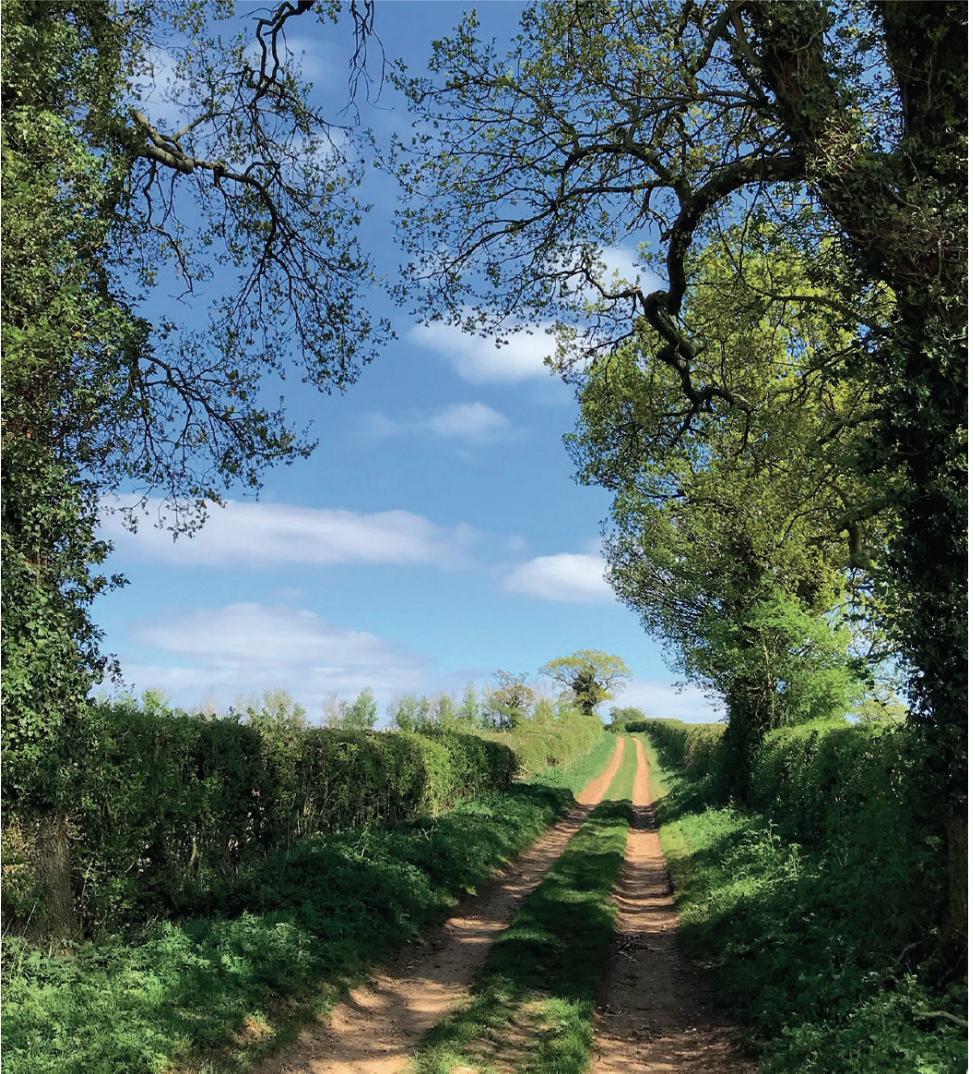


THE LINK

A COMMUNITY MAGAZINE FOR THE
SEVEN PARISHES IN THE SOUTH
WARWICKSHIRE 7 BENEFICE

May 2020

£1



■ BARCHESTON with WILLINGTON ■ BARTON-ON-THE-HEATH
■ BURMINGTON ■ CHERINGTON with STOURTON ■ LONG COMPTON
■ WHICHFORD and ASCOTT ■ THE WOLFORDS

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@TheSW7LINK

THE LINK

<https://editor794.wixsite.com/sw7link>

THE LINK

EVENTS DIARY

Contact: The Editor
Email: editor@swlink.org.uk

Events Update

What can one say other than stay at home? There is one notable event this month. Long Compton Parish Council have a meeting enabled by that now essential app *Zoom* (see page 36 for more details). Until normal service is resumed, please take time to enjoy these images of spring provided by Simon Lewis-Beeching.



LINK cover: *A Lane Full of Possibilities.*

Photograph by Helen Bostock of Little Wolford.

Cover design KMS Litho, Hook Norton.

The LINK welcomes contributions for the front cover or elsewhere.

Portrait orientation photographs or artwork preferred.

Please send items to editor@swlink.org.uk

LINK cover and artwork produced by KMS Litho, Hook Norton and sponsored by Oxford Hardware.

EDITORIAL

LINK Talk

Well, The LINK has had to go digital I'm afraid. It's actually been available online for the best part of four years, but the printed version is, by far, the preferred media of our readers. We have been regularly delivering just over seven hundred printed copies of the magazine each month for many years now, and as soon as it's reasonable to ask our fantastic distributors to recommence with the printed version, we will.

However, as I have been putting together the online version, it occurred to me that there are a few advantages to this situation. The first is that all content online is in colour. It's also much more environmentally friendly not to print, I can include videos, the internet links should operate and there is no longer a limit to the number of pages that we can include.

This has allowed me to invite local writers to include works which we would have had trouble accommodating in the printed version. You'll see in this issue we have included a new feature - *LINK Lit.* - where a local writer has provided us with a three-part serialisation of a short story. There may be some readers old enough to remember when the serialisation of books and stories was quite normal in magazines and newspapers.

I'll not pretend that's it's all plain sailing though. The LINK Crossword will require printing out and once again this month, we can't guarantee that any event mentioned will actually take place. The content of this issue of The LINK will, by nature of the situation, be very different and I would like to thank all contributors and village editors who have worked so hard to supply items for this month.

Advertisers have been contacted and advised of the situation in which we find ourselves. The adverts appearing in the online issue are there because the local businesses have asked for them. If they are operating within the current restrictions, please consider supporting them if you can.

Please do share any feedback on The LINK this month and if you have any items that you'd like to contribute, please do make contact.

This lockdown is affecting us all. Just in my small corner of SW7 we have children off school and students who've been prevented from taking their GCSEs, A-Levels and University exams. At the other end of the scale we have vulnerable 70+ residents confined to their homes. Following the rules means we will miss seeing our families, but following the rules also means when this is over, we will see our families again. Follow the advice - *Stay at Home, Save Lives.*

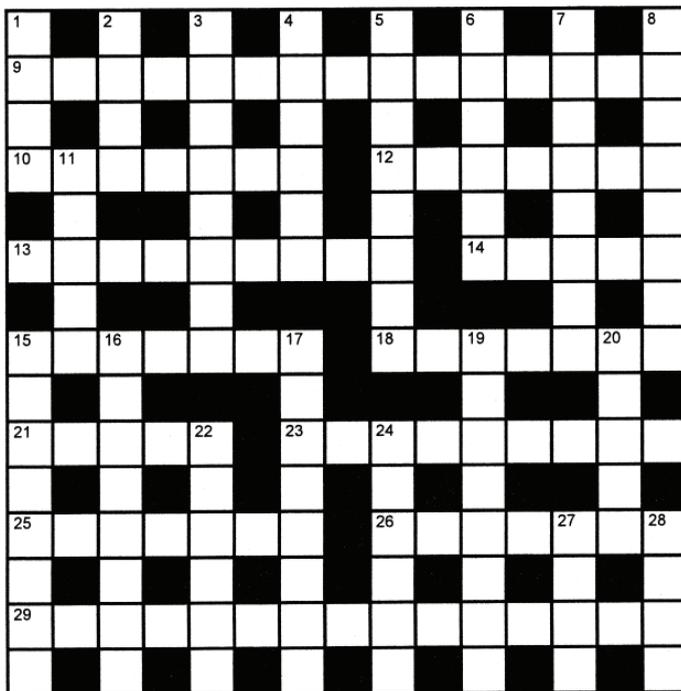


Where to now?

Photograph by Simon Lewis-Beeching

Keith Murphy, editor@swlink.org.uk

The LINK Crossword



Across

- 9 Often used to describe excitement. (5,3,7)
- 10 Get this lawfully. (7)
- 12 Prepare for better things. (7)
- 13 Shakespeare wrote that complicated sergeants had this 'thrust upon them.' (9)
- 14 Miss Doolittle improved her elocution. (5)
- 15 Churned up. (7)
- 18 One can get no further with this clue. (7)
- 21 Contracts. (5)
- 23 Carried on reformed unnoticed. (9)
- 25 This will carry on the right lines. (7)
- 26 Just like the New Testament shepherds (7)
- 29 Audacious behaviour. (15)

Down

- 1 Cain's victim. (4)
- 2 Words and music. (4)
- 3 Tailored awkwardly to the devotee. (8)
- 4 E.g. Pepsin and amylase. (6)
- 5 Anxious way to raise the sweet course. (8)
- 6 Think ahead for this. (6)
- 7 Try to find in a perfect world. (8)
- 8 Autographs are written this way. (8)
- 11 Deplore losing head over this bird. (5)
- 15 Realised it could be relative to the stars. (8)
- 16 Credo in English. (1,7)
- 17 A sour code is the polite way to find it. (8)
- 19 A searching experience. (4-4)
- 20 Uncle could be a regular part of her vocabulary. (5)
- 22 Back up in a jiffy ? (6)
- 24 The force named after the 17th century scientist. (6)
- 27 Dickens obsequious character sounds like a pile. (4)
- 28 It's getting harder to see. (4)

The LINK Crossword compiled for us by Campden John - (Please print if required)

For those Golfers not Golfing...

From our friends at Feldon Valley.



FELDON VALLEY

- The longest recorded drive was 515 Yards
- The first 18-Hole course was on a sheep farm
- Until the early 20th century the dimples on a golf ball protruded outwards.
- The term 'birdie' dates from 1899 when a player at Atlantic City Country Club in New Jersey hit a bird with his first shot on a par four. His second finished just inches from the hole, prompting his companions to call it 'a bird of a shot.'

Golfing Jokes

'You're late on the tee, John.'

'Yes, well being a Sunday, I had to toss a coin to see if I should go to church or go and play golf.'

'Okay, but why are you so late?'

'I had to toss it 15 times!'

What should you do if your round of golf is interrupted by a lightning storm? Walk around holding your 1-iron above your head, because even mother nature can't hit a 1-iron.

Golfing myths

1. Try not to leather your driver so hard...

Don't misconstrue this as a green light to go Happy Gilmore. However, many players, if struggling off the tee, will be told by their playing mates not to hit it so hard. According to Jack Nicklaus, this will lead to further trouble. 'Letting up with a driver almost always leads to quitting on the shot or attempting to steer the ball into position.'

2. I think you need to weaken your grip...

Close to 90 percent of golfers battle a slice. One of the biggest factors that causes this problem is a weak grip. Make your grip stronger, so your hands are turned away from the target and your palms are parallel with each other. Warning: Don't go too far on this spectrum, as holding the club too tightly will prevent you from releasing through the shot.

3. Keep Your Head Down...

'One of the worst clichés I hear is that you've got to keep your head down during the back swing,' said instructor Haney, one of the best coaches in the game. The same idea applies through impact. Keeping your head down can limit turning. Odds are, this will make you hit it fat. Keep your eyes down, not your head!

4. Take the Putter Straight Back...

Taking the flat stick straight back and straight through can be a viable putting stroke. But it's far from the only one. In fact, many teachers are preaching the benefits of an arc path. 'With an old-school, hunched setup and a wristy pop stroke, straight-back straight-through would work,' says instructor Frank Thomas. 'On today's faster greens, it requires too much coordination and practice. It's much easier to be consistent with an arc.'

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Please note the copy deadline for June 2020:

Monday 25 May

(NB – this assumes no easing of lockdown restrictions and no printed LINK)

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*Happy
Birthday!*



May Birthdays

12th Natalie Georgia Streets
 14th Theo Stapleton
 31st Luke Barker
 31st Lucie Cottam

Stourton Hill 17
 Cherington 16
 Stourton 17
 Cherington 17

SW7 BENEFICE CHURCH NEWS

Dear Friends,

For God so loved the world...

Those are the opening words of perhaps the most famous verse in the whole bible, John 3:16. But during times like we're facing at the moment, they immediately bring a whole load of questions to mind: Does he? Does he really love the world? If he does, then why on earth has he allowed the current crisis, with all its human tragedy, to happen? Surely if he really loved us, he would have stopped Coronavirus before it spread? The questions might be more personal. Surely if God loved me, he wouldn't have let me or my loved one get sick or even die? Suffering, both global and personal, is one of the biggest challenges to the Christian belief that God loves the world.

Now there are persuasive and rational answers to parts of this complex questions which philosophers call 'the problem of evil.' But none of those answers can tell us why a God who loves his world, allows suffering and evil in any specific situation. I can't tell you why God has allowed the Coronavirus to spread so widely and rapidly. And yet like other Christians, I am still absolutely convinced that God loves his world. How can that be?

In any normal year, the day I wrote this article would have been very different. Usually on Good Friday, I would be in church leading a service to remember the death of Jesus on the cross in the first century AD. Of course, due to the lockdown restrictions, that's no longer possible. But it is the events of Good Friday which answer the questions we're posing. How do we know God loves his world? He proved it on Good Friday all those years ago.

Here is what the rest of that verse from John 3 says: *For God so loved the world... that he gave his only son that whoever believes in him shall not die but have eternal life.*

On Good Friday, God gave his only son up to death for us so that those who put their trust in him, can enjoy life forever with him, a life that will one day be free from all suffering and evil when Jesus returns.

I have two children and my love for them is one of the strongest things I've ever felt. And yet God was willing to give up his only son for us. That is how much he loves us. The death of Jesus is why I can say with confidence 'God loves his world' even in the midst of the current crisis.

If you're interested in thinking through these things in more detail or just want to join in the life of the church at this uncertain time, do check out the South Warwickshire 7 Benefice YouTube channel at the address below, or type in 'SW7 benefice churches' in the You Tube search bar.

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCDh8bzt9ZSVbPWSulGsLg9w>

Ben Dyson (Pioneer Minister)

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(Or click below...)

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Farming May 2020 - The First Month of Covid-19

This month, I have attached a video taken with our camera trap, which I hope you will enjoy. 'The Happy Squirrel' is a delighted squirrel who would appear to have just found his winter nut hoard and is dancing with delight.



Go to <https://editor794.wixsite.com/sw7link/video-page> to see the video. You'll just jump for joy!

We have now managed to get all the spring barley drilled. I had forgotten how fast this will grow, it really is one of the wonders of nature. When I had younger ears, and in the right atmospheric conditions one could sometimes actually hear it growing! Unlike many businesses, farming is able to carry on pretty well as usual in the current circumstances, most farming is done with social distancing as the norm and you would be amazed how far people will stand from you, especially if you have just been muckspreading or been particularly hands on with the cattle.

As much of what we produce is the first step in the food chain, the business is able to go on as normal. However, there are problems with some dairy products. Not the availability of the milk, but having the correct packing lines so that it can be available in the correct pack sizes for the supermarkets, as opposed to the cafe and restaurant outlets that it would previously have gone to.

My contact in the baking industry tells me it is the same with flour. There is plenty of flour in the system but not enough of the packing lines that can put it into 1kg bags or even enough paper bags. As with everywhere else, there are some winners and some losers in agriculture. Many farms now rely on various diversifications to make a living and a lot of these, such as holiday lets or anything directly facing the public, have had to be halted.

I hope you enjoy the attached video, and everyone is able to stay safe.

Lynn Mathias farms at Manor Farm in Great Wolford

GARDENING NOTES

Editors:

Margaret Welsh, Long Compton Garden Club

Miranda Arnold, Whichford Amateur Gardener

In a normal year, May would be the perfect month to have friends round for a cup of tea or a drink in the garden. It's when spring is properly sprung, and the garden is full of promise. You'd sit in the spring sunshine, and chat about... well, whatever you'd normally chat about. The jasmine is out and fills the air with scent. Peonies are coming out, as are roses. The vegetable and fruit beds are tempting you with thoughts of good meals to come.

But this isn't a normal year. You can't have your friends round. I suppose you could Zoom with them, or Skype, and show them your garden that way, but it's not very satisfactory. However, just because you can't share your garden in real life with your friends, it doesn't mean you can let your gardening standards slide.

Weeds and pests will be coming to the fore in May. Keep on top of weeds by picking them out whenever you're passing, and hoeing in between rows of vegetable seedlings. Look out for the arrival of sawfly caterpillars, particularly on your gooseberries, and pick them off individually. Our gooseberries were practically killed by sawfly last year, and we had next to no fruit.

Water regularly if there's no rain. Even if there is rain, water your containers, and you might find that free-draining raised beds need more water than the clay borders. While watering, give plants a liquid feed - it's good to give bulbs a feed before you lift them, so you can be sure of good flowering next year. And then lift them once the leaves have yellowed and store them somewhere cool and dry, till you replant them in the autumn.

Dahlias can be planted out now in the borders. Add some compost and general fertiliser (e.g Growmore) to the hole before you plant. Make sure you put your plant supports in the beds before plant growth becomes too vigorous, and you can't fit them in.

In the vegetable garden, you can continue to sow lettuce, spring onions, peas, carrots, and beetroot, so that you have a regular supply, rather than a one-off glut. Thin out seedlings you sowed last month to ensure the remaining seedlings have enough space to grow properly. Sow runner and French beans now, and outdoor cucumbers and courgettes.

Feed your tomatoes when the first truss of fruit sets, and keep pinching out the side shoots of cordon varieties. (A side note: I absolutely love the smell of tomato leaves as you pinch them out.) Tie your cucumbers in and make sure they have plenty of water and a good feed from time to time.

One thing I've noticed about gardening this year is that people are even more willing to share seeds and seedlings than normal. I got rid of some spare chitted potatoes to a fellow local Twitter user (social media does have some beneficial uses!), and I've been posting seeds to friends and family, because many of the well-known online suppliers had sold out. If you'd been planning to add more plants to your garden, but feel you

can't because garden centres are closed, there are many independent nurseries that are desperate for orders, and have begun to take online orders for delivery. Worth Googling.

May is such a lovely month to be out in the garden; I feel deeply deeply sad that we can't share our pleasure in our gardens in person. But we will again.

Miranda Arnold



John Napier Forestry and Timber

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NATURE NOTES

Editor: Tony Partridge
Tel: 684698

A glimmer of sunlight and a sight of a little blue sky and I feel that it is high time I put my hand to the plough, so to speak, and go into the garden to the weeds, which have thrived over the last few winter months. Firstly then to the flowerpots, in which have been thriving an abundance of chickweed. I lay claim to be the champion chickweed grower in the village if not the county! Yet as I pull out handfuls of this plant, I thought in a way that it was a shame because from multitudes of tiny green leaves peep out tiny white flowers. What you actually see are the sepals, smaller petals being tucked beneath them. But how does this plant keep so healthy in dry conditions? The answer lies in the tiny hairs running along the flower stalks down which dew and rain will run. The hairs arrest the moisture's progress near to a leaf so that when needed, the leaf absorbs the moisture.

Richard Maybey gives us a recipe for us to eat it. Wash the plant well, put it with a dab of butter and chopped onion into a saucepan and simmer for ten minutes. Add a dash of lemon and your meal is ready. This is common chickweed, but there are quite a few other chickweeds including mouse-eared chickweed, so called because our ancestors thought that the leaves resembled a mouse's ear, and water chickweed found near streams and riversides. Chickweed is closely related to the garden plant snow-in-summer and any gardener will tell you how well it looks after itself. I have some which has installed itself inside my stone wall! But whilst I am happy to pull out the chickweed, I am reluctant – perhaps unwisely – to dispense with all the lesser celandine which grows not only in the pots, but out of crags in the paving and walls. But its dark green leaves and bright yellow flowers are a cheering sight after the darkness of the winter days. It was Wordsworth's favourite plant but unfortunately, the plant depicted on his gravestone is the greater celandine, a totally unrelated plant. Lesser celandine was once known as pilewort by reason of the fact that under the 'Doctrine of Signatures', its knobbly tubers resembled piles.

So as I labour manfully amongst the pots and flowerbeds, a robin springs from nowhere, perches in a nearby tree and commences its cheerful, high-pitched song. Then it moves to another tree and another. Its song, though it cheers one up, is not for my benefit but for any marauders who may be about! 'This is my territory and don't you forget it' is the message. We do get a few robins flying in from Europe, but this one has been with us all the winter and his mate joins him in December or January. The robin belongs to a group of birds called chats which include others such as the nightingale, the wheatear and stonechat. I am sure that there must be a reader or two who have had a robin wait patiently whilst they fork the garden soil only to have it pounce on any exposed worms or insects. Robins originally occupied woodland sites and it is thought that this derives from their following wild boar rooting up the woodland floor exposing a variety of food for the awaiting birds. Soon my robin and his mate will be hopefully producing a brood of young. The juvenile robin bears no resemblance to its parents being quite fluffy with a chest of pale buff spots. It will not gain its full red breast until the next year (how then does it know it is a robin you may ask? - I fear this is a question I

cannot answer). Legend has it that the red of the robin's breast was caused by the thorn it plucked from Christ's crown of thorns.

Still with my weeds, I delve down looking for a suitable part of a stalk to extract the plant and come across a ladybird. I touch my forehead in a salute to this creature for it can be an avaricious devourer of the aphids which plague weed gardeners. There are very many varieties of ladybirds from two spotted, to twenty-four spotted. Their bodies will vary in colour from black to white to yellow. Not only can they be found on plants, but in meadowland on grasses whilst some species favour reed beds at the water's edge, and on moorland. Their metamorphosis is as the butterfly from egg to caterpillar to pupa and adult. There has recently been an invasive species come to our shores that is the harlequin ladybird which is bigger and more aggressive than our own ladybirds causing a danger to the members of our native species. It remains to be seen if our own ladybird can withstand the invasion of a foreign intruder.

I have never seen an otter in this country, and I doubt if I ever will. But I am reliably informed that they are in the Avon at Stratford and in the river at Leamington. The numbers declined dramatically in the last century but are gradually coming back. They belong to the weasel family and sexes are known as a dog and a bitch. Their home is a holt – a tunnel in the riverbank. All in all, I feel otters are quiet creatures interfering with nothing, peacefully going about their business, swimming up and down rivers, living off the fish (well I have recently heard they've developed a taste for mink, probably the most vicious creature ever created, but released into the wild unwisely, in my view). So it's difficult to believe that well within our lifetime, they were hunted. Their opponents of course, were fishermen who believed that otters were depleting the rivers of fish. The practice died out of its own accord but there is a breed of dog called the otter hound. I have never seen one, so I Googled them and found a shaggy friendly looking animal. I fear that now, they no longer miss hunting and they are much happier lying on a soft rug in front of a fireside, rather than chasing up and down a wet grassy river looking for otters - which have probably got the message and made off somewhere else!

Tony Partridge



An Otterhound and an Otter face to face.

Highlight on Hedgehogs – April turns into May

I am thankful to Cherington Garden Group for having arranged for Kyra and Sophie from Hedgehog Friendly Town to give their inspiring talk back at the start of March – an interesting and enjoyable afternoon, and as it turned out, one of the last public events that I was able to attend before 'lockdown'.

In these strange old times of social distancing and working from home, I found I've been keeping an even closer eye on Mother Nature, and have been keenly awaiting the arrival of Matilda and Co. Disappointingly, strangely, sadly I have not seen or heard any hogs in the garden, although I did spot one small occurrence of hedgehog poo on the lawn.

This time last year I was enjoying regular sightings of one, or sometimes two hogs as they visited the garden in the evening. This month has been a very different story – from the end of March, and throughout April the hogs should have been increasingly active looking for potential mates, prime nesting spots and tasty garden morsels. They should have been piling on the weight, getting themselves tip-top ready for May, when the mating season begins in earnest. I will keep waiting, keep hoping and keep popping out to check the garden as evening turns to night-time. Substantial changes to local habitats may, or may not, have had an impact on the behavioural patterns of nature and wildlife – I have scarcely heard the thrush at dawn or dusk, or the owl at night, these last couple of months. I will, however, keep looking out for the hogs, and I will keep putting out water and meaty cat biscuits for them just in case they trundle into the garden and hopefully decide to stay awhile.

And so it feels like I have come full circle as Hedgehog Awareness Week (3 – 9 May) fast approaches. A year ago, I set out to raise awareness of hedgehogs in our local neighbourhood and gardens, and to discover the ways we can all help to protect them in just a few easy and fun ways. This will be my last article, but there are key things you can do as a family to help look after hedgehogs:

- Have fun building a hedgehog highway by making a hole 13cm x 13cm in your garden fence to help them pass safely through our gardens,
- Build a hedgehog house with the family for the hogs to shelter in,
- Take care when strimming and mowing the lawn, try and leave areas of long grass for nature in your garden,
- Be nature-friendly and try not to use slug pellets – these poison the slugs, and the birds or hogs that in turn eat the slugs,
- If you have a pond with steep sides in your garden, build a little ramp to act like a ladder to help them climb out of the water – otherwise they will drown,
- Clear up litter – elastic bands, empty cans, netting ... a hog can get entangled a die painful death if caught,
- Keep an eye out and wait for the hedgehogs to visit, now your garden is so hedgehog friendly. You can record your sightings from your garden, and when you are out and about, on the BIG Hedgehog Map.

Above all, if you are lucky enough to have hedgehogs visit you and you enjoy seeing them, please keep spreading the word. They are in sharp decline as a species, and anything we can do to help, no matter how small it seems, will genuinely make a difference. Remember, if you see a sick or injured hedgehog you can ring the British

Hedgehog Preservation Society on 01584 890 801. They will give you advice, or the number of a local carer.

Louise Turner

[Ed – our thanks to Louise Turner for taking us through the year with her Highlights on Hedgehogs. At short notice, I managed to extract a poem from one of our contributors to mark the end of Louise's articles and Hedgehog Awareness Week in May.]



A Poem for Hedgehog Week

Be aware of me as I softly pad,
From deep deep slumberous sleeps.
Take care of me - I'll make you glad,
As spring from winter creeps.

Open my highway, open my house,
Drown me not in pond.
For I am no rodent, no rat or mouse,
Of catfood*, I am fond.

Light no fires around my lair,
Burn not my cosy bed.
Strim away with extra care,
For hoglets I have bred.

Hedgehog week is May three to nine,
But remember me all year.
For upon your garden slugs I dine,
And my cuteness brings good cheer.

*(*Not fish based please!)*

Poem by Kit Humphrey



Acorns Primary School and Brailes C of E Primary School News

Acorns Primary

Leading a 'closed' school and remote teaching and learning are new to us all; I don't remember any professional development courses on how to lead during a pandemic, but I am very pleased to say that Acorns (and The Stour Federation Partnership) are proving to yet again be successful! We are currently on Easter holidays, but the offer to care for the children of keyworkers across the federation remains open at Shipston Primary. During the first official week of school closure, staff from Acorns continued to work on site to support key worker families and we shall be there again should the need arise. The advice given by the government was to keep children at home whenever possible and thankfully this has been followed very carefully by our families; children are safer at home.

The teachers have been enjoying communicating with pupils from our own homes, using our online platform, Seesaw. We use Seesaw under normal circumstances to share work and achievements with parents and it has now proved itself to be a vital tool in our remote teaching offer. Teachers have been so pleased to see the fabulous work children have been submitting and would like to thank families for their supporting role – becoming a parent teacher is again something I'm sure most parents had never envisaged! As a staff, we particularly like the light-hearted posts from members of the public on social media that say teachers should be paid millions moving forwards!

Well done to all our pupils who have set themselves routines and continued, despite the adverse situation, to try their very best with their home learning. Please see the photos for some examples of the excellent work from the Year 5 & 6 class who have continued to enjoy learning about World War 2. We've even been able to bring singing assemblies into the children's homes via Seesaw as well as story time in some classes. Even though the Easter Service couldn't take place, the song we'd been learning was recorded onto Seesaw for the children to sing along to! It's also been so lovely to see all the extra tasks families have been creating to keep themselves busy: den building, quiz making, cooking, drawing to name but a few.

The school website has an updated list of suggested online lessons which the children can follow, and each day on Seesaw, teachers post activities suggested by South Warwickshire School Games to keep the children active and learning new sports/fitness skills. Look out for updates on Twitter too: @acornshead, @MrsYoungAcorns.

Support is being offered for families who receive free school meals and members of staff are there for families via Seesaw and on the telephone. We are very aware that children will be starting to miss their normal routines and seeing their friends particularly as time goes on, so support from their families is going to be crucial over the coming weeks. We look forward to keeping you busy with tasks and communications during the summer term. Keep reading, keep smiling, be kind to each other and stay safe.

Mrs Young

Unsung Heroes

Early March, when it was clear that Coronavirus was on its way to stay for a long time, huge anxieties arose for us all about how we would cope with jobs, finances, and simply living from day to day with shops becoming rapidly depleted of many of our daily needs. Then came the instruction 'Stay at Home', with complete lockdown for those over 70 or with an underlying health condition.

Willington, like many communities, has its share of those now finding themselves prevented from doing their regular shopping and wondering how to solve the problem. Out of the blue, a comforting spark of hope arrived as a note through the letterbox offering help: 'Hello! If you are self-isolating, I can help!' with a phone contact and offers to pick up shopping, post mail, make a friendly phone call or get urgent supplies.

Kayleigh Seys, along with three others in the village, has set up Willington's Self-Isolating Support Group, with a dedicated phone number (07729 676728) just for that. The group keep in contact with each other via *WhatsApp* and phone calls to share the load. This is being a life saver for many of us, along with tremendous support from other neighbours too who are still eligible to make necessary journeys. They are all yet more unsung heroes and those of us prevented from going out and about, are immensely grateful and touched by their help. An added bonus is getting to know more people in our neighbourhood (2 metres apart of course!) than our normal busy time-conscious lives allow. We are very lucky to be where we are but hold in our thoughts all those in less fortunate circumstances, for whom contact with friendly support is not easily found.

Phyllida Gardner, Willington

Beverley Webb

The residents of Barcheston and Willington, together with other local areas, have been extremely fortunate that a local caterer, Bev Webb has stepped in to supply cooked meals delivered to the door. She has launched a twice weekly delivery to the door as required. There is a good selection on the main dishes and a pudding option. At least one senior resident has been catered for with meals more than twice a week.

The village really appreciates this wonderful service and would like to thank Beverley very much for her hard work. Bev can be contacted at 661858 or emailed at bev-webb@talktalk.net

A Polish Easter

Easter in Poland plays a huge role in the lives of its citizens, even bigger than the Christmas season. The reason behind that is, the life of Jesus would not make a difference without his Resurrection, and Poland, compared to its western neighbours, is a conservative country. That is why Polish people are preparing for this time with such splendour, variety of meals and decorations.

However, before that, Poles have to endure the Great Lent, the 40-day period during which clubs are closed and huge parties are postponed for the springtime. As many of you may know, Lent ends on Easter Sunday, and in the Polish case, with Easter breakfast.

Every year the table is decorated with varieties of meals: smoked sausage (wędzona kielbasa), babka cake (a bakery bread created by Jewish communities), pâté (pasztet domowy) and West Slavic fermented cereal soup (barszcz biały). Children are delighted by sweets of many kinds: chocolate hares and lambs. But the main role in the breakfast is played by an egg. It is served in uncountable forms: from simply boiled egg to soup with kielbasa and fried egg. For Christians, an egg is a symbol of a new beginning, a fresh start. Before serving it has to be sacrated in the local church.

Ironically, Easter Sunday is followed by Wet Monday, which has its origin in pagan tradition. People compete in the way they can pour water on each other. From a glass of water to a whole bucket; you can get a free shower and a water-damaged phone.

However, Polish Easter was not always a happy time. During the Second World War, also my teenage life, Poland was under German occupation, and after that, behind an Iron Curtain. Lack of basic resources, limited food, and destroyed infrastructure made Easter a huge challenge. Both occupiers - Nazis and Communists, were actively fighting to destroy the Polish heritage. Families were sitting at the modest table, trying to avoid an arrest.

That is how I met my family after years of separation. I was taken as a prisoner at the Warsaw Uprising, and moved to a camp in Germany. Months after, I was liberated by the allied armies and thanks to the scholarship project, as a member of Polish Army, I started studying at St. Andrews University. Years passed and in 1956, when the communist regime loosened, I could finally meet my family in Poland, sitting next to the humble Christmas meal.

In 2020, Poles still do not give up on their traditions. During lockdown, they are organising Easter online and local priests are blessing meals and families through webcams.

Frankly, as a 94-year-old vegetarian and agnostic, I think about religious celebrations and kielbasa with mixed feelings. However, the Poles are an example of a community which is dedicated to keep its traditions, no matter what the circumstances.

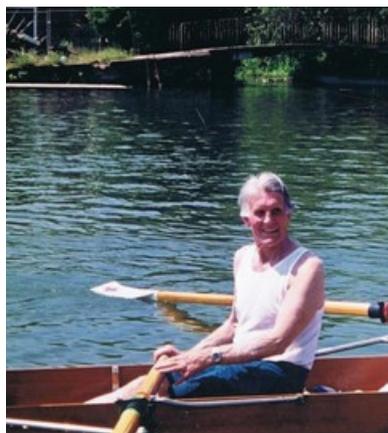
That is what I wish you all, stay strong during these hard times.

Zbigniew Pelczyński, Dover House

Barney Henderson

Very sadly, Barney Henderson, known by his family as Jimmy, died peacefully in Warwick hospital in the early hours of 28 March at the age of 90, after many months of illness.

He was born in Sumatra in 1929, where his father oversaw a rubber plantation. After Sandhurst, he was commissioned into The King's Own Scottish Borderers in 1948. His first period of active service was during the Korean War in 1952 when his Battalion formed part of the Commonwealth Brigade serving under UN command; their mission being to prevent the Chinese from overrunning what is now South Korea. During his last engagement in Korea, he was wounded twice while commanding two forward platoons. He refused to leave his position until the attacking Chinese had been successfully driven off.



After further active service in Malaya, Aden and South Arabia, he also served in Borneo as a Company Commander during that difficult period of confrontation with Indonesia. He continued to serve away from home for a large part of his career and two of his staff jobs were with The Gurkha Brigades in the Far East. He loved serving with The Gurkhas and was captivated by Nepal where he carried out several treks visiting relatives of his soldiers. As a result of his service with them, he became a great supporter of their welfare and raised money for their annual Gurkha appeal.

Rugby was his forte and he played, not only for his regiment and once for the army, but also for Kelso in the Borders. He was extremely popular with his soldiers and much respected by his junior officers; he left the army as a Lieutenant-Colonel after a happy and successful career.

Barney then became Domestic Bursar of Merton College, Oxford. This is why he came to live in Barton. He loved Merton and truly entered into the spirit of University life; he was so popular at the College that he was asked to become a Fellow, which is an honour by any standards.

Whilst he lived here in Barton, he took an extremely active part in all aspects of village life, being the chairman of the Parish Council for many years. He was much respected by all those with whom he came into contact, both within the village and in the surrounding area. He was always scrupulously fair in his dealings and many people sought his advice. A man of impeccable high standards, he will be very very sadly missed by us all.

Barney's first wife Jennifer, who died in 1984, is buried in Barton churchyard. He married Caroline in 1986. She survives him, as do his two children by his first marriage, Jamie and Miranda.

Johnny Rickett

[Ed – for a short period Barney was Village Editor for The LINK. He was always extremely complimentary about the magazine and its content. I will always remember opening his copy that he used to send to me – handwritten and delivered by the postman. It was a privilege to have known Barney.]

Coronavirus - Barton Support

If anyone is isolating due to Coronavirus, there is a large group in the village willing to shop for those who are presently unable to leave their homes. Suzie Coker is coordinating, so please contact her with any requests - or indeed if you also feel you are able to help Suzanne@theprdept.co.uk - 01608 674601.

Pleating time (A short story by Karyn Sassella)

I

She has a bad back. No wonder. She's been carrying a house there for more than five years. A house and a garden, two dogs, an irreplaceable love, a beautiful father who died too young, old friends and a restaurant that held all the hopes of her wary heart. Have you ever seen a house being transported? They're usually empty. She's carrying the lot. It's heavy. You can tell.

She's tried before, over the years, to off-load it. She opens and closes. It's a lot to hold. It's a lot to let go. But most of us carry our old houses with us. Some are heavier than others. Some are sitting there and we don't even know. Everyone else can see them, but you can feel them. They stick to you.

Now, after five years of longing and holding, she's decided to go back. To try to let it go, by moving forward to the paradise place where the house once was. The foundations are still there. She's ready to remove.

But it's a long way and it's a pretty heavy load. Her back's so bad she can't even pick up a box. How's she going to carry all that across states, across worlds?

She's tall, carries herself awkwardly. No wonder. That house has left its mark. She takes a few deep breaths, the kind of breaths that sting and make you all dizzy. She almost stopped right there, like she's done so many other times before. Accepted that it can't be moved. Live with the anesthetic melancholy for what was, shutting tight against what is, what could be.

She breathed again and stepped forward quickly. She lifted the house with one of her soft hands, held it on her shoulder for a moment to get her balance and quickly flipped it into position into the small of her back. Like tossing a pancake, hoping none of it sticks.

She starts walking, slowly. Walking back to the Paradise Place she's been pushing back. Back to the place of her pleated memories. Back to the place of her blistered dreams. Back to the place that holds her memories like oil in water; suspended there like sad butterflies, pinned into a frame. Her memories terrace like the garden, through the misty valley, past the distant hills, to The Dry Riverbed of Hopes. She walks slowly, deliberately, until she reaches them. There it is. There it all is. Unpleated.

II

She blinks. Cold tears caught in the deep crevices of the years fall. She unfolds her carefully ironed handkerchief and catches them all. She pleats time back into the corner of her handkerchief and knots it tightly. It's a large handkerchief but it floods quickly. It's

a beautiful pale blue with a fancy G embroidered on the fine cotton. It's the handkerchief of her beautiful father. The last unfolding was at his funeral.

There was a heavy downpour.

Finally, she reaches the old iron gate. It opens automatically like the doors of the supermarket are supposed to, but never do. It always makes her feel somehow foolish. Now, all the gates and doors and windows open. Even the soil opens with her familiar footprints. Welcome back, they say. Come in.

There it is. The place. Paradise is a place. The garden is overgrown, the lavender wooden, the old roses messy, eleven types of rosemary all lost without their smell. The old oak smiles. They remember her; they remember the time when the flowers picked themselves.

She moves closer, after the shock. Keep breathing, she tells herself, keep breathing. As she moves closer, she can smell the familiar smell of bread baking. Something shifts on her back.

There is a new house where the old one was. She looks in the tiny windows, there's nothing there. Still the smell of bread. They always say that baking bread, brewing coffee and placing flowers off-loads houses quickly.

She bends her knees gently and lowers the old house from her back. Slowly, carefully. All that honeyed stone. The house falls to the ground, weightless as a leaf and kisses the ground it's missed. It's a relief.

III

She waits for it to settle and walks in. She can still smell the bread. Everything is still in place in the old house, despite how far she's come. Is this a dream, she thinks, is this a dream?

She reaches the kitchen and opens the oven door. There's nothing there but the smell overcomes her and the memories throw her across the room onto the floor. Music drifts in from another room. Music always moves her.

She remembers laughing with her beautiful father, cooking with her lover, long nights drinking and talking with old friends, the marvellous mist in the morning, the ordinary business of running the restaurant, the dogs jumping through the open windows, the tiredness, even the arguments.

She remembers washing dishes, handkerchiefs and baking bread.

She remembers feeling light headed, light hearted.

She remembers the garden in flower and opening.

She takes out her camera. She wants the distance a camera gives. The camera records in order to forget. She bends to take a single photo of the oven door. She springs upright, and leaves.

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Thomas Franks Catering

Burmington resident, Frank Bothwell, has temporarily turned the £60 million Thomas Franks catering business - which in normal times caters for businesses and their employees, independent schools, private members clubs and special events - to 'community feeding' and charitable purposes.

Frank and his wife Emma have pledged to make none of their employees redundant as a result of the Covid-19 crisis. 1,700 staff would normally be providing around 20 million meals a year in the UK, Ireland, Malta and Portugal.

'Taking such a decision was easy. We will need our talented family back when we resume normal trading' says Frank. 'Until then, the company is surviving on its reserves, with strategic borrowing for the first time in its 15-year history.'

Instead, the talents and energies of a large proportion of the TF staff have been refocused on providing free food for disadvantaged children who don't get school meals now, vulnerable older people who might otherwise not be getting enough good food and NHS staff.

A good example of this is the initiative at Rendcomb College, near Cirencester. The college's kitchen provides a daily meal, to order, to the local village. Fresh bread is baked and distributed to those who need it. Hubs like Rendcomb are growing in number, making a difference to people in isolation.

What Frank's leadership team calls their 'underground movement' is focused on community feeding for as long as the coronavirus makes normal life impossible. However, there are plans to keep this going, particularly through their own charity (formed last year); the Thomas Franks Foundation chaired by Emma Bothwell.

Frank and Emma are hugely grateful to a number of their business clients and their bankers, who have donated large sums of money to help fund this project across the UK and the European countries in which TF operates.

Thomas Franks are delivering through partnerships with:

Kitchen Social via the Majors fund, to feed some 400,000 children and young adults in food poverty in London.

SOFEA, using food surplus gained from relationships with the airlines. We have taken delivery of over 20 tonnes of food which will be used in the next 2-3 weeks.

The Grace Foundation, which is distributing thousands of meals a week prepared and chilled for those in food poverty, isolation and financial hardship.

Also, they are raising a separate £100,000 to feed 50,000 NHS front line workers with a free meal delivered each day. They are delivering this food to the ICU departments at:

- Royal Berkshire Hospital
- Thatcham Hospital
- Birmingham Hospital (chilled meals to take home)
- Dundee Care
- Gloucestershire NHS via the Grace Foundation
- Malta's only Hospital
- Beaumont and St Vincent's in Dublin (food vouchers)
- Lisbon (food hampers)

Further projects will commence soon in Leeds, Barnsley and for paramedics in Yorkshire and Charing Cross Hospital in London. And just announced, the Foundation is to provide 500 front line NHS people at the Excel Nightingale Hospital with meals from a South London hub with volunteer chefs. This is thanks to another client - gaming company PPB. Frank says this will fund food for about 8 days.

Supporting our own area, the Foundation is providing fresh food hampers for every staff member at Ellen Badger Hospital, Shipston to save them a trip to the shop after an extremely busy day at work. Freshly prepared meals, (chilled and ready to reheat) are going to staff in the intensive care unit at Horton Hospital and talks are in progress with Katherine House Hospice, Adderbury to explore how the hospice can be supported.



One of the food production lines in operation

Overall, Frank is concerned that the funds raised so far will last for only for 14 - 18 more days maximum. He says:

'If you are able and have the time to safely help, the foundation is happy for volunteers to work out of any of the kitchen hubs we've set up. The local one is at Sibford School. But the best help can be just telling us where support is needed.'



Frank Bothwell points out that this is a 'not for profit' exercise; it's for the community - feeding children, vulnerable people and NHS staff. It's costing the firm over £100,000 of its own reserves, to achieve this project. But, the benefits to staff morale and our family owned food supply chain far outweigh that cost.

If you can help, or would like to know more, you can read more on our main web site at <https://thomasfranks.co.uk/> and if you know of anyone, or any group of people who might need help, email talktous@thomasfranks.co.uk

Milk Bottle Moneybox Collection

The Milk Bottle Money Box loose change collection for 2019 raised £46.60. Many thanks to everyone who collected their change throughout the year. It is very much appreciated.

The money goes to help maintain the church and churchyard. Thank you.

Julia Anne Hands



Lucky Chickens!

We Hate Litter!

Oli and Tasha Payne, and their children Matilda (6) and Mack (3) ventured out recently for a walk near Burmington. They were shocked at the amount of litter – beer cans, bottles, sandwich wrappers and assorted rubbish that they found strewn along the lanes and decided to do something about it. Oli ordered litter pickers online and armed with these, they set off as a family to pick up as much as they could on their walk. In a short space of time they collected a large plastic bin bag full.

Oli says they plan to keep at this; they are on a mission this summer to help keep our lanes clear of rubbish. Well done and thanks to Oli, Tash and family. What an example to us all!



VE Day 8th May 1945 – 75 Years On

Last June, the Government changed the date of the early May bank holiday from Monday 4 May to Friday 8 May in order to mark the 75th anniversary of VE Day, (Victory in Europe Day). It was to be the first of three days of national commemorative events.

Tuesday 8 May 1945 was the day when all the fighting against Nazi Germany came to an end. Although we can now expect all of these planned events in May to be cancelled, ideas have already been floated to move the commemorations to 15 -16 August this year to coincide with VJ Day (Victory over Japan Day) which commemorates the surrender of Japan in 1945.

Today we are fighting a different war against coronavirus, and although few of SW7's villagers were alive at the time, we might spare a moment to reflect on the historical importance of the two occasions, VE Day and VJ Day. It has been calculated that WWII war-related deaths exceeded 60 million, over three-quarters of whom were civilians and of whom 449,000 were Britons.

For some SW7 villagers, VE Day held the bitterness of family members killed in the war. For others, it held the promise of the return of loved ones, predominantly men, fathers, brothers and other relatives who had been absent from their homes for up to four years.

One villager recalled her teenage joy at the end of food and sweets rationing, not realising at the time, that it would in fact persist for another 8 years - until 1953. Another reflected on the joy at the end of the black-out with stout curtains thrown aside and a few feeble streetlights being switched back on, and of road signposts being replaced. Another villager remembered celebrating VE Day with a school picnic noted for unlimited pork dripping and spam sandwiches. Yet another remembered being rather grumpy on the day at learning that as a child ARP (Air Raid Precautions) runner, he did not qualify for a Victory medal. Another was equally grumpy at, having cycled to Windsor with a group of school friends expecting to see the King (King George VI), he learnt he was actually appearing that day on the balcony of Buckingham Palace with Winston Churchill above celebrating crowds packing the whole of central London. Another

villager, then a child in distant New Zealand, recalled her distress at the time at suffering a prolonged bout of pre-antibiotic mumps which coloured her opportunity of celebrating the prospect of the return of two beloved uncles, both fighting with ANZAC forces in Europe. It was a surprise to learn from her, that food rationing was also applied in New Zealand throughout the war.

From another SW7 villager one learnt of another villager's misgivings on being invited to a VE Day evening celebration arranged by a family which had narrowly avoided internment as members of Oswald Moseley's Blackshirt Nazi sympathisers.

But a stark reminder that, even as we celebrated VE Day, it was a victory then only half-won came from another SW7 villager. His father ran a local manufacturing company which was engaged in producing a vital component for an advanced aircraft gun-sight. Such was the shortage of nimble-fingered craftsmen at the time, that he was withdrawn from primary school before the age of 14 years to work in the factory. His memory of VE Day was of a very brief respite from work before returning the next day to help meet the demands for the gun-sight in the continuing war with Japan.

Recollections captured by Dennis Cummings



We were cautioned for visiting our second home.

An advertisement for Brian Simpson Framing. It features a framed picture of a building with a palm tree in the foreground. The text is as follows:

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'Finding A Way' in Cherington and Stourton

Coronavirus continues to spread its terrible shadow across the nation and the world, and we are fortunate that our local area is blessed with relative safety and peaceful surroundings. As the folk of Cherington and Stourton reflect on the hardship that so many are facing, there has been a resourceful, swift response of community spirit and care for others.

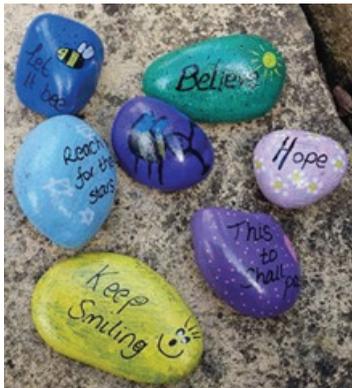
As part of the national initiative www.food4heroes.co.uk Hester, Connie and their amazing team have taken over The Hall kitchen to prepare 80 meals at a time delivered to doctors and nurses at the John Radcliffe and Horton Hospitals. So invaluable and appreciated are their efforts, that this is soon to be doubled to 150 meals and they will move on to a larger kitchen at Tudor Hall school. Well done ladies!

Sue Marshall in Stourton is also co-ordinating cake baking for hospital workers in similar fashion and Annie Parmenter and others are making 'scrubs' bags for staff to take their uniforms home for laundering.

Within days of the lockdown, Zoe had initiated a village support group to help the large number of self-isolators with shopping, collecting medication, posting letters etc. Trudie immediately supplied the group with enough flowers to deliver to everyone on Mothers' Day and the distillery has provided every household with a bottle of 'gin scented' hand sanitiser!

Keeping children entertained as they exercise on a walk, the group encouraged households to display toys and pictures in windows in the creation of a 'Bear Hunt' and Easter Egg Trail.

Lois and Leah have painted and hidden numerous decorated pebbles with messages of hope and goodwill.



Photographs courtesy of Lois Dudfield

Loyal and enthusiastic activity providers at The Hall have been hit hard both financially and emotionally by the suspension of activities, but have again rapidly risen to the challenge, finding ways to keep us all active both mentally and physically. Juliet has short work outs on video www.julietrobbins.com. Rachel is offering online Zumba, shipstonzumba@gmail.com or Facebook Shipston Zumba. Maddy Lesser has Yoga classes three times per week on Zoom, email bigmad@btinternet.com. Louise has beginner's watercolour art classes at various days and times, see www.willowtreart.co.uk

Village residents can of course be heard applauding the carers on Thursday evenings and the recent Sunday Clearsounds 'Light Shows', have sent rays of light visible to us all over Shipston.

The Cherington Arms are also doing such an excellent job with their great 'Take Away Menu' for all the local area – telephone 01608 686183.

Devastating as this crisis is, it also shows the best in people and the value of mutual care and support. Huge thanks to everyone, you are so enormously appreciated by us all.

Best Wishes - Annie Lewis

[Village Editor: Our thanks should go also to the many other members of our community who are carrying out sundry tasks to ensure that anyone in need is cared for, including those who answered the call for NHS volunteers.]

Village Lottery

Winners in the draw for the April Lottery were:

1st	Liz Maycock	£80
2nd	James Ind	£45
3rd	Jeremy Clark	£30

Congratulations to our winners and thank you for your continued support. For more information on joining please contact Steve Allkins.

Steve Allkins

Neighbourhood Watch

I am your local co-ordinator. I would welcome reports of any suspicious activity in our area so that I can pass details onto the local Police. Please let me know about anything that looks out of the ordinary as it may just be the piece of the jigsaw that is needed to solve a problem. Everything is completely confidential.

Contact Christine Dudfield 07866 127409/ 686288
or slimmingworldchris@yahoo.co.uk

Christine Dudfield

Cherington, Stourton and Sutton under Brailes Country Fair and Flower Show

March onwards is a very busy time for the flower show organisers, especially when it comes to raising funds from local businesses to help cover schedule printing costs etc. This year, as you can imagine, has been especially difficult, with many local businesses closed due to the Covid-19 outbreak.

Sadly, in the light of the current lockdown and the uncertainty of what will happen in the next few weeks/months, the decision has been taken to cancel this year's show.

It was not an easy decision to make, but it was a necessary one. The companies and attractions that support our show have been very understanding and we are extremely grateful to them. We hope they all weather this storm and look forward to working with them in the future.

If circumstances permit, we will have some sort of community event on Saturday 1 August. We all hope we will have an opportunity to get together and have some fun and, whilst there won't be a full schedule of competitions, we will try to have something for everyone to enter. All ideas welcome.

The Flower Show Committee

Brailes Picturehouse

If

Saturday 23 May - *Little Women*

Stay safe!

Deirdre Carney



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Neighbours for Help - (NfH)

Coronavirus Action and Support in Long Compton

What services do we offer?

- Telephone contact if you would like a chat
- Shopping, either at the shop or in Town
- Prescription delivery if they are ordered from the Chipping Norton or Shipston Health Centres.
- Any other help if needed, though unfortunately not transporting passengers.

Who are the volunteers, and how do I contact them?

- 20 or so villagers who have offered their help in numerous ways contacted via your co-ordinator below.

How can I volunteer or offer help and support?

- By ringing or emailing the co-ordinator on the A4 leaflet posted through your door. This will be one of the four people below depending where you are in the village.

Harrow Hill end of the village

Juliet Druce. 07885 688414. Jbdruce@yahoo.co.uk

Broad Street to the church

Paul Field. 07976 700763. Epfield98@gmail.com

Main road from Red Lion to East Street incl.

Janet Treadaway. 01608 684553. Janettreadaway@aol.com

Red Lion and Barncroft to the South end of the village

Brian Simpkins. 01608 684948. Simpkins335@btinternet.com

Long Compton Neighbourhood Watch

Our local co-ordinator is Jordan Boswell, who would very much welcome reports of suspicious behaviour. Do let him know about anything that seems to you to be out of the ordinary. Your information might just be the little piece of the jigsaw that helps solve a problem. All calls and emails are completely confidential – your name will not be made public. Contact Jordan on 07795 008998, or at jordanboswell@hotmail.com



100 Club News

There was no draw this month - as soon as possible, we will start the draws again, complete with suitable witnesses. In the meantime, the prize money is safe in the bank! Keep safe.

Chris Galloway 684234

Long Compton Parish Council

The Parish Council continues to operate. Not entirely 'business as usual' of course; we are holding meetings using Zoom and keeping in touch with each other by phone and email.

Councillors are doing their best to get around the village to keep an eye on things and are in regular contact with the District and County Council on all the 'normal' issues. Our next meeting will be on Monday 4 May and we would welcome participation from parishioners. Elizabeth will be publishing the agenda in advance and will be able to provide anyone interested in joining us with the necessary Zoom passwords and meeting ID. Do please carry on letting us know of your concerns and ideas.

Bill Cook, Chair

Parish Clerk: Elizabeth Gilkes 01608 684336



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Long Compton Stores

The Stores has always been at the centre of village life but never more so than in these difficult times.

Colin, Judith, June and Marianne are all intent on keeping stocks up where possible, including fresh fruit and veg, and have restricted opening times (7.30 am until 2.00 pm Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, Friday and Saturday. Closing at 12.00 on Sunday).

Customers are restricted to TWO in the shop at any one time - always keeping 2m distance from one another, in order to reduce risk and obey Social Distancing Rules.

They regret that a number of their suppliers have found it necessary to increase costs. Card payments are now accepted over the phone to reduce the need for personal excursions.



The village continues to be well served by County Dairy with Robin Smitten doing doorstep deliveries of not just milk but other groceries to villagers and particularly useful for those self-isolating. Pete and Em Ledbury have been particularly busy at North Cotswold Dairy, not only ensuring that the self-service milk dispenser has been kept full, but they are also delivering to local outlets. This is particularly challenging for them as they are also home schooling. Wyatts have added a home delivery service to their services for both food and garden centre items.

Need a Good Venue?

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COMP



The Friends of
Long Compton Church

2020 Photographic Competition

Image: Andreas Klatt ARPS

PHOTO

This year's theme is any interpretation of **GREEN**

Digital images accepted

Deadline:
7th June 2020

All entries will be displayed in the Photographic Exhibition to be launched in the church on Friday 7th August

Rules and entry forms can be found on our website
www.friendsoflongcomptonchurch.com

The Friends of Long Compton Church is a registered charity number 1141040

Friends of Long Compton Church

With churches closed for Easter, a processional cross was placed in Long Compton Lychgate for Good Friday and the gates were then decorated for Easter Sunday for the benefit of passers-by.



2019 was a year of success and innovation. The Friends hosted more events in the church of greater variety than ever. These not only raised much-needed funds for church repair, but typically featured a sociable get-together over a cup of tea, a glass of wine or a meal.

In March, historian and biographer, Nick Miller spoke at the Friends AGM on the theme: *Edith Cavell - WW1 nurse and forgotten British hero*. This drew a large audience and contributed a net profit of £1,270. A jazz concert by star of Ronnie Scott's and BBC radio, Emma Smith in December also raised, partly due to sponsorship, a very useful contribution of £1,671.

The Friends is not just about money. Our charitable objectives include the encouragement of greater use of the church premises. In 2019, also partly thanks to kind and generous sponsorship, the Friends again staged a photo competition and exhibition which, combined with a very popular village quiz, raised £231. The Friends also re-started the tradition of Summer Sunday afternoon teas in the church raising £117 in the year. These events attracted a host of village residents, passers-by and other visitors from far and wide.

Our major innovation in 2019 was a Christmas Tree Festival; large numbers, many of whom also stopped for coffee and a chat, came to judge which of the trees had been

most beautifully decorated by local people and organisations. Thanks to generous sponsorship, the Festival raised £827 in entry fees and donations. By popular demand, a repeat of the Festival is more than likely in 2020 subject to the lifting of restrictions.

Despite an increase in the fee for membership of the Friends, subscription income (£2,903) and membership were up on the previous year (£2,097). Regular donations from members also increased, up from £1,447 to £1,675. Gift Aid is claimed on subscriptions and donations.

Finally, the Friends continued to donate to church maintenance in 2019. In all £6,584 was paid over towards repairs to the lead work on the nave roof, refurbishment of the iron bird-proof gate at the Church entrance, replacement LED lights throughout the Church as well as grass cutting and repairs to the churchyard dry-stone boundary walls. The Friends also financed a reprint of the leaflet on the history and architecture of the Church. The Friends continue to brace themselves for the major cost, in due course, of renewing the chancel roof and repair to the plasterwork of the chancel ceiling.

As ever, a big thank you is due to all who have so generously contributed to the Friends' efforts, both in time and money.

Please note our 2020 Photographic Competition and Exhibition has now been launched at <https://www.friendsoflongcomptonchurch.com/news>

Our information and contact points:

e: friendslcchurch@gmail.com f: [@friendsoflongcomptonchurch](https://www.facebook.com/friendsoflongcomptonchurch)
www.friendsoflongcomptonchurch.com

Sue Klatt, Chairman: @friendsoflongcomptonchurch

Village Organisations

Long Compton and District Garden Club - Contact Anthony Wells 684337 or Lesley Roberts 684545 or lesleyroberts46@gmail.com

Compton and District History Society - Contact Diana Cook 684771

Comptonians - Contact Margaret Welsh 684238

Village Hall - Mo Read on 684130, 07814802814 or lcvillagehall@yahoo.co.uk

Compton Creatives - caroline.nixon@btinternet.com or jhburras@yahoo.co.uk

Long Compton & District Walkers - Jan Treadaway 684553

Long Compton Short Mat Bowls - Club Contact Adrian on 684024

Long Compton Bridge Club - Chris Galloway 684234



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Long Compton Ebenezer Congregational Chapel

As with all places of worship, the Chapel has closed its doors for services in the foreseeable future. In order to support our community and members through this difficult and unique time we have made use of technology; our minister, Rev. Marion Hartwell, has made two videos which have been published on Facebook.

She has also written several *Thoughts for the Day*. These started on 29 March (the 5th Sunday of Lent) and then from Passion Sunday on 5 April all through Holy week ending on Easter Day. They were published on Facebook and put in the display frames beside the chapel doors. We know that they have been appreciated by local residents.



In addition, the windows of the Chapel have been decorated appropriately for the spring and Easter season. We hope to continue with similar communication throughout the 'lockdown' in any way possible.

Dates to note, though lockdown will have postponed or cancelled most of them:

31 May	Bicentennial Anniversary
19 Jul	Memorial Garden Blessing
29 Aug	Village flower and produce show
27 Sept	Harvest Festival
3 Oct	Harvest Supper

longcomptonebenezerchapel@outlook.com
or Sally 07870545431/ Elizabeth 07791 621778

Ebenezer Congregational Chapel,
Butlers Lane, Long Compton, CV36 5JZ

FABRIC ITEMS

DROP OFF POINT

Please leave inside the Porch
the door is on the latch and the porch will be
emptied regularly

COTTON AND POLYCOTTON FABRIC IS REQUIRED
MUST BE WASHABLE. CURTAINS AND BED LINEN
COULD BE SUITABLE.

- TO MAKE UNIFORM LAUNDRY BAGS. So that uniforms can be put into washing machine without contamination.**
- HEADBANDS TO STOP CHAFING EARS FROM FACE MASKS**

ANY CORD OR ELASTIC AND LARGE BUTTONS ALSO REQUIRED.



Your Donation is Appreciated.

Ebenezer Congregational Chapel,

Butlers Lane, Long Compton, CV36 5JZ

FOOD BANK DONATION POINT

Please leave inside the Porch

the door is on the latch and the porch will be
emptied regularly

Collections of donated items for

Shipston Community Food Bank

which also serves those in need in Long Compton

At present they are in need of Tea, coffee,
sugar and UHT milk.

Food Parcel Requests & Information via:

<https://www.facebook.com/ShipstonFoodBank/>

Open for parcel distribution Tuesday and
Saturday 10 - 12

A further donation point is located at the Stores.

Your Donation is Appreciated.

Compton Creatives

Some of us in the village are sewing items for NHS and social care workers. Not the PPE they so desperately need, of course, but other things to make life easier.

For example, headbands to prevent sore ears from facemasks, and drawstring bags to carry home contaminated clothing to wash.

Our items will go to an organisation delightfully named the Warwickshire Scrubbers (because they are also making theatre scrubs) and will then be distributed wherever it is needed, including hospitals, care homes and social care providers. I have already had grateful messages from the nurses in Warwick Hospital A and E.

How you could help:

- If you can sew and have a machine, maybe you would join us. If you don't have the necessary materials, we will see if we can source them from within the village.
- We need the following items: large buttons, approximately $\frac{3}{4}$ to 1-inch diameter. Wide elastic, $\frac{1}{2}$ to 1-inch diameter. Pillowcases (to convert into drawstring bags) fun ones and flowery ones absolutely fine, they don't have to be sombre clinical colours.
- Do you know anyone who might be able to sew for us but does not do stuff online? If so, perhaps they could give me a call and I can give them written instructions.
- I am shielding for three months, so can't deliver and distribute items, could anyone help with this? Either on foot around the village or by occasionally delivering items to a properly socially distanced collection site in Wellesbourne?
- We would like to look after the healthcare workers in our village. If you know anyone who would benefit from these items, do let me know.



Contact Caroline Nixon 07557022531 caroline.nixon@btinternet.com

Instructions for making headbands and drawstring bags can be downloaded from my website. Look for COVID on the drop-down menu

<http://www.handmadetextilesbycaroline.co.uk/433923837>

Country Dairy

Country Dairy, based at Green Lane Farm at Whichford has been delivering fresh milk and associated dairy products to the local doorstep for many years. Serving Long Compton, Ascott, Whichford, Wigginton, Hook Norton and Great Rollright and all points between and around, our customers enjoy a wide choice of high quality products ensuring that we can cater for most people's needs. Offering a full range of organic products, with the choice of either glass (returnable) bottles or plastic, we maintain a traditional and well-supported service to the community.

Covering the whole area over six days a week, we deliver Monday, Wednesday, Friday or Tuesday, Thursday, Friday depending on the location in the area.



Doorstep delivery has been a part of life in the British Isles for well over a century and Country Dairy strives to continue that tradition providing a local, reliable, and comprehensive service to its customers. New customers always welcome, please contact Tom Sammon on 01608 737971 or 07759391119 - leave a message and we will get back to you.

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ENLIGHTENED WINDOWS

The Reading Room Draw

Congratulations to Spencer Hitchman who was the winner of the April Reading Room draw.

Jenny Scrivener

Nature Encounters



With recent events confining us to our homes for most of each day, I decided to work on a garden encounter that would go on to exceed all expectations and lift my mood on a daily basis. A pair of robins had built a nest by my garden gate, so I hatched a plan. I ordered some live mealworms on the internet and set about gaining the birds' confidence until they would finally feed from the hand. This became especially easy when the chicks had hatched, and the pressure was on to provide. You can follow the progress of this fun project, stage by stage, on my Instagram page (@patrickcfox), and perhaps decide to try this yourselves. It's addictive!

As I write, the chicks have just fledged and are still being fed regularly by the parents. I am hoping that when they begin to feed themselves, they will join the mealworm buffet.

Patrick Fox

[Ed – Please use common sense and avoid approaching nests, young chicks or fledglings]

Walk for the NHS

From what started off as a classic Sunday lunch chat about me finally cutting my hair off after six years of committed growth, it turned into a crazy idea involving walking around my 58m garden as many times as I continuously could, while my family cut my hair off.

So, on Tuesday 7 April at 05.05 I set off under the cover of darkness to do just that. While I secretly wanted my hair gone, the main reason for the walk was to raise money for the donation page [Masks for NHS Heroes](#), which was set up by an amazing group of NHS workers, raising money for Personal Protective Equipment. An incredible cause!

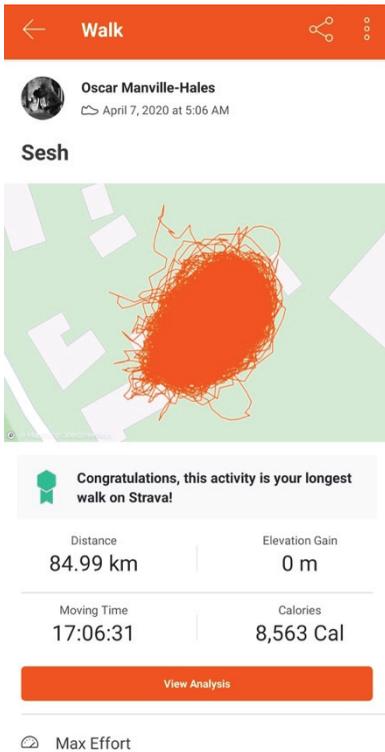


The plan for the walk was to wear different outfits along the way and progressively shave more and more of my hair off at certain donation milestones, with the £2,000 mark (my donation target) being a full buzzcut. When I woke up at 03:30 we were already on £700, which meant mohawk, a great start to the morning. By 11:00 we'd hit £2,000 and the hair was off. Six hours into the walk by this point, the sun was up and I was feeling lighter, swapping in and out of swimming lycra, a snowman costume, pirate costume, my mum's dress, and my cycling lycra, as chosen by the wonderful Facebook live viewers, much to their entertainment.

My initial target was to reach 12 hours or 60km, but at 17:05 I was feeling surprisingly fresh and donations were flying in, so I cracked on and decided that I would keep walking until I couldn't walk anymore. We were up to £3,500 so I said on the live stream that I wasn't stopping until I reached £4,000. This was

reached at the 16-hour mark, but after a motivational Facetime from mates up in Edinburgh, I decided to go for the double marathon. In the end we raised £5,149, walking 103,969 steps, 84.99 km in 17 hours 6 minutes.





Safe to say, I was broken for the next few days but witnessing the amount of support for the NHS that came out of it both in the form of amazing words of encouragement and the donations was incredible! Seeing other people do these challenges, like the famous 100-year-old Tom is just epic, so I encourage anyone out there to do their own challenge, no matter how big or small because every donation goes a long, long way.

Oscar Manville-Hales

Recipes for Lockdown

I just discovered that I can make my own buttermilk with which I make my bread. It is so simple. Just add the juice of a lemon to about 400 mls of milk, semi-skimmed will do. Leave covered in a warm place for about 24 hours. I will never have to buy buttermilk again!

I'm also making my own yoghurt. Simply stir in a really good plain yoghurt (probiotic) into milk, cover and leave in a warm place for 24 - 48 hours until it thickens. I added coconut powder to mine to thicken and flavour. It is amazing what isolation has done for me!

Jane Hall

NHS Creative Challenge

Lucy Wood laid down the creative gauntlet to the residents of Whichford and Ascott - to create a tribute to the NHS and key workers. Here are some of the excellent offerings that can be spotted on a stroll through the villages. Please send in more pictures from your strolls.



VILLAGE NEWS

THE WOLFORDS

Editor, Little Wolford Email: littlewolford@swlink.org.uk

Editor, Great Wolford: Lynn Mathias

Email: greatwolford@swlink.org.uk Tel: 674247

The Wolfords Village Hall One Hundred Club

The April winners were as follows;

1st prize – Janet Piller

2nd prize – Henry Warriner

3rd prize – Sue Elliot

Many congratulations to the above. Please let me know if you would like to have more shares as the club is still short of 100 shares. All proceeds go to help with the upkeep of the village hall.

James van Helden



Rising Above It All... Angel's eye view of St. Michael and All Angels in Great Wolford, Christmas 2019.
Drone photograph courtesy of Jennifer Green

'Care' in Great Wolford

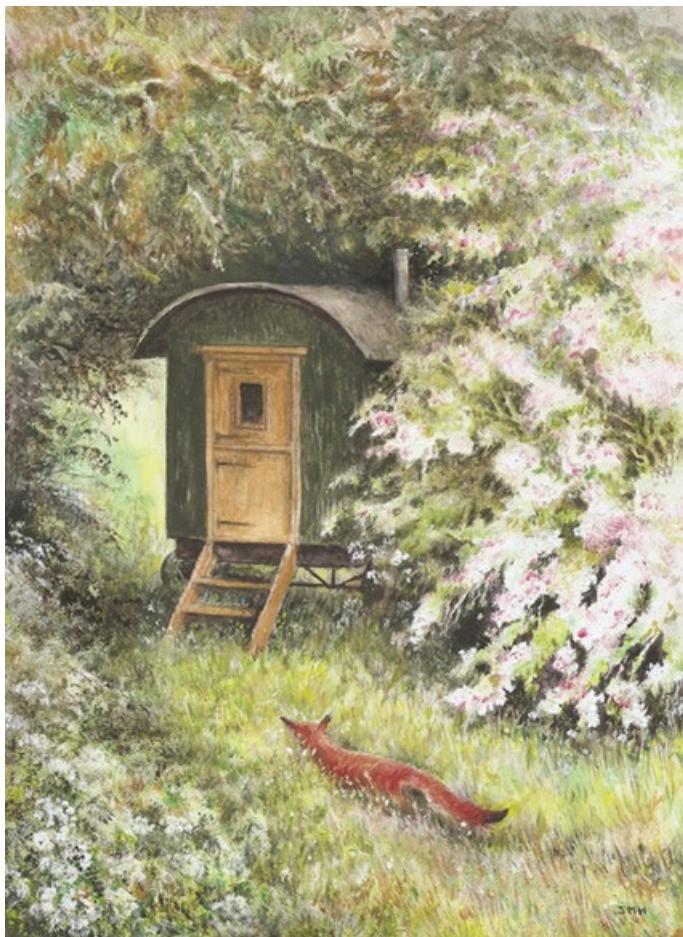
Following the leaflet drop giving Great Wolford parishioners contact details of those in the village able to help with some of the more practical needs in the current situation, the Parish Council has set up a 'contact all' email address that residents can use to contact all members of the care group. Please email:

care@greatwolfordparishcouncil.org.uk

This will send your email direct to some sixteen volunteers, who between them should be able to offer you some sort of help to overcome most problems. Of course, you may wish to contact an individual on the circulated list, but we all know how easy it is to lose that precious list.

The Parish Council would like to thank those residents who volunteered so promptly to step forward to offer help, if it was needed, to their neighbours in the village.

Great Wolford Parish Council



Some of you may remember the December 2019 Cover.
Jenny Henderson from Great Wolford has given us a spring update!

Little Wolford Free Phone Buddy Service

Little Wolford has now set up a free phone buddy service, pairing villagers up so they have someone to chat to and help stay connected while on their own at home. Anyone wanting to know more, can contact me (Helen) at chairmain@littlewolford.org.uk or find out more on the news pages of our website <https://www.littlewolford.org.uk/>

There is also information on our website for our defibrillator appeal - <https://www.littlewolford.org.uk/local-matters/defibrillator> and our online donation site is <https://communityheartbeat.charitycheckout.co.uk/cf/defibrillator-appeal>

Helen Bostock

The Wolfords WI and friends!

This month I am aware that many people in our parishes are taking on a range of extra tasks to help the key workers who are trying so hard to keep our communities running reasonably smoothly.

Like most of you, I have been particularly interested in how I might support our health workers. I was delighted when our secretary, Roz Warriner, emailed the stitchers amongst us with details of how to make headbands which nurses and other NHS staffers can fasten their masks onto, to prevent their ears from getting sore. She also forwarded details of bags and scrubs which they need.

A search of my fabric store yielded sufficient material for one set of scrubs and several headbands which I was able to add to Roz's headgear and bags.

Happily, these are now already on the way to local hospitals. Many thanks to Hilary Bryan who first circulated the patterns. If you're interested in supporting this work, please see the 'Compton Creatives' item on the Long Compton pages (page 44).

I'm looking forward to reading the online May edition of The LINK because I suspect that in our caring north Cotswold community, we are not alone in our efforts!



Gillian Ablewhite

Chairman's Corner

War and Peace

Many of us have been looking forward to joining in this month's celebrations and commemorations of the 75th anniversary of VE Day. Unfortunately, these will now be somewhat muted, due to the cancellation of events and gatherings across the country.

We can still reflect, remember and celebrate in our own way, albeit at home. I will be raising a glass to my grandfather, who 'did his bit' in the second world war. He was a medic in the Royal Army Medical Corps, serving in the 8th Army under the command of General Montgomery, and saw action in North Africa, Sicily and Italy.

Born in 1906, my grandfather must have been one of the 'older' conscripts, being in his mid-thirties when he was called up. Understandably, the effects of war prematurely aged him. He left home with a full head of dark brown hair, and returned with a thinner snow-white mane, a slimmer build and a Mediterranean tan. When he appeared on the doorstep, my mother (who was about 12 years old at the time) shouted out 'Mummy, there's a strange man at the front door!' Family life soon returned to normal, and I can only image that my grandfather was delighted to be back home, and that he celebrated in style - my aunt was born in 1945.

My grandfather used to regale the whole family with his 'during the war' stories. My cousin and I were young boys just at the time that my grandfather was at his most interesting and entertaining – of course, we never really listened, and always wanted to go out and play football, rather than hear about things we didn't understand. My grandfather passed away in 1981, and now that my parents are also no longer with us, memories of his wartime anecdotes are, regrettably, vague, dim and distant. They were never horror stories, though – like many of his generation, he never divulged the gory side of combat. Invariably, they were about the capers that he and his comrades got up to, the practical jokes that they played on each other, and even tales of picking lemons off the trees as they walked along the streets of Sicily. His nickname in the army was 'Blanco' (his surname was 'White').

Blanco's vocabulary would occasionally be peppered with the odd foreign word or idiom that he'd picked up from locals or other soldiers (both friend and foe alike). Asking if you would like something to eat, he would say 'Would you like some munjy?', a corrupted form of the Italian mangi or mangiare (eat); money would be referred to as 'ackers', derived from the Egyptian akka; his stories were always 'pukka' or 'dinkum' (or both), meaning that they were true; and whenever something exasperated or irritated him, he would exclaim 'Mein lieber Gott!'.

Seventy-five years on from the end of World War Two, we are now fighting our own peace-time battle - hopefully, this one will be over much quicker, with an early victory over this 'invisible enemy'. Let's hope we can all show the same spirit, resolve and mettle as our ancestors, and make them as proud of us as we were (are) of them. Cheers, Blanco, here's to you!

Simon Lewis-Beeching, chairman@swlink.org.uk

Poetry Notes

Email: editor@swlink.org.uk

Our poem for May has been suggested by Linda Jeffcutt from Great Wolford. It has been written by American author Laura Kelly Fanucci and you'll see that some of the spellings have remained in the original 'American'. The poem has no 'official' title but *When This Is Over* seems popular. Our thanks to Laura Fanucci – this is open and free material.

When This Is Over

When this is over,
May we never again take for granted
A handshake with a stranger
Full shelves at the store
Conversations with neighbors
A crowded theater
Friday night out
The taste of communion
A routine checkup
The school rush each morning
Coffee with a friend
The stadium roaring
Each deep breath
A boring Tuesday
Life itself.

When this ends
May we find
That we have become
More like the people
We wanted to be
We were called to be
We hoped to be
And may we stay
That way - better
For each other
Because of the worst.

Laura Kelly Fanucci



Thank you for your suggestion Linda. Please keep your poetry suggestions coming; writing them for us would be even better! Please be sure to submit your suggestions in good time bearing in mind that more recent poems will often be protected by copyright and if this is the case, the publisher's permission will need to be obtained.

Keith Murphy, editor@swlink.org.uk

This new feature in the online LINK is a serialised short story, or book, which hopefully will keep readers entertained during what has now become a lockdown. I have been asking for contributions and fortunately, this one has appeared.

Any featured work(s) will either have connections with the SW7 Benefice villages, or the author will live in the Benefice.

The first is a short story entitled *A Job for Life*. It's written in three parts. This issue carries Part 1. The author will be revealed when the all the story has been 'published'. Happy reading!

Keith Murphy, editor@swlink.org.uk

A Job for Life

I

John Sheen had never been lucky in the lottery of life. He had been born into an age where people were beginning to look to the future, but into a family whose life was rooted in the past. His father, Major (Rtd.) Donald J. Sheen, was one of those old-fashioned types who had had what was called at the time, 'a jolly good war.' Donald had come by his wartime commission through a series of fortunate circumstances and despite his army records telling him in no uncertain terms that his commission was 'for the duration of hostilities' and just 'temporary', though dogged cussedness he had held onto his commission for the maximum length of time possible until he was forced to retire by the rules which then surrounded such things.

As a result, John found himself born into a family ruled by a father used to wielding authority and unused to being challenged. His wife Rosemary, by some years younger than Donald, had recognised the problem with Donald's one-dimensional approach to childrearing as soon as she saw it, but felt powerless to act.

Donald and Rose lived in and ran, a small but comfortable pub in a Sussex village, just ten or so miles from Brighton. Donald had acquired the Red Lion from an old army comrade who after a torrid time with Donald fighting though Italy, had spent near on fifteen years or so slowly, but unmistakably dying from his wounds before finally giving his life for his then dead King. Rosemary knew an opportunity when she saw one. A single man, about to retire from the Army with a pension and a pub. The few years of age difference was not an obstruction in her mind, and time was not on her side.

They made a surprisingly handsome pair, especially on those dreary and wet November mornings when they stood with the rest of the village blocking the High Street to remember the fallen. He in his uniform and medals officiating at the ceremony and her in smart modern clothes, provided by his pension and the profits from a modest but increasingly successful pub business.

John's arrival was much celebrated by not only his parents, but also by the regulars in the Red Lion. Though their cognitive powers were somewhat dulled by their regular daily intake of alcohol, even the regulars were able to work out that it wasn't the full nine months since the wedding and yet John was there amongst them. Now this wasn't a deliberate move on Rosemary's part, although once it happened, she was, it has to be said, rather relieved. Donald, despite his obvious inexperience with the opposite sex was in his way, a 'good catch'. He offered Rose security and on his own terms, love of sorts. The news of the pregnancy prompted Donald into action, and he did what used to be called 'the decent thing.'

John's early life progressed well enough. A sound financial background was being established by both Donald and Rose through their hard work in the pub and little John wanted for little except perhaps, for some attention from his father, who found the experience of fatherhood somewhat of a strain. He much preferred to attend to business in the bar and socialise with his customers.

Donald held out high hopes for his son. In discussing the future with Rose, he rather took her aback with his plans. After the early years in local establishments, he wished to send John away at the age of seven to attend a boarding school that was run by some of his old Army connections. He was able to get a discount on the fees and as the pub was doing well, it could be afforded. Donald was keen for his son to have all the advantages he hadn't had. Going to the right school was, as he'd discovered in his Army career, absolutely critical. 'And besides', declared Donald, 'it would be the making of him.'

Against this onslaught Rose was defenceless. She had been disturbed by his hands-off approach to parenthood. Whilst the rest of the world was embracing a decade that would later become to be known as 'swinging', Donald was taking Rose and her little boy back to a pre-war world of privilege allied with pretence. Her feelings of difference widened over the time leading up to John's seventh year and when the moment came for John's departure, Rose was just grateful that they'd had no more children.

On the appointed day just after his seventh birthday, John and his sad little trunk of belongings was transported in his dad's little car the fifty or so miles to the educational establishment on which Major (Rtd.) Sheen's hopes so earnestly rested. Rose was not in a fit state to make the journey although Donald did not fully appreciate the fact. He was gratified that she had seen fit to look after the pub in his absence.

And that was it, after a few cursory words from his father, John was left in the tender mercies of the Prioriton Priory Preparatory School along with others of his age in the same position.

Life proceeded pretty well at first. The food was actually quite good, although John had never been particularly fussy in that direction and the communal life and shared dormitories took some getting used to, but overall, it wasn't as bad as John thought it was going to be. Some passing thoughts took him from time to time back to his mother

in Sussex. He managed to hold off any tears, having seen what happened to the other boys when discovered 'blubbering' for their mothers. Unfortunately, his mother was unable to hold back her tears for her lost boy. These were however shed in private whilst Donald was otherwise engaged.

It was in the classroom that things first started to go badly wrong for John. The local infants' school had spoken to Donald and Rose about the difficulties that John was having, particularly with his letters. Donald glossed over this as a temporary problem. He himself had been stronger with numbers than with words and urged the somewhat flustered infant teacher to 'just give him a spell in the slow readers group - that'll sort him out.' But at Priorton, the stakes had been upped considerably.

In the company of privately tutored seven-year olds, John found himself way off the pace and unable to keep up with his classmates. The more he tried, the more he failed. Today his condition has a name - it's called dyslexia. In John's early school days, it was more likely to earn the wearing of a fiercely wielded slipper than the wearing of a diagnostic label. It was just before the half-term break that John first met that slipper guided by the hand of the headmaster. He discovered not only how painful it was, but also how much credibility it gave him with his classmates. This was small consolation for the pain of the experience.

Back at home, John was pleased to see his mother but was less inclined to engage with his father. He shrugged off the questions and told them both that everything was 'going fine.' John couldn't be sure if the school had reported anything to his parents, but if they had, the pair of them were very good at keeping it secret.

After the short break, John returned to Priorton to discover that his troubles continued from exactly the point that he had left them. Threats of beatings had seen a progress of sorts in John's reading skills, but he was still substantially behind the others. He found some relief from persecution in the fact that his number skills were at least up with the best in his class and he was a 'little favourite' with the music teacher. This was on account of the interest he showed in the topics that that particular teacher was forcing down the throats of John and his classmates. Both his classmates and some of the more perceptive teachers, of which there were a few, noticed what a good memory John was blessed with.

Good memory or not, this was not enough to stop the threats of beatings become reality. Before he went home for the Easter break, he'd suffered a number of such attacks on his person and his seven-year-old body and mind was beginning to develop some resistance. In the place of self-pity, there was a growing anger that the world was permitted to treat him so. John was able, somehow to keep a lid on all of this over the Easter holidays and again assure his parents that 'all was well.'

Early in the summer term, the school had its annual day out to the seaside at Brighton. This was regarded by all as a bit of a treat, but for John, who had been a number of times before in his pre-Priorton days, it wasn't much of a novelty. Still, it would be one less day when his inability to unravel the jumble of the printed page would provoke the teaching staff to whom his care was entrusted.

The school chartered a coach, but as is the way with these things, there were more boys than seats. So John, along with another boy from his class, was earmarked to travel in the Headmaster's car with the school nurse and the aforementioned music teacher.

Much to John's discomfort, he was squashed up in the back of the car with him and his classmate either side of the teacher for the fifty or so mile trip to Brighton. He spent the journey in silence looking out of the window contemplating the world and his position in it.

Now part of the day was given over to spending some time on the beach, and after the staff had hastily arrange rugs and blankets, they all settled down to the traditional ice cream treat that had been bought to them by one of the beachside shops. In this moment of distraction, John had placed himself at the extreme edge of the last of the rugs. He'd been keeping himself out of the little tight group on his rug keenly comparing their ice creams and when all attention was diverted, and the noise of the breaking waves and screeching seagulls was at its height, he quietly made his escape. Well, as quietly as is possible for a seven-year-old boy shod in 'sensible' shoes and running hell for leather over the shingle that is Brighton beach. He didn't stop to look round until he reached The Esplanade.

On turning to observe the assembled school group in the distance, he could just see his discarded melting ice cream on the edge of the rug with everyone else in the party oblivious to his disappearance. The next step in his plan was to find the bus station. He'd done the walk several times on trips he and his mother had made in the past and he was sure that he could remember which way to go. His memory of the streets of Brighton served him well and sure enough, he arrived at the right place. In fact, there was the very bus that he knew he needed to get him home sitting there waiting to go. Over a few words with the driver and the conductor, John explained that he needed to get back to the Red Lion some ten miles distant and that when they arrived, his mum would pay his bus fare for him. The pair of them were surprisingly sympathetic, whether they thought he might cadge a drink as well as the fare, we can never be sure, but John boarded the bus as confident as he'd ever been and within forty minutes, he was home.

The bus was running a little early, so John had time to drag his startled mother out and get her to the bus to pay his fare.

On their return, before going back inside, John told Rose of his unhappiness at what was going on at the school at that he wasn't going back, whatever anyone said. It was matter of fact, not to be argued with and a statement of such clarity, that you'd never had credited that a seven-year-old could have said it. When Donald was confronted with the situation, he could see that all protestations to the contrary were hopeless and he made what in military terms, is known as a tactical withdrawal.

An hour or two later, John looked out of his bedroom window to see the headmaster's car draw to a halt outside the pub. He heard the raised voices in the downstairs rooms and whilst he couldn't hear what was actually being said, it was clear that the headteacher was coming off second best. Leading the charge was Rose. 'Thank goodness for mum' thought John. The following day his father went 'AWOL' and later that day, his trunk and all his possessions from Priorton were back in his Sussex bedroom. His father's plan for an exclusive education for the boy had come to nothing.

To be continued....

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