

The village is blooming. Leaves return to the trees and blossom is everywhere. Wild garlic and bluebells have taken the place of the snowdrops and daffodils that have been in abundance on the Triangle in Ham Lane. Following its recent makeover the Triangle has been looking rather lovely for several weeks except for the muddy verge that is used by the cars as a passing place.

We are a village full of sounds. The bell to call the ferry, the steam train puffing and tooting its way along the line, football on Saturday, children's voices on the Ham, music from Rock on the Beach at the Ferryboat Inn on sunny days, and this time of year, beautiful crystal clear birdsong. Sadly not all sounds are welcome including a powerful chainsaw being used most of the day on sunny Bank Holiday Monday. Now however there is a new sound in our village. Around lunchtime most days the paddle steamer Kingswear Castle sounds her whistle, announcing her arrival at Dittisham and Greenway. PS Kingswear Castle is the last remaining coal-fired paddle steamer in operation in the UK. She was built in 1924 just along the river at Philip & Son of Dartmouth, and worked between Totnes and Dartmouth until 1965. Her engines date back to 1904, that's eight years before the sinking of the Titanic. In her heyday this remarkable ship was the lifeblood of the river Dart and she could carry nearly 500 passengers. As you might imagine the PS Kingswear Castle has had an interesting life, she was loaned to the US Navy during World War II for use as a harbour tender. Then she was bought by the Paddle Steamer Preservation Society, leaving the river Dart to work on the Isle of Wight and later in Chatham, Kent where for 15 years she was fully restored to her former glory. From 1985 to 2012 she delighted passengers on the Medway. Now she has returned home, back to the River Dart after 47 years away. Welcome home PS Kingswear Castle – Woo Woo! What a lovely sound.

A huge thank you to Tom Leeman who produced the St George's Day Concert in the church a couple a weeks ago. The church was full for this superb family event. There were many varied and entertaining pieces including a brilliant performance from soloist Nigel Richards who sang 'Music of the Night' from The Phantom of the Opera together with many more songs that the whole audience enjoyed. I have said before that our Church as a venue can rival the O2, and this night was certainly no exception.

On 30th April there was a meeting in the village hall organized by the Dittisham Community Land Trust. A number of villagers attended the meeting which was led by Will Froude. Will asked the Trust Members to introduce themselves to the audience and to explain their reasons for wishing to be involved with the project to build their home in Dittisham. After the presentation the audience asked a variety of interesting questions.

And finally it is with great sadness that Dittisham has lost another of our much loved villagers. Steve Widman, known to most as Wid, died suddenly. Our thoughts, love and deepest condolences go to his family and all who knew him.

