brightly and she was bursting with something to tell him. 'Cosmo! I have news,' she said, 'very important news!' 'Ok,' said Cosmo, knowing that an adventure of some sort was on its way. As they walked to school, Carrie explained to Cosmo that she had received a message from the snowy owls of the north telling her that Santa Claus was not coming this year. Because of the Covid, he and the reindeer had to isolate in the North Pole. 'So Christmas is cancelled?' said Cosmo, looking like he was going to burst into tears. 'No Cosmo! Quite the opposite. You know I heard the owl in the garden last night, and I said he was bringing the news?' 'Yes,' said Cosmo. 'Well, the owls, our owls have had the news from the snowy owls of the north and their cousins from across the sea about Santa, and they have been sent to find volunteers in every community, to help save Christmas by taking on Santa's duties.'



The Magic Garden, A Covid Christmas - softback 29 pages £7.00 inc P&P
 By Josie Moon with illustrations by Vivienne May
 Designed by Paul Davy

A seasonal tale of heroism and problem-solving for children and families.

Available to purchase direct from the author Josie Moon via email to msjosiemoon@gmail.com

PayPal or Bank Transfer welcome
 Books will be posted or hand delivered if purchased on the East Marsh.
 This is a limited edition book and will only be available to purchase until December 20th 2020.



HIDDEN INSIDE

BY MICHAEL PARKER

Sometimes you feel
You just want to cry.
You feel a bit silly
You just don't know why.

You just don't admit it.
You shut off instead.
The thought of outside
Just fills you with dread.

"This is not normal"
A voice says inside
"I'll get over this"
And my God, you've tried.

But something says 'no'
Whatever you do,
From inside your head
That person is you.

Feeling like a burden
Can't cope with the shame
Feeling so down
Only you to blame.

But stop blaming yourself
It's okay to depend,
To not be okay,
To lean on a friend.

Whatever the time,
I'll always be there
To give you a hug
And just show I care.

Because I have been there
Walked around in your skin,
Listened to the bad
From the enemy within.

And so many more
That we know have cried,
Kept it to themselves
To retain some pride.

But please don't do that
Just talk, it's okay,
A coffee, a joke
Might just save your day

A wide-open ear
Is here anytime
So, to let you know that
I've told you in rhyme.

When life is tough,
we're here to listen

SAMARITANS

Call us free 24/7 on

116 123

samaritans.org

If you are feeling over-
whelmed or anxious at this
difficult time, don't hesitate
to ask for help.

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