

BROADLY SPEAKING

Our man behind the gates, **Richard Jordan-Baker**, shares life living at Broadlands



Behind the big black gates much has been happening. A particular highlight was hosting a photoshoot for a leading London fashion house that included the walled gardens, a semi-derelict barn, a stream and views with the River Test in the background. A model from Serbia (6ft 2in and not a little scary if I'm honest), wore clothes that were not going to keep the chill out, and the day was spent with very charming but slightly bonkers young people from the trendy parts of east London I only read about in the style section of the *Sunday Times*.

I say 'read' loosely as that part of the weekend's entertainment I normally glance over as jumpers photographed in gloomy corners with no detail showing and priced at £3,000 aren't really for me. Still, it was highly entertaining, paid for a third of a new window in the house and they bought me a fortifying lunch in the Three Tuns.

Another highlight was meeting equine artist Georgia Blakey; her unique style incorporating collage into her intriguing and beguiling work. We were introduced at a fundraising event for the Southampton Hospitals Charity, and I later visited her at her home studio. We hope to work together in some way in 2025 so watch this space, especially if you are budding equine artist looking for inspiration.

In October I visited the Showman's Show. It would be understandable if you were to conjure thoughts of lion tamers, jugglers and pretty girls in feathered costumes standing on the backs of galloping horses but, this is actually the trade show of the UK's event industry held at the Newbury Showground. The last few years have seen horizontal rain, so two sunny and dry days were a joy with people actually sitting out of doors meeting, talking, eating and drinking with the subject being trying to create, sell and run events of all kinds. The world of events was represented from promoters, suppliers and contractors to venue and landowners, media and press. It was, as ever, a chance to see old friends and meet new people.

Just a few nights ago I had the pleasure of representing Lady Alexandra Knatchbull at the Mountbatten School autumn concert. Lady Alexandra, daughter of Lady Mountbatten, is the patron of the school.

These concerts are always a highlight with what appears to be every child in the school performing with every parent, aunt, uncle, grandmother and grandfather packed into Romsey Abbey. Those in the audience for whom this is not their first concert come armed with cushions from home and as



Richard's King Charles bauble will be proudly hung from the tree

Out and about

empty a bladder as is medically possible. The programme is varied and energetic with pieces to please Swifties, those who like the blues, as well as those with what is the unexplainable love of musical theatre. The children are enthusiastic, talented, brave and as nervous as the staff involved. Everyone went home happy.

Following in the footsteps of King George VI and the late Prince Philip, Lady Mountbatten has been invited to be the admiral of the Royal Motor Yacht Club and, recently, I accompanied her to the club in Poole to join the members and their guests, including Prince Michael of Kent, to celebrate the return to the club of the long absent 1937 World Water Speed Trophy that has been in Australia for many years.

Being a long-standing, lifelong landlubber this was a fascinating lunch and event where I was introduced to a whole new world of sailing and all that goes with it. So much

now makes so much more sense. My first experience at sea was at 15 years old on a ferry to the Isle of Man, when I saw the packed lunch of cheese and pickle sandwiches, packed by my mother, for the second time!

Christmas looms large and I am determined to enjoy it. It is no secret that if, after a very bizarre chain of political events, I found myself to be a malevolent but miserable dictator, I would make Christmas either a biannual event or would pass draconian laws that would make anything 'Christmassy' illegal before December 1.

We are booked into a local hotel for Christmas Day lunch and, as last year, King Charles' bauble will hang from our tree.

To please my reader, I write with a glass of Three Terraces Waihopai New Zealand rosé and I have started a new book, *All That Glitters* by Orlando Whitfield.

The cover states: 'A story of friendship, fraud and fine art'. ●