



'Vicious Old Men'

White fish, oily fish, shellfish, smoked fish. Skate, sardines, scallops, salmon. Turbot, trout, tuna, tiger-prawns. Cheddington, Halstock, Evershot,

Corscombe. You name it, Jane's got it ... or visits it!

A few months ago I joined the Dorset Fishwife on her rounds through my parishes. I learned that turbot is beautiful but costly. That the older generation are consistent customers, while the "young & busy" spend more but less often. That dissected squid really is inky. That Jane is not just a supplier of fish, but a pastoral contact for many – and often a shoulder to cry on.

Spending time with Jane was another great opportunity to converse with someone at depth, and among other topics we touched on history & archaeology; faith & religion; Jesus, the bible & the church. I learn so much about God and about life from such encounters.

More than this, my trip proved an incredible way of immersing myself in the parish. I listened to someone grieving their spouse; planned a church event; discussed a burial of ashes; learned that someone was in hospital; saw progress on a house renovation and met a two week old foal!

Tell me, how do you pronounce 'GHOTI'? I've always been amused by Bernard Shaw's proposal of the spelling *ghoti* for "fish" – with the [gh] from "laugh", the [o] from "women" and the [ti] from "nation". Isn't language intriguing?

More importantly, why eat 'ghoti'? Well, it's a superfood (rich in Omega-3), containing calcium, protein and Vitamins A, B & D. It makes us strong; gives us energy; enables us to fight off illness; is good for the eyes & skin; lowers the risk of depression. Though be warned, we are not to make a graven image of such a cure-all – "the likeness of any fish that is in the waters beneath the earth" is verboten!

James Crowden's book, 'Dorset Coast', documents the lives of thirty six men & women, who work on the stretch from Lyme Regis to Mudeford Quay - tales of smuggling and tragedy at sea, daring rescues

and foreign trade, fishing and fish merchants, and lobster men ... seine boats ... netmakers, scallopers and more. Crab & lobster boats worked these shores in the late C19th / early C20th, but only the *Witch of Worbarrow* remains, now in the National Maritime Museum, Falmouth - "the last of her kind". Ian Baird of West Chelborough re-trained in 2010 as a traditional wooden boat builder and decided to build a replica of the original boat. His creation, *Witch of Weymouth*, is a clinker built, 15' sprit rigged yawl, larch on oak. The *Witch* is now the only Weymouth Harbour Crab & Lobster Boat in the world that is capable of sailing and remains in the original condition that her builders would have commissioned her in. Appearing on TV and in *Watercraft Magazine* means that, she is quite a famous little boat that opens a window on the past of our Dorset maritime heritage.

I had the privilege of blessing Ian's boat at its launch from Lyme last December, and getting a brief ride in it! Then a month ago I spent a morning with Ian on a boat he was restoring in Bridport – real, quality (& patient!) craftsmanship.



You may recall Jesus saw two brothers, Simon & Andrew casting a net into the lake "for they were fishermen". Why are they fishermen? Because they aren't disciples of a rabbi. They weren't good enough; they didn't make the cut. Jesus calls the not-good-enoughs. He says, "Come, follow me"; they hear, "You can be like me". Jesus took some boys who didn't make the cut & changed the course of human history.

If you are a passionate aficionado of locally produced, good quality food, try Jane's wares on :

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Oh, and 'vicious old

men'? Read the last 3

words of Mark 1:17

(King James Version)

very, very quickly!

