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Barkham Newsletter

Issue 134 Winter 2020

from the Barkham Village Residents Association

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Photo credit: Tom Waters Photography



Win a festive hamper
 See page 3 for details

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Please help us by paying your £2 subscription by direct debit. If you haven't paid this year, your debit will be taken shortly after you sign up. If you have paid, you will not be charged twice and your debit will be used to take next year's subscription in April / May 2021.

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In this issue...

All debits are fully protected under the UK direct debit scheme. By setting a debit up you will be helping to ensure the future of the BVRA

BVRA Reports	2	Local history	9	Twohoots Cheese	18
Hamper competition	3	New Books	11	Social	20
Planning	4	Quiz	12	Associations	22
Church	5	Alan's Patch	14		
District Councillor	6	Update from the Surgery	16		



Chairman's Chat

I hope that you are well and have coped with the second lockdown. I know it has been a strange and tough year, but I hope that when you receive this the lockdown has ended and that we can all make, albeit tentative, plans for the Christmas period.

I am pleased to see that we have managed to produce and distribute the complete set of four Newsletters this calendar year in difficult circumstances. All credit for this goes to our editor Suzanne Trigg, all our contributors and the dedicated group of distributors. My thanks for all your efforts.

As you may remember from the last edition, we took the correct decision to suspend the physical collection of subscriptions. As a result, we have focused on the Direct Debit approach and whilst this has continued to gain good traction we are still below the number of paid subscriptions for previous years. This is fundamental to the continued activities of the Residents Association and we ask all residents who have not paid to set up a simple Direct Debit using the link on the front page. We also decided to distribute the Autumn Newsletter to all residents regardless of subscription payment. This seemed the right and correct action given the Covid 19 situation. For this edition (winter) we are distributing to all households that have paid in 2020 (either by cash or DD) plus all households that paid in 2019, if you are one of these you will receive a personal note asking you to set up a direct debit. We would greatly appreciate you doing this. It may seem an inconsequential

amount but "every little helps", in ensuring the viability of the Residents Association.

We continue to look for a Membership Secretary to join us and manage the distribution and membership aspects of the Residents Association. It is not a daunting task (I am doing it as a stand in at the moment), so someone with a little spare time should be able to commit to this. We have excellent IT support and colleagues to assist initially. Please get in touch with me and have a chat.

This may not be a normal festive season but it's still "that" season. I think the community has been great in helping people who are less fortunate, are on their own or just can't be with friends and family. I know that you will all do your best to help these people.

Regards and best wishes
Alan Dixon

Advertising and Newsletter Contributions

Newsletter articles / contributions for the Spring edition should be in by 12 February 2021. It helps if these can be submitted in electronic form by email to newsletter@barkham.org.uk.

For trade adverts, please email treasurer@barkham.org.uk, or call 977 1831. We offer three landscape sizes, 64mm x 54mm at £22, 124mm x 105mm at £52 and 190x130mm at £100, for 4 quarterly insertions.

Distribution of the next issue will take place in early March.



Season's greetings to you all!

I am sorry to report that the annual Carols concert had to be cancelled this year, but that is probably no surprise to anyone. The normal diary of events is still on hold, but we have high hopes for next year. Keep an eye on our website and as soon as things start to get back to normal, we will publish a calendar of events.

Apart from the regular reports and quiz we also have an update from the surgery, an interesting

article about local history and a fascinating story 'Remembering Jack' and of course, our fabulous chance to win a luxury festive hamper, filled with locally sourced goodies. I am delighted to say we will also be donating goods of the same value as the hamper to the Wokingham Foodbank to be distributed for Christmas. We feel it is important to not only support local businesses but also give back to those feeling the pinch during this stressful period. If you are able to help in any way, check out the goods most required on their website Wokingham.foodbank.org.uk.

Christmas is going to feel different this year, but restrictions won't be forever. So, keep washing those hands, wearing those masks and giving people space and we will get through this. I do hope you all are able to relax and enjoy some family time safely. Here's to a better 2021.

Suzanne Trigg

The BVRA needs a new Membership Secretary!

Duties are to:

- Maintain a membership register (handling of subscription money will be dealt with separately).
- Print rounds for distributors - 4 times per annum
- Cover for distributors on holiday.

Over the whole year, it takes less than 30 hours to the entire job.

Please contact our Chairman, Alan Dixon (details on p 5), if you are interested in helping the BVRA by taking on this role or would like more details.

Win a Hamper



Barkham Residents Association wish to bring some cheer into the festive period by holding a raffle to win a festive hamper. The hamper will be a collection of luxury goodies which we will obtain from locally sourced distributors. To enter, all you have to do is visit our website (barkham.org.uk/christmas) and answer a simple question (have your BVRA newsletter to hand). We will be drawing the winner during the weekend of 19/20th of December and it will be delivered to a local address.

Eligibility is restricted to recipients of the winter 2020 newsletter and multiple entries from the same address will not be entered into the competition.

We will also be donating a hamper (of equal value) to the Wokingham Foodbank for distribution before Christmas.

Merry Christmas from everyone on the BVRA committee !



Planning

Just when you are beginning to think that planning could not become more confused or uncertain – it did.

Whilst central government was coping with the algorithm that moderated school exam results and struggling to develop an in-house track and trace app, they launched a public consultation that focused on another algorithm. Much has since been written in the media but let's see how this could impact us locally.

The Government has declared a goal to build 1,000,000 homes across the county by the end of this Parliament in May 2024. To do this, they feel the planning system has to be changed and launched three simultaneous and contingent consultations which have just closed. The need to build the right homes in the right places at the right price is paramount but this algorithm is based on some seriously wrong misconceptions.

The Wokingham 2010(-2026) Core Plan set out to build 662 homes per year. A few years ago, the Government changed the way of assessing housing needs and this was increased to 789. Despite this, Wokingham Borough Council (WBC) has performed well with an average 1,231 new dwellings built over each of the last three

years reflecting the back-end delivery of the plan. The draft Local Plan Update (LPU) for the Borough published earlier this year was based on building some 772 houses pa to 2036. This new algorithm requires 1,635 homes each year.

The assumption running through these consultations is that poor delivery of much-needed homes was down to the planning process - how can that be when there are planning approvals across the country for 1,000,000 homes which have still to be built? Much needs to be done to streamline the planning system but these current proposals will not hasten delivery – three reasons by way of example: i) There is no pressure on developers to build at the required rate, ii) It is assumed that oversupply will bring prices down – in reality, supply is used to maintain pricing and iii) The new algorithm skews build towards overheated areas such as London, the SE and SW at the expense of those areas where the Government is committed to 'levelling-up' such as the NE, NW, Yorkshire and the Midlands.

Wokingham Borough Council has been very proactive in seeking a review of these proposed reforms and has been strongly supported by local MPs – The Rt Hon Theresa May, The Rt Hon Sir John Redwood, James Sunderland and Matt Rodda. On the 08 Oct 2020, the House of Commons agreed that the proposed changes would not be implemented until they had been further debated in Parliament.

The draft LPU, which focused on building a new garden town at Grazeley, proposed one medium-sized additional development in Barkham of 140 homes on the for-

mer Reading FC Training Ground on Park Lane. WBC continues to explore Plan B options should Grazeley and the reduction in the housing numbers not happen.

Whilst all this was going on reports were coming in about high-visibility jackets, clip-boards, dormouse surveys around the fields of the southern part of the Parish and low flying aircraft circling overhead. WBC own most of this farmland and we have heard that they intend to repurpose these farmlands with the possibility of building a solar farm on some of the fields. This would remove the fields concerned from the housing market for the duration of the project. Plans are not confirmed, details are not available but we are assured there will be a formal public planning application and consultation. To continue the environmentally friendly theme, we have also heard that the Rooks Nest Wood 'SANG' will be extended and there will be an extensive tree planting programme.

An important aspect of planning, especially in the Barkham area, is the provision of 'Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspaces' or 'SANGs'. When new homes are built within 5km of The Thames Basin Heath Special Protection Area – a network of heathlands which supports vulnerable ground-nesting birds – 'SANGs' must be set aside as buffer zones for recreational and ecology purposes. Much of Barkham lies within this range. For larger developments such as Arborfield Green, this is done as part of the overall greening of the site which, including the internal SANG (Hazebrouck Meadows), accounts for some 50% of the total area. Smaller developments can benefit from 'buying-in' to an external

SANG such as Rooks Nest Wood where the overall scale of the new green space is more meaningful.

Two outstanding publications serve the residents of Barkham – this one, the *BVRA Magazine* and the Parish Council's *Village Info*. We will endeavour to strike a balance across the two periodicals between general newsy background planning articles such as this one and more specific detailed ones to avoid too much duplication. With these articles and the diligent BVDW alerts, hopefully, readers will have a good view of what is going on with planning in Barkham. Let us know what you think.

If you have any comments about anything written here then please e-mail to clerk@barkham-parish-council.org.uk.

Graeme Dexter
Barkham Parish Council.

BVRA 2020/21 GENERAL COMMITTEE MEMBERS

- Chairman: Alan Dixon 977 1831
chairman@barkham.org.uk
- Secretary: Richard Roberts 07785 228684
secretary@barkham.org.uk
- Treasurer: Alison Goudge 989 2287
treasurer@barkham.org.uk
- Social: (contact) Gill Powell 978 3373
social@barkham.org.uk
- Membership: vacancy
membership@barkham.org.uk
- Newsletter: Suzanne Trigg 07411 681272
newsletter@barkham.org.uk
- Web Site: Dave Clements 989 2198
webmaster@barkham.org.uk
- Development Watch: Stewart Richardson 979 1914
development@barkham.org.uk

Christmas 2020: disrupted but not cancelled



Can you imagine everybody across the country having their Christmas plans dictated by government announcements? Mary and Joseph knew all about it as they were forced to make the long and difficult journey to Bethlehem when Mary was so close to her due date. But then again, the prophets had announced hundreds of years before that God's promised messiah would come from that unremarkable town. In spite of imperial decrees, the events of the first Christmas all came together according to plan.

Normally in this edition of the magazine, I would be giving you the dates and details of our Carol Services, but as I write this in mid-November, we are mid-lockdown and churches are unable to meet. As with everything else, it is not yet clear what we will be able to do.

But please be assured that Christmas at Barkham Church has not been cancelled and we promise to provide opportunities for you to celebrate this year. At this stage are looking at two things: Some smaller live services, where you will be able to hear some carols, listen to the readings and hear the good news of Christmas which we need more than ever. Or, if you are unable to get out, we are recording some videos than you can access via our website, to enable you to remember the Christmas story from the comfort of your own home.

Keep an eye on the Barkham page of our website www.abch.org.uk or look out for the cards which we will deliver around the parish when plans are in place.

Let me wish you a safe and happy Christmas and I do hope we may get to see you as we think again about the one who came into our dark world as 'The Light of the World.'

Julian Bidgood
Minister of Barkham





who have been affected. They will provide information about organizations who can deliver assistance and advice, in some cases this will be the council as well as others who are in the charity sector, this can be a problem of a financial nature or around homelessness and mental health. These are strange times for many with residents losing their jobs and income due to no fault of their own so please if you find yourself in that situation don't be afraid to ask for help. The council has helped many with housing, council tax payments and grants, we have also committed to "no Children will go hungry in the Borough" A commitment which we will fulfil.

We have seen many acts of generosity with people giving their time as well as financial contributions and as I say working with the support organisations we are committed to reducing the impact of this dreadful pandemic and to help people to get back to normal, whatever that will look like, as quickly as possible. There is light at the end of the tunnel and its no longer a train coming as it looks like vaccination is on the way which will, if not eradicate the disease, will protect people and normal life can resume.

All the time this has been going on the council has continued to deliver services to residents such as waste collection, planning, including enforcement of unauthorised development of all kinds and to this end we have been fighting appeals and I am glad to say winning, most notably in protecting the countryside in our area this includes the Coombes and inspector has recognised the ancient woodland status accorded to this much valued and used woodland in the centre

of our community. Which has proved very important especially during the last 6 months during these periods of lockdown. The council has also cracked down on fly-tippers, prosecuting where ever possible and it has had an effect even when more people are likely to see it on their walks and we will continue to keep up the pressure.

We are coming to the end of some major road infrastructure projects, Barkham Bridge is coming on, the Arborfield relief road has been completed and the Winnersh relief road is on target for delivery. In addition to new cycleways and greenways. So life goes on, we have closed all our leisure centres and libraries and redeployed the staff to assist with issues arising from COVID-19 helping the old and vulnerable and meeting other demands placed upon the council during these times.

I just want to say have a good Christmas and stay safe and hopefully, next year will bring better news for us all.

John Kaiser
Ward councillor for Barkham,
Deputy Leader,
Executive member for finance
and Housing
Wokingham borough council

COVID-19 continues to be a major cost and concern to all and as such writing as I do during the 2nd and hopefully the last lockdown with case rising all over the South of England including Wokingham. I must admit we have got away with a lower level of cases than some of our neighbouring areas and from what I have seen this has been down to the responsible attitude of residents in the borough. We have managed to get all the schools back and attendance levels are high without the corresponding increase in cases which was always a major fear.

I would like to thank all the residents who have treated this pandemic as a serious threat to both family and the financial wellbeing of many and because of responsible attitude to social distancing the wearing of masks and the other actions needed to prevent the spread of the disease and that observance of the rules may mean we just may be able to have a Christmas, although not normal but hopefully a coming together of extended families and loved ones. This in itself is a good reason to keep up the good work.

We are seeing a lot of residents who now are beginning to face an uncertain future due to job losses and business collapse and we are working closely with the Citizens Advice in Wokingham who act as our front door for residents

Where in Barkham?



Answer on page 23.



Barkham web site

I hope you like our website
www.barkham.org.uk

We are constantly looking for ways to improve it and would welcome your suggestions.

More photos please!

We are always in need of attractive images of the Barkham area for both the web site and newsletter, so if you have some interesting photos and would like to share them please get in touch.

Dave Clements
webmaster@barkham.org.uk



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Remembering Jack



December 1941:

Christmas at RAF Hullavington training station. On Wednesday morning I had my first trip up over the English countryside and gosh what a mess. It's just a patchwork of fields and hedges with odd streams and railways and villages thrown in to confuse you. No wonder our observers are so hot at their navigation. I was up with my instructor of course whether he can pass on what he knows to me is another matter. Well after getting myself dizzy finding out where I was for about half an hour I asked him if I could have it and so I played around with the thing for a while steep turns and things and you have to watch what you are doing all the time or you'll soon be lost. Then I went up above the clouds. It is gorgeous up there brilliant sunshine and persil white clouds no dingy greyness there and not a drop of ground to be seen anywhere. Then I brought her down again below them to the greyness once more and then he brought her in to land. I had an hour up there it was amazing".

On the 14th July 1944 Warrant Officer John Henry Reeves (known as Jack) died when his spitfire was shot down over the Normandy countryside. He had bailed out too close to the ground and his parachute did not open. His final resting place is in a village churchyard in the village of Bailleul-la-Vallee, France. On the day he died his body was rescued by the local village and hidden because there were Germans in the area. A service was held outside the church because they did not know what religion he was.

He was then buried and after the war his details were passed to the War Graves Commission and then onto my mother-in-law, Jack's sister.

In 2007 we wrote to the Mayor of the village and received a reply telling us that he remembers when Jack was shot down and how his body was recovered and buried. We have since discovered that he had been shot down by "friendly fire" which was hard to hear. We also received a letter from the head of their equivalent of the British Legion who invited us to a ceremony which has been carried out around Jack's grave since he died. The small community hold a Remembrance Sunday service at each of the war memorials and another on the 8th May when France celebrates Liberation Day.

We usually join the village once and sometimes twice a year, with Jack's son and his wife. His son was only 3 months old when his father died. The first time we went we were amazed by the numbers attending. Initially it was just ourselves, the head of their association Francis and his wife Catherine, then gradually cars started to arrive and within 10 minutes the small road leading to the church was full of veterans carrying flags. The Mayor handed Jack's son a large arrangement of flowers and then everyone assembled outside the Mayors' office. We then marched to the churchyard and the flag bearers surrounded Jack's grave. A short speech in French and English was given a bugler played the last post and the flowers and our poppy wreath was laid on his grave. A two minutes silence then followed. We were very proud.

The first year we were asked to sing our national anthem which was a bit of a surprise but we managed it. We then all marched to their French veterans' memorial and carried out a similar service naming each of their war dead by name. After this event we are then invited back to the village hall for hot chocolate or a snifter. Hardly anyone speaks English, our French is rusty but we all communicate in a special way. There is also a lot of kissing of those we have become close to who we look forward to seeing each year. Following this we visit a local restaurant which is always a great pleasure in France and enjoy wonderful hospitality.

Many of the older villagers thanked us for liberating them, it was quite humbling. The Mayor and one other lady were the only surviving villagers who had been alive when Jack was shot down, she told us that the Germans had put a gun to her head during the war because they wanted to know where her parents were. Sadly both the Mayor and the lady are no longer with us but they are both buried in the churchyard close to Jack.

We are lucky to have Jack's log book and letters he wrote to his sister. The log book is full of wonderful day to day experiences during Jack's training and his first solo flight. Which is noted above.

Another letter states:

"As for the flying it is going quite well. I have now done a snap roll, slow roll, half roll and a loop amongst others. The loop is the easiest of the lot – you'd be surprised how easy it is but there isn't much sensation in it. I have now got in 40 odd hours and have about 3 more weeks to get in 30 more hours and I should be able

to do that quite easily weather permitting".

The RAF were well looked after when they were training in California and were invited to a reception on the 5th July 1941; a swish party hosted by the Hollywood actor Charles Laughton and his wife Elsa at their house on a cliff over-looking the sea in Santa Monica. Flora Robson, Deanna Durbin and Sam Goldwyn to name a few actors were there. In Jack's letter following the event he said he had taught Deanna Durbin the Lambeth Walk. Flora Robson commented that they had come to entertain the RAF but they had indeed been entertained by the RAF. Deanna Durbin told Jack he was an angel.

We felt as we were unable to get to France this year that we would remember Jack with a personal window at home. A photo of this has been sent to family, friends and those in France we meet with. It is the least we can do for a man who gave his life for his country and who remains in our hearts.

Julia Tredwell



Arborfield Local History Society

The original Society which for a brief time was joined by Barkham, had folded through lack of a committee. The society held monthly meetings at Arborfield Village Hall on the second Monday of each month. When active, ALHS was entertained by speakers of a high calibre. Paul Atterbury came from the Antique Road Show, someone spoke about The Workhouse and one member regularly talked about the village of Arborfield.

An important aim of the Society was the research into Arborfield's history (they have identified eve-

ry person named on the Memorial Cross) and in their archives hold many important documents including maps and photographs. Recently Di Thorne researched the Royal Observer Corps and its role in Arborfield during World War II. Readers may know that a Look-out Post was found when the new relief road was being constructed. Now the Look-out will be commemorated by a stone that was once part of the Geology Trail at the Coombes School.

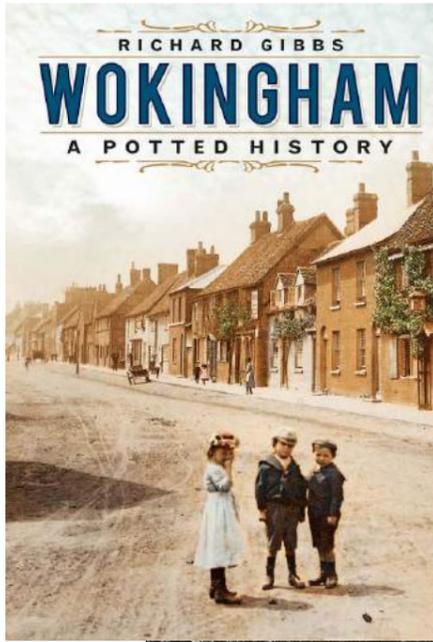
Although the Arborfield Local History Society no longer exists as such, a band of enthu-

siasts are keeping the idea active by forming the Research Group. It would be wonderful if there were people out there willing to help re-establish a local history society and become a committee member. If you are interested then please get in touch by email: junecoombes2020@yahoo.com

June Durant
Arborfield Research Group

A couple of interesting books have been recently published about the local area.

Wokingham a potted history – Richard Gibbs (available from Amazon)



Wokingham sits on the edge of Windsor Great Forest. Originally settled by the Wocingas, an Anglo-Saxon tribe, the town grew steadily - but its early prosperity was cut short when half of the houses were destroyed during the English Civil War. Wokingham has hosted bull-baiting, highwaymen and a multitude of beer houses. The town's people have played their part in both world wars. Its rich history is interwoven with the history of England: a story of good times and bad, from the Beaker people to the Victorians to the present day. Wokingham is the quintessential English county town.

The school in a wood – June Durant (available from Henry Street's garden centre)

This book was written at the request of Arborfield Local History and Research Group, formerly Arborfield Local History Society (ALHS) and provides a history of the Coombes Infant and Nursery School from its split from the Juniors in 1971 until it reunited in 2008 to be a Primary School once again.



After months of lock down it was fantastic to be able to open The Coombes Church of England Primary School to all of our pupils again. The staff has worked tremendously hard during the last six months to support our children and community, whilst keeping safety at the centre of all that we do. The support of the parents has been fantastic.

Freedom to Play

For children who lived through a lock down, playtime has never been so important. Of course this is carefully managed, with designated locations and timings to keep designated groups of children apart whilst at school. It has been fantastic to see children rediscover the freedom which comes with friendships and games. This free time provides the children the opportunity to develop their social and personal skills. As always we have placed the school's vision and values at the centre of their play, expecting children to treat each other with compassion, forgiveness and respect at all times. There is an atmosphere of calm contentment across our play times. We are very proud of our children.

School Improvements

Last year the school created space in the KS2 playground for our children to play football. However, after one of our wettest winters, the grass turned to



mud and football soon became an impossibility. Undeterred, our friendly farmer next door, gave us permission to improve our drainage, using their field next door as a runoff for the excess water. Work on this took place in April. This was the first step. The next step was to level the surface. Once this had been completed the PTA generously agreed to finance the installation of Astro-Turf with football markings. Our PTA are so supportive and the money that parents kindly donated is always used to directly benefit our children. Thank you again.

The Coombes Church of England Primary School were thrilled to be approached by the Arborfield Local History Society with a request to help them mark a very special place in the History of the Arborfield and Barkham com-

munity. During World War Two, an anti-aircraft gunnery emplacement was manned by volunteers from the village. This played an important part in the defence of the country against the Nazi enemy. The History Society wanted to mark this site with a memorial which would tell the story of the brave men who manned this gun. Many members of the History Society either went to The Coombes Church of England Primary School, or had children who went to the school and they asked if they could use one of our special standing stones to mark this location. The mason identified one of our five large Yorkshire Granite boulders, which would be perfect for this role and this was transported to the site on the side of the new road. This process has now been completed and stands as a reminder of the sacrifices made by members of our local community.



The Quiz

Still no Social Event photos for the centre spread due to Covid 19 so here is another picture quiz. The questions are a diverse mix of UK and worldwide locations. Something for all tastes, hopefully!

1. This is known as "Bobby's Bus Shelter" named after a local schoolboy. On which most northerly UK inhabited island would you find it?
2. This claims to be the smallest Visitor Centre in the world and as it's in a disused phone box it would be hard to argue! It is near the site of the Battle of Flodden. Which English monarch was on the throne when the battle took place (you may be able to see the year in the photo if you look carefully)?
3. Another battle - this is part of a 360 degree panorama of a famous battle in Belgium. Which battle?
4. There are 2 photos for this question:
4a is the house of a famous naturalist
4b is a stretch of water off South America named after the ship on which he travelled. Who is he and what is the name of his house and the stretch of water?
5. Whose memorial is this and where would you find it?



1



2



3



4a



4b



5

6. The home of a "Great Briton". Who was he and what is the name of his house?
7. Located on the island of Staffa, which composer wrote an overture inspired by this geological feature and what was the overture called?
8. This is the first house in the world to be lit by hydroelectricity. What is the name of the house?
9. Another two photos for this question, both taken from high viewpoints. Both are football World Cup stadiums. 9a was newly built in 2010 and 9b (very famous in the football world) opened for the 1950 World Cup and featured again in 2016. Can you name any (or all!) of the countries, cities, names of stadiums or viewpoints?
10.and finally, this very romantic poster (seen on Valentine's Day) is in a Spanish speaking country in Central America. Bordered by Honduras and Guatemala which country is it?



6



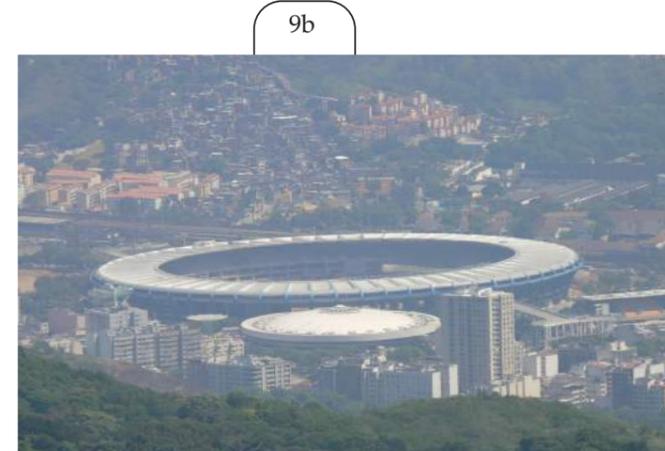
7



8



9a

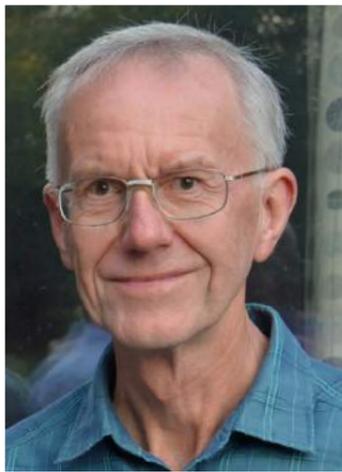


9b



10

Answers on page 23



Alan's Patch

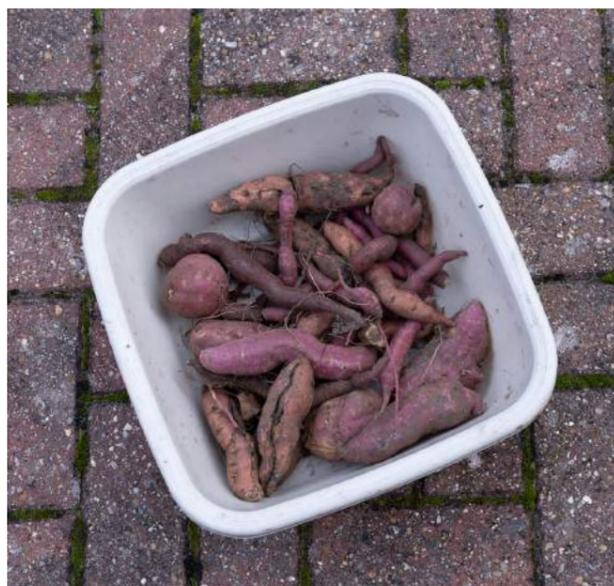
Now is the time to reflect on the season as a whole, the successes, the failures and to plan for next year.

As the gloomy winter weather sets in, it's but a distant memory now that we had glorious clear skies and warm weather from the beginning of the first lockdown in March through to the middle of June. This helped the early crops to grow and mature earlier than usual. Then the weather broke and we had a mixed mid to late Summer, with lots of cloud and quite a bit of rain delaying the ripening of later fruit and vegetables.

With the warm and sunny Spring, the new potatoes were excellent. I started eating them in the first days of June, remarkably early. The main crop, to store for the winter, was a bit lighter than normal but adequate. Growing sweet potatoes for the first time was interesting and there proved a useful crop of something different to eat, with a good texture and interesting flavour, so I'll grow them again next year. The photo shows the total crop with three different varieties – red, orange and round! Strange looking things, aren't they?

Despite an attack of black fly I was eating broad beans on the last day of May, a month earlier than normal because of the exceptional weather. Later the black fly got bored with the broad beans and moved over to the runner beans and that set them back and I didn't have anything to pick until September. I had a really good crop of French beans in July and early August, with plenty in the freezer, but then they petered out until they revived in mid to late September when it was sunnier again and I had another batch. I have only just eaten the last of these beans. Some of my other gardening friends have reported similar results, which are presumably weather-related.

Borlotti beans produced another excellent crop, proving to be a reliable crop over the four years I've been growing them. I store the beans in jars and use them in casseroles. I also grew Cannellini beans which were quite successful and soya beans which produced a miserable crop!



In the past, I've not had much trouble with pigeons attacking the peas but this year they were a real pest, causing a lot of damage to the plants so I had to resort to

netting them. With four sowings during the season, peas were available for over four months. I finished the last batch a few days ago.

I normally grow shallots from sets but this year, in addition, I sowed some from seed and the latter produced exceptionally large and tasty shallots. As sets grow, they multiply so that each produces about half-a-dozen shallots, ready in July. On the other hand, each seed produces just a single shallot but much larger and later, in September. The flavour of both seem fine so to my mind sowing seed is looking the way forward.

Sweet corn is the highlight of August, perfect on a barbecue. This year was no disappointment. I had some French beans climbing up them, they work well together. Butternut squash performed well although they were a bit smaller than in recent years. I attribute this to it being cloudy and cooler in late summer. I've plenty in store though and they are just as tasty.

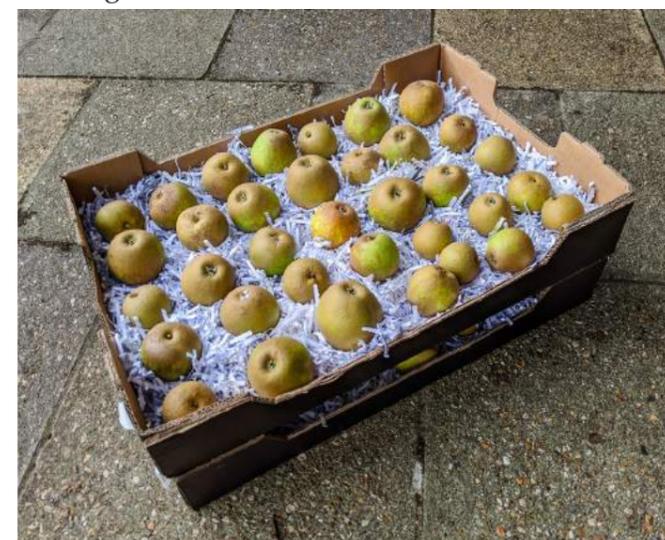
In the greenhouse, the tomatoes have been very productive, with many processed in the freezer for use in casseroles during the winter. I always grow the reliable

Gardeners Delight and I am still harvesting them in the middle of November. Cucumbers did well but finished a week or two ago.



Chilli peppers started slowly but eventually produced an excellent crop.

The main crop of apples has been excellent with 90% coming from the long-established three bushes



planted some thirty years ago but my young cordons are starting to produce a significant crop and provide more variety. The photo shows a tray of russets ready for storage. I also had lots of crab apples which I have turned into jelly.

In the previous edition, I reported the success of growing broad beans alongside the gooseberry plants to deter sawfly but by



September the broad beans had died back and it was then that the sawfly spotted their opportunity and returned to do their worst



with the grubs feeding off the leaves. This confirms the benefit of growing them together so that's what I'll do next year. I had an excellent crop of gooseberries

this year and the plants are in good shape.

The leaves have mostly dropped now and I've collected them from

the lawn and put them into the leaf cage. It will gradually sink as the leaves decompose during next year to produce leaf mould

for use on my patch. The wooden boards around my raised beds are over 25 years old and need replacing so that's one big job for the winter so, if you'll excuse me, I'll get back into my patch.

Update from the Surgery

Well this year has continued to throw surprises our way at the surgery!

Last week the world was given the fantastic news that the first Covid vaccination was getting good results in trials and that potentially we may have access to it in the UK by next month.

At first the prospect of getting everybody vaccinated seemed overwhelming but as the week has gone on and more news has been released I think we are up to the challenge so we await with interest the final news of whether the vaccine will be available and how exactly the logistics will be arranged.

The surgery continues in its 'New Normal' format. To minimise the numbers of patients attending the surgery at any one time we are carrying out the majority of our consultations over the phone. These can be pre-booked as normal and there are also plenty of phone calls available on the day. Anyone we speak to who need to be seen in order for us to treat effectively and safely are then booked to come into the surgery for a face to face appointment. We have an isolation room so anyone whom we think may have covid can be seen away from the rest of the surgery. I would urge anyone with worrying symptoms to get in touch. We are making coming down to the surgery as safe as possible. Please do not ignore what could be potentially serious symptoms, for example, change in bowel habit, breast lumps etc.

Other services continue albeit slightly differently - we are still doing smears and coils. Blood

tests also continue but those that are urgent are being prioritised and some people are being advised to go to Bracknell purely as we can't get through patients as quickly as we previously would have done because of cleaning and PPE. Don't worry if your regular blood tests or routine medication reviews fall a little behind, you haven't been forgotten and we will catch up! Obviously, we continue to deal with a lot of prescriptions too.

During this strange time we have seen an increase in mental health worries which is reflected across the country. Change in the jobs market, financial issues, loneliness, anxiety and a re-ignition of previous problems are some of the major mental health issues at the moment. Sometimes people need medication to help deal with their anxiety and sometimes people need talking therapies such as counselling. The hardest step is acknowledging you have a problem and asking for help. There are many ways to do this - don't feel daft or worried about getting in touch with the surgery to talk through your options. We can carry out consultations over the phone and direct you to the appropriate help or simply listen. You can go online and find the contact details for Talking Therapies and refer yourself for counselling or use some of the resources recommended on the NHS website. <https://www.nhs.uk/using-the-nhs/nhs-services/mental-health-services/how-to-access-mental-health-services/>

There are also some useful tips to managing your anxiety at home during these strange times.

Try to minimise your alcohol consumption - a glass of wine may feel like it relaxes you but

regularly drinking more than this will make your anxiety worse and is not recommended. Your sleep will be affected and in turn that can make you feel more anxious. Try not to overdo caffeinated drinks - I think now that more people are working from home it is very easy to reach for the kettle/coffee machine and increase the number of drinks through the day. Sometimes I think this is done to relieve the boredom of working and to create a break in the routine but caffeine will affect your sleep, your heart rate and your anxiety levels. Look for some caffeine free alternatives to have during a break or simply step away from the computer for a few minutes.

Try to get regular exercise. A lot of studies have shown that exercise helps with all sorts of mental health issues. Exercise can release endorphins which are natural feel good chemicals but also the age-old advice about getting some fresh air holds true. Going outside and grabbing the few rays of sunshine at this time of year is also vital for your vitamin D levels. A huge proportion of us are deficient in vitamin D at this time of year which can cause tiredness and aching. Interestingly there has also been some research about good vitamin D levels reducing chances of various cancers and also covid, but I digress!

Get some sleep. Avoid looking at your phone or device prior to going to bed. The type of light that is given off by the screen has an adverse effect on melatonin levels - this is the chemical that regulates our sleep/wake cycle and it has been shown that using devices close to bedtime is disruptive to sleep which in turn can worsen anxiety. I know a lot of people these days (myself included) read

books on devices - make sure that you have your setting switched to night-time which gives more of a sepia tinted glow and is better.

Talk to people. It is difficult to be very social in person because of the necessity of keeping safe. So, pick up the phone and speak to friends or family members you haven't previously had the time to talk to. If you are a fan of any of the virtual platforms have a chat/share a virtual dinner with friends. In a lot of cases you will realise that lots of us are worried about the current situation and the unpredictability of the future, talking about it may help settle your anxiety.

Spend time with your pets! Grooming the dog or stroking the cat will make you feel calmer and has actually been used in hospital settings to help people recover from various problems.

It's good to be up to date but don't get hung up on the news, in this situation it is very easy to end up watching the news multiple times a day, this can be a bad idea and can worsen the anxiety. Catch up on a program you always meant to watch or lose yourself in a box set instead.

I have touched on a few things that may help. There are many others - yoga, meditation and mindfulness to name three. There are loads of useful resources online and you may find something that you continue long after the anxiety has been dealt with. Remember you are not alone. If you are feeling desperate don't forget the Samaritans and other charitable organisations can help. No one is beyond helping. Stay safe.

Jane Spurgeon
GP Finchampstead Surgery

For the Love of Scrubs update

You may remember back in the Summer issue we told you about the community working together to create PPE for local healthcare providers. I am pleased to say I can give you the final numbers provided /distributed by the local Berkshire - For the Love of Scrubs group.

TOTAL ITEMS - 10,629

Scrub sets 2673

Bags 4615

Headbands 3061

Scrub hats 280

I would also like to express our congratulations to the nurse who started the initiative, Ashleigh Lindsell who now works as a community specialist nurse in East Anglia, has been honoured with an OBE for her services to the NHS during the Covid-19 pandemic. She started "For the Love of Scrubs" in March after noticing a "dire need" for the medical uniforms during the coronavirus outbreak. She started by making her own but now more than 70,000 volunteers have made 1.2 million items of PPE.

Well done all!

Do you run a charity or community group?

Maybe you're new to this role and want to make sure you're fully up-to-date with everything? Or maybe you've been doing it for a while and want to refresh your knowledge of charity law?

As a result of the pandemic lockdown inVOLve Community Services have transformed our support for charity trustees and committee members, by providing fully online trustees' training.

There are only few places left for the 9th December but that's fully repeated on 27th January 2021. Find out more at <https://involve.community/event/trustee-training/> or see all our training for community groups at <https://involve.community/events/>

Mike Allen, Trustee Recruitment & Liaison Officer
01344 383 519

My working days are usually Tuesday to Thursday

T: 01344 383 519
www.involve.community

Award winning soft blue cheese from your local cheesemakers

Sandy and Andy Rose are Barkham's very own cheesemakers. If you haven't tasted their award winning Barkham Blue or their new Barkham Belle, then you have missed a treat.

I was lucky enough to visit them and hear how this husband and wife team have been producing award winning cheese since 2003.

They use the traditional method with raw cows milk brought in from a Guernsey herd born and raised on a farm in Marlow. It is then pasteurized, piped into a large warming vat where starter



week later. The piercing allows oxygen into the cheese which promotes the growth of blue mould. They are then placed in



culture and blue mould are added to acidify the milk and add flavour. Rennet is then added which causes the milk to coagulate and set. When the consistency is right the curds are cut into cubes and put in to moulds to drain the whey. They are then put into a brine bath which allows salt to be absorbed for further flavour and to preserve them. After brining the cheeses are transferred to a drying room and then pierced a

the refrigerated maturing room where they will mature over 4-5 weeks. During this time, they are regularly turned and rubbed to develop the rind and control the mold. This is a very labour intensive process. Lastly, they are prepared in eco-friendly compostable wrapping ready to be distributed around the country.

"When the first lockdown was announced unfortunately, we lost

a couple of batches due to orders being cancelled, so we scaled back our processing uncertain of what was on the horizon. We are delighted to say that we are getting back on track and we are now stocking up for Christmas" Sandy advised, how the nicer and the fresher the milk you use, the more delicious the cheese will be.

I am delighted to say the ever so deliciously rich and creamy Barkham Blue is available to buy on the website (twohootscheese.co.uk) also at Barkham Village Store & Post Office, Lockey Farm Shop and the new deli in Wokingham Phils' Good Food.

We are very proud of all the awards our blue cheeses have won over the years and we hope you'll love them too.

Sandy Rose
Two Hoots cheese
Twohootscheese.co.uk

Collect from our dairy
If you would like to collect your cheeses directly from our dairy please contact us at info@twohootscheese.co.uk to arrange payment and collection.
Social distancing will be upheld during collections.

Be bright this winter

and avoid becoming a victim of burglary. As the clocks turn back, leave a light on... and burglars in the dark!

Burglars are often opportunistic thieves and you can take steps to avoid becoming one of their victims this autumn and winter.

- Try to make your home look occupied by using timer switches on lights and radios.
- Make sure your front door is illuminated by using dusk to dawn lighting that comes on automatically.
- Consider purchasing and installing a video doorbell, house alarm or CCTV system.
- Close and double lock all doors and windows when going out, even if you're only away from home for a short period of time. Those 10 or 15 minutes on the school run are all a burglar needs to break into your home.
- Always double lock every door and window when you go to bed.
- Keep all valuables and keys out of sight and away from doors, windows and letterboxes. If you are working from home, ensure your laptop is not on view.
- When not in use, keep electronic car keys in a security pouch to prevent them being scanned by thieves to open and steal your car.
- If you have a key safe, ensure it is not visible to people passing by, but anyone tampering with it can be seen.
- Don't give thieves the tools to burgle your house, ensure all sheds, garages, cabins, summerhouses and any other outbuildings are locked and

Leave a light on... and burglars in the dark

Be bright and invest in a light timer switch this winter

THAMES VALLEY POLICE

www.thamesvalleyalert.co.uk www.thamesvalley.police.uk

secure.

- Don't advertise you are away from home on social media. Ask a trusted friend or neighbour to keep an eye on your property.
- Join a local Neighbourhood Watch Scheme, visit www.ourwatch.org.uk

You can find further crime prevention advice at www.thamesvalley.police.uk

You can receive free information updates from Thames Valley Police by registering for Thames Valley Alert at: www.thamesvalleyalert.co.uk

Contact your Neighbourhood Policing Team

- Email: FieldsNHPT@thamesvalley.pnn.police.uk – please note this email address cannot be used to report crimes or for any urgent matters.
- Facebook: TVP Bracknell & Wokingham
- Twitter: @TVP_Wokingham

Please contact Thames Valley Police if you have any information relating to burglary in your neighbourhood. Report online at www.thamesvalley.police.uk call us on 101 or in an emergency dial 999. Alternatively, you can call Crimestoppers anonymously on free phone 0800 555 111.



Social Matters

Well here we are again in a 2nd Covid-19 Lockdown and the Social Matters report is, sadly, telling you of more cancelled or postponed events! No surprise then.

The Quiz Night in early November had already been postponed because of the ongoing Covid-19 restrictions, and sadly we have had to cancel the 'Carols in the Park' on December 18th - gathering, singing and brass band playing are all not allowed under the guidelines and restrictions, not even outdoors. It will be singing carols at home I'm afraid this year!

So I do hope that over the past few months you have all kept well, enjoyed the lovely weather, and have been able to have your own social events by eating out and having picnics, and maybe even having trips to the coast. Autumn this year has produced some very spectacular displays of colours with the changing trees etc. so walking through parks and woods has been enjoyable. But now the clocks have gone back, darker evenings and shorter days are here, although Christmas is not too long away. Hopefully we will all be able to celebrate in a

way which enables us to be with our families but to also keep safe and well.

We are so hoping that 2021 bring better times, and the Social Committee will arrange events as soon as we are able to - the Skittles, Barn Dance and the Quiz have all been postponed and will be planned for similar dates next year. The Brass Band has already been booked for December 17th 2021 for 'Carols in the Park' - at least we have one definite date!

If you would like to receive email alerts on forthcoming events then please sign up for alerts on our website www.barkham.org.uk/barkham/keep-in-touch-with-bvra, and also see our Facebook page for more information and updates.

Until the next time, on behalf of the Social Committee I would now like to wish you all and your families a Very Happy Christmas and a Healthy New Year. Do keep safe and well.

Shirley Warner
Social Committee Member



Sadly, the ongoing Coronavirus Pandemic situation and 2nd Lockdown have meant that we have not been able to hold our usual monthly speaker meetings. We did have one brief gathering of a few ladies in the Village Hall on September 2nd, just as halls reopened to clubs for meetings, but with very strict distancing and sanitising conditions. We chatted and had coffee and biscuits while sitting in a distanced circle - it was so good to actually see each other again even though we couldn't do the usual things and have a speaker. Then at the end of September, different Government guidelines came in again and we weren't able to meet again in early October. Sadly nothing else can take place this year and we will miss having our Christmas Party and Secret Santa in December with the usual banquet of wonderful Christmas food which all we Ladies provide to share.

The good news is that in October and early November one of our members was able to organise 3 walks locally, so a few of us in groups of up to 6 and with the required distancing were able to enjoy the outdoors. The first walk on Oct 1st was to explore the new Greenway Walk in Finchampstead from the Baptist Church through woods, boardwalks and footpaths to California Country Park and beyond, stopping for coffee at the Park cafe. The weather was warm and sunny - perfect for walking.

The second walk on October 16th commenced at Arborfield Recreation Park and took us towards Farley Hill and back, and en route we crossed over the new Arborfield Relief Road and it's Garden Bridge, which is soon to be opened. The last walk on November 4th, a day before the latest Lockdown, was to Virginia Water where a splendid array of Autumn colours were enjoyed. The photos show how great they all were.

As soon as we are able to we will resume our monthly meetings. All the speakers who were booked for this year wish to come next year, so we will remain hopeful that this will happen, commencing with the March meeting maybe. We will have a full diary so look forward to that very much.

In the meantime I would like to wish all the Barkham Ladies and their families a Very Happy Christmas and Healthy New Year. I hope that we can celebrate in a way that enables us to be together but also keep safe and well.

Shirley Warner
Chairperson



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Call Vicky on 0118 989 2571

Wokingham Choral Society



It is, sadly, many months since Wokingham Choral Society have reported their activities to the residents of Barkham but, although we have been unable to give any public performances, we have continued to sing together. We were sad to have to abandon our beautiful programme of Baroque Easter music, but took to Zoom in the summer term with an eclectic selection of short pieces, including 'Will the Circle be Unbroken?', an American work arranged by our Musical Director, James Morley Potter. Its references to 'tearful partings' and 'happy gatherings' seemed movingly apt in the circumstances, and we

enjoyed learning it whilst grappling with the phenomenon of a virtual rehearsal!

With great regret, we had to cancel our summer tour of the West Country but, on the other hand, we enjoyed WCS's first-ever virtual quiz at the end of August. The new season began on-line with Beethoven's Mass in C and Brahms' Song of Destiny but, when new research was published, we were excited to discover that, within a Covid-secure environment, we were permitted to meet in person. With the guidance of the medical expertise of a committee member, we were

able to hold several live rehearsals, 40 singers at a time, through late September and October, until Lockdown 2.0 sent us back to the world of virtual singing. In the meantime, we welcomed two new members and urge anyone else who may be interested in joining to contact Caroline (membership@wokingham-choral-society.org) and give us a try!

December finds us lifting our spirits with a selection of Christmas carols, and looking forward to 2021, hoping to meet old friends and new, when we can once again perform a WCS concert.

Finchampstead Flower Club



FFC have been unable to meet since February when they held their AGM, however, they have been keeping in touch via telephone calls and Facebook. Members send in photos of arrangements related to a monthly title. These are circulated to everyone and some have featured on the National Association Area Facebook page. As this goes to print, we will have held our first online demonstration and hope to make this a regular event. Here are some photos from our title Autumn Antics



The Quiz - Answers

1. Unst (Shetland Islands)
2. Henry VIII
3. Waterloo
4. Charles Darwin. Down House. Beagle Channel.
5. Martin Luther King Jr, Washington DC.
6. Winston Churchill, Chartwell (Kent)
7. Felix Mendelssohn wrote "The Hebrides", better known as "Fingal's Cave"; Cragside (Northumberland)
8. 9a is the Cape Town Stadium in South Africa, seen from the top of Table Mountain. 9b is the Maracana Stadium in Rio de Janeiro (Brazil), viewed from the Christ the Redeemer statue site.
10. El Salvador

General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR)

Members are reminded that membership records are maintained on a personal computer. In relation to this newsletter, details recorded are addresses and payment records only. The information is used solely for BVRA purposes, and any member is free to see his/her details by contacting the Membership Secretary. More information can be found on the BVRA website barkham.org.uk.



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