



August 2020

Dear WARG Members,

I know this will be a huge disappointment to many of you, not least myself, but Maureen informs me, she has heard from Dr. John Crook, who, quite understandably, in the light of what is appearing to be a second wave of the Covid virus, would prefer to postpone his talk on recent excavations at Winchester Cathedral.

We shall of course reschedule this as soon as possible and hopefully Dr. Crook will then have even more to tell us about this historic and beautiful building.

Now, a little bit of news on the political front.

A Purrfect Lollipop

***All about 'A Harmless necessary cat' – William Shakespeare, The Merchant of Venice
Act 4 Scene 1***

**Foreign Office cat Palmerston retires to countryside -By Justin Parkinson BBC
News**

Palmerston, the Foreign Office's resident cat, has retired from mousing duties to "spend more time relaxing away from the limelight".



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In a "letter", he says he has moved away from Whitehall and is now climbing trees rather than "overhearing all the foreign ""dignitaries"" conversations".

The black-and-white rescue cat, who has more than 105,000

Twitter followers, arrived from Battersea in 2016. He has been known to clash with Larry, Number 10's main mouse-catcher. Their decidedly undiplomatic disputes - which have included several hissy fits and a stand-off in full view of the press in Downing Street - are not thought to have hastened his departure.

Named after the famously interventionist and amorous 19th-Century Foreign Secretary and Prime Minister Viscount Palmerston, Palmerston has often featured in photographs involving visiting officials.



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In a distinctly anthropomorphic letter sent to Foreign Office permanent secretary Sir Simon McDonald, Palmerston "writes" that while there, he "pawed numerous memorandums" and set up his own "parallel network" for intelligence gathering.

He adds that, during the pandemic he, like so many other civil servants, has decided to "work from home" rather than in the office, while remaining "as diligent as ever".

Palmerston, whose age in cat years is uncertain, making a pension doubtful, has moved to an undisclosed location "in the countryside". He promises to remain "an ambassador for the UK" and praises his fellow "diplocats" and "diplodogs".

Palmerston, whose letter mercifully refrains from puns on "paw-licy" and contractual "claw-ses", says he will enjoy more "me time" over the summer and beyond. (Should that not be 'Meow time'.)

A replacement has yet to be appointed, to the probable delight of Foreign Office mice, who have yet to comment. Possible names for Palmerston's successor - assuming the link to former foreign secretaries is maintained - include Canning, Bathurst, Balfour, Eden, Rifkind and Miliband.

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Happy retirement. Hopefully there are plenty of Purrfect lives left with lots of Meow time.