

July/August 2020

No. 193

The Stoker



Stoke Golding Village Magazine

Including

Dadlington Matters

70p



Note from the Editors

Well 'lockdown' certainly hasn't stopped all our community activities and this issue of the Stoker is packed with examples of what you have been doing with your spare time including learning to draw, holding an isolated music festival and challenging yourselves to learn about nature.



Congratulations to the Scout Group for continuing to hold 'virtual' sessions to hold the interest of their members while they can't physically meet together.

Steve Martin and the Friends of the Community have been busy fighting a threatened housing development on the edge of the village in Wykin Lane and, against all the odds, were successful thanks to their many hours of hard work.

Of course many of us are missing seeing our families and friends and being involved in our usual social activities, but hopefully our lives will slowly start to become less restricted over the coming months.

Keep sending us your news, views, photos and articles - your contributions help to keep the Stoker a true community magazine.

Stay Safe

Jane and Steve

The Stoker Team

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Please send articles for the **September** issue of The Stoker **by 15th August** to:
The Editors, 45 Station Road, Stoke Golding.
Email thestoker@gmx.co.uk

If you can submit articles by e-mail or on a memory stick (Microsoft Word) it makes our job much easier, (**500 words maximum** please).

All correspondence, including e-mails, must include your full name, home address and home telephone number.

N.B. All advertising enquiries to Ella Orr - ella42@sky.com

Publication of any articles or letters submitted does not imply approval of, or agreement with, any views and comments contained, and are published without prejudice. Copying of content without our explicit consent is not permitted.

Cover picture: Stoke Golding by Tony Cole

Relieve for Wykin Lane as Housing Development is Refused

The outline planning application appeared first on the agenda at this month's planning committee meeting, which was held again on Zoom and watched by over hundred interested parties on YouTube.

I'm sure that most of you will now know that Councillor Collett's motion to refuse the application was upheld by a majority of eight to seven members, with two abstentions.

This went against the advice of the Planning department who reminded the committee that they should consider whether the harm to the countryside outweighed the delivery of housing in this location due to the lack of a five year housing supply. This view was also supported by the agent for the developers who requested that the committee respect the Planning Officers position.

However, the committee spoke variously about the suitability of Wykin Lane for the expected increased traffic levels from this development and the proposed Triumph development nearby and all the issues that might arise from it.

The fear that this was just the first of more applications near this site was discussed and the concern that by approving this application it would set a precedent. This was dismissed by the Planning Officer who said that this application could not be refused on the grounds of what might happen in the future, as there may then be a Local Plan, a five year housing supply and a Neighbourhood Plan in place.

The vote itself was recorded and at this time the meeting is still available to watch on You Tube through a link HBBC website (under Planning Committee meetings) as will be the minutes for the meeting.

A big thank you should go to everyone who put in the time and effort to fight this application. Let's hope the developers decide not to appeal the decision.

Jan Zelenczuk

Tina Slesser Jackie Jones
Ross Lockett *Thank You!* Willie Sinclair
Jo Tomlinson Diane Sinclair
Sandra Martin Garth Tomlinson
Tracey Chadwick

Thank You to a Wonderful Team

I have posted this on our Friends of the Community page but also wanted the wider Stoke Golding Community to be aware of the team of wonderful people responsible for the hard work, passion and enthusiasm behind

our success on the Wykin Lane development. This team has met nearly every week since early October. We have tried to read, analyse, discuss, share and debate as much as possible in this time and then planned on how to cram all this information into something meaningful to everyone - especially the village and the Council's Planning Committee!

So far so good... we are now preparing for the next battle.

Steve Martin

Save The Baxter Hall for the Community



Following the news that the community is in danger of losing the Baxter Hall and the receipt of Reg Ward's letter below, we are in the process of trying to find out more about the history of the Baxter Hall and the seemingly hostile 'takeover' by the Diocese a number of years ago. We received a very prompt and courteous response from Carolyn

Lewis, the Diocesan Director of Education which we have printed in full on the following page and we will provide an updated article in the September issue of the Stoker. If anyone has any more information please get in touch with us. *Eds*



Dear Editors

The proposed sale of the Baxter Hall in Stoke Golding by the Leicester Diocesan Board is very sad.

The Board acquired the assets of the Baxter Charity of Stoke Golding despite total opposition from the Charity Trustees and the people of Stoke Golding. No recompense was paid.

The Hall provided facilities for the education of the village children for many years, it now provides a well-appointed meeting room, a home and a facility used by the Robin Hood Playgroup, a well-known and popular nursery for pre-school children.

The Hall is a very important part of our village and, should it be sold, the community would lose an essential asset. If the Diocese no longer has use for it, it should be returned to the village - after all it is rightly theirs.

The Baxter Hall should not be sold, and the assets used elsewhere, that would be a travesty. The community of Stoke Golding deserves better.

Reg Ward



Dear Editors

Many thanks for your email to the Diocese. I am responding on behalf of the Diocesan Board of Education which owns Baxter Hall.

Thank you very much for taking the time and trouble to email me with your concerns. I understand that there are others in the village who are also concerned and I have met with the Parochial Church Council and the Parish Council to listen to these concerns and see how we can work in partnership to find a way forward.

The Diocesan Board of Education (DBE) is a registered charity whose objects are, in summary, to promote and support education (particularly religious education) in the Diocese, especially through church schools. As with any charity the legal duty of the Board (as trustees) is to advance the objects of the charity and therefore to invest any assets, such as land or buildings which are not required for operational purposes, in order to achieve the best income to support the charity's work. The DBE keeps under regular review its land and buildings and is legally obliged to consider if their current use furthers the work of the charity to best effect.

I recognise that the potential for Baxter Hall to be sold is not what many in the village would wish for, but hope that villagers will recognise that the DBE would not have made any decision without very careful thought and consideration, taking in to account professional advice and opinion.

Nevertheless, The Diocesan Board of Education is very keen to work with the community and explore any alternative proposals. Indeed, when I met with the Parish Council we discussed whether they could make an application to the Borough council for the hall to be an asset of community value. This application has been submitted and will be considered shortly, I believe. If successful, this will give the community the opportunity to explore purchasing the hall for community use.

With all good wishes

Carolyn Lewis

Diocesan Director of Education

2020 Stoke Golding Scarecrow Festival

The second Stoke Golding Scarecrow is planned for the August Bank Holiday weekend.

It was wonderful to have so many people involved in contributing to an amazing day last year.

We are hoping this can be another great event for the village community to look forward to and get involved in. Our theme this year is **NHS and Key Workers** which should give plenty of options for imaginative and creative scarecrow builders! We have modified our plans to ensure we can have socially distant day whilst still having fun and connecting with each other around the village. There will be ways you can be involved even if you are not a scarecrow maker! More information will be posted on the village notice board and the Stoke Golding Scarecrow Festival Facebook Page. Entry is £5 with cash prizes and can be made online this year with details on the facebook page. For those who prefer, entry payments with name, address and email contact can be delivered to 37 Station Road, or 38 Wykin Lane before the 21st of August. Volunteers to help, especially during the event would be very welcome- please get in touch via email at stokegoldingscarecrows@gmail.com or through the facebook page.



Plenty of time to get creative for a fun weekend !

Stoke Golding Surgery Latest



The surgery is still not allowing walk in appointments, but remains open to dispense medicines when patients are asked to ring the bell and wait. Only one person is allowed in the surgery at a time and patients must wear a mask or face covering e.g. a scarf. This is similar to any hospital visit as well.

The surgery have had new Perspex screens fitted to protect staff and patients as helping confidentiality (see the photo). I

have seen them and they look fine.

If you have to be seen by a doctor you will be asked to attend the Castle Mead surgery.

Alison Ellis, the practice manager, has asked me to inform patients that if they are struggling with shopping, need a chat or picking up medications, we can arrange for a volunteer to help with this on a regular basis during Covid 19 and also urgent prescriptions between 8am-8pm via GoodSam NHS volunteers by phoning 0808 196 3382.

I am sure you will join me in thanking all the staff of both surgeries for continuing to support their patients and looking after them during this difficult time.

Jennifer

Great News! Tammy's Hair Salon is Reopening

We were delighted to read this on the Facebook Stoke Golding Community page.

We are still waiting for the opening date to be confirmed and are aiming for the **4th July** all being well. In the meantime we are getting everything ready to be able to open safely. Due to not being able to work at full capacity when we return, we are booking those in that had appointments booked in before lockdown.

Each station will be thoroughly cleaned in between every client and to ensure the safety of ourselves and our clients we will both be wearing all necessary PPE.

Could all clients please:

- Arrive at the salon at their appointment time so we can prevent people's appointments running into someone else's and therefore having too many people in the salon at one time.
- Come to their appointment on their own - we are not allowed to congregate.

- Wear a mask! We will have spares if you forget.
- Let us know if you can't make your appointment so we can offer it to someone else.
- Use hand sanitiser which will be available when entering the salon.

We will not be able to offer refreshments or magazines but you are welcome to bring your own and WiFi will be available.

We will except cash but the card machine will be available.

Because we are having to allocate more time for each client there may be a slight price increase on some services.

We will update again when we have clear guidelines.

We can't wait to get back!!

Tammy & Charlotte xx

Unlocked Talent

Before lockdown Graham, from the Courtyard in Stoke Golding, was the only artist in the Wilson household - he is well-known locally for his beautiful pictures and won the visitors' choice at last year's Market Bosworth Festival. Finding time on her hands because of being furloughed from work, Graham's wife, Corinne, decided she would have a go at some sketches of animals, with his support, and it turns out she has a real talent herself and has taken to it like a duck to water. She has really enjoyed drawing some of her friend's pets and you may recognise them in her pictures.

Well done Corinne - eds



Archie



Alfie



Hooch

Lockdown: The Flowers that Bloom

We have some friends that we go walking with who have a fascination for all things natural. They equip themselves with binoculars and zoom lens cameras and, as we're hiking along some winding track, they'll suddenly stop to observe a distant spec on the horizon which they'll confidently announce is a peregrine falcon or they'll be peering down at a little yellow flower, enthusing about its rarity. They once spent half an hour examining a slug! Whilst we enjoy the nature around us, we don't have that same passion - until lockdown. As we began exploring the highways and byways around Dadlington, I decided to discover a little more about the flora and fauna, downloading an app for my phone that allowed me to photograph and then identify the things that we found.

The majority of our finds have been wild flowers. That isn't to say we haven't seen plenty of animals but often they are difficult to photograph. Butterflies never seem to stay in one place long enough, buzzards are too far away to capture with my phone camera, but flowers conveniently remain where they are whilst I photograph them. I have to admit that my knowledge of hedgerow flowers before this was fairly basic. I could spot a buttercup or a daisy or the ubiquitous cow parsley with confidence but present me with borage or speedwell and I'd struggle to identify them as anything other than pretty blue flowers. Now I point out celandine, champions and dog roses with alacrity.



They say you can tell the age of a hedgerow by the number of different species that grow there and hedgerows have provided me with the majority of my 49 finds so far. As the weeks have passed by, dandelions and bluebells have flowered and faded with new species bursting into flower: purple foxgloves, bitter wintercress and red valerian. Walks by the canals and rivers have provided me with sedges and yellow iris. The most stunning find was a glorious field of crimson and purple which, on closer inspection, turned out to be crimson clover and lacy phacelia. Our two most productive walks have been the footpath that runs along the southern side of Mallory Park racing circuit and the pathway that follow the River Anker near Caldecote across the border in Warwickshire.



Once I've photographed and identified the flower, I can share it onto an international database and other users of the app then confirm my sighting or offer up alternative identifications which, on two occasions, have been more accurate. The most unusual find was the giant puffball we came upon on a footpath off Stapleton Lane: it became my first entry. I thought this was fairly spectacular until I went on the news section of the app where I read about someone who'd discovered a new species of spider in Vietnam and the rare flowering of the parasitic balanophora laxiflora in Taiwan. Maybe we'll come across one of those today on our walk to Shenton.

Michael

Festival at home!

Every year at Catton Hall in Derbyshire on the Spring Holiday weekend the Bearded Theory Spring Gathering takes place. This a festival that we have been to a few times with friends to see bands old and new, wonder at the acts in the cabaret tent, get creative and make things and generally enjoy the dressing up and atmosphere.

However, this year it was postponed by the organisers and the resulting anguished wail could be heard throughout the land from Beardies everywhere. Then we got a message from a friend that he was setting up a virtual festival on Facebook, with links to past performances from the bands that were due to perform and a playlist of songs for each band. Magically people took to their gardens and up went the bunting and fairy lights. Sheds became home bars and widescreen TV's emerged from inside to outside. No to be outdone we got out our Christmas lights and the VE day bunting along with the flagpole from which our camp flag fluttered in the sunshine.

The main arena stage, known as the Pallet Stage was recreated and our favourite stage, the Woodland, was easy to do under our apple tree in amongst the wildflowers.

The weather was good and we enjoyed dancing under the stars to Toots and the Maytals, The Gladiators, Robert Plant, The Fall and Primal Scream to name just a few.

The upside of the festival at home was not having to queue for the 'facilities', the bed was comfy and there were no uninvited strangers in our tent looking for cash. But we missed the people, the atmosphere and the laughs that you only get at a live festival and the music too! Hopefully next year we'll be back at Catton Hall but until then, Glastonbury (courtesy of the BBC!)

Jan Zelenczuk



We make no comment on the sanity of these people! - eds

Bob's Focus

Hello Stokers, some of you on social media may already know me, or you may have seen Beth's write up some months back regarding that nuisance that had arrived in the village. Well, for my sins, I have been asked to do a little bit of writing for the Stoker - nothing contentious hopefully, nothing political, just going to share my love of nature, just to give you a flavour of what is going on around our beautiful village.

Over the last few months, with people spending more time at home, some of you have already ventured out and are discovering the wildlife for yourself. The interest in nature has increased tremendously on the village Facebook page and, like myself, some of you have been tempted to dust off that camera and grab some wonderful images of birds, mammals, the countryside and those fantastic sunsets that we are blessed with in our area.



So here is the deal: I will try to write some interesting little snippets about what has gone on in the last month and what we should look out for in the month ahead.

The lock down gave me the incentive to grab my DSLR by the focus ring and turn off that little setting in green that reads "Auto". It's given my brain some substantial amount of exercise, but finally I think I have got to grips with the dreaded threesome, Aperture/shutter speed and ISO. Hence any photos I dare to share will be my own and not taken from Google, so bear with me, they will improve in time.



So, what has been going on in the last few weeks? Well we will all have noticed that we have lots of young birds darting around our gardens, sitting in the middle of the lawn squawking "Dad feed me, feed me now!" In fact a lot of birds are on their second broods. This year there has been a population boom along the banks of the Ashby Canal of Reed Buntings (a bit like a spuggy with a black and white head).

But what always catches my eye at this time of year is when the Dragon/Damsel and May flies emerge with their neon colours like little flashes of lightning around the reed beds.

So, what should we look out for in July? Well certainly go for a walk along the canal or on one of our many public footpaths. Wild flowers will be bursting through those uncut edges of the fields, and butterflies will become abundant. (Try putting a butterfly feeder in your garden to see what you can attract). Hopefully this year the towpaths will be left to flower. (Last year some one with little or no knowledge was let loose with a strimmer and cut down most of the meadowsweet before it had chance to flower- I have had words, so fingers crossed). The meadowsweet has an amazing scent, especially in the evenings, this attracts a wide variety of insects, which in turn attract the birds.

Oops that's 500 words so I have to go, look forward to catching you all next month.

Colli Bob

Following the news that Peggy has recently passed away aged 99, we are printing a section of one of her poems in honour of her memory. She regularly sent the Stoker poems until a few years ago, which we were happy to include.

CELEBRATION FOR MISS SPARROW

In the year eighteen eighty our school was built
The date carved on the stonework for all to see
A local lady, Miss Sparrow, our benefactor
Schooling the key to good learning was her priority

Our school was built on generous proportions
Three classrooms, glass partitioned, all with sliding doors
In my time only two were in use
For the very large families were now no more

The infants' school was set apart from the rest
Snug in it's playground surrounded by walls
The girls found these useful when playtime came around
For practicing new games with their rubber balls

A door in the wall led to our Headmaster's door
At the end of the lovely garden was a special plot
For senior boys to test their skills with fork and spade
Most of the boys enjoyed it but a few did not!

At the opposite side of the school was the junior teachers house
So attractive with garden, lawn and trees
Where in summer after a trying day
Teachers could sit in the shade and take their class

Peggy Holmes



Coincidence

As we read the June Stoker about Lockdown Art we realised that Trevor's picture of the Alan King's Life on the Canals was the jigsaw we were currently working on.

Kind regards, John & Jill.

VE Day Memories

This is not a local memory, but was probably similar to events held all over the U.K. on that momentous day. I was born and brought up in a very small village in Sussex and was six years old. I remember my mother calling out to our neighbour that the war was over. I then went off to school with the children from the farm further up the lane. On arriving at school it was announced that after a short assembly, led by the vicar, the school would close for the day. Hooray. I decided that I would go off and play with my best friend Josephine, naively believing that my mum thought that I was safely ensconced in school. The idea that she might have heard from the wireless that all schools would be closed for the day never entered my head. I went home at midday, when I was hungry, but don't remember being admonished for my morning's absence. In the afternoon, the Canadian soldiers, who were based at one of the large country estate houses in the village, loaded the village children into the backs of their lorries and took us for rides up and down the lanes. If you were the proud possessor of a red, white or blue cardigan or jumper then you could stand at the back of the lorry madly waving and cheering. I didn't have a cardi of the requisite colour but was sporting a large red, white and blue hair ribbon, which my mum had kept for just such an occasion. I was also proudly wearing a new pair of ankle socks with red, white and blue stripes round the tops, which my soldier dad had procured on his travels. But, the best part of the day, to this ever hungry six year old, was at the end of the rides when the Canadian soldiers dished out copious amounts of CHOCOLATE BISCUITS. Heaven.

Jill Webster

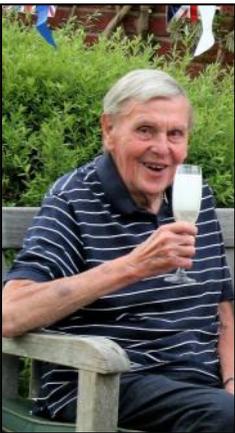
STOKER QUIZ ANSWERS *(from last month)*

1.Bond Street (Bond's treat 2.Oxford Circus, 3.Cockfosters 4.Blackfriars
5.Paddington, 6.Mile End Road, 7.Seven Sisters, 8.Vauxhall,9.Parsons Green
10.St. James's Park, 11.Victoria, 12.Sloane Square, 13.Tottenham Court Road
14.Baker Street, 15.Kew Gardens, 16.Waterloo, 17.Elephant & Castle
18.Barking, 19.Warren Street, 20.Whitechapel, 21.Holland Park, 22.Monument
23.Westminster, 24.London Bridge, 25.Piccadilly Circus,26.Embankment
27.Angel, 28.Canary Wharf, 29.Oval, 30.Clapham Common

WWII Veteran Bob White

Crown Hill Close resident Bob White, nearly 98 years old, was called up to serve in the Navy on 15th December 1941 with instructions to report to Chatham Barracks. He says he did have a choice – either turn up or go to prison! His Mum said they could have at least waited until after Christmas.

His initial training at Chatham, with the other new recruits, included learning to sling a hammock, how to march, how to use a rifle and how to cope with the abuse that was continuously thrown at them. Ten days later he was transferred to Sheerness for intense training on H M S WILDFIRE, learning seamanship including how to splice rope and wire and more marching. He particularly remembers having to cope with extremely harsh discipline. He was drafted to a sea-going craft for 6 months earning the title of Able Seaman. Further training at Scapa Flow in special defence gave him the rank of Leading Seaman (Riggers Mate). He was drafted to the South East Asia Command, working from Trincomalee in Ceylon (now Sri Lanka), working on defences until the Japanese surrender in August 1945.



V.E. day 2020

In August 1945 the ship Bob was serving on received orders to go to the Seychelle Islands to 'show the flag' to thank the population of these islands for their support in providing harbour for British ships. Bob remembers beautiful tropical islands with bananas never seen in the war and no risk of being invaded. A thanksgiving service was held, and they paraded through the capital Victoria. Bob was eventually demobbed from the Navy after 5 years and, after a short period of leave, had to go back to work to finish his apprenticeship as a printer. He describes this as a difficult time as, after 5 years in the open air, he had to return to a smelly factory.

Bob was able to visit the Seychelles, with his late wife Pat, when they were both in their 70s and he was able to donate his order of service from the thanksgiving to their archives whilst enjoying the holiday of a lifetime.

You are looking amazing Bob - Eds

Lockdown Choir



Ambion Voices, Stoke Golding and Dadlington's Community Choir, has been meeting 'virtually' since lockdown began in March. The choir has had weekly online rehearsals, learning new songs as well as improving their well-known repertoire. They have even made their first recording by emailing their individual recordings to be edited and added to everyone else's. 'You've Got a Friend in Me' from Toy Story is the first of many recordings the choir will be making over the coming weeks and we are all really proud of it.

This is by no means the same as meeting to sing together and it doesn't suit the whole choir but, in these strange and worrying times, does give some of the same sense of friendship, support and achievement to the choir members who are taking part.

We enjoy running our virtual rehearsals and seeing everyone who is able to join us, but also miss our other choir members and the joy of singing together. We hope it won't be too long before we are back to 'normal' (whatever that is!)

Rachel & Jane

Tweetheart and Lady Jay - a story for children

One morning Lady Jay set off to photograph birds on a local estate when suddenly she heard a high-pitched singing and a flash of yellow from a nearby stone wall. "Hello TWEETHEART please do not be afraid and fly off, I'm Lady Jay, what's your name?" "Well my real name is yellow hammer, but I like you calling me Tweetheart." "I must say you are a beautiful colour and so handsome. Do you mind if I take a picture of you?" "Of course not, I would like that." "Thank you, replied Lady Jay". "I must fly home now to my Bunting family - see you around Lady Jay." "Oh yes Tweetheart, I hope to see you tomorrow, bye." 🙋



The following day, Lady Jay found the yellow bird again. "Hello Tweetheart, how are you today?" "I'm very well thank you Lady Jay, how are you?" "I'm very well and the weather is so beautiful with glorious sunshine it makes the colour of your feathers, tail and claws look even more spectacular. That song of yours is so delightful too what's it called?" "It's called 'A little bit of bread and no cheeeeeese'.

Although I like cheese, I prefer insects and seeds. I must fly away and find some insects to take back to my family for lunch- bye for now." "Bye Tweetheart I hope to see you tomorrow and hope you find some insects."

The next day came and Lady Jay found Tweetheart with a beak full of insects. "Hello Tweetheart, I see you have your beak too full to sing today" "Yes Lady Jay, I've been able to fly around and catch insects and need to take them back to my family, must fly, see you tomorrow I hope."



"Good morning Tweetheart how are you today and I see you are sitting on the bracken and not the wall." "Yes I like singing on top of the wall but when it's a little windy I enjoy swinging in the bracken. You get home Lady Jay as I think it's blowing for rain and I must fly back to snuggle in my nest" "Take care Tweetheart!"



Story and photos by Jan Croft - friend of the village

Down Memory Lane - *continued from last month*



The old grey cast iron cooker, with the thermometer on the outside of the oven door, stood in the corner, rarely used at all. At the other end of the kitchen under the small window, giving a view onto the comings and goings of all that visited the outside loo (no inside toilet or bathroom), stood a small Belfast sink with an electric water heater on the wall. This was the only source of hot water and was a new addition, so Gran didn't have to light a fire under the copper to the side of the sink.

Gran used to always have fish on a Friday, which she would poach in milk in a pan precariously perched on top a paraffin stove which used to live under the copper where the fire would normally be set to heat the water for wash day.

There was a bit of paint chipped off the white painted wall separating the kitchen next door, where every day Gran would tap on the wall with a small razor sharp vegetable knife to inform Aunt Flo next door that she had brewed up. Within minutes the two sisters would be dunking Rich Tea biscuits and drinking tea out of their saucers. In the living room there was a pink cast iron fireplace with plates that you could stick a pan on and swing over the fire to heat them up, a main oven over the top of the fire and a small bread oven offset to the left hand side. This little oven was where Gran made the best puddings in the world, rice puds with a thick crusty skin, spotted dick and jam roly-poly. Grandad said if Gran was only wearing one stocking then we would surely have jam roly-poly for pudding!

The alcove to the side of the fire was boxed in with a convenient gap underneath where, when the cat brought something home as a present, the mouse, rat or bird would always make for. I lost count of the times I saw Gran on her knees, with a broom handle, trying to get it back out again, always amusing to see though.

The old big dialled wartime radio used to hum and light up with a warm glow when you turned it on, but had long given up broadcasting owing to a burned out valve, but hey it looks nice so why get rid?

The fire provided comfort when the tin bath was brought inside on bath days and placed in front of it. The fire was also excellent for toast and toasted teacakes laced with real butter! The pantry was in the corner of the living room, mainly stocked with tinned fruit, meat, veg and Carnation milk. On the floor was a marble thrawl, upon which stood a little wooden box with a mesh front to keep out the flies. This was where the milk, cheese, bacon etc lived. No fridge yet, no frozen foods - we didn't even have Vesta curries!

The front room was immaculately laid out with the best furniture, ornaments, large sideboard and a grand fireplace (I'll come back to this room later). The two upstairs rooms were both bedrooms, the bed sheets always smelled so fresh and were warmed by stone hot water bottles. I can remember my Gran placing chairs either side of the bed to stop me falling out and banging my head on the Guzunder!

During the bombing of Coventry an incendiary bomb crashed through the Rosemary roof tiles, through the bedroom ceiling and knocked one of the wooden knobs off the dressing table before beginning to fizz furiously. My Grandad picked the device up and threw it out of the window into the back yard where it caused no further harm. The knob never was put back together properly and the wood remained scorched.

I'm going to wind this one up now, we need to get back. I hope you managed to finish that cup of tea? Maybe you never got this far?

But before I go I have two burning questions, neither of which I will never truly know the answers to:

1. Why was that front room never used? "It's for best I would be told, you don't play in there" Why not? What is best when it comes around?
2. Why was my Grandad prone to fits of dancing around the house singing "Umpah Umpah stick it up your jumper" on a Sunday afternoon when he came home from the Saracens Head?

I promised there was a point to this ramble didn't I? So here it is:

History is recorded, not always correctly and I have my reservations about some of the stuff I was taught at school and some of the things that were conveniently left out of the curriculum.

Family history is all important so to the old uns - if you can get the grandchildren to sit still long enough, pass on your knowledge, write it down if you feel the urge. To the young uns - ask those questions, learn as much as you can about your past and, in turn, pass it on.

Oh, Grans coming back down the garden with some eggs, you carry on, I'll stay for a cuppa with her and Aunt Flo. You know your way back don't you?

Oh and remember to shut the gate please, we don't want the Moggys to get out.

Colli Bob

Rainbow Troughs

The observant Stoker may have noticed that the troughs have been replanted (somewhat later than usual for obvious reasons). We have used rainbow colours in keeping with the times and I'm sure they'll look lovely as they mature.

I know some of you wonderful people are already on the case (and we're very grateful!) but they never mind extra help so if you live close to one it would be marvellous if you could give it a watering whenever you can. Amazingly, after all that rain, some are already dry.

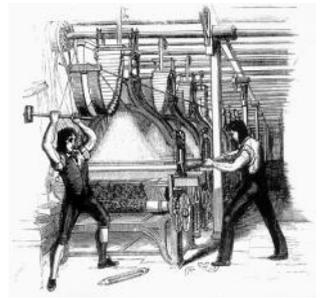


Thanks so much. *Leila & Ruth*

Luddites

In a previous article on framework knitters, I discovered that Luddites had attacked some of the machines in Hinckley, although, by and large, South West Leicestershire escaped the worst of these destructive attacks. Luddite is now used as a term of offence for anyone who fails to embrace the latest technological advances or who hankers for a return to the ways of the past. However, this does the Luddites a great disservice. They were not so much against change itself but about the effects on their lives that change brought about.

Named after General Ned Ludd, a mythical figure who was said to have lived in that home of good mythical figures, Sherwood Forest, the Luddites first act of machine destruction took place in Nottingham in 1811. Framework knitters had, for decades, produced products for which they were paid fixed rates but with the industrialisation of their industry, this all changed. They faced a cut in wages, the introduction of less skilled workers doing their jobs in factories, and wider stocking frames that produced cheaper goods that were inferior in quality. Their livelihoods and quality of life were at risk and so they banded together and took direct action. The movement spread.



Machine-breaking Luddites (Wikipedia)

In Yorkshire it was the croppers, highly skilled finishers of woollen cloth, who rebelled; in Lancashire it was the cotton weavers and spinners. Not only were machines destroyed but also employers, magistrates and food merchants were attacked. The government had to act to stem the violence and so in 1812, machine-breaking became a crime punishable by death, resulting in the execution of 17 men the following year. Despite this, the authority's attempts to quell the Luddites were largely ineffective. The machine wreckers became a secret society, with rules of silence to protect its members. The use of government spies and troops met with resistance from local people including many small factory owners who had sympathy with the Luddites' cause.

The attack in Hinckley in 1830 would have been one of the last recorded incidents as working people accepted the inevitable with factories springing up in every town and city. The Luddites were largely forgotten by history until the 1950s when another technological revolution saw their name being used as an insult.

Michael Dix

Ten of a Kind (Answers on page 26)

August sees a yachting spectacular on the Isle of Wight with Cowes Week. So here are ten boating related questions for you to try.

1. In which city would you find Nelson's ship, the Victory?
2. Who sailed single handedly around the world in 1966 in his boat Gypsy Moth IV?
3. What name is shared by the world's first nuclear submarine and the original Star Trek TV spaceship?
4. According to a nautical saying, the time for the first drink of the day is when the sun is over the yardarm but where on a ship would you find the yard arm?
5. Which famous murderer was arrested in 1910 on a transatlantic ship as it approached Quebec, the arresting detective having been alerted by a wireless message from the ship, the first instance of wireless being used to arrest a criminal?
6. What is the kitchen on a ship called?
7. Which famous ship was damaged by fire in 2007 during restoration work at Greenwich?
8. Which TV cartoon character was captain of the Black Pig?
9. Which painter, the subject of a 2014 film, painted The Fighting Temeraire, a picture showing an old warship being towed up the Thames?
10. Which Cunard Ocean liner is now a tourist attraction at Long Beach in California?

Stoke Golding Scout Group



You can't say that, in these unusual times, the Scout Group aren't being creative. The Scout Association has subscribed to a virtual meeting platform which has the added features of white board, power point, sharing etc.

So the Cubs and Scouts have played Pictionary, the Beavers have learnt about 1st aid and bandaged a teddy to demonstrate the skills they have learnt.



The Cubs have been making paper planes and sending in videos of them flying. The Scouts have been learning magic tricks virtually, as well.

Coming up, the Beavers are doing magic and the Cubs are in an escape room and so it goes on.

Therefore despite these unusual times the Scout Group are getting together in their various sections and having fun.

Jennifer



Memories of a Broken Empire (Part 3)

The first Kazakh university I visited was the Karaganda Economic University. Karaganda, Kazakhstan's second largest city, is situated on the Yellow Steppe, 1,100 kilometres north of the then capital, Almaty, and had been a "closed city" for many years, mainly because it was home to a huge iron foundry, a Russian tank factory, and, on its outskirts, a large gulag complex together with several prisoner-of-war camps. Only the iron foundry remains in business.

I was the first "westerner" to enter the university and I doubt whether many had visited Karaganda since a group of Welsh miners came to open the surrounding coal mines in the 19th century but it became almost a second home to me because, on the conclusion of our first project, I was able to obtain funds to design and deliver a two-year development programme for the staff of the university.

The University had a strict non-smoking rule and I was amused, not to say honoured, when I was given special dispensation to smoke my meerschaum pipe as I pleased. I put this down to the fact that it was thought to be a typically English (eccentric?) gentleman's habit and the University Senate wanted it known they had such a rare visitor in their midst, or perhaps that their most revered English heroes included Robin Hood and Sherlock Holmes! When I brought groups to Britain I always tried to arrange a visit to Nottingham Castle and 221b Baker Street.

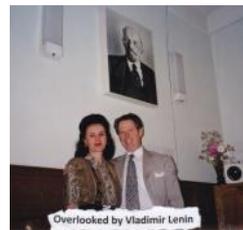
On one memorable summer visit my interpreter, Tania, and I were met at the airport by the Rector of the university, Erkara Balkaraevich and two of his Deans of Faculty, all of whom I knew well, and instead of taking us to Karaganda they drove into the steppe and came to a halt in a beautiful willow-edged river valley. Rugs were spread out on the sand and a picnic of horsemeat, mutton, black Caspian caviar, boiled eggs (always eaten with caviar), freshly baked bread, cakes and fresh fruit, together with the obligatory vodka for the men, and champanski for the lady, appeared as if by magic.



Many toasts were proposed that unforgettable afternoon and although I was well aware of the Kazakh custom that any toast involving a woman, eg "the Queen" or "wives back home" demanded that the vodka be "downed in one" I was glad to be sitting on the ground where it was easy to dispose of a glass or two without it being too obvious.

Late in the afternoon, when we were all feeling a little sentimental, Erkara turned to me and, through Tania, said, his voice a mixture of nostalgia and pride that I remember as if it were yesterday, **"this is how the Kazakh's used to live before the Russians came."** Sincerely meant but not strictly true - before the Russians came the Kazakhs knew nothing of Vodka! .

It was a short visit and I was staying at the Cosmonaut Hotel, built specifically for the Russian cosmonauts using the Balkonur Cosmodrome from which Yuri Gagarin, the first person in space, was launched. Sadly, the hotel was much the worse for wear and virtually unoccupied but an armed guard still kept watch from the gatehouse tower. Anyone looking for the Cosmodrome wouldn't find it at Balkonur, nor by using a map, because the Russians, for security reasons, named it after a town many miles away and showed it on the map in a totally different place.



Arriving at the hotel late in the evening, tired after a long but memorable day, I crashed onto my bed, waking early next morning with more mosquito (some said bed-bug) bites on my body than I could count. Fortunately neither Kazakh mosquitos nor bed-bugs carry malaria but they were very painful.

Bob Quinney



Kitchen Corner Ginger Crunch

This is really tasty - ideal with your morning coffee

GINGER CRUNCH INGREDIENTS

4ozs (125gms) Softened Butter

½ Cup of Caster Sugar

1 ½ Cups Plain Flour

1tsp Baking Powder

1tsp Ground Ginger

GINGER ICING

2ozs (70gms) Butter

¾ Cup Icing Sugar

2tblsp Golden Syrup

3tsps Ground Ginger

METHOD

Pre-heat oven to 190C /375F or Gas Mark 5. Grease and Line a Swiss Roll tin.

Cream the butter and sugar until light and fluffy. Sift the flour and baking powder and ginger together. Mix into the creamed mixture. Turn the dough onto a lightly floured surface and knead well. Press the dough into the prepared tin. (I press it down with a potato masher to cover the base).

Bake for 20-25 minutes or until golden.

Whilst the base is baking make the icing. Combine the icing ingredients in a small saucepan and heat until the butter is melted, stirring all the time.

Remove the base from the oven and pour the hot icing over and spread evenly. Cut into squares whilst still warm.

Church Matters

From St Margaret's Church



During these last few months, our entire nation has been going through a time of profound change – almost everything about our lives, from the way we shop to the locations where we work and go to school, to who we can meet, has been altered.

Some have tragically lost loved ones through this time, some have lost jobs and incomes, some have been furloughed whilst others have been working harder than ever. Some have lost precious planned events; family parties and celebrations, baptisms and weddings have had to be re-scheduled. End of year proms, exams, holidays and a whole host of other things precious to us have been lost too... and that will have taken its toll on us all.

We are now slowly and cautiously being given more freedom; we're not out of the woods yet but thankfully there are positive signs that the virus no longer has the hold on the county that it did. As I reflect on the losses, but also being grateful for the positives, I ask the question, "Where has God been in it all?" Of course, I believe He has been there...but sometimes we have to slow down in order to be able to see and recognise His presence in all kinds of situations. In Deuteronomy 31:6 it says, "...the LORD your God goes with you; he will never leave you nor forsake you." And I believe that's true.

As the restrictions are now beginning to be lifted, new challenges arise and we have to make decisions as to what is best for our own context and circumstances. Worship has taken place almost without interruption at St Margaret's for hundreds of years and yet we realise that we cannot just re-open our doors for public gatherings and services like we did before.

Discussions are taking place on how we will be able to open for private prayer, putting into place all that needs to happen to do that safely for those who find the building a sanctuary, and especially at this stage, need to access the church and sit quietly.

We are hoping to re-open in some form from the beginning of July, and so I finish with a prayer to offer our building to God:

Lord of compassion – we offer this building:
Consecrate it to be a place of acceptance
Where all are welcomed and valued
The rejected find a home
Love is poured out.

Lord of encounter – we offer this building:
Consecrate it to be a place of prayer
Where your face is sought
Your touch felt
Your will revealed.

Lord of the broken – we offer this building:
Consecrate it to be a place of healing
Where those who mourn are comforted
Wounds are tended
Lives made whole.
Amen.

Pat Bennett

Wishing you all God's blessings Linda

| | |
|---|---|
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|---|---|

Battlefield Journeys 2 - Bloor Heath, St Albans x 2 & Barnet

To visit all the battlefields of the Wars of the Roses takes some planning as they are sprinkled across the length and breadth of England. However, the second of my visits happened by accident. We'd taken our caravan to North Shropshire - and inadvertently stumbled across Blore Heath, the second encounter of the medieval conflict. Sue and I battled our way along a rarely used footpath that followed the Yorkist position before she retired to the car and I set off to find a monument erected to one Lord Audley, the Lancastrian commander who was killed in battle. Wherever the elusive monument was, it remained hidden from my view. There's never much to see on a 500 year old battlefield, so when there is and you can't see it, it is a tad frustrating.

The first planned trip was to St Albans. Sue and I went our separate ways, her love of battlefields matching my love of shopping. There had been two battles in the city, the first in 1461, marking the outbreak in hostilities between the weak King Henry IV and the ambitious Richard, Duke of York who'd ruled the country for a year during a period when Henry was incapacitated by mental health problems. The battle was little more than a street skirmish and St Albans retains the same street patterns as it did back then. I was able to walk along lanes leading out of the city where the Lancastrians had erected barriers to stop the Yorkists from attacking them. It didn't work as a group led by the Earl of Warwick broke through some gardens and surprised the King and his knights still putting on their armour in the market place. A few nobles were killed, the King was injured and it all ended almost as soon as it had begun. There was an excellent display on the battle in the small museum that fronts the market place. After meeting Sue for lunch, I set off to walk to Bernard's Heath, just out of the city, where the second battle rumbled on six years later. Warwick was the one defending his position this time, fighting a losing retreat from the city centre to a small village to the north.

A short car ride away was Barnet, scene of another battle in 1471. By now, Warwick had changed sides, forced the Yorkist Edward IV into exile and put dear old Henry VI back on the throne. This was to be his final stand. There was another monument which I found easily although next to it were workmen busy pumping raw sewage out of a blocked pipe: hardly conducive to my reflections. A stretch of grassland enabled me to trace the development of the battle, fought in early morning fog. After the Lancastrian leader, the Earl of Oxford, had seen off the Yorkist contingent his men were fighting, he had considerable trouble stopping them from engaging in a bit of pillage in Barnet. When he eventually managed to get most of them together, they returned to the fray. Unfortunately, during their absence, the two sides had slightly rotated and Oxford's men came up behind their own side who they wrongly identified as Yorkists due to them wearing an emblem of the sun which was similar to Edward IV's symbol. With cries of treason, the Lancastrian army fell apart and ran away.

Michael Dix

Fool on the Hill

Roll up, Roll up.....

I see that those over paid Prima Donna types who ply their trade in the Premier League will shortly be emerging from their enforced isolation to entertain us in our continued incarceration. Well good, because quite frankly, the repeats of Midsomer Murders are starting to wear a bit thin. It also looks like Lewis Hamilton and his chums are going to be whizzing about on deserted race tracks around Europe so Sky will be able to justify the king's ransom that they ask for their services. This is also good news for the ordinary guys in the world of broadcasting who have been struggling whilst the level of creative output has been at rock bottom. If I am honest I have rather missed all the sport stuff and although one should never trivialise the events of the last few months, it will be nice to have something else to distract us.

Strangely though, the thing that I have really missed during the Pandemic has been the summer season of Village Fetes, Flower Festivals and other such small community "do's". I mean, where else is a chap going to get hold of a Clairol Foot Spa (little used) or a set of Carmen Heated Rollers with two of them missing? Bric a Brac stalls are the product of the winter clear out of attics and sheds just in time for the season of village functions. Then we pounce on these never to be repeated bargains and secrete them away in the gaps in our sheds and lofts until the seasons turn and we dig them all out again to be offered to a new generation of the unsuspecting. It is much the same with raffle and tombola prizes. A recent Government survey concluded that there are actually only 24 village raffle and Tombola prizes in existence and that they are passed around from village to village to augment the odd bottle of Japanese Merlot donated by the local squire. Or I might just have made that up. These most worthy functions are usually organised by the same unsung few who have to tread a very careful line so as not to upset the sensitivities of the Village residents. It is a truth well known that Mrs Hepplethwaite's fruit scones would not be eaten by a starving duck on the filthiest backwater of an industrial canal. Still they are still greeted each year with the obligatory "Oh, how scrummy they look" before being placed in the most distant corner of the tea room where they will do least harm. Heaven help the fete organiser who dares to meddle with the placement of the various stalls and games. Last year, amid protests, Mrs. McTweed's jams and chutneys stall was moved to the shade of the Sycamore tree with the honest intention of shielding her from the summer sun. The fact that her sales plummeted due to an unfortunate descent of avian guano is still a matter of some frostiness.

F.O.T.H





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Answers to 10 of a Kind

1. Portsmouth
2. Sir Francis Chichester
3. USS Enterprise
4. They are the ends of the yards which are the horizontal beams attached to the mast of a sailing ship
5. Dr Crippen
6. A galley
7. Cutty Sark
8. Captain Pugwash
9. JMW Turner
10. Queen Mary

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Obituaries

IDA ALICE HOLMES (Peggy)

Peggy passed away peacefully at Harvey House Care Home on 6 June, aged 99 years. Dearly loved wife of the late Robert, much loved mother to Christabelle and dear mother in law to David. Private funeral to take place shortly.

JOHN MARR

John Marr, of Stoke Golding and later of Higham, passed away on 4th June, 2020, aged 90 years. Beloved husband of Ann, loving dad of Joanne, Suzanne, Sallyann, Jackie, Louise, Steve and Mark, much loved grandad and great grandad, brother and uncle.

We offer our sincere condolences to the family and friends of Peggy and John.



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