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Issue 80 August 2020

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# WELCOME to the Valley News



I am sorry to report that I cut four pages from this edition. It's a result of many activities not being reported or proposed. Don't lose heart, things are changing. However we do have some new contributors this month, which is great.

So again this month, there is much mention of lockdown but it is starting to ease and slowly we can all see a bit of normality returning. We have two articles about walking (pages 16 & 27) that both show what an interesting part of Hampshire this is. I am always grateful to our councillors who provide us with up to date information about things. Putting politics aside, they all work incredibly hard for this community.

We have a very different entrepreneur on page 9, also demonstrating the difficulties of balancing family and working from home. The letter from the Rectory from James Grieg is very pertinent and a refreshing view on how life might be in the future. It's so good to learn of positive results from this very difficult time.

I unashamedly wanted to emphasize the reopening of our pubs in the centre spread. The village pub has long been a community focus and perhaps key to us getting back together. Good news too about the Horse! I guess now all pubs need our custom. You can also read on page 33 that one of the village halls is back in action. Our halls are in some ways businesses and they do need us to return to remain financially viable. I'm sure we will hear much more about that in the coming months.

There are two comments on safety

(pages 7 & 31). It's great to see more folk out on bikes and perhaps not just for recreation. Bikes and cars are a difficult mix and our main road is increasingly busy. It's no longer a country lane but a busy through route. Sadly, many here don't feel the speed limits apply to them.

It's been a wonderful summer and we always have contributions reflecting our natural world, be it flowers, butterflies or just gardens. For my part, I'm sinking in a sea of plums, bottling skills needed again. Please continue to support our advertisers. Our next editor will be Charlotte Appleby.

*Tony Gaster*

## Itchen Valley News

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Cover photo by Verity Coleman, other photos from various contributors.

## What's On

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### September Murder for Southwood Players

Time to give up repeats of Midsummer Murders and enjoy live drama with Southwood Players. Quick out of the Covid blocks, we will be staging Agatha Christie's *The Hollow*, deferred from July, for three performances between 10 and 13 September. As usual we will perform in the Southwood House garden with a slightly reduced audience but plenty of picnics and applause expected and no canned cheering from



the terraces. The cast has been rehearsing by Zoom in the hope that we could be ready when lock down eased. Most of the cast will be familiar from our previous performances (one shown in the picture). The play will again be staged for charities – The Multiple Sclerosis Society, Winchester Young Carers and the Itchen Valley Churches.

Details will be available shortly at [www.southwoodplayers.org.uk](http://www.southwoodplayers.org.uk). Meanwhile I will be happy to answer queries on [owennicholas27@gmail.com](mailto:owennicholas27@gmail.com). This could include a comment on afternoon performances as more suitable for September.

Nick Owen

### Martyr Worthy lecture series

Tuesday 24 November 2020

Saturday 30 January 2021

Friday 26 February 2021

We are planning to offer the biennial Martyr Worthy Lecture Series again this winter, with the first lecture scheduled for Tuesday 24 November - all three proposed dates are in the Save the Date listings. The organising team is of course aware that the lectures will have to be set up very differently, with smaller numbers and with everyone's safety paramount. But be assured we will be delivering high quality lectures in some form or other to liven up the dark winter months and raise funds for the Itchen Valley Parish.

*Verity Coleman, Gilly Greenwood, Joanna Lang and Liz Platt*

### Wheelbarrow Saga - Part 2

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I am delighted to report that Emilie Cavendish found and has returned the wheelbarrow previously missing from Sir Edward Grey's cottage garden (see July issue page 25). It must have been taken for a walk before the lockdown when we were in New Zealand.

Apparently it had been sitting for some time near the kissing gate where the footpath crosses the lime avenue and after keeping an eye on it for a while she decided to give it a good home. It is now back from whence it came.

*Pat Brockway.*

### Not so tiddler joke

---

What's the difference between a cat and a comma?

One has its claws at the end of its paws, and one is a pause at the end of a clause.

*Henry Labram*





## Boomtown Community Grants 2020



### **Do you have an Itchen Valley Community Project needing financial Support?**

**£5600 of Community Grants** are available to bid for thanks to the success of Boomtown Fair 2019. This will be the 4<sup>th</sup> year that the Parish Council have been able to share these grants across community groups. Last year the scheme was extremely popular, with successful bids from:

**Friends of Itchen Abbas Primary School:** For the purchase of non - curriculum equipment

**Martyr Worthy and Easton Cricket Club:** Towards the electronic score board

**Wild Itchen Verges:** For more biodiversity work including at Couch Green

**Avington Village:** To purchase a secure cabinet to display the Vinegar Bible in St Mary's

**Watercress Way:** To enhance access to the line at Couch Green

**Easton Defibrillator Action Group (EDAG):** For more in depth training

**Itchen Valley Parish Council:** For the enhanced refurbishment of the Itchen Abbas bus stop

**Itchen Valley Parish Council:** For the development of an independent Valley wide desktop or mobile application that allows valley residents to have access to a secure social media platform.

Inevitably, some schemes have suffered delays due to COVID-19, but we will be looking forward to projects restarting and being delivered.

We would love to hear from any other local community groups, new or old.

The bid process is not onerous so, if you have a great community idea, why not get some financial support to get it off the ground? The funding can cover any age group.

A full application form with criteria can be downloaded from the Parish Council web site [www.itchenvalleyparishcouncil.org.uk](http://www.itchenvalleyparishcouncil.org.uk). All applications need to be returned electronically to the Parish Clerk by 10 September 2020 at the latest. Bids will be discussed at the Parish Council F&GP committee on 16 September 2020. All applicants are welcome to attend; please notify the clerk as the meeting could be held virtually.

Happy bidding.

Yvette Riley

*On Behalf of Itchen Valley Parish Council working in partnership with Boomtown Fair*



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## Wear a helmet!

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Oh dear. As much as I'm delighted to see people encouraging children onto bikes and family groups out cycling, why, why, why are the adults so certain that only the children need helmets?

What a mixed message that sends out! Standard comment 'I've been cycling for years. I won't fall off!'

From experience, as the children grow up, suddenly they feel their handlebars should carry the helmets. Standard comments - 'You don't wear one so why should I?' 'I don't wobble anymore!' I remember going down hills

& clocking up 22mph (the kids often more!) Even then, would my reactions have been good enough to cope with something out of the ordinary? Probably not!! Fortunately I never found out but at least with a helmet on, I stood a better chance!

Consider: What if the wobbly child clips your tyre and the last thing you remember is going down? What use are you to them lying in a hospital bed with concussion, brain damage or worse still on a mortuary slab? No I'm not exaggerating!

Please think about your loved ones and how they'd feel if you ended up needing their help for the rest of your life or were no longer there for them. Please think and wear a cycle helmet!

Jenny Sloan

Ex Cycling Proficiency Teacher

*Thank you for this timely warning as cycling is so popular now. Might I add a plea for reflective or bright clothing as black seems to be a favourite colour. Ed*

## All change please!

---

The 67 Stagecoach bus service between Petersfield and Alresford, the one that passes through the Itchen Valley, was severely reduced soon after the start of the coronavirus outbreak. With some aspects of life returning to normal, the bus service has now resumed a service similar to the one in operating at the start of 2020.

Do note that the first service of the day towards Winchester at 0753 hasn't been reinstated and the 1623 service is now at 1523.

Full details of the service can be found, as usual, in the pink box on page 36.

Vernon Tottle

**Save the Dates** At the time of going to press, these events are scheduled to go ahead. However, please be aware that, given the current situation, that may change.

**Tuesday 24 November 2020, Saturday 30 January and Friday 26 February 2021** Martyr Worthy lecture series.

**5 December 2020** Children's Christmas party Martyr Worthy Village Hall

**17-20 June 2021** Easton Flower Festival

**11 September 2021** Itchen Valley Flower and Produce Festival

**18 September 2021** The Building Ball 7pm, at the David Roth Memorial Cricket Ground, Easton. Village Hall fundraiser.

## From our city councillors

### New Green Waste Collection

Winchester City Council is to bring in a new system of green bins for garden waste collection early next year.



Instead of green bags, green wheelie bins, similar in size to recycling bins, are to be provided. They will be supplied in two sizes, 240 litres and 140 litres. The supply of the bins will be free, although the cost of them to the Council will be £400,000. It will not be possible to have a mixed system of bins and bags.

The wheelie bins have several advantages over the bags:

- they hold a great deal more (about 2.5 times the capacity of the bags and are easier to move around.
- Long life
- The collection trucks are more efficient, larger and have a reduced environmental impact.

Disadvantages of the bags:

- When filled with wet vegetation the weight can exceed 25 kilos, the Health and Safety limit of lifting for men. (16kg for women operatives.)
- The bags wear out rapidly, especially if dragged when full.
- Empty bags are blown away by the wind or otherwise disappear.

There will be an annual charge of £59 for the large bin and £39 for the smaller. The signing up process (which is starting in November) for the new collection in 2021 allows bins to be shared by groups of neighbours. This could reduce the cost to each household and reduce the problem of bin storage.

At the moment the green waste collection service is paid for by all households, via their council tax, so that although not charged for it directly, it isn't actually 'free'. The current cost to the



Council is £578,000. Many flat-dwellers and others without gardens, who do not actually use the service, are subsidising those with gardens. It is worth noting that the proposed charges are the lowest in Hampshire, (Hart District Council currently charge £72 for their bins) and that Winchester will be the last in Hampshire to bring in a charge for green waste collection. Residents can of course opt out of the collection system altogether and take their green waste to a recycling centre themselves. The Council will also be offering composting bins at a subsidised price of £19.

This change to the green waste collection has been brought about by the need to close an increasing gap in Council finances, quite apart from the fact that that Hampshire County Council is requiring all councils to charge for garden waste collection. There was an increasing and growing problem with income not matching expenditure and the Covid crisis has added to this. Many of the Council's sources of income, such as rents and parking charges etc. have plummeted and contrary to newspaper headlines, the Government is not refunding all the costs and income losses from Covid.  
*mpower@winchester.gov.uk 01962 734167*

*rgordon-smith@winchester.gov.uk 01962 733219*



## Valley Entrepreneur

*Lucy Wolfe from Easton, also one of our editors, has been talking about her new voice-over business*

### **What's your background and how did you get into voiceovers?**

I joined BFBS (British Forces Broadcasting Service) in Germany as a radio reporter in the mid 90s – more by luck than judgement, as I thought I was being interviewed for the role of office manager! BFBS gave me training in radio and television, and I gained experience reporting all around the world including Bosnia, Kuwait, Canada, Gibraltar and Poland. When I returned to the UK, I presented their flagship news programme and then ended up moving to BBC South in 2001, where I enjoyed five years as a TV Presenter. When our son Ned was born, I started to do freelance work, before joining Crown Media (a media training and simulation company). With the arrival of our daughter Charlie and my husband travelling with work, I decided it was the right time to take a break from 'work outside the home'!

Roll on a few years and I wanted to get back to work. I had often done voiceover work on the side during my

time at BFBS and the BBC, but with encouragement from friends and family I finally took the plunge to set up as a

voiceover artist at the end of last year. As many will know, going back to work after a break can mean digging deep on the confidence front, and I am very grateful to my friends, including those in Easton (you know who you are!), who gave me so much encouragement and advice.

### **Where do you work?**

I work mainly from home, in a cupboard! My husband helped me convert a walk-through cupboard into a voiceover booth, with sound-proofing tiles and strategically placed duvets and pillows, which make perfect sound-proofing materials. It's not pretty, but it's effective and means that I can produce quality audio without having to worry about lawn mowers, strimmers and other ambient sound intrusions!

### **What kind of voiceovers do you do?**

All sorts! There is a huge variety of work out there and since starting out I have voiced commercials, corporate communication videos, medical demos, online training manuals, presentations, documentaries and plenty in between. I enjoy acting, but tend to focus on the 'straight' reads, rather than audio books and video games. The work is international with the majority of my clients coming from the US and the rest of Europe. Clients have included HSBC, Roche, Johnson & Johnson, Baker Hughes, Maersk and even the EU!



## How has lockdown affected your business?

I launched in February, just before lockdown, so I haven't really known anything different. The nature of the work means that it can be done remotely, which is obviously a huge bonus. I expected that lockdown might mean the market was flooded with actors and actresses unable to perform live, but it seems there is lots of work to go round and I've been fortunate enough to keep busy! One of the upsides of being home-bound is that I can respond quickly to any auditions that come in and can generally be 'on call' for clients. Having the whole family in the house working and home-schooling has presented its own challenges in terms of noise control, but the children have been very good at taking heed of all the signs posted around the house saying "Sssshhhh Recording in Progress!"

## "What do you enjoy most about your new profession?"

I love the variety of work and liaising with clients from all corners of the world. The remote directed sessions are fun, especially when you get a group of clients from the other side of the world, directing and listening to you – in some ways it rekindles the buzz you get from presenting live television. Some of the subject matter is fascinating, although I can't say that I actually understand everything that I'm reading! The medical narrations are always fun with some tongue-twisting words - often requiring a call to Doctor friends for pronunciation advice. Working from home is great as I can fit the work in around family commitments, although as any freelancer knows, it's sometimes difficult to separate the two as no one ever wants to turn down work or miss

an opportunity to get some more!

## What are your goals going forward?

I'm beginning to get repeat business from previous clients so it would be good to build on that. I love auditioning, but probably need to get wiser as to which ones to go for and which ones are most suited to my voice. Dream job? The voice of Alexa perhaps, or for a supermarket chain 'unexpected item in bagging area' - I always wonder who does that one!

*Lucy Wolfe was being interviewed by Fi McIntosh*

## From our MP

There are many great things about the richness and variety of where we live but the reassuring presence of our various military colleagues is one of the best.



Last month it was a great honour to perform the role (pictured) of inspector officer at the **Army Training Regiment** (Sir John Moore Barracks) for its latest Passing Out parade. For those who don't know, the ATR hosts basic training for the British Army, as individual civilians are transformed into soldiers.

All recruits undertake a 14-week course before moving onto the next stage of their training before deployment as the next generation of the army. This was the Covid class and, as such, they deserve special praise. I wish them every success for the future as they are the very best of us.

Secondly, did you know that as part of my **Green Winchester** push I am working with an increasingly influential



group of MPs as part of the Conservative Environment Network? The CEN produced a green manifesto last year ahead of the General Election and much of our work made it into the final party manifesto.

We have also recently written to the Prime Minister setting out our vision for a green recovery from Covid-19. It doesn't mention reversing the recent decision of Winchester City Council to charge for green waste collection but that's not a bad idea! You can see the letter, and more than ten years of work, at [www.greenwinchester.com](http://www.greenwinchester.com) Finally, please remember and take notice of **Hampshire**

**Together** which is a new engagement exercise being undertaken by the local NHS. I am doing everything I can to make sure constituents are aware of it. The programme will deliver a new hospital for mid/north Hampshire and, while there is so much opportunity here backed by the promise of significant new investment in the local NHS, I want constituents to be in no doubt that any change could have a huge impact on the Royal Hampshire County Hospital around acute services such as maternity, stroke care and the emergency dept.

Steve Brine

MP for Winchester & Itchen Valley

## Can you recognise these photos?

*These old photos of Avington were sent to Fi McIntosh by David Sulzberger. Regrettably there is no more information. Maybe this will generate some interest and comment.*



*Perhaps other readers of IVN have similar pictures which might be shared. Please do get in touch. Lockdown might still offer time to search the attic or wherever. Most printed photos or slides can be turned into digital format.*

*I must also thank Penny Russell whose skill enabled the image format to be changed.*  
Ed

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## Lockdown provides a new interest

Last month, there were a number of contributions from young people about what they had been doing. So here is my contribution from an older perspective.

As our garden is so very beautiful in summer and the Lockdown has

and all my worries and distractions - in observing, drawing and painting. This interest in garden flowers has now extended to wild flowers and a realisation that I have never really looked carefully at plants before. The lanes and fields are arrayed in particular with Queen Anne's Lace which if examined closely sometimes looks like snowflakes and in the brilliant sunshine I've been lucky enough to find some



occasioned so many more hours at home, I have spent more time than ever before looking closely at flowers. Observing them has made me want to copy them so I now own a paint box and set of brushes. In spite of having absolutely no artistic ability, I am amazed how utterly I can lose myself -

which are dazzlingly pink, white and red with an intricate network of bracts beneath the flowers. These are beyond any attempts at copying and make diamonds seem dull! They are a wonderful subject for Mindfulness!  
*Clare Gaster*

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## Jackie's County Corner

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The lockdown is unwinding, and we are all determined to make changes to extend the feeling of community that has built up since 23 March. We have all enjoyed the birdsong, fewer

cars on the road and, if we have them, our gardens and footpaths. We have produced more waste at home, (and *much* more glass!) though restaurants have much less. This is the time for communities and individuals to look at how lightly we can tread upon the planet in our daily lives, whilst still ensuring that our local businesses and services can adapt to survive.

**Digital connectivity for ALL**, not just the 97% target previously held by HCC, has become vital for access to services and for work. Zoom and similar platforms have meant we travel less often. So at last, where you live doesn't restrict participation, however strange it seems at first, and it does reduce your carbon footprint!

Many of you have tried out the **Recycling Centre** booking schemes. All of your comments to me (mainly frustrated) have been passed to the team, and hopefully the feedback is being used to improve the service. Thank you too, for your thoughts about wildflowers, but it's not too late for more comments!

**Libraries have been used in different ways:** so many residents have used the online service, and visiting is now possible. Over 15000

responded to the Spring consultation- but now a look at the digital offer during Covid 19 lockdown will be part of the review of the budget for Libraries.

At **Policy and Resources Scrutiny Committee**, we heard that the 'cost of Covid' to HCC up to May had been around £200m. Although the Council had received approx. £53m in grant, the County Council would be around £110m off budget as a result of Covid in 2020-21. This puts non-essential services at risk in future.

The **0333 370 4000 helpline** is still in place and expected to be so for the future. A triage system has meant that approximately 50% of the calls had been referred to Adult or Children's services.

I know it worked well: I used the helpline often, developing a good relationship with the **Meals on Wheels team!** Any adult who is unable to cook their own food is entitled to use the Meals on Wheels which provides a hot lunch, and can provide a packed tea too. If you think you or a loved one may need the service, you can call the helpline above for advice.

Child safeguarding is a key role for the County Council. The number of children in care has increased. And **more foster carers are urgently needed.** Go to [hants.gov.uk](https://hants.gov.uk) for more information, search 'fostercare'.

Black Lives Matter brought the uncomfortable issue of slavery back to the fore for us all. The Safeguarding teams are concerned about Modern Slavery. If you are concerned about someone, you should call the **Modern Slavery helpline 08000 121 700**

Council meetings are all online now. We have looked at the **risk to childcare places.** Sufficiency of places

is a County Council responsibility. A combination of issues, including the challenges of childcare in bubbles has created an extremely difficult financial situation and it is estimated over one third of settings are at risk of closure. Thank you if you have given or raised funds for your local pre-school.

**Our schools have never closed, staying open over Easter** and the current arrangements are, to say the least, challenging. Staff have worked continuously since Feb half term, often with children from different age groups. Thank you to all who have looked after children during lockdown.

*Cllr Jackie Porter*

*Tell/text: 07973 696085*

## Lockdown; A Walk in the Park?



Like much of the population at the moment, I have found myself in a position where I have a lot more time on my hands than usual. In a normal life, I live and work on Cunard cruise ships as director

of the Entertainment Department, a busy and demanding job. I started my sea-going career fresh out of University, roughly seven years ago, and since then have spent much less time on solid ground than I have at sea. However, as neither Entertainment nor Cruising have fared well with the recent pandemic, it seems I am going to be a land-lubber for much longer than I am used to.

There seems to be an unwritten list in



place of lockdown clichés. Some turn to baking, making incredible edible creations, others have started learning an instrument. I started something equally as unoriginal and ordered a pair of walking shoes.

Accompanied only by the soothing tones of Stephen Fry in my ear working his way through the 'Harry Potter' series, I started walking the routes I knew from growing up in Easton. Though beautiful, I quickly felt the need to diversify and began exploring the rest of the valley, and then further still. I have walked different parts of the South Downs Way, the Three Castles Path and the Watercress Way. I have undertaken pub crawl walks around some stunning countryside, without the added benefit of being able to stop for any liquid refreshment! I have trekked Butser Hill, St Catherine's Hill, St Giles' Hill & Cheesefoot Head. I have been tempted by the baked goods for sale outside houses while walking through Chilcomb and battled through many an





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overgrown woodland path. Since I began keeping a record on 6 April, I have just over 900km under my belt (about 560 miles), which is roughly the distance between Winchester and Inverness. I wonder how far I can get before cruising restarts.



For anyone who loves to walk and would like to explore some new routes, I would thoroughly recommend [www.footpathmap.co.uk](http://www.footpathmap.co.uk) - a free website which details every footpath, byway and bridleway in the UK, which will also tell you your live location. Whatever direction I set off in, when I have that website up on my phone I always know which routes I am allowed to walk and how to get home safely. Originally, I set off half with the aim of getting 'quaran-toned' (seven years of eating first-class cruise ship cuisine does take its toll) and half just to pass the time, but the more steps I take, the further I am inspired to explore the most beautiful countryside we have on our doorstep. Having travelled the

world several times, I can assure all Itchen Valley residents; there really is no place like home.

*Cat Kennedy*

## Bird of the month

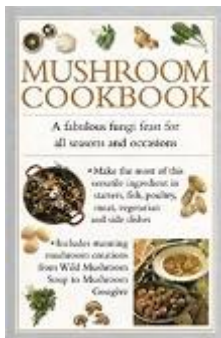
This is a fledgling House Martin which was being fed by its parents who return to the same nest site each year. In September, it will embark on its long migration to Southern Africa. By then it will weigh 14 grams, a little more than a £2 coin!

*Elaine Labram*



## Double vision

The Tottle household had its cookery books out on the table. The top one was "Mushroom Cookbook" and it was pointed out that the title had three instances of the letters "oo".



I struggled to think of another published volume with three double letters the same. Yes, the words "bookkeeper" and "bookkeeping" are the only English words with three consecutive

double letters (and there are plenty of books on accountancy) but is there another book with three double letters that are all the same?

If you've nothing better to do .....

*Vernon Tottle*

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## New openings for our pubs after lockdown.

I'm a great fan of my local pub, The Plough in Itchen Abbas. It's not always been the best and some previous managers were hopeless. However, Ashley Young has transformed the pub and many of us welcomed his take-away offerings, carefully done with an on-line menu. I was also delighted to see the pub proper reopened for both drinks and meals. The Cricketers in Easton too is back in business and Gary is ensuring his local customers are fully replenished. Both pubs are pictured here.

Gary comments: It is lovely to welcome everyone back to The Cricketers. Things are slightly different now and we have guidelines in place as per Government advice.



We are open Wednesday to Sunday and also offer takeaway. We would advise customers to pre-book tables wherever possible.

Elsewhere in Easton, the Bodle family is looking forward to welcoming you back to the Chestnut Horse. Callum's family business is called the *Welcome Home*







Pub Company and he tells us that this captures exactly how they want you to feel when you spend time at the Chestnut Horse. Callum and Paul will be heading up the front of house team, extending the initial welcome, Nathan will be working with head chef Sam as a trainee chef helping with designing and producing the menu. Amelia, whilst still working full time for City & Guilds, will be in the background providing admin support but will be seen in and around the pub at evenings and weekends. Callum is looking forward to becoming part of the local community as a family and supporting the local area and communities as a business. Whilst he will be arriving in the village very soon, he wants to make sure everything is ready

and safe for customers to return following the pub closure. So he is aiming to open on Saturday 8 August and will keep everyone up to date with progress via social media accounts and the Chestnut Horse website.

*Various contributors*



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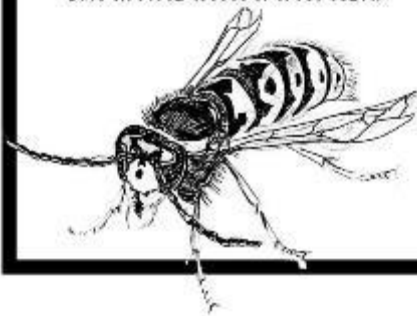
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## Letter from the Rectory

### **Love Thy neighbour AND thy self.**

Over a socially distanced garden coffee, a friend and I were discussing the highs and lows of lockdown -

more time with family, cleaner air, dolphins in the Venice canals but also, the pain, loss, and hardship many have experienced. Then she asked me what parts of my lockdown lifestyle will I carry on when life resumes?

I'd naively assumed life would return to its pre-March craziness, maybe we'll travel a little less, work from home more, Zoom our relatives more, but that's it. I've been longing to pop to the shops without the dreaded outside queue, to be able to go out for a pizza with friends without fearing for my life. I was happy for things to go back to just how they were before.

But the more I pondered it, the more I thought about the little things that have changed. Yes, there are the obvious ones – not hearing the drone of the M3 from my garden, and spending more time as a family has been amazing. I really do want to keep this up, being beaten by a 6 year old at Scrabble has inspired me to up my game.

But what struck me most was the way our physically spread-out community came together to look after each



other. On our lane, we started an email group, checked in on each other, kept in touch with those shielding and did shopping for each other and we swapped (sanitised) veg seedlings. But then came the unsolicited acts of kindness, the loaves of bread hanging in a bag on the gate, the board games offered over the hedge, the bag of craft kits for the girls, the Wednesday night delivery of donuts from friends passing by. And the supportive chats and warm faces as we untunefully clattered our pans on the Thursday night clap for carers.

Have you ever heard the story of the prize-winning maize grower? There was a farmer who year after year won the coveted prize for best maize corn. A journalist attempted to get to the bottom of the farmer's winning streak. What was his secret? Well, as you may know maize is pollinated by the wind, the swirling wind picks up the pollen from the male plant and distributes it

to the female flower. So the farmer said "If my neighbours grow inferior corn, cross-pollination will steadily degrade the quality of my corn. If I am to

grow good corn, I must help my neighbours grow good corn." So each year the farmer gave his prize winning Maize corn to all his neighbours.

Why tell this story? Well I think it demonstrates the infectious nature of love and kindness. Our lives are far more connected than we think, bitterness and anger can pollinate just as easily as kindness and gratitude. A simple text to check up on someone, or a bag of home-grown spinach left on

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Swimming stoats by Corinne Kozok  
See article on page 29





a doorstep begins to ripple through the community, and eventually takes root. A simple act that gives a powerful message – a message that I'm thinking of you, I know you're there and not forgotten. It reminds me of the famous words of Jesus, his second great commandment – *'Love thy neighbour as thyself'*.

If this lockdown has taught us anything, and if we are to attempt to keep anything up, for me it's a greater understanding of how close we are as a community and a greater sense of the power of caring for one another. But the often overlooked part of that verse is the salient last two words.

Jesus commands us to also love ourselves. I'm not sure about you, but I'm often hard on myself, must work harder, exercise more, read more, be a better person. But if lockdown has taught me one thing, it's the importance of self-care, of feeding ourselves a mental diet of goodness. If we read, think and watch junk, it is much the same as a diet of junk food, eventually it takes effect.

In the bible Saint Paul says *'Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is honourable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence, if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things'*.

By stopping negative thinking quickly before it festers and replacing it with thinking of things that are excellent and commendable, replacing criticism of friends and family with honour and admiration, replacing feelings of begrudging with acts of service, replacing blame with unconditional love, and replacing complaints with peace, we can begin to feed our minds a healthier diet of *'whatever is pure and*

*lovely'*.

I read this week that younger generations are spending up to 9 hours a day on social media, for this generation their 'social media timeline' is their library, where their knowledge and influence comes from. So fill that library with sources and people that inspire, educate, motivate and have balanced opinions.

Without sounding like a John Lennon parrot, singing 'All you need is Love' on repeat, for me, if I can keep one thing up as lockdown eases and eventually fades away, it is to literally Love thy neighbours AND love thy self. For each of you, you will have a different lockdown narrative and a different outcome but think about the question, with what part of lockdown could you continue? Whatever it is for you, I know I'll be trying to pass round the metaphorical maize seed to those around me. So, neighbours watch out for a bag of beans or a jar of my infamous pickled cucumbers coming your way.

James Greig

## Our Wild Valley - the comma butterfly.

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So named because of white comma marks on the underside of its wings, the comma has expanded its range, one of few species to do so since numbers dwindled in the 1800's. Its caterpillars used to feed predominantly on hops, now it is thought that they can munch on nettles. It is now a common sight in England and Wales. When resting with wings closed this butterfly has excellent camouflage, the jagged outline of the wings giving the appearance of a withered leaf, making the butterfly inconspicuous when resting on a tree trunk or when hibernating.

While all activities in the village halls are suspended, booking information is given in case you wish to make a reservation.

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### Martyr Worthy Village Hall

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**We may not be able to gather as we normally do, but we're still here if you need prayerful or practical support.**

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**LLM** - Mr Gerry Stacey

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**Parish Administrator** - Beccy Clark

[admin@itchenvalleychurches.org](mailto:admin@itchenvalleychurches.org) - 01962 779845

**[www.itchenvalleychurches.org](http://www.itchenvalleychurches.org)**

The adults that appear in early July are from eggs laid by the butterflies that have survived hibernation and ovulated in Spring. It has been shown that eggs laid before mid summer will produce adults with white undersides that in turn will lay another brood of eggs. These butterflies that develop after mid summer will have dark undersides and will be the ones that hibernate



themselves. The assumption, therefore, is that a good spring will allow for an earlier emergence and more-rapid larval development, resulting in a higher number of butterflies that can lay another brood the same summer. I think our hot Spring could have done exactly that this year.

I don't know whether it is because I have been out more, but this July, as I write, there appears to have been loads of butterflies, especially seen on the delicate pink bramble flowers or the faithful scabious and knapweed flowers. We have seen the comma butterfly outside our window on the verbena

too. This photo was taken at Blackwood Forest on a day when the sun didn't appear much. But when it did, the brambles were alive with flutters in an instant. I haven't seen that many butterflies in one go in years; it was stunning to watch them rise and fall, flutter and flap, nip and duck. The forest came alive and it made my heart sing. What a show. It gave me hope that the little things will survive and support the food chain up and up, including our farmland birds, raptors and mammals. More than ever now, we've learnt we are all so linked together.

Have a great summer, keep well.

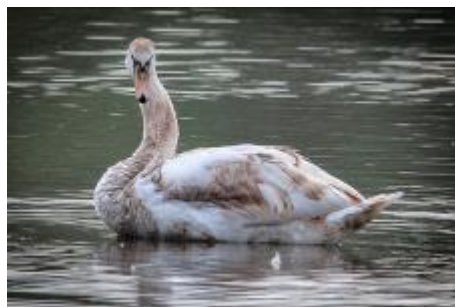
*Sophie Rogers*

## No Need to Travel

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Over the last ten years, Mike and I have travelled the world photographing wildlife, people, landscapes, towns and cities. Our passion for photography knows no geographical boundaries as we have taken photographs as far north as the Arctic Circle, and as far south as Antarctica; both ends of our world, and everywhere in between. So what does one do when the airports are closed, flights cancelled for the foreseeable future, and we are required to stay safely at home?

Nowadays, while Mike catches up on his beauty sleep, I am up with the sun,





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which is very early these summer mornings, and off looking for something to capture with my camera, walking as far as my feet are able to take me. With an empty diary, and no expectations to go anywhere or see anybody, time is my undemanding companion.

I have enjoyed wandering through the fields of wildflowers that surround this beautiful area in which we live, watching the light change, feeling the soft wind on my face, and hearing the beautiful dawn chorus, as the birds welcome the beginning of a new day. My spirits are lifted, and I feel connected to the natural world, and reminded that I don't have to travel far to find an image that pleases and excites me.

A favourite spot of mine has been beside the lake opposite Avington Park. The swans, ducks, coots etc, have amused me immensely as they swim, preen, fly and have intense altercations with each other. There is a particularly territorial Coot that chases off every bird that dares swim into his corner of the lake, no matter their size! One morning I was photographing the swans preening themselves; I had no idea how particular they are with their morning

ablutions, carefully cleaning their tummies, wings, and other bits that I won't mention here, when suddenly there was some shrill screeching just below me on the bank of the river. To my amazement a family of young Stoats was having a noisy fight, much like our own children do. I managed to capture a couple of images, but was taken aback when they leaped into the water and swam across a narrow channel in front of me. Again I managed to take a couple of quick photographs, and then they disappeared. What a bonus to see something so unusual and unexpected. That's the joy of being a photographer. But although I have been back to the lake in hope that they would repeat their behaviour, they have not reappeared at all. Successful wildlife photography normally requires patience and a good level of technique, but sometimes an opportunity pops up unexpectedly, and Lady Luck deals you a winning card. *See photo on page 24.* When I'm travelling I usually take a couple of cameras, but currently, because of the weight, I have limited myself to carrying one camera, a long lens and a tripod. But nowadays I find that after a long walk, standing and shooting frames for a couple of hours, I begin to miss my morning cup of tea, and start to run out of steam. But I have been having so much fun on my morning excursions that I find myself not missing my international adventures at all. I'm sure that when it is safe to do so, Mike and I will be off on another photography trip, but right now, I am content to put on my walking boots, hang my camera over my shoulder, and head off to see what new image appears for me to capture, right here in my own "backyard".

*Corinne Kozok*





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## From The Parish Council.

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Gradual changes are being made as lockdown is eased. On footpaths the notices recommending a one way system have gone but for the present the notices reminding people to keep their distance remain. As two metres is recommended to be safer than one, the decision has been made not to make any changes for the present. Please remember all notices are intended to help, inform and give guidance where possible. Whether you agree with their content or not, please leave them intact. If you think a notice needs removing or changing please let our Clerk or one of the Councillors know.

The main concern has been how to reopen our two playgrounds. Last year's and this year's inspections plus some of our own observations have raised a number of safety issues. Some are reasonably minor and can be easily resolved or can wait while the more serious ones are remedied. Until these serious ones have been sorted out, the play grounds cannot be opened. Where it has been decided to replace equipment, this has been ordered. Rather than wait for everything to be ready, some play equipment deemed to be unsafe may be barriered off with red and white tape. This will allow the remaining equipment, which has been passed as safe, to be put back into use. Please do not attempt to use the playgrounds until they have been opened and please do not use equipment that has been sealed off with barrier tape. Someone has already tried to force open one of the gates to the play area at Couch Green. The result is a damaged latch. It takes time to get items repaired which causes further delays to opening the

playgrounds. Finding contractors to do this work at present is difficult. Some have still not restarted work, others are working with a reduced staff and all are trying to catch up with a backlog. Once the play areas have been opened, please read the notices and keep to the recommendations on hygiene and distancing.

Longer term issues mentioned in previous articles to the Valley News such as footpaths and traffic are still being given attention. On footpaths some progress is beginning to be made. Thank you to those with rights of way over their land, who have kept them clear. There have been some positive responses to improving the route of some paths and to having a board walk on one of the more soggy areas.

The excessive speed of some motor vehicles and how to slow them down is a difficult problem. One idea under investigation is to see if the existing auto speed reminding devices can be replaced by more modern one, like those which show your actual speed and give you a smiley face if you are keeping to the limit. While researching into this topic an interesting fact has come up. These auto reminders are more effective if they are not permanently in the same place. It is therefore likely that we will keep the same arrangement and share an auto speed checking device, old or new, with other parishes.

And at last, as lockdown is eased the request is out for applications to be made for grants from funds made available from last year's Boom Town Festival. Please see the separate article on page 5 for details. Sadly with Boom Town having to be cancelled this year there will not be similar funding available next year.

*Patrick Appleby*

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### Resuming our 2020 Programme

It was very strange having only 37 Valley Gardeners present at our talk on 14 July. But following the easing of lock down, that is the maximum size of audience allowed at the Itchen Abbas & Avington Village Hall at the moment. Mind you, we were all very happy to be there to re-start the 2020 Club programme, under the strict social distancing rules which are in place of course. Our members have missed the garden visits and talks as well as the important social aspect of mixing with fellow Valley Gardeners. The



arrangements for our talk went well, all the hygiene protocols were easy to follow and carry out. We were the first group to use the hall since it closed in March. I would encourage other local groups, clubs and societies to start using this precious facility as soon as they can as it is important to support it and its place in village life.

Our speaker for this event was Adam Vetere, an award-winning landscape and garden designer who came to tell us about Old Camps, his family home and garden near Newbury. The site of this garden was a Roman encampment purposefully selected for its position on

higher ground and its proximity to Roman Winchester (Venta Belgarum) and Silchester (Calleva Atrebatum). Adam, his wife Heidi and their family arrived at Old Camps in 2007. The garden is set over an acre and has panoramic views of Watership Down and one can see why it was the perfect site for a Roman settlement. Adam, Heidi and their extended family have created the most extraordinary garden which has so many different “rooms” to be discovered that there is something to delight every visitor. Some of the most unusual features are the Mediterranean terraces, which are also the biggest borders in the garden. They occupy a southerly aspect and

benefit from the microclimate enjoyed here, thus allowing a wide variety of Mediterranean plants to thrive on the Hampshire/Berkshire border. Citrus trees, Brugmansia, Ficus Carica, Nerium Oleander, various succulents and aloes, plus dwarf peaches and scented pelargoniums thrive on the Tropical terrace whilst the fruit and vegetables growing in the

Potager pay tribute to Adam's Italian background. Closer to home here, the newly installed Ravine garden was inspired by the Lost gardens of Heligan and features Acers, ferns, silver birches and witch hazels to name but a few. This is truly a garden of incredible variety and interest presented to the very highest standard. The Valley Gardeners will be visiting Adam's garden in early September for a private visit. Old Camps will be open to the public for the NGS on 1 and 2 August but you do need to book on the NGS website: <https://ngs.org.uk/>

*Catherine Hahn*



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## The Practical Gardener

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For those growing things to eat, it is now the peak part of the year. I always think a time of great satisfaction, assuming that everything has gone to plan. The easiest vegetables to grow are onions and if properly dried, they keep for months. I hang them in nets in the garage to allow the air to circulate but not in the same space as potatoes.

I can report on my findings about pigeons. What tenacious birds these are. The only real solution is a complete net, properly pinned to the ground. I have a plastic owl which has limited effect, my Thai gongs are better but they need a breeze to sound. I was lent some reflective tape by my helpful neighbour, Mark. It certainly helps but



again it needs a breeze to be properly effective. A word about nets. They do need to be carefully stretched otherwise smaller and more curious birds may get entrapped and that's not good. It seems to me whatever we do, we must work with nature and birds have every right to be welcomed in our gardens.

I try to make my growing space productive. So, before the broad beans

were harvested, I planted brassicas between the rows. It made everything a bit crowded but we shall see what happens in the coming months. I have found root crops difficult to grow in past years yet this year, mid-July, I have harvested the first beetroot and carrots. OK, they are cheap to buy in



shops but most shop carrots remind me of a £4 bottle of wine – flavourless. I've included photos of two amazing crops, the first plums and cucumbers in the greenhouse.

I can now also report one answer to seed germination. The fact is that many seeds you buy are dead. In the past two months, I've sowed over 200 pea seeds of different varieties. All the seeds I have are in date. Only one variety has germinated, Rondo. Sadly, it means my succession cropping will be late and maybe there will be no second crop. That's a pity as peas grow well here and are wonderful if picked and eaten on the same day. I had exactly the same problem with runner beans, the seeds just rotted in the pots. So, it can be a bit disappointing when things don't happen as expected so perseverance is needed.

I have had an answer from T&M about some replacement plants which were

ordered on-line. Even with this new supply, only 80% arrived in a fit condition. Of the 50 or so plants I ordered, so far fewer than 30 have survived. In gardening you learn quickly, hence I share my experiences. You learn who you can trust and which suppliers actually care. On that topic, I have a swing chair in the garden, not that old and one of the metal parts failed. The first answer I had from the supplier (the chair was Italian) was wait. Out of the blue a week later came four new metal struts. A few weeks later a complete pack of fittings arrived, all at no cost. That's what I call a supplier that cares – Alfresia.

Happy Gardening!  
*Tony Gaster*

## Wildflower of the month

Enchanter's Nightshade is an inconspicuous woodland willowherb, pollinated by tiny flies. Its name



reminds us the Anglo Saxons used it to protect against the spells of elves.

*Simon Broadley*

## Local monthly information

### Itchen Valley area waste collections in August

Black bins and green bags on Fridays 3, 17 and 31 August. Green bins on Fridays 10 and 24 August. Glass boxes on Friday 24 August.

### Cameo

Now cancelled.

### Farmers Market in Winchester

Sundays 12 and 25 August.

### Parish Council Full Meeting

Thursday 2 August. Virtual meeting accessible via Zoom.

### 67 Bus operated by Stagecoach.

Mondays and Thursdays to Winchester:  
 08:23 09:23 13:53 15:23 17:23

Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Fridays to Winchester:

08:23 09:23 11:53 13:53 15:23 17:23

Mondays and Thursdays to Alresford:  
 11:49 15:19 17:09 18:09

Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Fridays to Alresford:

09:49 11:49 13:19 15:19 17:09 18:09

### Saturday service (same for the whole month.

Towards Winchester:

08:23 11:23 14:23 17:23

Towards Alresford:

09:19 12:19 15:19 18:09

### No Sunday or bank holiday service

All times shown are at Itchen Abbas.

Times are 5 minutes later (or earlier) at Easton.





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Help is available if you have a medical condition which makes you vulnerable to COVID-19, especially if you are over 70. You also qualify if you are pregnant or have a disability.

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