

Great Bentley Parish News

**Produced by the Community
for the Community**



March 2021

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COLNE COMMUNITY SCHOOL: - 01206 303511

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01206 250732

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Alan Bayliss, 01206 250450.

EDITORIAL

Well, February certainly threw some weather at us with the return of the Beast from the East Volume 2. Thank you to everyone who helped to make life easier during these times, see page 23. Record rainfall during December/January meant that the saturated ground could not absorb the water and I have never seen the ditches and dykes so full, even the pond outside Moorlands has returned. Worryingly the crossroads at Lufkins was flooded on all four approach roads on 31st January and as of the 14th February the water was still across to the middle of Thorngton Road. I reported this to our District and County Councillors and a man was despatched the following day with a spade. You will see from the photograph on page 10 that the signpost has been knocked down once again. Last time it took 3 years to get it erected and the fingerposts then repositioned themselves sending unsuspecting motorists in the completely wrong directions! Watch this space.

Well we certainly have some informative and interesting articles once again this month, thank you to everyone concerned. It makes my job all the more pleasurable. So an alcohol theme is developing here with the history of rum rations and exciting information on a new local Gin Distillery. (See ad on page 36 and article on page 35). We also have more from Barbara Fookes on the fires in the village that she so vividly remembers. Plenty more featured inside too.

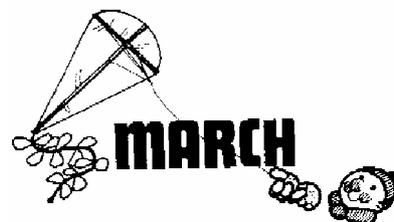
We have a lovely article on a former villager, Tom Fairweather on pages 28/29 of his life during the war. On that note I am mindful of how life must have been for people then. This was heightened by a news broadcast two days ago about children living in Yemen and how these poor innocents of primary school age are being shot by snipers as they play out in the streets. No nice homes to return to after all the trauma of trying to drag your injured little sister from the street whilst bullets are being aimed at you. It made me acutely aware that the restrictions we are being asked to adhere to at present are inconsequential in comparison to those people who are continuously living in constant fear, in war zones. It was so lovely to see the children here out on the green enjoying the snow. Much to be grateful for.

I love reading about the fun times at The Oaks Residential Home at Aingers Green and they have received some really kind gestures recently from China Palace and Flour Power Cakes. See page 11. More information on how best to take your donations to the Clothing Banks on page 34 and what happens when you leave black sacks beside the banks. You will be surprised!

I am just rechecking this editorial and it is 18th of February. After a little rain this morning the weather cheered up nicely and I was able to prune the Wisteria and pot on some sweet pepper plants. It was so lovely to be out in the garden with signs of spring emerging in the borders.

Don't forget to get your form filling skills into gear ready for the Census in March. Not my favourite job I have to say. On a positive note the nights are getting lighter, clocks go forward this month too and it will soon be the official start of spring.

Stay safe and well,
Mary Maskell



2021

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Front Cover

The woods in winter
at Aingers Green
February 2021
Thanks to
Chris Pinner

DISCLAIMER

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THE MONTHLY LETTERS - MARCH

Reflection for the month

When we set off on a journey do we know where we're going? As someone a little lacking in a sense of direction the journey may be a little circuitous but I usually know where I'm heading for! Some journeys are so familiar that we probably don't even notice them at all. Others take so much more planning when we're not sure. Sat navs are tremendously helpful on the unfamiliar until, perhaps, they take us on a different route to the one that Google maps recommended! But we are always looking for this guidance as we go along.

In our Christian life, our destination of eternal life is assured for all those who accept God in Jesus through the Holy Spirit into their lives. Our navigation of life is, however, unique. We may have a clear sense of the direction of our lives at some times and less at others. It can be that in the uncertainty of things a new direction is both sought and found.

Our Christian lives are a journey. There may be many twists and turns along the way; new directions or old places revisited. In every moment God is there. Whatever direction life takes we are all called, firstly, to be disciples of Jesus who calls us to him, to be with him and learn from him before being sent out for him. In this we are guided by the Holy Spirit who leads and comforts us through the journey of life.

In this time of uncertainty and unfamiliarity we are encouraged to turn to God once again. In doing so, we are assured comfort and peace as well as seeking a new way through the journey we are on.

For reflection

Are we comfortable in our journey of discipleship at this time? Are we in a familiar place? Do we sense that we may be moving in a new direction?

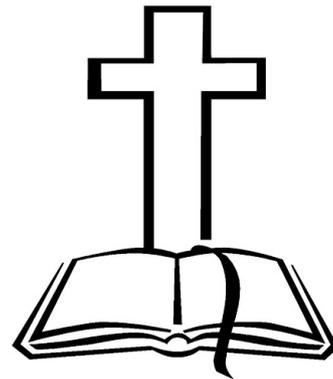
Prayer

Loving God,
As we continue to journey with you,
May we know the peace and comfort of your presence,
In the familiar and the unfamiliar
The old and the new.

Forgive us for the times
where we've lost our sense of direction,
And lead us back to you
through your Holy Spirit.

May we tread in your footsteps,
Follow your way,
Know your challenge, protection and comfort,
Today and in all the days to come,
Amen.

C. Preece January 2021



Here we are a couple of weeks into Lent, I have found this a bit of a challenge so far and I am sure it is because we have all given up so much over these last months that I didn't really want to give up anything for Lent so I decided that I would take something up. I am reading the Psalms – it has been a long time since I read them all but to be honest I am not reading them all this time but selecting 1 or 2 a day to read and think about. For me knowing that I am choosing them each day allows me a bit of space with it, I am also a traditionalist and did start at Psalm 1 which reminds us that when we journey with God we are given strength to be the best version of ourselves. To be honest I am sure we would all want that in life.

Whatever you are doing for Lent I hope that it strengthens you. Do take care and look after yourselves and each other.

Every Blessing
Sharon



**GREAT BENTLEY
METHODIST
CHURCH NEWS**

Greetings to you all

We welcome you to worship at Church or on Zoom with us during March. We continue to pray for relief from the Virus. If you would like to join our Zoom service by Computer or Telephone please ring 01206 250087 for the connection link.

Having taken the decision during January not to open the Church for worship we suspect that this may continue into March so look out for announcements should this change although things are starting to look better.

Morning worship will be held at **10.30am** unless otherwise stated.

The leaders of worship are set out below:-

- March 7th Maggie Woods**
- March 14th Rev Tom Osborne**
Holy Communion
- March 21st Deacon Janet Jenkins**
- March 28th Jane Allison**

All other activities suspended until further notice

Gritting

A big thank you to George Wright for the bags of grit he delivered to our cul de sac in De Vere Estate today 8th February and for what you did in the village too. The neighbours were glad of it and most of them pitched in to spread it, they were happy to receive it too. It means that it is safer to walk on the paths when they have to! Much appreciated and thanks to Mary for organising it.

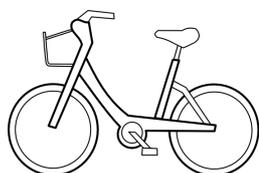
Carol McDougall.

FOR SALE

Ladies bicycle

£60

07538 569383



FOOD BANK

The container for the food bank is inside the Church.

Food required please:

Tinned vegetables

Tinned potatoes

Tinned tomatoes

Rice (not pasta)

Tinned fruit

Tinned custard and rice.

Biscuits, cereals

Coffee, sugar

All toiletries

Washing liquid/ powder/ washing up liquid etc



Toilet rolls

Kitchen rolls

Dog and cat food



**CLOCKS GO
FORWARD
ON
28th MARCH**

MOTHERING SUNDAY

14th March



TAKEAWAYS

THE FUSILIER

Ring 01206 250222

THE PLOUGH

Ring 01206 255242

Do you take snapshots or photographs?

What's the difference? Many people would say nothing, just a different word for the same thing, but to some who have an informed or artistic eye, quite a lot.

A snapshot is a captured moment in time, a record of what the viewer saw in that fraction of a second when the button was pressed and the image in front of the camera was recorded so that it may be viewed again later perhaps in more detail to re-live that moment or shared with friends and then probably consigned to oblivion. A photograph however has a number of subtle differences to a snapshot. Some of which can make the recorded image worthy of printing maybe and hanging on the wall or sending to a magazine or something for others to enjoy. (Or entering into the village show maybe!).

When coming across an interesting or picturesque scene it is worthwhile to take a "snapshot" to record the view and then look more deeply into the scene and decide where the actual point of interest is and then take a "photograph" or two possibly isolating the main point of interest which will make a stronger more interesting image.

Record shots of children and adults should not be formal "stand up straight, look at the camera and say cheese", affairs. In fact informal relaxed images have far more information in them as they show the real person as they are (or were) at that time. This is why professional photographers spend some time chatting over a cup of tea to their subject to relax them before even picking up a camera.

The vast majority of images are taken from "eye level" and that is certainly convenient but sometimes if the photographer could kneel down, the change in perspective could transform the image and this is especially important when shooting young children, and don't forget they have legs and feet which make a better picture if included rather than most backgrounds above their heads.

Moving a few steps to the left or right can also improve the general composition as changing the viewpoint can allow the viewer to be "led into" the scene or maybe remove a barrier and also allows the main point of interest to be repositioned slightly to one side, generally more pleasing to the eye.

Don't forget when shooting images which include water, try to keep the camera level, The horizon is flat and lakes do not run downhill and, unless visiting Pisa, buildings are generally upright and don't lean to one side. A landscape is usually more pleasing if the horizon is above or below the centre line of the image, approximately on a third is usually considered the most pleasing position.

When taking a group of people it is worthwhile to take two or three shots in quick succession especially in bright sunshine to avoid one of the people having their eyes closed as blinking may only take 1/40th of a second but if that was when the single shot was taken.....

Try and avoid busy/distracting backgrounds. A person pushing a buggy behind your main subject or a red "no entry" sign for example will ruin the image as it will draw the eye away from the intended focal point. A tree/lamp post/waste bin immediately behind your subject doesn't help either. Take the time to look around the scene and check there is nothing to distract the eye from the subject.

If your camera is a `phone, remember to hold it "sideways" when taking landscape type pictures not "upright"(portrait) especially if recording an "incident" as the information to the left and right is usually more important and interesting than the sky or pavement. (Note TV news items with wide fuzzy edges shot by bystanders).

So there we have it. A starting point for you to turn your "snapshots" into "Photographs".

J.M.



FOUND

Set of keys found on the Green

Please ring 01206 251086

FOUND

Black handbag with short strap.
Found on The Green. Looks as good as new.

Please ring 01206 250524

SURROUNDED BY FIRE (PART 2)

The next fire I remember wasn't quite so close to Rambler Cottage. This was when Harris' Bakery caught fire. The Bakery, a wooden building was at the back of where the Chinese is now. Lots of men went to help put the fire out including my father. This they did with the fire brigade.

Why mention it? It's what happened when dad got back to Rambler Cottage that stands out in my mind.

When dad went to help fight the fire he was in his shirt sleeves with a sleeveless pullover. This pullover had been painstakingly knitted by mum in 3 ply wool with a Fair Isle pattern round the bottom. When dad came back afterwards he had scorch marks down the front of the pullover. Mum was really cross and vowed and declared she would never knit him anything again. And she didn't! Poor dad he was only helping out.

The next fire was nearer to home. In fact it was in the back garden of Rambler Cottage. I am a bit hazy about the date of the fire but Roz (my sister) and I were both living at home. I think we were in our late teens early twenties.

Dad was very keen to keep the cardboard waste from the shop down so he regularly incinerated it. (NO RECYCLING SCHEMES IN THOSE DAYS). For some reason the cardboard had piled up but nevertheless dad lit the incinerator when the shop closed. Roz slept at the back of the cottage and that night she was woken up by a noise then a glow in her room. She looked out the back window and saw flames in the garden.

She quickly woke us all up and we went into the garden to see what we could do. There we ladies were with our hair in rollers and wearing our dressing gowns using the garden hose when the fire brigade arrived. The wooden fence near the incinerator had caught fire and apparently the flames were so high they could be seen from the A133

The firemen soon put the fire out. Before they left they spoke to dad about making sure the incinerator was out by damping it down before leaving it.

The last fire I remember near Rambler Cottage was when the Surplus Store and the Smith's home went up in flames.

I think this happened in September/October 1974. The Smith's house was over the top of the store and at the back. It was a large house and there was only a garden between the house and Rambler Cottage. The store was right next door to dad's shop.

I was living at home and had been helping in the shop. Roz and Mike married in 1973 and were living in Colchester. In the early morning hours of the day the fire happened. I was woken up by a yell from outside. It was Mr Smith yelling "please save my children". I went through to mum and dad's room and looked out of their window to see the Smith's house. I was shocked to see flames coming out of the chimney. I quickly shook dad to wake him up and explain what I had seen. He said "Don't worry dear, it's only Mr Smith stoking his chimney." "No dad" I said "not at four o'clock in the morning". Then he came to wake mum and we all quickly got dressed and we went to see what we could do to help.

By this time the shop was well alight and we could hear the paint tins exploding. The fire brigade were there but no sign of the Smith family. We found out that the family were all safe and were in a nearby house. This was Mr and Mrs Smith and two very young foster children. The family Roz and I had grown up with had left home a few years before.

In the meanwhile mum had rung Roz and both her and Mike came over. As the morning went on I don't know how it started but dad, Roz, Mike and I found ourselves providing the firemen with tea and toast. Mum stayed in the kitchen preparing it while we kept up a constant supply to our front gate for the firemen to collect.

The fire took a long time to put out, but eventually it was. All that was left was the ruins of London House (the Smith's home) and the burnt out Surplus Store formally London House Stores. In the afternoon my mum received a big bouquet of flowers from the firemen as a thank you.

The Smith family were found a house in Larkfield Road as a temporary measure. They were helped with food, clothes and furniture as they had absolutely nothing. Later the council found them a bungalow in the village. The Sunday after the fire there was a joint Methodist and Anglican Harvest Festival at St Mary's Church. The joint offertory was given to the Smith family with some of the produce.

Before I wrote about this fire I contacted Cherry Smith. Cherry was working in London when the fire happened. However she came down to Great Bentley the next day. She remembers seeing the burnt out shell of her old house. She said she went to Larkfield Road to help comfort her mum and dad. Cherry said she believed the fire started in the Surplus Store through an electrical fault.

Barbara Fookes

POLICE REPORT

RECORDED CRIMES- 16

19/12/2020-23/01/2021

CRIME TYPES- Other x 2 - Theft from motor vehicle - assault without injury x 4 - malicious communications x3 - Non crime investigation - Harassment without violence x 2 - Having possession of a controlled drug class B - Domestic abuse - Harassment pursue course of conduct.

Incidents reported – 26 From 19/12/2020- 23/01/2021

Types reported- Suspicious circumstances x 4 - Section 165/59 - Assault - Road traffic collision x 2 Shair Lane/The Tye Road - Domestic x 5 - Covid breach x 6 - Concern x 4- Highway Disruption x 3

TRUCAM Monthly 4

21/01/2021- Thorrington Road - 4 caught Top speed 42mph

Christmas found me on scene of a fatal RTC, where another family had to deal with the loss of a loved one. Please drive safely with due care and attention.

Latest Scams Circulating- Vaccine. Method Phone (in case you missed last month)

'Confirmed scam going around whereby a text message will be sent to people stating they are eligible to have the vaccine and to follow the link to receive this. Once the link is clicked on, this takes you to a fake NHS website where it asks for all personal details of bank account/sort code and card number to verify and prove ownership of your address. The way the message is received it looks to be true and given the pandemic we are currently in, people will panic and believe this to be true and go ahead without realising they are about to be scammed/defrauded.'

Sky Insurance. Method-phone scam.

A phone scam has been reported, where someone pretending to be from Sky, introduces an insurance or collection of all their Sky equipment.

Luckily the resident cancelled their bank card before the transaction went through, which then resulted to further threats from the scammers, Sky confirmed this was not from them.

If you are effected by any scams, please fill in an online form to report to action fraud
www.actionfraud.police.uk/reporting-fraud

Please be vigilant.

Reporting incidents the correct way.

To report an incident **please ring 101**

Or report it online <https://www.essex.police.uk/do-it-online/report-a-crime/>



If residents have any concern on suspicious vehicles/activity/ drugs in the village, please feel free to contact me, with as much detail as possible, including contact details so I can investigate. (Unless it is an **incident**, which then needs to be reported as above)

Email - julia.brandon@essex.pnn.police.uk

Tel - 101 Ext - 440222

THANK YOU

Can I firstly give a huge thank you to the generous people of Great Bentley who have enabled me to donate £167.41 to the food bank. Thank you to those that just gave money, who offered us hot drinks and supplied very yummy flapjack - and sorry I didn't share! A very special thank you to Ian and Sue who have supported me in manning the box so I could thaw out! And thank you to Leigh who as always offered help with delivery. I shall see you all next year
Many thanks **Nean**

WELCOME

Richard and Jazmin Mcdade
to 13 Finch Drive
and new residents to 70 Birch Avenue



RMS TITANIC

by David Ettritch. Retired Curator of Shipwreck and Heritage Centre
Charlestown, Cornwall

Hi again,

Dr Robert Ballard on September 1st 1985, seventy three years after she sank RMS Titanic was found. Dr Robert Ballard and a joint French/American expedition had located the lost ship and got the first ever pictures of her standing upright on the sea bed proudly!

Dr Ballard had spent 12 years searching for RMS Titanic and over the course 1985-1986 descended 2½ miles in Alvin his three man submarine, 11 times to photograph using his robo camera deep into the wreck down the main staircase seeing the glass chandeliers still hanging after nearly 75 years. When estimating where to look for Titanic we look at her distress position 41°46'N, 50° 14'W worked out by 4th officer Boxall, always regarded as a good navigator, but there was evidence that in this case he was wrong. Titanic's true position 49°, 56', 54°W, 41°, 43', 35°N, putting Californian's position 21 miles away. Now personal feeling of people who lost relatives on Titanic whilst working in the shipwreck became real whilst working in the shipwreck centre I often met people who had connections, one became a very close friend called Fred Banfield who lived in Plymouth. He was looking at our Titanic exhibits when I came across him. He said to me that he was very impressed and that he had one or two things that I might be interested in. So over a cup of tea in our restaurant, he told me that his father had lost his life on the Titanic. His dad was travelling to America to work in a gold mine. Being a worker in Helston, Cornwall in a tin mine, Fred's father was an engineer and his name was also Frederick Banfield, born 29th January 1884. After serving an apprenticeship he worked as a mining engineer. Married to Cecilia Avery Gardner in 1907. Later in that year he took passage to America on SS New York working in gold and silver mines in San Reno and Tonopah in Nevada. 4 years later he returned to the UK on SS Oceanic and lived with his wife in Helston Cornwall. Fred booked to go back to America to join his brother who lived in Houghton, N. Michigan. His wife would join him later. He booked 2nd class with two friends on Titanic leaving Cecilia in Helston, pregnant with Fred Banfield junior.

Fred junior joined the navy and became a senior officer in a very successful career. He always felt that Captain Smith of Titanic was to blame for the sinking and the death of his father. Some of Captain Smith's accidents gave him the name of a risk taker. In 1911 he nearly sank a tug that was attending his ship SS Olympic badly damaging it. Again on Olympic he collided with HMS Hawke whilst leaving Portsmouth. HMS Hawke was seriously damaged, and SS Olympic had to return to Belfast for repairs. Second Officer Lightoller of the Titanic who had previously served with Captain Smith makes mention of the speed at which Smith used to navigate liners entering and leaving harbour. This was his standard practice.

Back to Fred junior, my wife and I would visit Fred in Plymouth at Higher Compton. We would talk about Titanic and collections of post cards. One time he told us that he had something special to show us. He kept us waiting for about an hour then after tea and cake brought out a large envelope and emptied the contents on the table. My eyes opened wide for there on the table was a letter sent from RMS Titanic to Fred junior's mum. It was on genuine Titanic paper and also 3 postcards of Titanic. Now you might not think so but you must believe that genuine Titanic relics from the actual ship go for lots of money. Fred said to me that he would be pleased for the museum to buy and show these artefacts and also to make copies for any interested people. So the museum invested and many people have copies of these artefacts. Some years later we agreed to return these pieces of Titanic history to Fred's daughter and she put them up for auction. The letter went for £25,000, the three postcards £15,000. I still have my copies!

Keep safe and well

Yours David

david_ettritch_26@msn.com

DEADLINE FOR APRIL MAGAZINE

MONDAY 15th MARCH

Material to Mary Maskell, Caldew Cottage, The Green, 250524 **AND**
Carole Allington, Poplar House, Station Road, 251086.

Please mark all material - "Parish Magazine"

email: carole@pncallington.co.uk **AND marymaskell@sys3internet.net**

IMPORTANT - PLEASE SEND ALL INFORMATION TO BOTH OF US

Great Bentley Website: www.greatbentleyparishcouncil.co.uk

Thank you from your NHS – Please can you help?

Back in April 2020 I worked with the Great Bentley Community Support Group to reach out to our villagers for their support in donating handmade scrubs to our acute and community hospitals and healthcare teams. We were blown away with the production line that followed and I am still wearing my rainbow scrubs on the wards with pride, knowing how much time and effort went into supporting this plea.

Then came VE day, when Dani's Deli and a huge number of villagers came together to donate a mountain of cakes, pastries and goodies for the NHS staff working that bank holiday weekend. The look on health workers faces when we arrived with your edible delights will always stick in my memory as a very happy Covid-19 day. At a time when things seemed so bleak, you made such a huge difference to that long bank holiday weekend. The staff were so grateful and Great Bentley is now famous for its kindness and generosity.

The summer months came and we started to see signs of hope. Those of us who had been re-deployed slowly started filtering back to our own teams and we started the initial road to Covid recovery, in the knowledge that this winter was going to be the toughest ever. We were told to take our annual leave, spend time with our loved ones and get rest before entering phase two. Taking a 'break' with 4 daughters is always a challenge but you may have seen me running around the village in my bright pink tops, trying to seek a tiny bit of downtime from the world. I feel very blessed to live in such a beautiful village, where running in the fresh air and countryside feels like a real privilege compared to many others.

In November we had a mini second wave in North East Essex and the pressure started building on the community hospital wards. I volunteered to do some over-time shifts at Clacton Hospital on the lead up to Christmas, to offer support to the therapy team and also just be an extra pair of hands to an exhausted workforce. It was during these shifts that I felt saddened by the lack of hope patients had whilst sitting in their lonely hospital beds. No visitors to brighten the day, no deliveries of biscuits, grapes or puzzle books from their loved ones. Instead, a handful had the odd photo of their grandchildren or partners to show me but many had nothing. One lady sobbed into her blanket as she told me that she was so bored and lonely and was desperate for some balls of wool to be delivered, so she could keep herself amused.

In knowledge of the grim few months ahead, I was confident that our community spirit could once again lift the mood of our exhausted NHS. In the first week of January, I had the difficult decision of choosing which of my paediatric team members would have to be re-deployed into adult teams yet again to support the crisis. Staff were terrified, not only scared at the prospect of working on red Covid wards but also being expected to step the furthest out of their comfort zones. We have children's speech and language therapists working as healthcare assistants at Clacton and Fryatt Hospitals, Occupational Therapists supporting admission avoidance teams and myself and my physiotherapy colleague supporting the critical care unit at Colchester General Hospital. Over the course of January, there has been a lot of blood, sweat and tears to support the workforce, whether that be existing staff on the wards and critical care or staff working in such unfamiliar environments. I am so proud of all my colleagues in the NHS; every single one of them is doing their bit to support this crisis response. I have met some truly inspirational people and have learnt so much about my own resilience and strength in working in such a pressured and stressful situation.

The reason I wanted to share the real-life events of a local healthcare worker is that I hope this helps you understand why we are making pleas to our local communities to continue to support our NHS. We have already been overwhelmed by donations of food stuffs, toiletries, knitting supplies, puzzle and colouring books, DAB radios and TVs for patients and staff at Clacton and Fryatt Hospital and these deliveries are helping brighten even the greyest days. Dani's Deli also donated two trays of scrumptious bakes and pastries just at the right time. Ward staff are like vultures when treats arrive but who blames them after the months of hard graft, they deserve to eat cream cakes every day!

Continued on page 10.

If you or somebody you know is able to offer support our ongoing donations, we would be extremely grateful. To reduce footfall and contamination risk, we are asking for all donations to be ordered via Amazon and sent to:

Emma Blowers
Community Hospital Donations
Children's Therapy Department
Clacton Hospital
Tower Road
Clacton, CO15 1LF

Thank you in advance to those who are able to donate. Your gesture will go a long way towards raising the spirits of staff and patients at a time when everything else feels very sad.

The main items we would really benefit from are:

Toiletries for patients ie toothpaste, toothbrushes, deodorant, shower gel
Hand creams for staff (ideally pocket sized ones!)
Dry food stuffs for staff and patients (ideally individually wrapped) - biscuits, cereal bars, chocolate, crisps
Adult colouring or puzzle books, with pens/pencils
Knitting wool and needles
DAB radios (ideally news ones, still in boxes)

Rainfall in Great Bentley

As a result of all of the water lying about on fields and roads, I have been asked if January's rainfall of 112 mm (4.4 inches) in 2021 is one of the highest on record. I looked back at my records which recommenced during 1997 and can state that this January's total was the highest that I recorded during that period. The second highest was during January of 2014 when we received 87.5 mm (3.5 inches). January 2021 was however preceded by a wet December of 97.5mm (3.8 inches). The highest annual record that I recorded was 785 mm (31 inches) during 2012, whilst John Wiseman at Plough road recorded a higher figure of 891mm (35 inches) during the same year. The lowest annual rainfall recorded was 350mm (13.8 inches) during 2003. The other interesting feature is that the water table at the site of the now filled in pond on the green outside Moorlands, has been at or above ground level on 17 occasions since 2001. The months at which this occurred were mostly during the December to February periods.

David Gollifer

I have noted that this December/January rainfall was the highest recorded for 100 years. ED



NEWS FROM THE OAKS

It's been a fabulous end to January and start to February here at The Oaks.

We've celebrated Burns night we even addressed the haggis ... some tried it and some said 'noooo thank you!' And 'urgh what's that!' We also enjoyed poetry by Robert Burns.

We entered a cake competition, had fun making, baking and decorating them oh and licking the spoon! That's the best part right other than eating the cake of course!

So as it was Valentine's theme we added personal touches to our cake with the residents wedding photos.

This brought such treasured memories to all and it was clear to see how much it meant to everyone.

We also couldn't forget those who are no longer with us but still a part of our home so a white rose was placed in memory of each of them and their loved ones.

It was also Chinese New Year and what an amazing and thoughtful gift we received from China Palace who were so very kind to provide our residents with a Chinese take away. We can honestly say everyone thoroughly enjoyed it so a very heart felt thank you for your kindness China Palace it really was appreciated.

We've also thanked all the amazing staff here at The Oaks for all they do so they each received a handmade thank you card, sweets and lovely hand cream.

So thank you once again to each and everyone of you you are all amazing.

Well it snowed, snowed again and snowed some more didn't it? So what better way to enjoy it than to watch the staff make snow angels, watch the chef be cheeky and throw snowballs at them so what better way to get him back than to plot payback!

So here was our plan, staff prepared the snowballs, we tricked the chef in to thinking we wanted to speak to him then WHAM snowballs thrown at him ... residents won by 5 shots and the chef, well he didn't stand a chance! We can confirm that no chefs were harmed and he's still cooking amazing food!

Did you know it was national story week recently? So we enjoyed reading stories for our families (video of course) we even read out some horrible history truths! That was interesting.

Wait until you hear what we did next!

It'll have you singing the song all day and hopefully up and dancing too!

We danced to Proud Mary by Tina Turner and wow did we all enjoy it! This also brought smiles and comfort to our families too with seeing the video. Safe to say the coffee we had after went down a treat!

Last thing we want to say before we go is thank you to a lady who is an absolute diamond and a rock to us all who deserves the world but unfortunately we can't give her that so this little message will be just as nice so Amanda 'The Guvnah' as one resident calls her we want to say thank you, you truly are amazing and don't ever forget that.

We also want to say such a big thank you to Flour Power Cakes for kindly donating a cake to us.... her cakes are absolutely beautiful and little did we know the size of the cake that she would make us. We are beyond amazed we really are and we feel ever so thankful for what she has done for us. Thank you so so much from us all. You truly are a kind and talented lady

We can't wait to tell you what we're doing next! See you next month.

Love from all at The Oaks x

BENTLEY IN BLOOM

This months notes are really a repeat of last months. We are offering our village hanging baskets planted up by Deans and delivered to your door for the all in price of £35.00. They are self watering baskets all you need to do is keep the resevoir topped up.The baskets remain the property of Bentley in Bloom and will be collected at the end of the year!

It would be nice if the baskets can be seen by the public, and if you have access to the brackets already on some telegraph poles thats fine!

To take advantage of this generous offer call me on 250799.

Michael Dorling

THANK YOU

A big thank you to everyone for their cards, phone calls and general support following the death of my dear Mum from Covid Pneumonia on the 16th of January. It's a great comfort to know that so many people are thinking of us at this sad time.

Nicky Justice and family



PET NOTES



What a cold February that was. I hope everyone stayed safe and well, and enjoyed how beautiful our village green looked covered in snow.

This month's article is on caring for elderly cats. As a cat owner myself, I am passionate about looking after our feline family members as they mature, enhancing their quality of life and keeping them marching on for longer than they would without the benefit of modern medicine. Hopefully the cat owners reading this visit the vet at least once a year for their pet's annual vaccination, but if you don't I implore you to have a vet examine your cat at least annually as the majority of problems that come with age are best treated early. Let's take a look at some of the common problems facing geriatric cats....

Hyperthyroidism

The thyroid is overactive resulting in far too high a metabolic rate. Cats with this condition often have very large appetites and weight loss. Some of the other symptoms are vomiting, diarrhoea and increased vocalisation. It is diagnosed using a blood test. There are several options for treatment and the vet responsible for your cat's care is best placed to advise which is the most appropriate for them. When hyperthyroidism is treated appropriately, it is possible to resolve all of the symptoms leading to a much happier cat without a limit on life expectancy.



Kidney Disease

This is detected by performing tests on both blood and urine samples. On occasion, your vet may also recommend an ultrasound scan. Symptoms include vomiting, diarrhoea, lethargy, weight loss, loss of appetite and "general unwellness". Though the kidney disease we see in elderly cats is not generally curable, we can manage the condition and give cats both a much better quality of life and extended life expectancy through medicine, fluid support and dietary changes.

Dental Disease

It makes sense that as cats get older, they are more prone to dental disease. If only we could teach them to brush their teeth! There are some excellent veterinary dental diets available and I recommend brushing the teeth a couple of times a week if your cat will let you. Gingivitis is a common issue which often necessitates the extraction of teeth if not treated early. The symptoms to look out for include reduced appetite, weight loss, preferring wet food to dry biscuits, eating the food on one side of the mouth (often you can see the cat tilting their head to achieve this), pawing at the mouth, halitosis, tooth loss, bleeding or pus from the mouth. Your vet will examine the mouth and advise you on what treatment is required. I have seen many a cat hugely benefit from a dental procedure so please contact your vet straight away if you have any concerns about their dental health.

Cancer

As with us, the risk of cancer increases with the age of the cat. Symptoms depend on the location of the cancer including, but not limited to, vomiting, diarrhoea, lethargy, weight loss, general unwellness, coughing, altered breathing, a visible swelling/mass. The treatment and prognosis depend on both the location and type of cancer, and early detection improves the chance of recovery.

Arthritis

In my experience, pet owners are pretty aware of dogs developing arthritis but they don't often consider it in cats despite it being an issue for them too. Sometimes it's very obvious and a cat will have a limp but often it is far subtler, such as not grooming themselves as well as they used to or a reduction in jumping/normal behaviour. There are some excellent medicines available which do not involve giving tablets – hurrah! Many arthritic cats also show excellent response to acupuncture.

Key messages:

Visit your vet as soon as possible any time you are concerned about your cat.

Ensure your cat is examined by a vet at least once a year.

Dr April Young MRCVS

Great Bentley Wine Tasting Group

For further details please contact Colin on 01206 252157 or e mail zindhum@hotmail.com

The wine tasting group established in August 2012 continues to hold enjoyable and informative evenings. For details please contact the above. Free advice available too, so please do contact me.

Fancy being part of an on-line wine tasting from the safety of your home then please do get in touch? Two clicks and you are in. It's free and great fun!

Points scoring

It's quite amazing how the world of wine tasting and buying has changed these past two decades or so. I read with pleasure wine articles and reviews of wines tasted with others, which after all is surely the pleasure of drinking wine, those shared experiences and discussions over which is the better wine and why? However, it's become increasingly evident that the complexities, subtleties and flavours are becoming lost in the endless quest to mark the wine out of 100. I was watching recently a wine review by a well-known wine critic with the property owner. Even before the owner could taste the wine with the critic the shout was 'I'm 91 on this'. No mention of the taste of the wine, the complexity, the length and the value. Onto the next wine, 20 seconds later and 'I'm 92 on this'. Who does this help?

I see today thousands of wines marked as 90 or over. Everywhere you go it's ** out of 100. Is this telling me '100% I'll enjoy the wine, it's guaranteed bulletproof, go for it, it's a sure fire certainty you are going to love it'? Can I be sure it's in a perfect place to drink right now?

As a wine consumer and lover of wine, for me the things that matter are, what the wine tastes like, does it offer good value for money and if I really like it can I buy it again. Is this a wine I would be proud to show to my friends, rather than to shout I've managed to secure some wine over 90 points, which tell you nothing? I don't believe the consumer is better informed at all, just led down the market that everything has to have a score and the higher the score the better the wine. Sure it's useful to benchmark the wine in some way, but how about saying for example this was a wonderful Merlot with bright fruit and terrific length of flavour showing a true sense of place and offering excellent value for money too. I believe this wine to be a match for other more prestigious Chateau costing twice as much and it's ready for drinking right now too.

If you score a wine 98 out of 100 the wine could be totally unready to drink. The consumer buys this thinking he has a certainty of immediate pleasure but is left disappointed and frustrated. It's a fact of course and perhaps a generalisation, that if you step up what you spend on a bottle of wine, the likelihood is the wine may well have the potential to age and become more smooth and complex over time. This also needs to be explained to the consumer. I often find myself saying to my wine friends 'drink less, drink better' but often get a reply that they spent £20 on a bottle of wine and it was not as nice as their £10 they usually buy, so I'm not going to take the risk again. This is where descriptions come in. A little knowledge and written notes, not scores, explaining where appropriate that the £20 is a wine that has the potential to improve and taste better in say 2 years or so and it's worth the wait. This will go a long way to allowing the consumer to understand better what they are buying.

The joy of wine is everything, so let's embrace it with the passion of the written word, share it and not score it!

Wine recommendations this month. You can't go out for a meal or a drink and you can't have dinner parties right now, so the time is right to push the boat out a little and enjoy some wonderful wines. Remember the moto 'drink less but drink better in 2021'

Herbert Beaufort Bouzy Brut, Champagne. Marks and Spencer £30

Put a little sparkle back into your life with this wonderful wine.

This is rich, dry with lovely honeyed flavours and delicious biscuity complexity. Absolutely wonderful.

Silene Chardonnay, Limoux, Mas, France. Co Op £10

This is a lovely rich yet refined Chardonnay with classic flavours of butter and toast. Shocking embossed bottle, but the quality is in the bottle.

Mourchon Seguret Grand Reserve 2016. Mr. Wheeler Colchester £22.50

Well worth the step up to the Grand Reserve which offers a rich, fruity, intense mouthful of delicious spicy fruit. Full bodied with fine length of flavour. Great with richly flavoured dishes.



A FEW NOTES FROM YOUR DISTRICT COUNCILLOR

BRIDLEWAY FROM PLOUGH ROAD TO ST. MARY'S ROAD – RE-OPENED

Thank you to everyone involved to ensuring that the above bridleway was reopened when it had been discovered that it was completely fenced off and closed on the morning of Saturday 6th February. The whole area was also covered in mud and totally inaccessible to all who are entitled to use it.

The Head of CALA Homes was contacted as were Tendring District Council's Planning Enforcement team. Although the bridleway had been given planning permission to be moved, the agreement was that the new one was to be in place before the existing bridleway was closed. Then the construction traffic would be able to access the development site through the old bridleway to start on the 25 new homes that have been agreed to at this stage. There are to be only 25 new homes at present due to the ongoing situation regarding the footpath over the railway. Construction traffic will not now be going through to Aingers Green to access the development site.

COMMUNITY CHAMPIONS TO SUPPORT COVID-19 RESPONSE

£220,000 has been given to Tendring District Council (TDC) for a project to encourage more people to follow Covid-19 public health advice. Under the Government's Community Champions scheme TDC has received the money to support outreach work in the district's communities, particularly around vaccinations.

This project is not about setting up something particularly new, the funding would strengthen the already great work taking place in Tendring's local communities through enhancing, improving and supporting the existing fantastic voluntary networks we have in our district.

Part of the Community Champions work is making sure groups who might be missing out on national messaging get the latest advice, for example for helping community transport groups get people to Covid vaccination centres.

The funding is a real boost, and the work of our Community Champions will not be confined to the pandemic. It is anticipated a project officer will co-ordinate the work of around nine Community Champions, working with grassroots organisations to support their local communities.

TACKLING CLIMATE CHANGE

TDC declared a Climate Emergency in August 2019, and work has been continuing since then to look at its approach on the action plan adopted in November last year. The overall aim is for the council to become net zero carbon by 2030.

A working party was set up and has been acknowledged for the ongoing work which had been carried out by officers and councillors on the Climate Change Working Party. It has been said that we must not let the work done so far gather dust on anybody's shelf, but council has a role to play for our future generations.

Cllr Talbot who is the Cabinet Member taking this forward has called on council colleagues to raise Climate Change with their town and parish councils and other groups in their wards to seek their involvement – as part of TDC's aspiration to lead the way in driving emissions down across the district. He asked us for ideas to be put forward, so if there are any ideas that you have I would be extremely pleased to pass them on for you.

CENSUS 2021

Households across Tendring will be asked to take part in Census 2021.

The once-in-a-decade survey gives an accurate estimate of all the people and households in England and Wales. It has been carried out every decade since 1801 with the exception of 1941.

Households will be receiving a letter with a unique access code, allowing them to complete the questionnaire on their computers, phones or tablets. However, there will be plenty of support available for people who are not confident with online services, and paper questionnaires will automatically be issued in areas where the Office of National Statistics (ONS) has identified residents who are more likely to need them. It is important everyone takes part, and it has been made easier for people to do so online, with help and paper questionnaires for those that need them.

Census day will be on March 21st. Census results are really interesting, and they help to shape how everyone delivers services – so it is so important that everyone takes part.

The census will include questions about your age, work, health, education, household size, gender and ethnicity. For the first time, there will be a question asking people whether they have served in the armed forces, as well as voluntary questions for those aged 16 and over on sexual orientation and gender identity.

Results will be available within 12 months, personal records will be locked away for 100 years, kept safe for future generations. For more information, visit www.census.gov.uk.

AMBITIOUS FREEPORT FOR EAST OF ENGLAND TO DRIVE JOBS AND INVESTMENT

A new freeport for the East of England could create 13,500 jobs in the region – as part of an investment of more than half-a-billion pounds.

The figures were set out in a bid submitted by Freeport East, ahead of the Government's deadline (midday, Friday 5 February) as part of its compelling argument for the designation. A decision is expected by the Treasury in the Spring. Freeport East is a partnership made up of business and local government driving forward the bid – which has also been backed by both the New Anglia and South East Local Enterprise Partnerships.

If freeport status is granted to the area, the bid estimates 13,500 new jobs could be created in the area, while over the next five years Freeport East would attract more than £500million of investment – while providing a £650m boost to the UK economy.

Freeport East can deliver on the nation's strategic aims:

- **growing global trade**, combining the UK's largest deep-sea container port at Felixstowe with the short sea European gateway at Harwich.
- **being a hub for Innovation**, driving the Green Industrial Revolution by creating a new hydrogen hub and supporting development of offshore renewables; and
- **driving economic growth and opportunity** for more deprived communities both close to the ports and – through its trade connections throughout the UK – across the country.

It is said that working with local councils, LEPS, partners and innovators we will deliver a green energy hub that will help deliver net-zero transport systems and complement sustainable developments in other regions.

The benefits would spread to other sites earmarked for development, such as Horsley Cross and Bathside Bay in Tendring, and other areas in Felixstowe.

Innovation will look at supporting green energy, such as the expansion of offshore wind in the region and new nuclear projects at Sizewell and Bradwell, as well as wider research and development linked in with university partners across the region and beyond around hydrogen technology.

Cllr Lynda McWilliams
Tendring District Councillor to the Wards of
Great Bentley, Little Bentley and Frating
Cabinet Member with the Portfolio for Partnerships

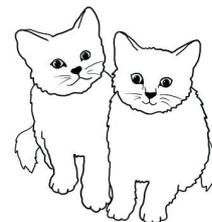
email lynda@boblyn.co.uk or cllr.lmcwilliams@tendrindc.gov.uk

Telephone Number 01206 250732

Mobile Number 07564 613603

Tails of Many Kitties

Regular readers of my articles over time will recall Gloria a dear friend of well over twenty years who carries out cat and kitten rescue in Tottenham. Our friendship came about by chance on a visit to an RSPCA rehoming centre in Hertfordshire whilst still living in Enfield. In need of some advice which the staff at reception were not able to provide, one of the ladies said "I know someone who can, she has just left but if you are quick you will catch her before she gets to her car!" There began a wonderful true friendship which despite the miles between us is as strong as ever, Gloria lives near the famous Harmsworth Animal Hospital where many very needy, desperate cats and dogs are brought in every day. So it was that we received a phone call from Gloria following one of her frequent visits there asking if we had space for a little cat that had been found wandering along the busy pavements of Tottenham weaving her way through the legs of shoppers and going round and round in ever decreasing circles. Thankfully someone picked her up and took her to The Harmsworth explaining the circumstances under which they had found her. That description brought about her being given the name of Matilda because one of the staff said it sounded as if she had been waltzing along the pavement hence Waltzing Matilda! There was a reason for her behaviour bless her....she was blind, apart from that and the fact she was elderly and under nourished the vet found no obvious signs of injury or ill health and deemed her ready for Gloria to bring her to us. Always exciting to welcome the arrival of Gloria with or without a cat and that occasion was no exception. Tilda as we came to call her was Tortieshell, my own particular favourite cat colouring and personality, often known as 'naughty torties' they can tend to be very 'precious' and their ideal is to be an 'only cat' with one doting owner! Tilda was in The Hospice accommodation at first but as was the case more often than not soon came indoors! She was remarkable. However long she had roamed the streets she had learnt to fend for herself somehow, our other indoor cats and the dogs took little notice of her being used to newcomers in the household, as for Tilda nothing was going to get in the way of her new life! In her determined manner she explored the house using her heightened senses in the absence of sight, she decided she liked to be upstairs, but call her when it was grub time and she was down the stairs straight to the place where we put her food bowl, used the litter tray then back upstairs, fastidious grooming and more sleeping! Nothing daunted little Tilda and one night she found her way onto the bed, ignoring the hisses from whatever cat or cats had already bagged their spot she curled up with no preamble and settled down for the night. She wasn't a fidget and her routine of new found loving trouble free surroundings was complete, all was well with her, mind you whobetide me if I accidentally put my arm out from under the duvet and touched her, I had to get it back under the duvet mighty quick. This haughty, naughty tortie did not take kindly to being disturbed!!! Little Tilda brought much pleasure and amusement in her time and like those who came before and those who were to follow left a mark on my heart.



More cosy, colourful blankets are ready for Louise to collect, I have spoken with her and it will come as no surprise to you to hear she is very busy, she wanted me to tell you that "the wonderful ladies and one gentleman who knit" are much appreciated and she makes a point of explaining where the knitted blankets which go with each cat or kitten she homes has come from. I am not on Facebook but she tells me there are photos of your blankets on there.... I have always known how clever and generous you are and now lots of other people do too....You are all Stars! If we all try and do our own little bit in our own little corner then we can help to make a difference. Thank you for caring.

Judy Bishop 251702



Following on from last month's enquiry

Back row: Esther Allington, Jennifer Allington
Left to right: Susan Deeks (District Commissioner)
 Jackie Starling, Pauline Seaman, Ann Cross, Stephanie Wright, Helen Tricker,
 Jackie Maers, Sylvia Keeble, Bryony Went

Front row:
Left to right: Janice Eaves, Gaye Tricker, Brenda Smith, Susan Baker, Sally White, Jill Snowden,
 Pamela Ellacott, Janet Baker, Pat Ruffell, Vanessa or Valerie Barnard (not sure).

Thank you to Brenda Knight. I love the sandals. We all had these didn't we? ED

My Pre-Covid Good Samaritan

I left home in a hurry to go shopping and drove along Wick Road, Gt. Bentley in the direction of Weeley. Just as I passed Coppice Farm on the left, a Range Rover came towards me at a very steady speed and with no intention of slowing down despite the narrowness of the road caused by very large potholes and the difficulty two cars would have to pass one another safely. Determined to avoid a collision, I moved further to the left and hit a very deep pothole. I knew immediately that I was in trouble.

Anxious to return to the village and home, I turned round and headed towards Gt. Bentley even though I could hear hissing from the damaged tyre. I was compelled to stop once I reached the Weeley Road just past the mini-roundabout. My tyre was completely flat.

What can I do now, I thought? Oh yes, I'll ring Mick at Gt Bentley garage. He will come to my rescue, as he always does, and then I remembered I had left my phone at home. There was nobody in sight at that moment, either on foot or in a car.

Then, in the distance, I could see a man walking in my direction. I waited until he came nearer and, after explaining my dilemma, I asked if I could use his phone to ring the garage.

"Just give me two minutes. I have some business to see to and then I'll come and change your tyre, and you can be safely on your way," he said. He returned as promised, by which time I had found the spare, the jack, the red triangle etc. and he replaced the tyre within a few minutes. I wanted to hug him, or at least shake his hand, now covered in dirt and grease of course, so that wasn't possible.

He refused any payment but accepted a donation to one of his charities, after which he waited to see me drive away safely.

The Covid pandemic has reminded me many times about the kindness of this stranger and of all the people everywhere who have put themselves out for others in so many different ways, and who continue to do so, often at great risk to themselves and their loved ones.

How grateful we are to all our Good Samaritans!



Rosemary Branch

FOOTBALL CLUB NOTES

Similar to everybody else in the country. I am waiting to hear what Boris has to say on February 22nd regarding a path out of lockdown.

Will outdoor sports be possible or do we continue to watch on the TV at home?

At times in my playing days and more recently watching from the side lines I have wished that we had something like VAR to fall back on. Now I'm not so sure!

My understanding of VAR when it first arrived was that it was to help the referee if he/she had made a "clear and obvious error.

Now we get the situation where every single goal is scrutinised for anything. The slightest glancing touch of an arm or a big toe offside. The referee is called to the pitch side monitor to watch the incident in slow motion over and over again until they are as confused as we are watching from home.

It doesn't help when players fall to the ground, screams echoing in the empty stadiums at the slightest touch as if they have been shot by a sniper from the stands.

The January and February zoom committee meetings were cancelled because absolutely nothing had happened in that period.

However we are all hoping that after 22nd February we can start planning something ?

Follow Great Bentley Football Club and Border League Football on Facebook and Twitter for all the up to date information.



Follow the Bulldogs

Mel

My Allotment

Mick Moore

Affectionately known as "Mick the Window Cleaner".

Sadly, Mick passed away at home on 25th January after a short battle with cancer. His partner Chris and his daughters Lucy and Kate were at his side. The funeral will take place on Friday 12th March and due to Covid Restrictions there will only be space for family and close friends to attend. The funeral cortege will pass through the village and down the green between 10:30 and 10:45 on the way to Weeley Crematorium for those of you who may wish to pay your respects to Mick.

Chris, Lucy and Kate are collecting donations for either Cancer Research or the Royal Brompton Hospital. These can be made online via the following website.
<https://michaelmoore.muchloved.com>.

We would like to thank everyone for their kind messages, cards, flowers etc received.

Chris, Lucy, Kate

When first I took on my allotment,
I wished to grow flowers and veg,
But first came the backache of digging
That pushed me quite close to the edge.
The rabbits dug up my potatoes
And the mice ran away with my seeds,
And the red-legged partridges
Made it their place
To relieve me of all of my peas!
But time made me wary and watchful,
I bought netting and fleece by the mile,
As I hammered and nailed
But miserably failed
To get nature to follow my style.
But the sunflower was watching my toiling
As butterflies courted the air
Gently urging me onwards and upwards and
To nurture my garden with care.
On my journey of growing and learning,
Good friendship was made on the way,
Enduring the sad and the bad times
And sharing the joys of the day.
Through wreaths of blue smoke from the bonfire
We battled on - cocoa in hand
Watching cobwebs of rain falling, gentle and soft
Onto tiny green plants on the ground.
And when finally the summer was with us,
And good days were further ahead
We saluted our life
With a glass of chilled wine
To a sun setting orange and red.
J.M.

A RUM YARN

Three hundred years ago the Royal Navy switched from the daily issue of a gallon of beer to ½ pint of neat rum!! At the time, beer was in short supply and proving difficult to keep. The rum was blended from suppliers in Trinidad & Tobago, Jamaica, and The British Virgin Isles. It was 95.5 proof and the issue was divided into two servings a day. The quantity was halved in 1823 and again in 1850. The "Tot" (1/8 Pint) as it became fondly known continued to be issued to sailors, traditionally at midday.

Occasionally the order Splice the Mainbrace was made. This meant a second issue of rum was given, usually in recognition of a job well done e.g. a Naval victory, or in more recent times a Royal birth!! This expression stems from the time when sails were hoisted on yardarms. These were controlled or braced by ropes and the mainsail rope could be as much as 15-18 inches in diameter. The Mainbrace was occasionally damaged in battle and needed repairing, this was usually achieved by splicing the damaged ends together. The task of splicing the mainbrace together was considered one of the most difficult onboard ship, so it was rewarded with an extra rum issue.

In 1740, not long after the rum issue started, Vice Admiral Vernon ordered that the rum should be mixed with water before it was issued, to curb the levels of drunkenness. The water and rum were mixed in an oak Rum Tub. Admiral Vernon was commonly known by sailors as "Old Grog" – this came from his habit of wearing heavy waterproof cloaks made of Grogham material. The rum and water mix became known as Grog.

In 1739 Vernon was promoted to Vice Admiral and put in command of six ships. He was ordered by the Admiralty to attack Spanish commerce and settlements in the Caribbean. His first engagement was the town of Puerto Belo in Panama. He quickly overran the town, capturing it in the November. The victory led to the naming of Portobello Road in Notting Hill and the nearby Vernon Yard. On retiring from the Navy, Admiral Vernon became an MP for Ipswich where he continued to fight the Royal Navy's corner. He died in 1757 aged 72 at the family estate in Nacton, Suffolk. Today in the River Orwell, close to the family estate you can find a navigational buoy named "Grog".

The rum issue continued at sea and in Naval establishments for many years until it was finally abolished by the Admiralty on July 31st 1970. I remember it well, not only did I drink my daily tot, but part of my job was also to store, issue and account for the rum. It came in 9 gallon barrels and was decanted into one gallon jars before issue.

At that time, it was considered that sailors, following their Tot issue would be less capable of operating machinery that was becoming increasingly complex, thereby endangering themselves or others. Additionally, sailors would likely fail the newly introduced Breathalyser Test! So, the longstanding tradition of a daily rum issue finally ceased and was replaced by..... a can of beer!!!

Peter Harry

SESAW NEWS

Everyone seems to be in a reflective mood as we mark the changes in our lives over the last year so here are a few words from Mum – better known to you as Maggie.

"Many of us have come to acknowledge the truth of that old adage, 'You don't know what you'll miss until it's gone', be it a person, a pet or the disrupted rhythm of life.

The current situation has brought home to us at SESAW, how much we miss the help and commitment received from Firms in the past. It's very apparent just how much hard work and effort they put into helping us maintain the kennels and catteries on site, thus giving us more time for the animals. That said we are still here, a bit scruffier, up to our ears in mud but never the less the animals are clean, warm in their heated kennels, well fed and loved,

So what's to moan about? Spring is on its way, it will get dryer and we look forward to releasing a Buzzard that was bought into us starving. It is now eating well and waiting for better weather to go back to its territory. It is a similar scenario for a Barn Owl which will be taking wing in the near future. So don't forget, if we can help we are here, operating nearly thirty years and facing the future with hope and compassion."

That's enough for now, Mum. It's time for you to feed all the animals including me, your usual correspondent, Kenny (the Boss) Chihuahua. Suffolk & Essex Small Animal Welfare, Reg.Charity No.1124029, Stoke Road, Leavenheath, CO6 4PP.

Tel: 01787 210888 www.sesaw.co.uk

GREAT BENTLEY PARISH COUNCIL

Community Resource Centre, Village Hall Plough Road CO7 8LG

Contact the Clerk on clerk@greatbentleyparishcouncil.co.uk

www.greatbentleyparishcouncil.co.uk

Due to Government advice regarding Covid-19 the Community Resource Centre is still closed. Parish Council meetings are successfully being held virtually using Zoom. Agendas will be placed on the Parish Council website no later than 3 working days before the meeting. If you wish to join the meeting please email the clerk.

Meeting held 4th February 2021:

Planning Applications Considered

The planning applications shown in the table below were considered by the Planning Committee. If you wish to make a comment on these or other planning applications, you should log on to the Tendring District Council website. Follow the link: <https://idox.tendringdc.gov.uk/online-applications/>

20/01781/FUL Mr and Mrs May	Single storey and part two storey rear extension. Decided by TDC 3 rd February	4 Weeley Road Aingers Green CO7 8NB
20/01737/OUT Mrs Green	Proposed two detached dwellings.	Land rear of Gable Farm Aingers Green Road Aingers Green, CO7 8NH
21/00099/TCA Mr Terence Baker	1 No. Himalayan Silver Birch - reduce height back to previous cutting points, 1 No. Lilac - remove 2 lower boughs.	Pycotts The Green, Great Bentley CO7 8PA

S106 funding for proposed Doctor Surgery:

Dr Bhatti of Great Bentley Surgery has asked, due to withdrawal of funding from the NHSE, if the Parish Council and TDC would be prepared to explore the possibility of funding for the proposed new Doctor's Surgery through S106 monies obtained from a further housing development east of Admirals Green. This was also discussed at the previous 2 meetings.

Cllr Wright has declared a Pecuniary Interest and will withdraw from meetings before the item is discussed. Cllr Hills has declared a Pecuniary Interest and a dispensation has been granted to attend Great Bentley Planning Committee and Parish Council meetings to give representation and answer any questions the Councillors may have. He will withdraw from meetings before any debate or voting regarding the project takes place.

At the meeting on 4th February the Chairman of the Planning Committee stressed the Parish Council need to consider whether they support in principle the possibility of funding the new surgery through further development. Following the communication from Dr Bhatti he said it is important that irrespective of the decision they make that they give the surgery some new assurance that they do support the surgery and the great work they do, and the benefits residents have from having the surgery on their doorstep.

Some of the points raised during the discussion were:

- There would be 50+ more houses in the village to gain S106 funding, this has not yet been shared with the village and there could be protests against the extra housing.
- If TDC do not support the proposal, then it will not move forward.
- There is a need to explore all avenues to keep the surgery in Great Bentley.
- It is not clear on what the Parish Council is being asked to support without looking at any other options on how to support the surgery.
- Timescale – unknown how long the current surgery can be maintained. What is the urgency of the proposal?
- In 2017 the application at appeal was for a surgery and 25 houses to be built, the surgery would be leased by the practice. A decision by CCG is still awaited.
- The proposed development would be outside the new local plan boundary.
- Would this need to go out to a village referendum.
- There are still approximately 300 houses to be built from previous planning applications.

- TDC Head of Planning wrote that for funding to be diverted it would need to outweigh other competing social requirements.
- This application would be based on S106 affordable housing funding.
- Great Bentley is being asked to provide a surgery where only 1/3 of the patients are village residents.
- There is funding from health impact statements from other developments including those outside the village and it is wondered if those could be used.

It was resolved to advise the developer and Doctor's Surgery that the Parish Council wholeheartedly support the effort to keep the surgery in the village, but they cannot support what they are being asked to support in principle because of lack of information and firm proposals in funding it, but that they are keen to work with the Dr Surgery and any other interested parties to understand what the options are.

Planning matters to report:

ESS/134/20/TEN/SPO Proposed Second Reservoir and associated works – Lufkins Farm, Great Bentley Road, Frating, Colchester. Town & Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017 (EIA Regulations 2017) – The Scoping Opinion has been issued.

Match Funding:

The Parish Council have agreed to match the funding of £500 from the Community Reach Partnership at Brightlingsea for Christmas lights in Great Bentley.

Southside track:

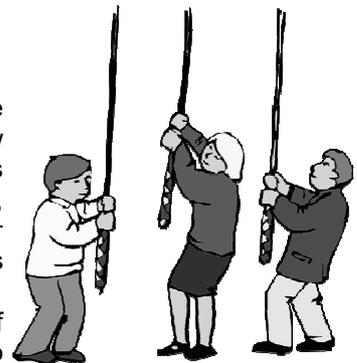
A meeting with the contractor has taken place and remedial work will take place when the track surface water and the weather conditions are suitable.

Next Virtual Meeting – 4th March. Planning Committee at 7pm followed by the Parish Council Meeting.

A letter has been received for publication in this issue from a Southside resident. It can be found on the back inside cover where we used to feature the diary. ED

BELFRY NEWS

Another month of lockdown having passed, our thoughts look towards the future of church bell ringing. As a local band, we meet every week to learn new methods and hone our skills in a theoretical fashion. This will, of course, help us when we finally return to St Mary's Church tower. All the ringing associations, guilds and societies have one thing on their minds at the moment – how will our activities, membership and teaching survive the pandemic and the challenges we will face once ringing becomes possible again?



The Essex Association of Change Ringers and the Central Council of Church Bell Ringers update us on a weekly basis, even though there is little to report!

The main concern for all those involved in the management and teaching of this ancient, and quintessentially English art have a 'Ringing Recovery Group', made up purely of volunteers from amongst members. This group are planning how we will return to ringing, encourage new membership and ensure that church bells will be rung regularly as they were prior to the various lockdowns and restrictions imposed by this terrible pandemic.

With the vaccines being administered, we feel we can start to cautiously plan ahead with a view to ringing the bells again later this year. For us, this will be a time of celebration, as most of us have only seen each other during virtual ringing sessions for the past year!

Once we resume ringing activities, we will be looking to welcome new members. A reminder of a few common myths that I haven't included in my posts for more than a year:

- You do not need to be strong!
- You do not need to be a musician
- You do not need to have learnt to play a musical instrument

If you would like to learn to ring, please contact me using the details below or through our Facebook page.



Roger Carey-Smith 07422 880921 Great-Bentley@eacr.org.uk

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

RUNNING CLUB

So as i wound up last month's piece there was the hope that we would all be able to go out on virtual runs. Within a day of sending the article it became apparent that encouraging the memebbers to travel even relatively short distances would be to condone breaking best advice. We had to swiftly stand the whole competition down.

Members have instead been writing trail runs for the rest of us. We have published these on the understanding that only those of us within a short distance of any start point should go out to do that particular run. And on that thought we would like to share one of the routes as an invigorating walk. Just a few caveats, disclaimers and don't blame mes: The course is muddy. Very muddy in parts.

The route is published as a 10 k (6.2 mile) distance. If you get lost it could be a lot further. There will a short sections on roads. Please take care and watch for traffic.

And please note you undertake this at your own risk as we cannot be responsible for any changes which could happen or anything which could happen to anyone as they go round.

I am happy to email a copy of these instructions if anyone would like to print in a larger font or with double spacing. My address is paul.carlisle4@btinternet.com

Great Bromley Trail Run.

Start at St Georges Church, Great Bromley (CO7 7HZ)

Code to abbreviations at the bottom of the page

Start at Great Bromley church CP: Exit CP thru main exit and TR onto P: At next FPS on L X Rd and follow TK along LHFE. At TK Junc with WMSP Cont SA, at next WMSP cont SA, X FD towards woods. At entrance to woods with WMSP X FB into woods. Follow path thru woods. Exit woods up steps with WMSP, SA field on faint P to WMSP. Follow steps down to bridge. X FB and continue up steps on other side. Follow faint P X FD to WMSP, thru gap in F and TR. TL up steps. At top of steps TR following P, cont on P until concrete BR. X Br. At end of BR turn L down steps to enc P. Follow Enc P until gap in F on RHS with WMSP.



Turn R Thru gap in F and BR (half R) across FD towards WMSP. At WMSP with TK Junc TL and follow P along RHFE with F on R. At TK Junc Cont SA with Fence on L along P, cont SA past WMSP on R At FC TR along LHFE following TK for approx 100m. At WMSP on L TL. Follow P X FB. Cont SA with past WMSP and black Barn on L. Cont SA on Faint P FSD. Cont SA X EB with WMSP on R along Faint P. X FD towards WMSP where P goes into ENC P. SA on Enc P. At next WMSP BL with path and follow until you meet RD. TR onto P.

Follow pavement until Old School Lane then TR. Cont on Old School Lane, SA past Hatchcroft Gardens on RHS until you see park on LHS. RD goes into Enc P. Cont along P until you reach gravel TK and BL with TK. At end of TK TR onto RD. Follow RD FSD (half mile) until JUNC with grass triangle and white G. TL thru 5 bar MG and cont along gravel TK past house on L. Cont SA on concrete P past glasshouse on R, keeping farm bldgs on R: Follow P X BR. Cont SA following concrete TK FSD.

At end of TK thru MG to meet RD. TR on R *TAKE CARE*

After 20m, level with end of house TR thru gap onto LHFE. Follow LHFE with ditch and stream on left. Follow TK along LHFE. Follow track as it bears round to the R, still on LHFE keeping stream on LHS. Cont FSD past FB on L.

After approx. 1 mile at FC at 2nd FB TL X FB, X Stile and TR following P along RHFE with pond on R Cont on RHFE FSD (just under half mile.) At TK Junc TL keeping woods and earth mounds on R. At corner of woods on R follow P SA. BR with P and cont between 2 FDs. At TK Junc with WMSP TL and cont until you meet RD. X RD and TR on P. TL into church CP.

Code to abbreviations below

BR Bridge : Cont Continue: CP Car park : EB Earthbridge: FB Footbridge: FPS Fingerpost sign:

FD Field: Junc Junction: L Left: LHFE Left-hand field edge: LHS Left hand side: MG metal gate :

P Path: R Right: RHFE Right-hand field edge: RHS Right hand side: SA Straight ahead: TK Track:

TL Turn left: TR Turn right: WMSP Way marker signpost: X Cross

Paul Carlisle



Surgery News

Covid-19 Vaccinations

The Covid-19 vaccination programme is now in full swing and we are working hard to invite our patients for their vaccinations as quickly as possible.

Can we please ask patients to help us by not contacting the Surgery to ask when you will receive your invitation for your vaccination. We are working through the Groups in strict order and can assure you that you will be contacted at the appropriate time.

If you are 65 or older and haven't received an invite to book your Covid-19 vaccination yet, you can arrange an appointment by either ringing 119 or by contacting the Surgery.

Repeat Prescriptions

In order to help our Prescription Clerks can we please ask that patients do not ring to check if a prescription has been issued. Please allow three working days after putting your request into the Surgery and contact your nominated Pharmacy who will be able to confirm if your medication is ready to collect.

Appointments at the Surgery

Due to social distancing as we only have limited room in our waiting area can we please ask that patients only arrive a couple of minutes before their appointment time.

Surgery Training Afternoon

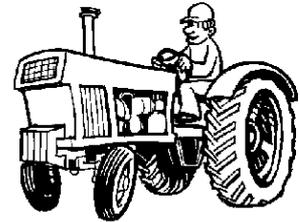
Along with all other surgeries in the area we will be shut from 12 noon on Wednesday, 24 March 2021 for staff training.

Patient Participation Group Meetings

At the time of writing the Newsletter there isn't a Patient Participation Group meeting planned in March 2021.

Sue Mitson – Operations Manager

Farming Diaries



In recent weeks you may have seen many farmers not drilling crops as they will have done in previous years, but instead clearing snow from the roads, spreading salt on the minor roads in and around Great Bentley and outside the pharmacy, doctor's surgery and shops. **We must thank them for all their hard work, time and efforts** to try and get our roads cleared so the village could continue to function whilst still attending to their own livestock who had frozen water troughs, water pipes and added health pressures due to the severe cold weather. It is something that we don't always see (as thankfully we don't often have such weather) yet, the local farmers are always willing to take the time to help and support the local community.

Crops coming out of the winter this year will have been sitting in cold, wet soils this can result in a lack of nutrition being available to them. As soon as the weather dries and warms up farmers will begin applying fertiliser to give crops a kick start to the growing season. This fertiliser contains a blend of nutrients such as nitrogen and sulphur, and are applied at a rate suited to the crop to enable them to grow away quickly and continue to photosynthesise with the increasing day length.

The very last sugar beet will have been lifted before the local Silverspoon factory at Bury St Edmunds shut its doors for the year to begin its busy process of turning our local farmer's sugar beet into sweet products for you to use in your tea, cake baking and jam making. Any Silverspoon product you see in the shops will have been made using British grown sugar beet so where you can please support our local farmers and buy this British product.

Farmers will begin pulling land down for spring drilling in order to create a friable tilth. This is important as it allows tender plant roots to penetrate the soil to enable it to source moisture and nutrients. Where sugar beet once stood in the field spring cropping will now be being drilled such as spring barley of which malting varieties can go on to make the beers we drink. It won't be long until we start to see the familiar 'ridging up' of land for the future planting of potatoes. These potatoes depending on the variety, will remain in the ground for between 90 to 120 days being irrigated on a regular basis and products applied to prevent the outbreak of potato blight which can devastate an entire crop. The crop will then be lifted and graded depending on size where they will then be sent for processing into crisps and chips or to supermarkets to be sold loose or pre-packed.

Vicki Brooks

NATURE NOTES



The recent arrival of significant snow felt like a redoubling of Lockdown with existing Covid restrictions. But undeterred, on the third day a perambulation was made of my transformed local patch in the Holland Brook valley. The sudden change from mild, wet weather meant the snow lay over ground not frozen solid, which was to shortly follow, but still gave a stark appreciation of the hardships wildlife has to endure.

Fieldfares and Redwings were conspicuous, their markings and colours enhanced in the prevailing whiteness. Less wary than usual they sought the last remaining hedgerow berries, but chiefly fossicked in the few barer patches on the ground. A Buzzard's outstretched underwing pattern could be fully seen as it floated low overhead, with no inclination or thermals to take it very high for leisurely gliding. I disturbed probably a different bird a mile further on, rising with a long-tailed rat in its talons, the most dramatic sighting of my ramble. The mystery of just what such a large bird-of-prey finds to eat is posed. Rabbits often head the list and, as well as rats here, grey squirrels and small mammals rather than birds. Two Hares were seen, one an exaggerated silhouette on the white low horizon of a rising field. They would probably be too large for a Buzzard to tackle but not as a corpse – as carrion is not despised. In the following days I saw two Buzzards sitting quite low in trees looking at the ground presumably for anything that moved. Kestrels are more often seen perched like this "still-hunting." A Sparrow-hawk, prime bird-slayer was not seen on my walk, finding easier pickings at garden bird-feeders.

Along the brook's part flooded meadows not all were frozen. On the ice between water and snow, three Pied Wagtails hunted for food: that imperative in this cruel weather means not a morsel is left unconsidered. The cheerful peewit sounds of Lapwing were heard before seeing them. They are a scarce sight inland nowadays, probably only recently pushed over the North Sea ahead of this late cold winter blast, like several species seen on my walk - including Woodcock. One was to quietly break cover as I walked up a hedged valley with small stream. Woodpigeon usually feeding on rape fields were busy eating the hard fruit of mature ivy where it almost overtops small trees. Back beside the brook a Cormorant is perched on a fencepost, attended by a small group of Starlings. Teal are the most numerous wildfowl, identified at distance by their tinkling calls. Two Tufted Duck steadfastly ignore me on a small adjacent farm reservoir, conserving energy clearly outweighs the threat I pose. Returning home across a stubble field a flock of some thirty Skylarks is a reminder, if less obvious species, that in winter many gather into flocks. In contrast I heard and briefly saw Bullfinch twice on my walk, birds that largely remain in their conjugal pairings most of the year. Such neat distinctions can be pondered on once home in the warm. The coolness of the white landscape's enchantment with icicles and drifts, little crevasses and snow bridges over ditches was turning to feel very cold. By the time this is published it will have vanished along with most of the Continental refugee birds – with let us hope spring beckoning.

DRB

SNOWY WEATHER THANK YOU

MARY CACKETT

Mary Cackett, widow of Ron, formerly of 69, Birch Avenue, passed away peacefully in a care home on Tuesday 2nd February. Mary lived in the village for 47 years and for many years was a home help. Mary will be sadly missed by her 2 daughters, 4 grandchildren and 7 greatgrandchildren.

Funeral to be held at Weeley Crematorium on Thursday 1st April at 1.15pm.

Mary's ashes will be interred in St Mary's churchyard, in her husband Ron's grave, at a later date.

Thank you to everyone who made life easier for all of the village residents and workers during the snowy weather; Jonathan Hills for making sure access to the surgery was safe, George Wright and his merry men who spread at least 1 tonne of salt and grit on paths and minor roadways and filled the salt bins, the milkmen, postmen and shop assistants for keeping the village shops stocked and open Sue from Tesco for spreading salt on the parking area near the post box and of course the Surgery and Pharmacy. Special thank you to neighbours and friends for keeping an eye out for those who needed paths clearing and shopping etc. Need to add to this the men working on the railway 13th/14th February in freezing conditions.

Thanks everyone, all acts of kindness greatly appreciated.

SCHOOL NEWS

News from Year 6 at Great Bentley Primary School

Both Y6 key worker children and Y6 children at home, have been exploring the Amazon Rainforest this term and have been researching and writing fact files about their favourite animal. A lot of those chosen are animals found at the zoo and we are sending our fact files to Colchester Zoo for them to see as well. Those children in school are staying in touch with those at home with a weekly Zoom social which is involving lots of scavenger hunts and news of home life, pets which feature highly on a weekly basis too!

Best wishes from the Y6 children

CBBC YouTube Channel

We think children and parents may be interested in this for entertainment at half term and outside of home-schooling hours whilst we're in lockdown.

We are uploading videos to it daily that are suitable for 5-11 year olds. We have all the top CBBC brands on here, with a wide range of genres from factual shows, news, dramas, comedy to entertainment.

Programmes like Horrible Histories, Blue Peter, Newsround, The Next Step, Saturday Mash-Up, Operation Ouch, the Playlist, the Dumping Ground, Heirs of the Night and Jamie Johnson. We are also welcoming back Dani Harmer in the brilliant new programme My Mum Tracy Beaker.

If you think your children would be interested in this, please ask them to subscribe to www.youtube.com/cbbc - (it's obviously completely free to subscribe!) and don't forget to watch the CBBClive daily and on the BBC iPlayer.

Essex & Herts Air Ambulance gets keys to new airbase

Essex & Herts Air Ambulance (EHAAT) has taken possession of its brand-new purpose-built airbase at North Weald Airfield following its completion by Barnes Construction. Work on the facility began in February 2020 after planning permission was granted by Epping Forest District Council. Project managed by quantity surveyors Castons, and designed by architects Hurley Porte and Duell and structural engineer specialists Superstructures, the new airbase was built by Barnes Construction and has been delivered on time despite the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic.

In a socially distanced handover, EHAAT CEO Jane Gurney and Cliff Gale, EHAAT's Operations Director took possession of the building from Mark Hart, Joint Divisional Managing Director of Barnes Construction. This was carried out via a video link in order to comply with the current lockdown restrictions on non-essential travel.

Jane Gurney said: "The handing over of this building today by Barnes Construction marks yet another milestone in what is a very important project for the Charity. The opportunity to design and build our own Airbase has allowed us to include elements such as dedicated areas for training which will benefit not only our crews but also the local pre-hospital care community along with an interactive visitor centre for our supporters, who we look forward to welcoming to this incredible new building when such visits become possible again.

On behalf of the Trustees and the Executive Team I would like to thank Barnes Construction, associated partners and suppliers for all their hard work and support in seeing this project through to completion in such a professional manner especially with the added pressures the pandemic presented.

I would also like to thank our amazing fundraisers and donors for helping us secure the future operation of the charity at North Weald for many years to come by supporting us and making this possible".

Mark Hart said: "We are proud to have played a key part in the construction of this new airbase, which is a true community-based project that will help everyone. The project has been a collaborative team effort and I'm very grateful to Castons, Superstructures and Hurley Porte and Duell in particular, for helping us to get the scheme delivered on time, and under the most extreme and challenging circumstances due to COVID-19".

In addition to housing one of EHAAT's two helicopters and two of its rapid response vehicles, the new building has areas for training, mentoring, patient liaison and fundraising. There is space for cross training with other emergency services, which will benefit both EHAAT and the local pre-hospital care community. Part of the new airbase will be a dedicated interactive visitor centre which will allow the charity to welcome and engage with the local community.

The new building, which includes a hangar which is capable of housing two helicopters when necessary (for example, to permit aircraft maintenance) has underground heating beneath the helipad to keep it free of snow and ice during the winter months.

The building has been designed with 'green' issues very much to the fore. It includes charging points for electric cars and photovoltaic panels on the roof which will generate electricity. Any excess will be supplied to the National Grid. There is bicycle parking for staff who wish to cycle to work and as much waste as possible will be recycled. The building has been well insulated in order to retain heat and reduce noise pollution and it will make as much use as possible of natural light in order to save on electricity.

Work has now begun on the internal fit out phase, and it is scheduled to become operational by June of this year.

Visit ehaat.org/north-weald-airbase/ to see a time-lapse of the complete external build.

Children's Page

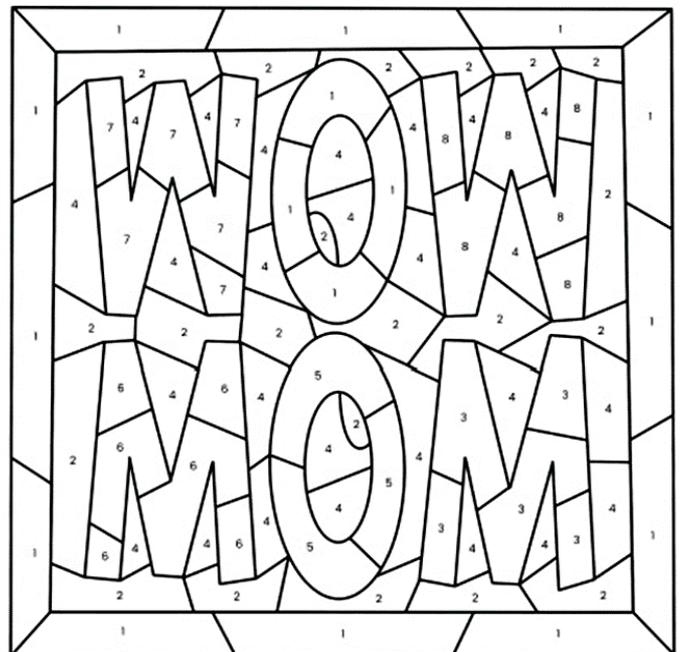
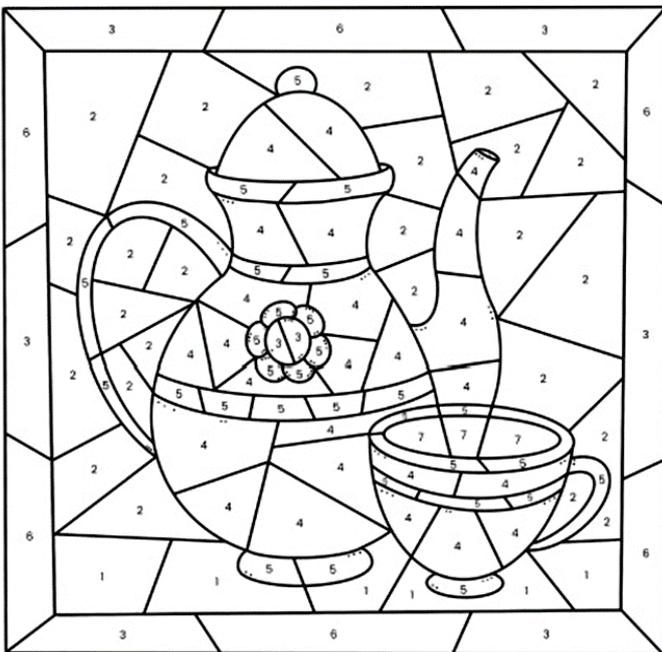
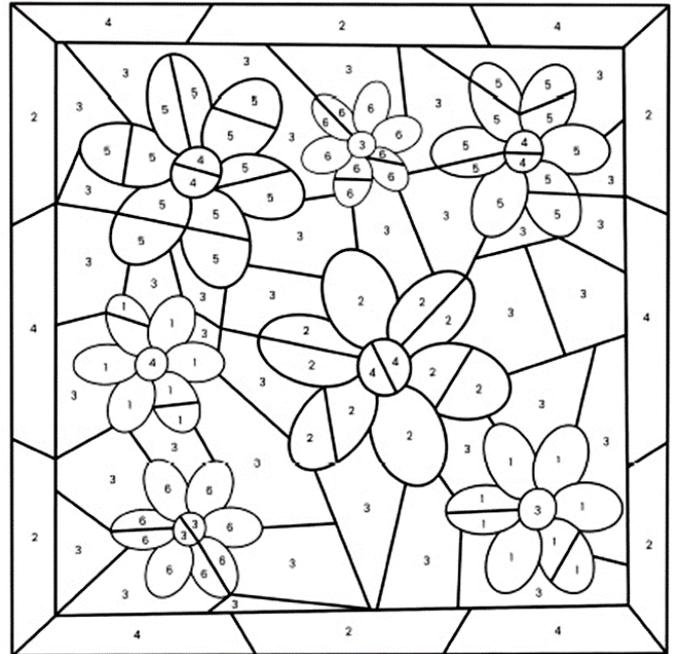
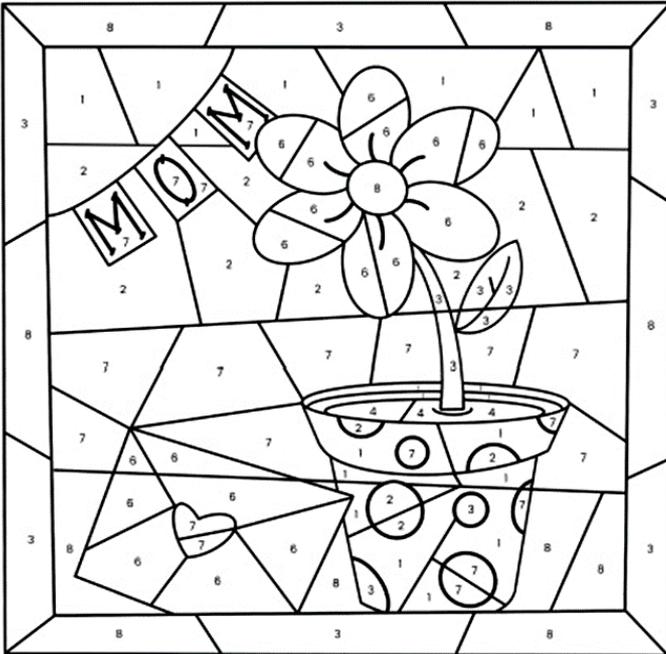
Mother's Day Colour by Number

Orange – 1 Blue – 2 Green – 3

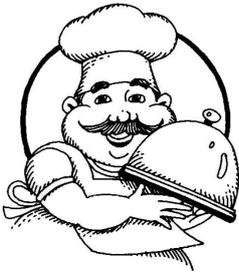
Grey – 4 Light Blue – 5 Purple – 6

Pink – 7

Yellow – 8



Happy Mother's Day



COOKERY CORNER

This is based on a meal cooked for us as part of a group get together eaten on the raised decking of a friend's house one balmy evening. Paul had met Kris many years before while Kris was travelling round Australia, sleeping on friends' sofas and working here and there whenever he could. Last year he had been staying with Paul for several weeks, and this was his last day before flying home to Sweden. Paul invited a group of us to say farewell, and Kris volunteered to cook for us all.

POT ROAST VEAL PROVENCAL

Kris cooked the meat wrapped in foil separately from the sauce. In this recipe everything is cooked in one pot. These amounts will serve four people.

1.2K rose veal boned and rolled	500 g carrots	a large onion	half a cauliflower	2 sticks celery
75g diced smoked pancetta	50g butter	tomato puree	150g white wine	fresh nutmeg
200ml vegetable stock	2 bay leaves	fresh parsley	3 sprigs of thyme	
2 large tomatoes	a few sliced mushrooms	basil leaves		

Preheat the oven to 120 degrees. Rinse the meat and pat dry. Tie the parsley, thyme and bay leaves together. Melt the butter in a large, heavy ovenproof casserole dish with a lid. Peel and slice the onion and carrots thickly, and wash and slice the celery. Separate the cauliflower into largish florets and cook all in the melted butter on a low heat for about 10 minutes, before removing them from the dish and setting them aside. Add the meat, pancetta, the bunch of herbs and a grating of nutmeg to the dish and brown the meat on all sides. Pour in the white wine, turn the heat up high and allow it to bubble for a few minutes, then add the chopped and peeled tomatoes, vegetable stock, and a good squirt of tomato puree. Stir the sauce around the meat, cover the dish and place in the preheated oven for one and a quarter hours or until the meat is cooked through. If you do not have a heavy pot, the cooking time will be longer. Remove the dish from the oven and place on the hob. Remove the bunch of herbs, lift the cooked meat out and cover lightly with foil to keep warm. Add the sliced mushrooms and the other vegetables and bring to the boil, then cook for about 10 minutes until the sauce thickens. Season with ground black pepper. Turn the oven up to 180 degrees. Slice the meat thickly and arrange in a rectangular oven tray. Pour the sauce all over the top and return the uncovered dish to the oven for 10 minutes or so. Sprinkle with torn basil leaves and serve with boiled potatoes, various salads and bread in the centre of the table for all to help themselves. Or you might try the following recipe as an accompaniment instead.

RUMBLETHUMPS

This dish is very versatile and can be eaten hot, or cold with a salad, or even on its own. It can also be cooked earlier or the day before and reheated without spoiling. The recipe here will serve six.

600g large potatoes	250g savoy cabbage or kale	400g swede	75g unsalted butter
25g grated cheddar cheese			

Peel the potatoes and swede and cut into chunks before cooking in boiling, salted water until tender. Drain well and return to the pan. Heat 50g of the butter in a frying pan and gently cook the cabbage for a few minutes until tender but still coloured. Add the cabbage to the saucepan with the potatoes and swede. Add the rest of the butter and mash together, seasoning to taste. Preheat the oven to 180 degrees. Spoon the mash into a lidded ovenproof dish and top with the grated cheddar cheese and bake covered for approximately 30 minutes. Remove the lid and cook for a further 15 minutes until piping hot and golden brown.

M.E.

MARvellous Quiz for MARch

(All answers begin with MAR)

1. George Kranky is the hero of this children's book.
2. This herb is closely related to oregano.
3. German/American actress who starred in the 1930 film 'The Blue Angel'.
4. Dense, spiky grass often found on sand dunes.
5. Caribbean island which is an overseas department of France.
6. Orlando, theCat, feline hero of a series of books by Kathleen Hale.
7. French revolutionary assassinated in his bath by Charlotte Corday in 1793.
8. Alternative name for Shrove Tuesday.
9. Fortified wine produced in Sicily.
10. British crime writer born in Essex, whose works include 'Dangerous Lady'.
11. This cocktail should be shaken, not stirred!
12. And with a cherry?
13. Australian winner of the Ladies' Singles at Wimbledon (1963,1965.)
14. Eastern tributary of the Seine whose banks were the site of a WW1 battle.
15. A puppet controlled from above using wires or strings.
16. Napoleon's horse...and a chicken dish!
17. You either love it or hate it!
18. Large African wading bird in the stork family.
19. Fast marine fish with a spear like snout and a long rigid dorsal fin.

1.George's Marvellous Medicine 2.marjoram 3.Marlene Dietrich 4.marram 5.Martinique
6.Marmalade 7.Marat 8.Mardi Gras 9.Marsala 10.Martina Cole 11.Martini 12.maraschino
13.Margaret Court (nee Smith) 14.Marne 15.marionette 16.Marengo 17.Marmite 18.marabou
19.marlin 20.Martello

Tom Fairweather part 1 - Capture

Thomas Arnold Fairweather

Thomas Fairweather was born in Great Bentley on 25th March 1921, he attended the local school, finishing up as School Captain, as his brother Dennis had been before him. Leaving school at the age of 14, in 1935 he began work as an apprentice electrician and cycled daily to Clacton and soon found himself doing the full wiring job on some new bungalows. But that work came to an end, so next he worked at the secret Radar Station at Little Bromley in 1937. (The row of tall pylons that were visible from Great Bentley).

Tom had joined the voluntary Territorial Army in the early part of 1939, and it was whilst he was working at the Little Bromley site that he was called up on 3rd September 1939. Tom was in 'A' Company. 2/5th. Battalion of The Essex Regiment, and in the early days spent time at Dovercourt, Walton-on-the Naze, Colchester then back to the Little Bromley site, but in uniform this time. Tom actually spent Christmas day 1939 at the Naze Tower at Walton. He was one of four on guard duty, but says that they did have their turkey and other Christmas fare.

Tom was then sent to Northumberland around the beginning of 1940. He spent time at Morpeth and places near the Scottish Borders. Whilst there they were asked if they wished to volunteer for an elite force which would become the forerunner of the commandos, Tom volunteered and found himself sent to Inverlochy Castle near Fort William where they did some hard training, including climbing Ben Nevis with full pack and rifle. Shortly after this Tom was given the opportunity to rejoin his original unit as this special unit was said to become a suicide squad, and in fact would become the commandos. Tom decided not to take this opportunity.

However, Tom's unit was soon on the move, this time abroad. Having been issued with tropical kit, it was on the train to Glasgow and to the King George V dock to board a troopship H.M.T. Neuralia, an old coal fired steamship which arrived at Freetown, Sierra Leone on 5 January 1940. They were put on guard duty on a ship in the harbour which was full of Vichy French. Next thing involved moving inland and Tom recalls going by lorry and crossing a river on a makeshift raft. They were issued with wellingtons and a machete for cutting their way through the bush, also mosquito nets to put over the beds. Nevertheless, at one stage about three quarters of Tom's battalion were in hospital with malaria.

On 17 June 1941 Tom was on the move once more, embarking on H.M.T. Bergenfjord which was a Norwegian ship. They crossed the equator 23 June 1941, but Tom missed the ceremony because he was in the ships hospital with a touch of malaria. They rounded the Cape, then on to Durban, arriving 4 July 1941.

They spent a week in Durban before boarding a French liner, Ile de France and set off, along with two other fast liners, the Mauritania and the New Amsterdam. They arrived at Port Tewfik, just outside Suez, 20 July 1941, and disembarked on 27 July to a transit camp and then on to Sidi Barrani (northern Egypt). In September 1941 Tom was guarding an aerodrome where he witnessed a few spectacular landings of aircraft that he assumed had been damaged by enemy fire. Tom had a week's leave in Cairo before setting off on 1,000 mile journey in a truck convoy, making about 100 miles per day with bivouacs at night. They had passed through Damascus on 14 June and arrived at the Sidney Smith barracks in Acre, Palestine, 15 June 1942, then across the canal once more at Kantara on 22 June 1942 and then 'into the blue' (the desert).

Tom's next journey was by train which came to a halt but as night fell they had a feeling of safety. But suddenly they heard the sound of a plane, possibly looking for a target, and on seeing the train it circled around, dropped some flares to light the area and then flew off. As it departed the majority of the troops, fearing its return, left the train and ran out into the desert, about 100 yards away, which they thought a safe distance. They were just congratulating themselves for having such a good idea when officers arrived and rounded them up. They had been given no authority to detrain, and were ordered back. Very unwillingly they went and had just settled back on the train when they again heard an aircraft, and along with it, rocket fire. Two or three people were killed and about half a dozen injured, They were then ordered into the desert for the remainder of the night, after which Tom had little confidence of those in authority, adding that "surely they need to have common sense as a first requirement" The next morning a burial service for the dead was held, as they had their padre with them. When they finally boarded the train, it set off in the opposite direction to the desert halt at El Alamein where they detrained.

Tobruk (Libya), with its important sea port, had fallen on June 21st 1942 under Rommel's rapid advance, and the British forces, under their commander Auchinlec, had retreated to El Alamein. So when he arrived there Tom learned that the British forces were to make a stand at all costs. They were there to raise the alarm if anything happened. Tom felt terrified because of the intense darkness, unable to see anything being very frightening.

However, action when it came was in daylight, at about 6 o'clock in the morning on 1st July 1942 (historians record this as the first battle of El Alamein). When the first shells came over they thought 'this is it'. The bombardment continued all day, and as fearful as that was, Tom found it not as bad as laying out in the darkness, also there was no hand to hand combat. All day they endured the shells with some near, some far.

The trenches that they had dug were just big enough for two to squat down in with their heads below the firing line. Tom and his friend Ted Mortimer had been pinned down all day, chain smoking their ample supply of cigarettes, but as they had no matches, once obtaining a light they had to keep them going by smoking in turn. All they had as weapons were rifles, and no artillery that they were aware of. Against German tanks, armoured vehicles, and troop carriers they just kept their heads down. The ones that were brave, or thought that they had to set an example, didn't last long. Water was their vital need, and the miniature tankers, which attempted to provide a supply were real targets for the enemy, and most of the crews were killed or wounded.

As the day wore on the rumble of tanks and other tracked vehicles came closer. Tom says that they wondered what was going to happen; with so little opposition it was so easy for the enemy. At about 5 pm the noise of individual tanks was heard and they thought that they were coming right over them, instead one pulled up right alongside. Amid shouts of "Rouse Rouse" they looked up and very quickly responded to the command "Hande Hoch". If one values their life, as Tom says he did, "then you don't give them cause to shoot". Tom judged that their foe, from the 21st Panzer Division under Rommel, had seen more action than he and Ted, and quickly got out of the trench which had sheltered them all day, leaving their rifles behind, naturally. They were made to undo their belts and shrug off their equipment, given a frisk, and then they were prisoners. .

Herded together with other captives they still had a feeling of being 'free', and had a chance to watch the Germans in action, picking up each pair of Tom's colleagues in turn, in a similar manner. A rifle pointing at them in a menacing manner was good cause for them to surrender. Tom witnessed one good deed by a German; a British Sergeant Major Lockmiller lay dying with a stomach wound, and, knowing that a drink is not advisable for such a wound, the German cut open an orange and moistened the dying man's lips.

After spending a cold night in the desert with only K.D. shirt, shorts, boots and socks and the all important water bottle, plus his tin helmet which at least served as a pillow, morning eventually came. They were then on the march again, going through the German troops, with no enmity shown. Eventually they halted and were provided with a little water for drinking only.

Tom recalls that he must have had a degree of freedom during the walk, because, when he came across a broken down vehicle, he was able to drain some very rusty water from its radiator. Do or die, under such circumstances, but as rust indicates a presence of iron it may have done some good, if only to appease his thirst. One didn't drink, just took a mouthful to moisten it and the lips, and then back into the bottle. It took about three days walking back through the German positions. Tom's diary records that they reached El Daba and Mersa-Matruh on the 5th July, and that is where they met the Italians.

**(Continued in April Part Two –
A POW)**

Opinion John Evans 2021

Everyone is entitled to an opinion, private appraisal is a human right which must not be denied regardless of status. But how do we scrutinise the source of the information which contributes to the formation of that opinion? It is common today to be influenced by loose gossip, by the press or fooled by social media and internet propaganda, each and all able to bring into question the factual validity of that opinion. Not everyone is a poet, a scholar or philosopher so perhaps there is a need to guard carefully ones opinion before espousing it in public. Healthy debate is essential but with the proviso that members taking part are not warped by ideological tyranny or by the blinkered bigotry of followers who may be obsessively bound to a particular cause.

What began as a mere difference of opinion ended in one of the most tragic events in the history of Western Australia. Political rivalry, jealousy and a large measure of pure spite brought about in the March of 1902 the suicide of an Irish engineer, Charles Yelverton O'Connor, an act of utter despair carried out by a single gunshot to the head and the subsequent falling from his horse into the sea. Probably one of W.A.'s darkest secrets is the vindictive hounding of a great man, not just by local politicians but also by a respected newspaper. There is no doubting the toxic intention to discredit O'Connor but hard to understand the reason for the ferocity of the attack, chiefly by a journalist who, in stark contrast to his admirable political conviction which had championed votes for women, fought for the introduction of a minimum wage and penal reform, a man of vision yet was also a man of noxious racism and myopic intolerance which had placed him in gaol charged with sedition and rebel rousing. With the power of the press at his disposal, he orchestrated a relentless attack, firstly upon O'Connor's engineering capability which gained little credence or interest but then of a more personal nature, including the questioning of his integrity, cheap derision and allegations of cronyism, false accusation of corruption and misinformed damnation of estimated costs, such vitriol which bore scant evidence to support those accusations.

Immediately on his arrival in Perth in 1891 having been persuaded by the Premier John Forrest to accept the position of Engineer in Chief, O'Connor began his colossal workload by developing the railway network but entered into a political minefield when asked to redesign the troublesome port of Fremantle, sited on the estuary of the Swan River. But O'Connor survived, his inner harbour project was opened in 1897, 'testament to the boldness, brilliance and foresight of its designer'. However, expected support for his work following this success did not come his way, only further criticism. During the gold rush of 1893, the scarcity of clean water in areas around the rapidly growing mining community of Kalgoorlie became critical, urging John Forrest to commission O'Connor to design a pipeline, known as the Goldfields Water Supply Scheme which would pump fresh water over a distance of 540 kilometres from Perth to Kalgoorlie, a project fraught with design complexity. Work began in 1896. Unfortunately, Premier John Forrest left his post, a move which placed O'Connor in a vulnerable position and at the mercy of his rivals. Both the new Premier of W.A. who was a long standing opponent of the project and the newly appointed editor of the same newspaper continued the attack, prompting a full enquiry by the Australian government which found no basis for the press accusations of corruption. But even that did not change the aggressive attitude of the opposition who continued to focus the attack on his personal integrity rather than of his engineering expertise. Ten months before the completion of the pipeline, C.Y.O'Connor rode his horse into the sea near South Beach, Fremantle to carry out his suicide. At the location of his death, his poignant memorial statue depicts a man riding his horse into the waves, a man alone and isolated having been driven to taking his own life owing to relentless malignant disapproval and unproven conjecture.

Despite the vexatious slander, the pipeline project was an astonishing achievement, officially opened by the then Sir John Forrest in January 1903, an engineering masterpiece the successful operation of which O'Connor would never witness, a triumph which today is still providing fresh water to that distant inland community of Kalgoorlie.

To place this project in perspective is to board the 'Prospector' train from Perth on the west coast and travel to the gold fields of Kalgoorlie, a high-speed inland journey of 7 hours duration, a seven hour scenic ride which is rarely without visual evidence of O'Connor's pipeline. Also, to visit the museum at Kalgoorlie is to marvel at the vast quantity of gold that the community has produced over the years but undoubtedly would have been an impossibility without that essential water supply.

Today, the statue of C.Y.O'Connor stands on a tall pedestal at the entrance to Fremantle harbour, a bronze figure of a revered man holding his rolled design drawings, an image of a genius deep in thought. Some believe that he was a befitting ambassador, sited at that location in order to give hope and encouragement to newcomers as they disembarked from steamers. However, within just one hour's walk through the sand dunes of South Beach lies the second artwork, that of a horseman in the shallows being battered by the waves, carrying out a tragic death.

It is incomprehensible that the two memorials commemorate the same man.



Great Bentley Pre-school
www.greatbentleypreschool.co.uk
information@greatbentleypreschool.co.uk

It's crazy to think that we are nearly a year into this pandemic now, it certainly has been a challenging time and I know everyone has suffered for their own reasons, I hope everyone is continuing to stay safe and positive though and that you all enjoyed the snow we recently had. At least it gave us a different view from our windows if nothing else.

World Book Day

World Book Day is on Thursday 4th March which we will be celebrating in Pre-school.

We have been busy making resources and props for different stories so we can display and focus on one particular book/story each week throughout the term.

Reading the same book over and over to children has great benefits, not only do children thrive on repetition, but it also helps them to get to know sounds, words and language, encourages them to value books and stories, sparks imagination, stimulates curiosity and helps to develop concentration and the ability to focus along with interacting in social and communication skills.

We will be encouraging the children to bring in their favourite books for discussion points and look forward to some wonderful costumes if they wish to dress up.

Easter

Sadly, we didn't get to celebrate Easter last year as we had just gone into the first lockdown, although we are unable to have our normal Easter celebrations this year, we will definitely be doing lots of fun and exciting Easter activities with the children.

Easter is a great time of the year, it's normally around the start of Spring which is my favorite season. Spring officially starts on Saturday 20th March this year and it's when we hopefully start to see the warmer weather with new life beginning to bloom everywhere around us, such a great season too for the children to explore and learn about.

Registers

Well I can't believe that we have nearly come to the end of this term, seems impossible when we haven't seen many of our children.

We are open though as normal, and we are taking on new children too, once again I will be looking at the registers this month for the new term that starts in April. If you are interested in joining our Pre-school contact me as soon as possible, a lot of sessions are already at their full capacity so don't delay. Please find our details on the main advert or via our details above.

Last but not least I would like to wish all you Mummy's out there a very special day with your little ones on Sunday 14th March.

Thanks for reading **Julie Wiles**

THANK YOU

Thank you so much for your recent donation of £218.13 following Mr John Glover of Landscape Services shredding the Christmas trees and donating to charity. I would like to thank you most sincerely on behalf of all the people we have assisted. We really appreciate your support, especially in these uncertain times as we all adapt to Coronavirus. I can assure you that your donation really will make a difference to our work.

Unlike NHS emergency services, Essex & Herts Air Ambulance is a charity. Each of our missions costs in the region of £2,200. Without access to National Lottery funding, and with only limited support from the Government, we rely on the generosity and goodwill of supporters such as yourselves to remain operational and keep saving lives.

Once again on behalf of us all, a very sincere thank you.

Natasha Robertson
Fundraising Manager - Essex & Herts Air Ambulance

MICHAEL PARKER

Michael sadly passed away on 18th February in hospital. He will be sadly missed by his daughter Julie and those who knew him in the village.

Looking Back

The year I began my career at Pearson's was momentous for me personally of course, however it was to go down in history as the year England won The World Cup on Saturday 30th July 1966!

Those of us who were fortunate enough to experience the excitement and anticipation of the build up to that never to be forgotten event will have their own unique recollections and memories. I was working, the staff rota worked out that we had one Saturday in ten off and the one in question wasn't one of mine, there was much teasing and light hearted banter from colleagues who had struck lucky! However not to be out done I have to confess that I took my faithful Dansette portable radio to work with me that day and onto the shop floor! Saturday trading was different from Monday to Friday when, should one of the Directors see a member of staff without a duster in their hand or not tidying a pile of towels (that didn't need it) or heaven forbid doing nothing, words were said and questions asked! On Saturday the opposite applied, we were expected to be standing straight backed and alert behind our respective counters ready to serve at 9am on the dot with not a duster in sight except those that were for sale! Saturday shoppers differed too, there were far more men for a start, not dressed casually as is the way nowadays, it was suit, shirt, tie and shiny shoes and a very resigned look on their face! I was soon to realise that these were the husbands of ladies I had spent time with during the week showing them goods they expressed an interest in, could have been tablecloths for instance of which we had a wide range from Irish Linen to Seersucker. Having provided all the information my customer needed they often said " thank you for all your help dear but I can't buy anything today I have to wait until Saturday when my husband is with me." Invariably they did but it has to be said they didn't necessarily go home with the item their wife had set her heart on! In the morning of The Final there was not the usual Saturday feel in the store, minds were elsewhere both with staff and customers, purchases if made at all were made with more haste, the food hall was extra busy and The Harvey's Bristol Cream concession situated close by opened up in time for people to buy some wine or spirits in the hope they would be able to celebrate an England victory. I have to say James the manager of said concession happened to be charming and very 'dishy' which had not gone unnoticed by many of the ladies who worked in Pearson's and it was strange how many of them, myself included, took the longer route back to their departments after a break via The Harvey's counter!! By midday the store became empty and a quietness settled, there were a few women who doubtless wanted nothing to do with football fever who ventured out but in the main the store was deserted. Of course there was no such thing as a smart phone in 1966 so my radio was going to be the means of keeping up with the score, funnily enough there seemed to be a lot of below counter level jobs to be done that day so every so often I bent down and opened the cupboard under the till where I put my radio stuck my head in and switched it on with the sound turned so low I strained my ears to keep abreast of the score. Word got round on the grapevine and every so often members of staff would find an excuse to use the escalator to get a whispered or hand language update! I remember a muted cheer spreading through the store but no one let on I had a radio secreted away....there was a shop in the high street that did TV Rental and had one on in the window where crowds had gathered so as far as anyone knew that's where the result came from!

Perhaps having recalled my memories there will be those of you who might feel drawn to put yours into words to go in next month's Parish News for us to share. I doubt that I shall ever see the likes of The FIFA World Cup being held aloft by England in my lifetime, I'd like to think I will see Harry Kane lift The Trophy.....well you can't blame a girl for dreaming can you?

Judy Bishop

I can remember exactly where I was on July 30th 1966. My Saturday job was working at Legg's the Bakers at Braintree and I was sweeping the crumbs out of the window when we heard, over the radio the final score. ED

All Change For Trains Part 2

The Covid 19 lockdown has seen a reduction in train passengers and hence a reduced timetable during this time. Prior to the onset of the virus, passenger numbers were very much on the increase and will no doubt build again once restrictions are lifted. The new fleet of trains which are due to take to the tracks during this year have been designed to use the optimum of space to move more passengers more efficiently over the network.

Back in the 1950's the railways were faced with the problem of a reduction in use. The massive rise in the use of motor transport caused a sharp decline in both passenger and freight use. It was inevitable that changes would have to be made and British Railways made a start by introducing a 'Modernisation Plan'. This had a direct impact on our branch line to Clacton and Walton. It was chosen as one of the first branch lines in the East Anglia region to be served by electric trains. Unfortunately around this time the decision was made to close Thorrington station. The last train to stop at this station was on the 3rd November 1957. Like many villages Thorrington has since increased in size and nowadays would benefit from having a railway station.

Electrification began around 1957 and I remember seeing the support posts and gantries for the overhead lines being erected. Foot and road bridges had to be heightened to accommodate these cables. Tye Bridge never used to have the elevated hump that it has nowadays. At the time I felt excited at the prospect of electric trains running on this line. On any rail trip to London I would always watch with interest at the green electric trains that were already running in the suburbs. The realisation that the coming of these trains would see the end of steam engines had reduced my enthusiasm. By 1959 the electrification work had been completed and there was an official opening ceremony held at Clacton railway station on the 13th April of that year. My brother and I attended that event and of course we travelled there by train. The event was covered by the Clacton Gazette with a photo of the crowds on the station concourse and we spotted ourselves as tiny dots amongst the crowds in the photograph.

By 1960 main line services from Liverpool Street saw diesel engines being used instead of steam engines; these were mainly Brush Type 2's. DMU's (diesel multiple units) of various types replaced the steam engine on the Brightlingsea line. These trains had only a very short time running on this line having only been brought into service in the late 50's and then the line being closed in 1964. This of course was the result of a major report called 'The Reshaping of British Railways' conducted by the now famous Dr. Richard Beeching. The Clacton/Walton line was safe from the axe due to the investment in electrification.

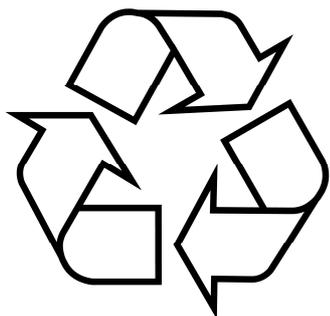
Travelling on these new electric trains differed from the steam hauled ones because of the fact they had a much faster acceleration when pulling out of a station. The carriages however were very similar to the old ones in that they had slam shut doors and mostly had separate compartments with no through corridors. This arrangement wouldn't suit the social distancing requirements these days. The open plan corridor electric trains that we are now familiar with didn't appear until the electrification between Colchester and Chelmsford was completed in the early 1960's. These were class 309 EMU's recognisable as being wine red in colour with curved wrap round windows at the front driver's compartment. Very nice comfortable trains as I remember.

In order to enable a through service to Liverpool Street these electric trains had, for a while, to be capable of running on two different voltages. The initial electrification from Shenfield and later Chelmsford had a voltage of 1,000v d.c., where as the voltage on the newly installed Clacton/Walton branch line had a voltage of 25,000v a.c. This line was used for trial runs for this arrangement prior to the commencement of the through service. All overhead systems now operate on a standard 25,000v a.c.

Having the electric trains in service simplified the arrangement at Thorpe-le-Soken station for the services to Frinton and Walton or Clacton. In the days of steam it would involve splitting the train and having another engine to take the remaining half to its destination. This spitting arrangement continued with the electric trains with it being much easier with a double unit just to uncouple the two units. These days however things are done much differently and uniquely. This was something that was picked up by two railway enthusiasts, Vicki Pipe and Geoff Marshall. Back in 2017 they set off with the ambition to visit every railway station in the UK and wrote a book about their adventures. When visiting this line, they noticed in the time table that it is the only instance where the local 'stopper' train precedes the 'fast' through train. If you make this journey in the Walton direction from Great Bentley you will be aware of the train waiting at Thorpe for the train from Liverpool Street to stop and allow people to change and continue onto Clacton. They commented in their book that it is an 'interesting and smart way of scheduling and relies on trains remaining absolutely on time'. Yes well that's the theory!

Roy Parker

TENDRING PRIMARY RECYCLE SCHEME



By now you will be aware that although much of our work is in connection with the vast amounts of recycling we process through TerraCycle, we are also an environmental group in many other respects.

We hate to see anything end up in landfill for example, and for this reason one of the areas we have been looking at recently is the use of our local Bring Banks, with a special focus on the clothing banks, and how we might be able to improve their usage.

Sadly, these areas are often found to be untidy and messy, with numerous bags and loose items simply left on the ground. Whether that is due to innocent public misinformation, or deliberate abuse, it is difficult to know, but the more we know

about how to use these facilities correctly, the more we can save from landfill.

With regards to the clothing banks, the most obvious thing we need to know is what can and cannot be taken, and this will vary according to who is responsible for the bank. It is commonly thought that duvets and pillows can be taken, but locally this is certainly not the case. Most of the local banks are either run in partnership with Tendring District Council, or the Salvation Army (often in conjunction with a local supermarket), and neither are able to take duvets or pillows. Clean clothing, paired shoes and trainers, belts and bags are gratefully accepted at all sites, but it is always best to check at the individual bank first.

When bagging your items, did you know that it is best to pack them into tied carrier bags, which will fall easily into the bank, whereas a full dustbin bag can often be too big which will result in blocking the chute. A simple fact which had never occurred to me! If it happens however, the bank is then unusable until emptied, leading to people leaving their bags beside the bank, believing that their donations will still be of use. The sad fact though, is that anything left **BESIDE** the bank has to be classified as fly tipping, and for that reason, must be sent to landfill. Something as simple as packing your donations in carrier bags however, can help to avoid that happening.

Despite this, you may well see the collections team load the bags into their lorries and will feel reassured that the items will be of use after all. The Salvation Army advised however, that the back of the lorry is divided into two, with one side being for the items removed from the bank, whilst the other is for landfill only.

Similarly, once you realise that any bags on the ground are destined for landfill, this might lead you to think that maybe you should retrieve the bags and upcycle the fabrics into useful new items for example, putting them to good use instead. Please don't ever be tempted though, as amazingly, the removal of any items left at the site, is classified as theft and you may well find yourself subject to a fine!

So, in summary check carefully what can be taken; bag your items in carrier bags rather than dustbin bags; and if you find the bank either blocked or full, take your items home and try again another day. Whilst all of this will be helpful, the first thing we can do of course, is simply to consider carefully whether we actually need to purchase that item of clothing in the first place.

WRAP – The Waste & Resources Action Programme – state that

- An estimated £140 million worth (350,000 tonnes) of used clothing goes to waste in landfill every year
- Whilst, for every tonne of textiles reused rather than being sent to landfill, greenhouse gas emissions (a major source of global warming) are reduced by 7 tonnes
- They also state that extending the average life of clothes by 9 months would save £5 billion in resources used to supply, launder and dispose of clothing.

Sobering thoughts indeed. Between us though, with a little thought, we can all make a difference.

At the time of writing our drop off points remain closed because of lockdown. We hope to have better news for you at the time of next writing, but will have to wait and see what the Prime Minister announces of course. Until then, stay safe.

June Barker

Introducing East Coast Distillery - a new distillery on your doorstep!

Born and brought up on the south coast of the Tendring Peninsula and having always lived in the area, I've had the good fortune to be able to explore the wonderful richness and diversity of this coastline. From the Stour Estuary around Manningtree to the hidden gem of Wrabness round to Copperas Bay; the glorious broad beaches of Frinton and the wonderful clinking halliards in the sailing communities of Brightlingsea and Wivenhoe. But for me it's the Walton Backwaters, the tidal estuarine saltmarsh between Harwich and Walton, that holds the most majesty. So different every time you visit. Calm and tranquil - idyllic for kayaking or swimming one moment, then wild and foreboding the next as the grey sky blurs with the grey waters. Regardless of the weather the area is always packed with wading birds and an abundance of plant and animal life.

It's here that we're fortunate to have been able to set up East Coast Distillery. Our home in Landermere, Thorpe-le-Soken, just a ten-minute walk up the lane to the Quay, was formerly a dairy building, once used as a milking parlour. In all honesty, when we took on the building in August 2019 it didn't feel a million miles away from that in terms of condition! We spent the next nine months getting the building up to scratch with help from friends and family, painting floors and walls and fitting a new roof before we were able to fit out the distillery and finally install a 500-litre bespoke stainless-steel pot still, affectionately known as Monty.

All four of us, myself Ben and wife Lucy and our friends and business partners Nicole and Simon all still work full time in public sector roles. We didn't have money to throw around on silly mistakes. As such we started the planning for the distillery some three years ago and have worked over that time with our friends at the Yorkshire Dales Distillery to learn our craft, understand the equipment we needed (and what we didn't) and develop the recipe for Tide's Fortune Essex Dry Gin. Along the way we've benefited from endless support and encouragement from the local business community for which we're extremely grateful.

We launched in mid-pandemic on World Gin Day in June 2020 and eight months on we're extremely proud of the East Coast Distillery brand and our signature Essex Dry Gin. It has been amazingly well received by so many supportive customers and we have made by hand and sold over 2500 bottles to individuals, shops, restaurants and bars across Essex and beyond.

Tide's Fortune is a classic, juniper rich, dry gin. A gin for gin lovers. Not sweetened or coloured after production but the product of distilling the best quality botanicals, including locally sourced and foraged coastal botanicals such as Sea Buckthorn which gives the gin a wonderful citrus piquancy and Sea Purslane that directly connects our gin to the flora of the beautiful backwaters. Tide's Fortune is a celebration of the coast and coastal communities, the nautical and naval history of the area that so often gets overlooked. The ethos of East Coast Distillery is very much about protecting the oceans by minimising the use of plastics wherever we can, and we donate from the sale of every bottle to local, coastal charities.

If you're looking for a flavour of the coast and a classic dry gin that is authentically hand made locally by our small team just along the coast in Landermere, please do visit our website eastcoastdistillery.co.uk. At the time of writing, we're currently not opening the distillery for Click and Collect to do our bit to keep everybody safe but we're offering complimentary delivery ensuring your gin arrives safe and sound at your door (in fully recyclable cardboard packaging of course).

We're looking forward to the time when we can invite you to the distillery, to have a look round and enjoy a drink with us in our licensed bar, but for now why not sit back, relax and enjoy a G&T at home.

To keep up to speed with what we're up to we'd love it if you would sign up to our newsletter via our website and follow us on Facebook and Instagram @eastcoastdistillery. (See advert on page 36). Take Care and Stay Safe. Ben, Lucy, Nicole and Simon.