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Issue 79 July 2020

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WELCOME to the Valley News



What have you learnt in lockdown? I have realised that I am never going to read Ulysses (if not now, when?), that jigsaws give you a little buzz every time you fit a piece and that Scandi box sets are not my thing. My main achievement, such as it is, is working out all those seeds and what to do with a looming frost and no greenhouse and how exciting to eat your own lettuce - Tony has been trying to convince us and offering help for years!

It is almost a cliché, but like so many I have enjoyed being out in the Valley and blessing our luck to live here. We walk most days but have found all sorts of new routes in the last few months. The heronry opposite has been hugely entertaining, five or six nests with all those clattering beaks and whirling birds; I wonder how much of it we would have absorbed in busier years. I am delighted to have been able to include some views on lockdown from the younger residents, and am most struck that all the photographs are out in the countryside – one writer may claim only to have watched Netflix, but there she is striding through (I am guessing) the National Park!

Jackie Porter is seeking our views on the verge mowing regime (page 33) and no one will be surprised that, with my Wild Valley Verges hat on, (check out our Facebook page) I am longing for a different mowing regime on our verges! There are places where, for safety and comfort, mowing is important, but perhaps we should have left behind an era when close mowing was considered vital. We just need to wait until the flowers have set seed and

now in August. We are helping our farmers to leave space for wildlife with spectacular results (page 23) and we should be able to leave space for wildlife on our verges too. What a creative and stimulating group of readers, explaining, helping others and adapting to new circumstances. Thank you to you all for so many excellent contributions that it has been a struggle to cram them all in! Finally can someone spare a wheelbarrow (page 25) and a thought for the tiny treasure that is the remains of Sir Edward Grey's cottage in Itchen Abbas and its custodians? Look forward to Tony Gaster editing next month.

Verity Coleman

Itchen Valley News

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Postponements

Easton Flower Festival and Open Gardens



We were very sad to have to cancel the much anticipated inaugural Easton Flower Festival and Open Gardens in June. We have some very talented gardeners in this village and they had worked incredibly hard to get their gardens looking their very best to be put on show.

The plans for decorating the church were likewise spectacular but now, at the time of writing, the doors are closed and there haven't been flowers inside for several months.

However, the good news is that we have rescheduled for next year and the dates will be 18, 19 & 20 June with a Sparkling Preview evening on 17 June. Please make a note in your diaries - the hard work this year will not be wasted and the gardens will come back better than ever.

We hope by then we will be able to mix freely and enjoy each other's company once again.

In the meantime I hope the photo will whet your appetites for 2021!

Phoebe Culshaw

Itchen Valley Flower and Produce Festival

I am so sorry to have to report that the re-launch of the former Itchen Valley Flower Show - now re-named the Itchen Valley Flower & Produce Festival – will not go ahead on 12 September as planned. The committee organising the festival came to this sad conclusion in early June, because the situation of uncertainty surrounding the Coronavirus pandemic meant we could not progress all the necessary planning.

To adapt a phrase from the infamous Donald Rumsfeld, there were “too many unknowns” for us to be sure that the festival could be held successfully in mid September. By early June we needed to get our publicity in place, our suppliers of food and drink on board, printing of schedules and posters etc. ordered and our contributors to the festival confirmed. None of these were possible because we did not know if continuing social distancing would mean normal social interaction at an event such as this would be allowed by September or if life would be back to anywhere approaching “normal” by then. Also, with schools suspended since March, our plan to involve all the primary schoolchildren in the valley with growing flowers, fruit and vegetables during the late Spring and Summer were stymied as we had no access to them through that vital period. Finally, we wondered whether many of our prospective visitors would be happy to attend a busy, crowded event in early September, despite any relaxation of rules.

With all these questions unanswerable, we concluded that perhaps it was better to face reality and cancel the festival for this year. But, rest assured,

we will be holding the Flower & Produce Festival on 11 September next year so please put that date in your 2021 diary or calendar.

Catherine Hahn

Heroes

Kings Worthy Post Office



BK and Sangeeta Kaura have been at our Post Office for 21 years and I spoke with Sangeeta about how the business has adapted to Covid19 challenges. She said that they did reduce their hours of opening when the Post Office reduced the daily collections from three to two. They didn't expand their food range, but were always able to get milk, bread and eggs to sell, which were very popular. Then customers also started to buy other food items in the shop. The Post Office provided the perspex protection stand and eventually provided visors for the staff. Sangeeta

was not able to get hold of face masks and gloves but kind customers brought some in for them! They are now selling face masks but still cannot get hold of gloves.

They did want to thank everyone who has sent cards and letters, made phone calls and really thanked them properly - they said they could not wish for nicer customers! They were very appreciative – and so are we!

Angela Wheeler

Itchen Scrubbers

It was no mean achievement by the Itchen Scrubbers to make over seventy sets of scrubs (tops and trousers) for the NHS. Scrubs are easy to put on and take off, cool under PPE and quick to wash with staff needing several sets each. Our team of Scrubbers had never made a set in their lives - and had no idea what they were letting themselves in for!

Once we had sufficient fabric, patterns and haberdashery, off went the sewing machines. I am very proud to let you know that they have supplied paediatric ICU units, Community Nurses working from a GP surgery, care home staff and Southampton General, Royal Hampshire County, Frimley Park and Royal Surrey NHS Trusts.

One 'scrubber' made isolation gowns





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Staff nurse at
Frimley Park

for a local Hospice, another made mask extenders, and some made laundry bags. We also sent over 100 scrub hats to the Isle of Wight Hospital (along with the Alresford Scrubbers) and masks continue to be made. (Still available to order).

I would like to take this opportunity to publicly thank, in no particular order, my team:

Alex, Jill, Sophie, Caroline, Joanna, Sarah, Sheila, Penny, Victoria, Tamsin and Pauline

I also want to thank ALL the Itchen Hatters and all the generous donors of financial support we received. It would not have been possible without the hard work and goodwill of you all.

Caroline Coleman
chapelfieldstudio@gmail.com

From our MP

Readers of The Itchen Valley News will be aware I was able to secure significant new investment for our local health Trust (HHFT) as part of the Health Infrastructure Plan. As previously reported, HHFT has now received confirmation of guidelines - and some £5m in initial seed funding - to bring together its plans and a team to build safe and sustainable services in Winchester and across mid/North Hampshire for the long-term.

“Hampshire Together” has now been launched to start a conversation about this project which will include our whole local NHS – from GPs to mental health services, community care to acute hospital provision as well as social care and the wider voluntary sector. The aim is to “deliver fully joined-up care; from hospital to home and everything in between.” This is clearly an ambitious exercise but it’s welcome if it is a genuine attempt to listen to my constituents on future health services. I had to work extremely hard last year to secure our place in the Health Infrastructure Plan and I’ve had confirmation from ministers that no matter the final formulation of the plans, the Royal Hampshire County Hospital will receive significant investment.

The Trust know my red lines (they haven’t changed) around consultant led obstetric care – and an emergency

department worthy of the name - in Winchester and I am very sure local people back me 100% in this view. Now is the time to speak up and make sure your voice is heard from the very start noting the clear message from the Trust that "at this stage no decisions have been taken and no options generated".

I am regularly in the RHCH – meeting with senior managers, staff and patients – and will be reminding them the era of moving all activity into fewer larger hospitals is over. In the words of Secretary of State Matt Hancock "I want more services closer to the communities they serve."

Also this month, my latest Annual Report is now published and you can find it on my website. I am also conducting a major survey among constituents to mark ten years as your MP; Finally, it is hoped we can continue to move from crisis to recovery as the Covid-19 pandemic enters a new phase. There will be so many difficult days ahead – and possibly even local action to tackle spikes in infection - but I stand by my view at the outset that social distanced or otherwise we are all going to have to live with an element of risk or the medicine really will be worse than the disease.

Steve Brine *MP*

Quizzing the Quiz Master

John Lang used his time in lockdown producing a daily 20 question quiz.

What made you start?

The initial idea was to produce a daily quiz for my five grandchildren aged between 15 and 9. After a few days somebody heard what I was doing and suggested I should send it to the Itchen List.



How many did you do (and what made you decide ENOUGH!)?

58 quizzes in all. I was beginning to realise that producing a daily quiz was taking up an increasing amount of time. I dropped Sundays which helped - but the level of muttering from across the kitchen table was beginning to hit home. And the grass wasn't being cut as often as it should!

Who was your target audience?

Initially my grandchildren and then families. Few things gave me more pleasure than to hear from people who said an entire family would sit down of an evening to do the daily quiz. I was also very eager to entertain people on their own and I have had some feedback to say this worked. My biggest disappointment was a failure to reach residents in care homes.

How many people did the quiz?

I honestly don't know. I did discover that the daily download to the Itchen List was going into many people's junk box and is probably still there. Apart from the Itchen List, I had an 'extras group' numbering 69. Several people in this list sent it on to others, but I have no feel for numbers.

Where did it spread to?

It went to people in the USA, Switzerland, France and Dubai as well

as throughout the U.K. from Scotland to next door.

Where did you find the questions?

Most were in my head and I drew heavily on my own experiences. A chance remark by someone or an item in either a magazine or a daily newspaper prompted others. Many had a nautical theme and the studious reader might have been able to trace my travels in a lifetime meandering around the world from the North Pole to an anchorage off Socotra! Not a single question came from a quiz data bank. But I did respond to requests such as “We need more on sport.” Perhaps the biggest surprise that not a single person wanted questions on contemporary music, TV or celebrities.

Your favourite question ?

Probably “Which city is furthest west, Edinburgh or London?” Nearly everyone who provided feedback got it wrong! I also wondered how many people would provide the right answer to “what colour is the new moon?” I loved working on questions to do with the Netherlands, Venice, India, Singapore and Burma (which, curiously, is one place I have never been to but my eldest daughter has, and the feedback from her stay there was electrifying). And islands were also a great draw.

Did you struggle with any answer yourself?

My biggest problem was with the question I asked about the Malagasy Republic. It is now called Madagascar and I have never been there. I thought the answer would be straightforward but Madagascar’s history was a nightmare to unravel in six sentences. Précis hurdles presented huge challenges but I loved trying to describe, say, the Peninsular War in just a few words.

Funny moments?

The answer I still enjoy most came very early to the question “What is a beefeater.” The two best answers were ‘gin’ and ‘a carnivore’. Brilliant! I was always mortified to discover a mistake I had made with an answer but some of the exchanges I had with those who pointed out the errors of my ways were hilarious. People were extraordinarily gracious in their comments.

Were there any frustrations?

Yes. The computer playing up ten minutes before I was hoping to send the quiz out. It happened more than once.

What will happen to the Quiz now?

I don’t know. Part of me would like to publish them and see the royalties go to one of the groups who have done so much to keep us going in these past few months. Instinctively it would be directed at one of the lesser known groups such as carers in care homes and private homes, but I think this will be a medium term project rather than one done tomorrow.

In summary?

It was great fun to do and I miss it. But I am sure to stop it when I did was the right decision.

John Lang was talking to Verity Coleman

One happy quizzer:

John’s Quiz was Home School Tuition for me! I looked forward to it every day and hoped I could at least answer half the questions and remember the answers to the others! John kept us going through a very challenging and isolating time and was appreciated both local and further afield. It was an immense amount of work but very much enjoyed.

Angela Wheeler

The Grange Festival adapts to Covid19



The Grange Festival, along with all other country house opera companies this summer, was obliged to cancel its whole programme in late March. Michael Chance and the board decided to take the risk of offering patrons who had already booked seats just two options – to donate part or all of the ticket price, or to allow the Grange to hold the ticket money over as a deposit for next season. This strategy appears to have worked, as those booking early are generally strong supporters of the Grange Festival. Meanwhile, this year's season is being rescheduled for summer 2021.

Since then, there has been a steady stream of emails, initially offering playlists chosen by Michael, and most recently providing links to watch previous productions, with Bernstein's *Candide* (2018) the first offering, available until early July. For all opera companies in this position, it has been vital to maintain contact with their audience, using streaming to show previous productions and maintaining a lively presence on social media.

Practically all the singers and musicians who perform at the Grange and other venues are self-employed. Their normal income stream has completely dried up and they are reliant on frankly inadequate government financial support, or (if they're lucky) partial payment of their fees by the companies

they were due to perform for. So far the government has had little to say about support for the arts world, as it no doubt has to deal with matters it considers more urgent. But all opera companies are in a perilous financial position, and without the strong support of their usual patrons most would be in danger of collapse.

I'm anticipating The Grange Festival coming back next year with its usual panache!

Peter McManus

From Twilight Trees to Living Spaces

Like the majority of readers, we've been hit really hard by Covid19. Our family business – installing our faux and lit trees for weddings and corporate and social events – collapsed overnight as we watched cancellation after cancellation roll in. We've had tearful Zoom calls with brides-to-be with whom we've built up close relationships and we just hope we can support them once these special days are rescheduled for later in the year or next year. We've had to furlough our employees and lay off seasonal workers and freelancers. As the business owners, we've been in survival mode just keeping things ticking over and reacting to daily news. Our hope is that we're through the worst, there



will be a steady return to normality and that once satisfactory testing and a successful vaccine programme are in place society can resume its work and play, albeit perhaps in a more considered way?

But, there's a never-give-up spirit at Twilight Trees which fellow entrepreneurs will recognise. And, in the depths of despair, opportunity has arisen in two areas. First, in twenty days we conceived, designed and built a range of decorative screens to aid social distancing. Our new Living-Spaces range has now been launched to really positive receptions on social channels, especially Instagram, where we already have a lovely following for



our posts on creative events.

Second, we're in the process of agreeing a joint-venture in the UAE to manufacture the screens and market them. This local partner will also represent the core Twilight Trees range across the Middle East region.

We're flat out selling the Living Spaces range of screens all over the UK. The phones have been red-hot; enquiries from hairdressers in Scotland, major gastro pub and restaurant groups in the south east and landmark office buildings in London, all asking for details and

quotes. We're already planning on bringing back staff in July to cope with customer service.

We've learnt a lot from this crisis. We've learnt to rely on creativity – not easy when you're anxious at 4 am – and we've learnt to trust in like-minded people and collaborate openly for mutual benefit.

Has our business been changed for ever? Probably, yes. Will we get through this crisis? Definitely. And, will be wiser, stronger, fitter? Absolutely! Now, where's the biscuit tin.....

Susie Reid Thomas, info@twilight-trees.com, 01962 877644

Adapting at Itchen Abbas School

During the last month things have changed considerably at Itchen Abbas Primary School and we are very pleased that the staff have been able to welcome more children back to school. This started with the Reception class and Year 1; the teachers and staff worked so hard to make sure the school was ready to accept these children. Mrs Dear and the staff were delighted and very relieved at how successful this was. All of the children adhered to the new routines and expectations and were so sensible. Everybody worked hard to ensure that the changes were not scary and to ensure that mental well-being is the top priority.

As a result of how successful it has been with these two year groups, the school were reassured enough to open up further to Year 6 pupils on a rota system meaning children will either be at school on Monday and Tuesday or Wednesday and Thursday.

89% of eligible children have returned

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Kawasaki

to school which when compared with the country's average is an amazing number and shows what confidence parents have in the school and the staff. Mrs Dear says how wonderful it has been to hear children in school again and to see their happy, smiling faces. As Governors we would like to thank all of the staff for their continued hard work and cheerfulness and all of parents who prepared their children so

we're giving you this little bear, for cuddles and to remind all of you, you are special to us, and that is true.

We as Governors continue to be very proud of the staff and children of Itchen Abbas Primary School, thank you to you all.

Beccy Clark Vice-Chair, IAPS governors

St Swithun's Martyr Worthy



Sisters Flossy
and Heidi with
their school
bears

well for what it would be like, making the transition much easier.

As a special thank you to the children, whom everyone has missed so much and to say well done for adapting to all of the changes that have come their way, they have all received a gift of a teddy bear in a school T shirt. These were sent with a special message - *Whether you are home or school learning we want you to know that our hearts are yearning, to see you smiling, happy with laughter for now and for your forever after. And so to show how much we care,*



Work to repair the roof and guttering has been delayed by the lockdown, so the scaffolding on the church has been up rather longer than anticipated. Perhaps it will be down to coincide with the welcome news of the church doors opening again.

The church is dedicated to St Swithun who is commemorated annually on 15 July. It rained on the day that St Swithun's remains were moved into the Old Minster at Winchester on 15 July 971, and ever since it has traditionally been believed that if it rains on the saint's day it will rain for forty days thereafter. His body was moved again, into a shrine in Winchester Cathedral in 1093, which pilgrims visited until it was destroyed in 1538.

So watch the weather on 15 July!
Verity Coleman

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Lockdown: views from the young



Esmé aged 9

I have enjoyed walking my neighbour's dog, he is very friendly and hardly ever barks. I have really liked our walks together.



Joseph aged 11

Whilst I have missed my friends at school and outside, I have enjoyed helping some of my neighbours with dog walking and bee keeping.



Maia (16)

When lockdown was first announced I was getting ready to take my GCSEs. At first, I was disappointed that my last few months at school would end so abruptly and sad that I would end my secondary school years without properly saying goodbye to my friends. This disappointment quickly turned to relief when I realised that revision could stop and there would be no stress of exams.

To begin with, I did as little as possible and watched as many Netflix shows as I could fit into one day. I still watch as much TV as I can but break it up with a bit of pre-reading for my A-levels.

Our prom has been postponed, so I may still get to say goodbye to my friends properly, but the chances of it

happening slip away the further we get into lockdown.

Lockdown has helped me to really appreciate how lucky I am to be a teenager living in the valley. There are no crowded spaces and our family has lots of choice as to where we would like to walk or cycle and occasionally even have a paddle in the river. At the beginning my sister would go for a walk at least a couple of times a week. It took a while to get used to the one-way system and took even longer to deal with the awkwardness of living in such a friendly area and having to avoid contact with other people!

I hope that the pause caused by Coronavirus has allowed our environment to re-emerge and start to flourish again and families and friends to reconnect albeit on social media.



Julian Ellis Brown (24)

As many of us have, I've spent much of the past three months reading and reflecting on the various opinions on the scourge of the coronavirus and our collective human experience throughout. Other than a lot of bandying around of the word 'unprecedented,' there have been stories told from all manner of backgrounds.

Nurses, doctors and other essential workers have put their lives on the line to keep us safe and healthy. There are

also stories from those who have walked great feats to raise money for our beloved NHS, or alternatively, divided public opinion through a certain trip to Barnard Castle. When it comes to my personal experience of the virus, I often found myself in a number of situations feeling that I was both over-reacting and under-reacting simultaneously – a curious feeling that I haven't really experienced since trying to act 'cool' in secondary school.

For the majority of us, lockdown has been perhaps not quite as publicised or heralded, but nevertheless challenging. We have been away from our loved ones, had our jobs put on hold, become accustomed to every facet of life being virtual and in cases such as my own, had to discover a new way of learning as education moves online.

But I must say I have also found quarantine to have a remarkable highlight - having time to reflect. Its a commodity that I rarely find in London as I flash between university, home and evening drinks in three corners of the capital. Maybe there is something to be learnt from this way of life, other than how much I usually spend on pints each week.

Don't get me wrong, this has not been one long zen-like experience – I have often caught myself between a state of relaxation as we temporarily 'left' our busy lives and one of anxiousness and frustration for exactly the same reason. Because we haven't really left our busy lives, they're just now on Zoom. I was three months away from finishing my two-year masters in Innovation Design Engineering, alongside the very best set of classmates at the Royal College of Art and Imperial College London.

Those friends have now dispersed to their homes across the globe.

Two days ago, that degree finished,



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with no peers to celebrate with, no physical show and no graduation to look forward to. Likewise, my brother Eliot has spent the lockdown, head down, completing his Part II in Architecture following seven years of study. He's also emerged with no fanfare and a rude awakening to the uncertainty of job opportunities. But we are the lucky ones. I have lost no family or friends to this deadly virus. Eliot and I were at the back end of our studies and had at least formed friendships with fellow students without the need to social distance. I am so incredibly fortunate to be able to have come back to a home (with a garden) that has access to nature, to see a bit of the beautiful countryside around us each day and spend time with my family. I even managed to build myself a little workshop to be able to continue working on my degree with some greatly appreciated contributions from neighbours in the Valley.



As we see ourselves slowly reconstructing a 'normal life' I see us facing a blank canvas of opportunity to use the best of lockdown to bring back into our day-to-day. Perhaps we don't need to buy so much - although the queues on Monday, as the shops reopened, seem to dispute that - and perhaps now is the time for us to realise the benefits we all felt when slowing down a little. The reduced emissions from China's factories, a series of global movements to

acknowledge those most downtrodden in our society and the power of us all taking a moment for a little reflection and a walk in a field with some very friendly cows.

A History of Pandemics

Can we learn from the past?

Part Two

Last month Ned took us through the early outbreaks of bubonic plague. The story continues.....

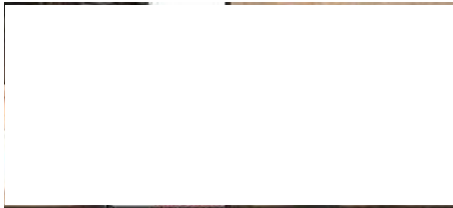
The final outbreak of bubonic plague was in China and India, killing around twelve million people. This outbreak was much more controlled due to the progress made in science since the second outbreak. A Swiss/French

bacteriologist called Alexandre Yersin started to investigate and was able to find the bacteria causing the

disease. It was later named after him as it is called *Yersinia Pestis*. Then a Russian scientist called Waldemar Haffkine created a medicine to kill the bacteria and that was the end of the bubonic plague. There was also much better sanitation and protection, because infective patients were kept in isolation away from the public, preventing the spread of the disease. They were able to confine it to China and India and stopping it from turning global like the outbreak before.

Even though the second outbreak was over 600 years ago and the final one was over a century ago, there are similarities with how we are trying to stop Covid-19 from spreading. The difference between the illnesses though

is that Yersinia Pestis is a bacterial infection, whereas Covid-19 is a virus, although they both affect the respiratory system meaning they are both spread by coughing and sneezing. First the similarities between the techniques in stopping the spread of the illnesses. In the first outbreak ships travelling to Italy were left in the bay for forty days. Today we are hearing a lot about quarantine, which is one of the greatest similarities. Secondly, in the first outbreak the doctors wore the bird like masks to stop the illness travelling through the air into them. This was one of the few things in that time that was scientifically correct although they thought that putting herbs in the beak was that the smell forced the illness away not that it filters the illness out. But now we are being told to wear face coverings to go out into crowded places. Also, as we have



all seen on the news, when doctors and nurses are working in intensive care they are wearing a lot of PPE (personal protective equipment), which includes visors and face masks. In the final outbreak there was much more sophisticated and better PPE for doctors, and they would also isolate anybody who had the virus. Finally, the cures. In the second outbreak all the cures were mad and crazy, probably due to the lack of scientific research and also fear because they couldn't do anything to stop the illness once they caught it except hope they would naturally

survive. The final outbreak is and was the final outbreak due to the cures. Scientists developed antibiotics and also a vaccine. Right now, scientists are trying to create medicines to fight off Covid-19. They are also developing a vaccine to prevent a second outbreak either long-term or short-term, unlike the Black Death.

I hope this has put all this into perspective. Stay Alert, Control the Virus, Save Lives

Ned Wolfe

On owning a dog



Soon after we came to Itchen Abbas in 2005, we had a rescue dog, a twice owned Jack Russell called Ruby. Those

who have had children will know the joys of seeing them grow up and become independent. With dogs, it's quite different as they are never independent. We wanted a retired greyhound but were told our fences were not high enough. Yet Ruby managed to escape easily and frequently in her early days. The



problem was only solved by using an electric fence for a short while.

All the rules we made at the start were broken. Ruby knew after just a short time how to get round them. It was clear from previous ownership, that she had been a handful. However, as time went on, we came to love her, as did family and friends (and maybe even our chief editor). She was never good in cars, often sick, and so that curtailed some activity. Having a big garden helped as she ran with great speed. With a footpath behind our fence, she could sense walkers and would bark and chase up and down. She often sat on the landing window ledge looking out over the drive. She could sense visitors five minutes before they entered the Close.

Ruby soon regarded our village as her own and disliked any other dog being close, always a trial when out for a walk. She was fond of small children and soon realised she had to play second fiddle when they were in the house. A most affectionate and loving little dog.

At the age of eight, she developed a problem with her back legs – cruciate



ligaments. Thanks to the excellent vet hospital in Ringwood, matters were put right but the cost was significant.

As she became older, she started to go downhill, deaf, blind and then demented. Finally, she could no longer control her legs. Although deaf, she could hear the word *treat* from a long distance.

Dogs can pull at your heart strings perhaps even more so than people. Her little life is embedded in our memories and she touched the lives of many who met her. She's at peace now in the garden.

Tony Gaster

From the Parish Council

The first two purposes of the South Downs National Park are stated as "1. To conserve and enhance the national beauty, wild life and cultural heritage of the area and 2. To provide opportunities for understanding and enjoyment of the special qualities of the National Park by the Public." In reality those purposes should be applied to all of our Civil Parish and beyond. As lockdown is eased we all need to think what can be done to protect, maintain, and improve our local environment. The Parish Council is considering ways in which we can build on some of the good that has come out of the past months and sadly also some bad practices which need to be discouraged

and preferably stopped.

The overground pipeline situation is still ongoing and the outcome of the planning applications is not expected in the immediate future. An interesting alternative has been raised recently, which would reinstate water meadow in the Candover Valley that would be able to hold water in times of plenty and feed back into the rivers in times of drought. It would therefore remove the need for the pipeline and enhance the wildlife habitat, both of which would be very much more in keeping with the purposes as stated above. If this is a viable alternative the Parish Council is likely to support it.

Regarding bad practices which have crept in since the easing of lockdown, one of the worst is not the number of visitors to the countryside but the way some have abused it. It is clear that such abusers are unaware of, or simply do not care about, the damage they cause; this is not just a local but a national issue. Please remember the Parish Council is not permitted to use the Itchen List. If you wish to raise these issues with us you must get in touch with a Councillor or our Clerk. As residents please set a good example. Do not drop litter, pick up after your dog, (put it in a bin or take it home) and remember to keep to two metre social distancing. Cyclists need to remember that too, especially when passing pedestrians, and to please keep away from narrow footpaths. Probably the biggest problem has been people congregating in large groups and bathing in the river. Litter has been left behind on the banks and thrown in the river. If you feel brave enough you can speak to these people but be warned they can be verbally abusive. They need to understand that the result of their behaviour is likely to end with the few

places where there is access to the river being fenced off. Tragic though that would be, the first priority must be to protect the river and the habitats that it supports.

A second negative resulting from lockdown is that some drivers, having experienced roads with little or no traffic, have decided that speeding on country lanes is the norm. Again residents can set a good example, and slower cars in front can stop those behind from speeding. The Parish Council will be looking at what other measure can be taken in the long term as well.

As most people are aware there will be no BoomTown Festival this year but we are starting the process of advertising for applications to bid for funds from last year's Festival which we distribute. Details can be found on our website and there will be more information in next month's Valley News.

We are discussing how we can build on the more positive aspects that have come out of experience of the past four months. Many more people have taken to both walking and cycling. For walkers we are looking at how the network of paths might be improved. We are doing as much as we can to keep as many paths open as possible. In the case of rights of way it is the responsibility of the landowner concerned to keep the path clear. For cyclists we are looking at options from quiet road schemes to the possibility of a safe cycle route into Winchester. However please be warned that all these things take time. Last but not least, building on the experience of lockdown, we will be looking to formulate a set of plans to help deal with future emergencies, from power cuts, to flooding, to another epidemic

and anything else that can be thought of. All ideas are welcome.

Patrick Appleby

Itchen Entrepreneur

Avington farmer and golf course owner Robert Stent on a hole new way of golfing and some woolly (rather than hairy) bunkers – as told to Fi Macintosh and Lucy Wolfe.

How did you feel when it was decided that golf courses would have to shut completely?

It was a relatively simple decision to close. We saw a huge increase in players in the run up to closing, with the driving range closing and more people unable to work. This made keeping the clubhouse for the staff almost impossible. We closed voluntarily 48 hours before the lockdown started.

What's been the biggest challenge for the Club during lockdown?

Obviously it was a very worrying time initially. Government support via business rate cuts, local business grant and the furlough scheme have made the situation bearable and enabled me to keep all staff on. James and I on the farm were able to keep on top of mowing while the green keepers were furloughed. As the grass growing season got going this was becoming impossible. By this stage there was some talk that golf may get started again as it was not difficult to maintain 2 metre isolation.

You've attracted some attention for your innovative way of keeping the grass down.... what happened?

The very dry weather delayed grass growth which meant we were short of grass on the farm for the sheep that graze there (not mine). It was a fairly simple leap to realising that they could



be beneficial on the course. Generally this worked really well and was a good PR option. The only negative was the amount they (the sheep) enjoyed playing in the bunkers! They did a fantastic job at reducing the bulk of grass in our rough, which can get very long. They kept off the greens as the grass was too short (mown at 4mm). Local photographer Kevin Milner took the shots that were used by the Times, and this was then picked up by TMZ, an American website which did a fun video about the sheep. Interestingly another course in the New Forest added sheep to graze as well.

We're really enjoying the biodiversity in the verges and fields. Is that something you are passionate about?

The farm has been closely involved with conservation for many years. Following the end of set aside we entered the Countryside Stewardship Scheme enabling us to keep margins of fields for conservation. Some of these areas have now been solely for biodiversity and environmental benefit for well over twenty years. About 15 hectares (37 acres) of the farm is now within the ELS/HLS environmental schemes. Significant benefits have been seen with the biodiversity on the farm with studies done by Southampton University on small mammals which

help sustain our barn owl population (boxes round the farm). We have had nesting red kites for the past two years. The farm is particularly well suited to this work with areas of woodland and margins unsuitable for crop production. As a specialist seed grower, growing five different varieties of wheat for seed (contracted to the breeder), grass for seed as well as specialist crops like borage and quinoa, keeping the margins out of production simplifies harvest and helps with crop purity. – I could go on!



Now that you're open again – how have you adapted to the regulations and in your opinion is it working?

Keeping the clubhouse closed and with some simple modifications I was happy that our staff could work safely. Our software is well set up to cope with tee bookings and keeping our members happy. Our E-Player registration was working well before the closure, however it has been exceptionally

successful since and gives us the potential to keep in touch with anyone who has played. Over 600 new registrations in the past couple of weeks has kept us busy in the office. Personally I think the new system has worked well keeping staff safe as well as remaining accessible to all golfers.

What was it like on the first day the course opened and what's the atmosphere like there at the moment?

I think we were all a little concerned when we were allowed to open as it was a big test of the procedures put in place. It was like opening for the first time again! Clubhouse staff took to it very well and are confident in the way it works, a couple of them are still away due to health or age issues.

On the farming side have you tailored your crops to the current situation?

Farming has continued unchanged by the lockdown. All work has continued as before as crops keep growing and harvest will start at the end of July as always. The weather has been very challenging this year with continuous rain from October to March and a drought since. Without some useful rain and damper conditions in the near future it will be a very poor harvest and a serious challenge for some farmers.

What about weddings and holidays?

The biggest hit the business has taken is the closure of the holiday cottages and wedding venue. All weddings have moved to next year which obviously means the loss of a year's income. Holiday booking are beginning to creep back but very slowly while we are still unsure of how we will come out of lockdown. We have had several cancellations with some re booking for

the following year. Hopefully we will begin to see bookings take off fairly soon. I cannot see many flying off to enjoy foreign holidays and we do have a lot to offer for holidays in this area.

Letter from the Rectory

A New Better?

I have got rather bored of the expression 'The New Normal'. It's often accompanied by a shrug of the shoulders, a 'nothing can be done' look in the eyes over (what I feel sure will become the compulsory) face covering. I think that there is something defeatist, something fatalistic, about the idea of a new normal: it's as if everyone is saying to themselves 'we are forced into this situation; it's a disaster and there is nothing that we can do about it'. It reminds me slightly of Private Frazer in Dad's Army who would say at every turn of events 'We're doomed!'. But I wonder if, in this changing world, which has been thrust upon us by this horrible virus, there is any chance of finding something better than the life we had before March this year. But before we start down this path we do need to recognise and acknowledge, perhaps even grieve, what we have lost. Some of us may have had the unbearable trauma of losing friends and relations, people that we love, people that we have been unable to grieve for properly and to lay to rest. Some of us will have lost jobs or not found jobs they were searching for. Children and teenagers may have lost a great slug of their education, as so many parents have struggled with home schooling.



Students may have lost gap years. Sweethearts, may have seen engagements and weddings disappear. Retired folk (or those who hoped to retire soon) may have seen pension funds evaporate. There will be many other challenges that individuals face, which I don't know about. But a loss which is common to all of us, though, is a loss of predictability, a loss of certainty. It would be understandable if we were beside ourselves with fear about the future.

But while we are putting on our mental Private Frazer, sucking in our teeth and preparing to pronounce The End Of The World, perhaps it would also be good for a moment to take stock of what we have gained during this strange time of lockdown. For many families this has been a time when they have all been together for an extended period for the first time in years. No commuting, no sport, no social events and little travel has meant that we have been thrown together closer and deeper than we have been for decades. For some, this may have been an explosive combination, but, for others, it has been a joy. Many of us have used the time saved in travelling to spend getting fit. As I run round Itchen Valley early in the mornings, I see people of a generation that I never thought existed here - the roads are more like the sea front at San Francisco with everyone running (and so many in their twenties and thirties) than the Itchen Valley I have known over the last 8 or so years. Others have found that they are not spending so much money as they are not travelling abroad on holiday any more or don't have petrol bills to pay. Some have reinvested this unexpected windfall in claret (as I can see from the monthly glass collections). But most importantly, many of us have been able

to slow down and stop haring around the whole time. This, when added to the environmental benefits of cleaner skies, thriving wild species and goats roaming the streets of Llandudno, shows some benefits to us all from the lockdown.

All of that is nice (and potentially life changing for some) but that doesn't take away the fear for the future. Part of the problem I think is that we have thought that we are actually in control of the future. This is an illusion. The one absolutely certain thing is that life does not turn out as we expect it to. If anyone actually believed that at the beginning of this year, I feel sure that they don't believe it any more.

But what are we to do when we can feel the seas rising, when we can see the storm clouds on the horizon and we know that our little boat is no match for what is round the corner? We need to steer for land! We need to look out for that lighthouse which can guide us away from the rocks and help us navigate to safety. That lighthouse is none other than Jesus Christ who enables us, through knowing him, to live secure in the present and makes it possible to rest our fears on his shoulders and trust him to deliver us through the storm. I know you may have all sorts of difficulties with the idea of a god existing at all, but lockdown may have given you some time to think about big questions. If you want to know how to turn your fears into something which will transform your life and give you a sense of peace, all you have to do is to contact me at rector@itchenvaleychurches.org. And perhaps for you the new normal really will be a new better.

Revd. Alex Pease

Sir Edward Grey's cottage

When I arrived to do some work at the site of Sir Edward Grey's cottage I found that my faithful old wheelbarrow had disappeared! Well, as I have been in lockdown and unable, therefore, to do much in recent weeks I can understand someone feeling that, as nothing appeared to be going on, they could give it a good home. If this was the case I would be delighted if you could pop it back because taking one with me each time I go (in a Ford KA) is something of a problem. I have 'lost' countless bird boxes over the years but this was quite a departure from the norm.

Failing that, if anyone has an old barrow, which is no longer needed, I would be hugely grateful for it. Since writing this I have discovered that the seat has been badly damaged. Someone's effort to remove that, too, I think. Clearly they hadn't realised it was padlocked to a concrete block underground! My husband is attempting to refurbish it at home.



I would add that this patch is meant to be partly wild and partly 'tame' complying with the wishes of the owner, Winchester College, who keep it as a small nature reserve in memory of the Greys, who were keen naturalists.

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The Overstory by Richard Powers

This tremendous book won the Pulitzer Prize in 2019 and it is easy to see why. A novel of our times, it is about man's relationship with the natural world, specifically with trees, and when you have read it you will certainly think about trees differently. The book has a huge scope, indeed it is a long read at over 600 pages, but it encompasses much interesting science and many fascinating ideas.

The first third introduces the characters, nine disparate people finely drawn with very different back-stories, and all affected in some way or other by trees. For example Neelay Mehta, the son of immigrants to the USA, a whizz-kid in the early days of computing, who is severely injured falling from an oak tree, or Douglas Pavlicek, a loadmaster in the USAF who is shot down over Vietnam but saved by a banyan tree. Most of the



characters seem to be oddballs, but this keeps the story interesting.

The next section moves forward to a hippy-type movement of eco-warriors trying to save great swathes of American forest from loggers - think "Swampy" in the trees near Newbury or Extinction Rebellion trying to save the planet in our times. A number of the characters are drawn together in this endeavour, trying to get their message across in the face of big business; their last effort is a disaster (but to go further would spoil it).

Much of the book is beautifully written with wonderful descriptions, but it is heavy going at times, rather repetitious and filled with baffling colloquial Americanisms whose meaning one has to guess. It would benefit from a good prune, but is certainly worth reading if only to broaden one's mind about the Green Movement and the lives of trees.

Brigid McManus

From our local councillor



Trees Matter: as part of the Climate Emergency declared last year WCC has managed to plant more than 500 new trees. During lockdown many of us

fostered young trees to prevent them being dumped. These are now thriving and mild panic ensues as we try to find a home for them. The oak needs to be planted this autumn; the lime would survive another year. Any good homes with enough space for these big babies? Increase in fly tipping: there has been a noticeable and regrettable increase in fly tipping since lockdown started. The closing of waste re-cycling centres has

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no doubt added to the problem. The majority of law-abiding citizens have had to store waste and resist the temptation to drop garden waste into distant hedgerows.

It is easy to go on line and report fly tipping on the WCC website and there is a very useful app to download. This allows the location of dumped materials to be easily recorded and passed to the Council. Describing a location in a remote country lane accurately is not particularly easy. If WCC is already aware of the dumped waste, there should be a sprayed yellow 'W'. Leave the material as you find it, not only can there be toxic items dumped, but also there is frequently various types of evidence that allow the culprits to be successfully prosecuted.

Waste Recycling Centres have now re-opened although with a restricted service and with the requirement to arrange a pre-booked time, but only for car owners. This seems rather unjust on pedestrians, who can only drop off a fraction of what might be fitted in a car, and will be travelling there by the greenest possible means. We are addressing this unfairness at HCC. If you do not have an email address you can book by phoning 02380 179949, weekdays only.

Wild flowers: as a consequence of mowing teams being diverted to clearing fly tipping, our verges were unmown for some weeks and we had



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an opportunity to see how many species go unnoticed as they are decapitated before flowering. Perhaps the mowing staff could be diverted to siding up our surfaced paths that suffer incursions.

Public conveniences: We are confused by public lavatories being closed elsewhere in the UK, all those in Winchester District have remained open unless in a building that is closed, such as the Guildhall.

Margot Power

Masks for CAMEO



CAMEO, normally a short church service and lunch for older residents on the third Tuesday of the month, has had to be suspended for the moment. However, the team have been keeping in touch with the guests and this month gave all of them a mask so that they are suitably equipped when they leave home. Jill Croft answered the call, and made over forty masks in a week so that everyone could have one. Here she is receiving grateful thanks and gifts from CAMEO organiser Charlotte Appleby.

Verity Coleman

Easton & Martyr Worthy Cricket Club adapts

All cricketing recreational activities

were banned during the lockdown and the club has complied accordingly. In the hope of playing some form of cricket later in the season, the outfield has been maintained - and the square initially prepared for future use - by our diligent groundsman, Lee Padwick. But on 15 May the ECB Guidance was changed to allow the use of outdoor facilities such as our nets, for a maximum of two players unless they were from the same household. Having completed a careful Risk Assessment to follow the ECB guidance, the Easton nets were open for members to use from 17 May. The rules are displayed on the nets and further information on their use by members can be obtained from me, or from the Club Secretary seb.stannard@btinternet.com. It is important to point out that under the ECB guidance the nets are effectively closed for any other use for hygiene reasons; and only available through pre-booking to comply with the needs of Track & Trace.

Further guidance was released by the ECB on 5 June which indicated that there may be a return to recreational cricket by 1 August. If this does happen it is most likely to be in a small format (6 a side). While this date is still some way away, they also allowed training outdoors to increase from groups of two players to larger numbers, up to a maximum of six players. The club is currently considering the extra regulations required to increase the size of the training groups and will update its guidance on this soon. In the meantime the use of the nets has been taken up by many of the club members - both senior and junior - to remind ourselves of the joys of the sport in the glorious weather we have been experiencing recently. We have even had a local Hampshire professional

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

Easton Village Hall Ina Williams 779465 or evh.booking@googlemail.com

Martyr Worthy Village Hall

Lucinda Ffennell 779701 or simon@ffennell.plus.com

Itchen Abbas and Avington Village Hall

Details of bookings and real time availability are available on our website.

www.iaavillagehall.co.uk Hall Manager Alex Bellisario

manager@iaavillagehall.co.uk 07947 191229 Village hall callbox 01962 791021

Itchen Valley Churches

At this time we will be broadcasting our services online at 10am each Sunday, the post with the link will be left on our website each week, so if you are not able to tune in on Sunday, you can do this at any time afterwards. The link for the service will also be sent to all followers of the church website.

As a first step to opening our churches for worship in the future, the Government and the National Church have issued guidance on re-opening for private prayer only. This is wonderful news for all of us who have found it very difficult not to have our church buildings open during the pandemic. We are working through this guidance and making preparations to ensure that we can open safely with consideration for those who want to visit our buildings for private prayer and those that look after our churches.

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

Rector - Revd Alex Pease

rector@itchenvalleychurches.org - 01962 779845

LLM - Mr Gerry Stacey

gerry.Stacey@biblesociety.org.uk - 07554 438973

Parish Administrator - Beccy Clark

admin@itchenvalleychurches.org - 01962 779845

www.itchenvalleychurches.org

using the nets and practising with some of the members!

A highlight of the cricket club's season has always been the Sixes Tournament in late July each year (originally planned for 24 July in 2020). Given the latest guidance on recreational cricket not being played before 1 August, we have decided to delay the Easton Sixes to a provisional date of Friday 28 August. Put the date in your diary and watch this space for further news about the event, as the ECB guidance is revealed further in the weeks ahead.

Finally - if anyone would like to join the club and use the facilities, please contact me or Seb and we can give you all the details you will require.

Looking forward to Test Match cricket returning in July - and some sense of normality!

Adrian Lee Club Chairman

Our Wild Valley: Digging in

May was dry and warm with a school half term that some of us hopefully had the chance to make the most of in the local countryside or garden. According to National Centers for Environmental Information it was the warmest May since record keeping began in 1880. It was probably also one of the loneliest and hardest months for many. Feeling thankful and lucky to be fit, we have biked, run, walked and biked again. Spring enveloped us in a big green bear hug each day and we breathed it in. I am extremely grateful that the sun kept rising each morning, shining light and life into our home.

The dry weather brought hungry animal visitors nearer to human habitation with first one then four holes dug deep into the verge bank. It must have had big claws and a big empty stomach as the ground was so

hard, we couldn't imagine much being alive in it. However badgers had been at work digging out bees nests so they could eat the fat larvae. A few poor bees remained in the morning but they didn't last long. Amazing there were so many nests in such a small area of grassland. We also have had a slowworm or two on the bank and one small - baby but very much dead - grass snake. I'm hoping the other young fared better.

If you haven't done this already, gaps to let hedgehogs through fencing or hedging into gardens could make all the difference to any that are surviving in the area. I put out shallow plant dishes of water for mammals and insects alike. We found a few of the caterpillars in the photo on the roadside, luckily we put them in the hedgerow which was



full of nettles; they were peacock caterpillars. Black, spiny with white dots, they moved incredibly fast and presumably feast on nettles at a similar speed.

Sophie Rogers

Jackie's County Corner

As we walk into July, I'd like to start a debate about wildflowers, and cutting of verges.

I'm sure you'll agree there is more than one side to this: access, wildlife, animal



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and human health are all considerations, and I'd like to take this debate out to all of you.

If we cut verges, this inevitably reduces the diversity of the plant life and bug life within them. But if we allow them to grow uncut, then it's difficult to walk on them, and saplings grow undeterred by a mower. Trees then quickly develop; footways and verges become unwalkable and vehicles may be damaged as branches overhang the roads, their detritus blocks drains. The A roads are vivid examples of this: the A33 footway becomes obliterated by weeds even a few weeks after clearance.

The A31 is rife with ragwort, which worries farmers and delights butterfly conservationists.

As your councillor, I am asked to get foliage cut back or to save it from the mower or hedge trimmer in equal measure. So, what do you think?

Rural footpaths are generally edged with wildflowers. Even nettles support butterflies and other fauna! We are members of the animal kingdom too: if we want homo sapiens to remain healthy, we need to walk and exercise too, so cutting back nettles is an especially common request from walkers with children. I am influenced by the work of the National Park City project which looks at people as part of the environment: and it's true; the more we see nature, the more we appreciate it.

I have had several cases of Lyme's disease reported to me in my time as a councillor, caught from ticks as people walk on a verge or alongside long grass adjoining a tarmac footway. My own daughter caught Lyme's disease last year and it took months of recovery, some people take years. It is not something to take lightly.

So, what should we do? Cut or keep? I'd like to know what you think.

There's a lot of other work progressing in this County division despite the Covid crisis:

- The Candover Water Augmentation scheme to combat drought: an alternative plan has been suggested to use the natural water courses to deliver the scheme.
- The Hampshire Together consultation about our health services and new hospital proposals: go to www.hampshiretogether.nhs.
- HWRC booking system updates: go to www.hants.gov.uk/wasteandrecycling or call 02380 179 949 (9am to 5pm)
- An opportunity for you to log your ideas for pedestrian/cycle improvements: search for www.hantscovidtravelmap.
- Worthys flooding plans have been drawn up: it's now a matter of securing funding

- Junction 9 works- a new version of the plan is imminent as I write this.

- The County and City councils are looking at what needs to change as we move into 'Covid recovery'.

As always, you can email me with your queries and comments : my details below. Meanwhile, please continue to take care of yourself, and family, and stay alert to the risks of coronavirus in our community.

Cllr Jackie Porter, County and City Councillor

Jackie.porter@hants.gov.uk
07973 696085

The Grange, Hampshire – the sparkling wine story so far

'Lord, how well it does go down!' remarked Captain Jack Aubrey when

enjoying a draught of sparkling wine (it was called sillery by the 19th-century British Navy) on a boiling hot day in Gibraltar from Patrick O'Brian's *The Far Side of the World* – and, much to my relief, the first wines produced from Burge's Field also seem to be going down well. Each of the four we have released to date has won an award in one competition or other, culminating



in last year's PINK (the 2015 harvest) winning a Gold medal in the 2020 Sommelier Wine Awards in May - I didn't stop grinning for a week! But it has been a bit of a bumpy ride and, rather the opposite of modern life, very, very slow. This is the story so far...

After thirty or so years working in careers that couldn't be further from wine (lighting design, banking, publishing and television production), we (my two sisters, brother and father) had, sometime in 2009, the not-so-sudden realisation that we would really like to work together to produce something special from the land that we have known all our lives. Over the years the Grange estate has produced lamb, mutton, milk, beef, game and any number of different cereal crops, but we were after something that was less of a primary product, something that might capture the essence of these rolling, Hampshire downs and the



precious clarity of the sparkling River Itchen. In 2009 the Champenois were beginning to complain about the weather being too hot and some family friends had just produced their first wine from a site in north Hampshire – we had our product, English Sparkling Wine.

So we tested the soil in various fields across the estate and the one that came top, according to the analysis from France, was Burge's Field - a thin, gravelly, clay cap sitting on several hundred feet of chalk, not unlike the Montagne de Reims in Champagne. We planted in 2011 with the three traditional sparkling wine varieties – Pinot Noir, Pinot Meunier and Chardonnay. In all there are about 52,000 vines, roughly a third of each variety, packed into the twenty-five acres, and, in an average year, they produce between seventy-five and a hundred tonnes of grapes - but for the first three years they produce nothing...

It was only in 2014 that we had our first harvest. Just 8 tonnes went off to Coates and Seely near Whitchurch to be vinified, with most of the tonnage going to the winemaker to pay for the 1,500 bottles he made for us. The team there were very enthusiastic and said they were 'good grapes'... but for us the proof would be in the pudding, the taste of the wine. However, after about

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three months of primary fermentation, racking and blending, this particular pudding then needs three



years ageing in bottle before it's ready to be drunk. So we had another three years to wait.

The next year for various reasons we switched our wine making to Hattingley Valley in Wield, north of Alresford and there we sent the harvests from 2015 and 2016 – more loads of 'good grapes' according to the team there – still no proof... Then in 2017, we had the worst late spring frost in living memory that reached as far south as Rioja in Spain and parts of northern Italy. It would have destroyed our crop had it not been for the candles - you may have seen the spectacular sight of the *bougies* lighting the field late at night and early in the morning. They managed to keep the temperature just high enough in the bottom half of the vineyard to ensure we had something to harvest come October – we had predicted about ninety tonnes in our sixth year but we barely got fifty. But the disappointment of that was tempered by the realisation that we were getting very close to the first taste...

In January 2018 the bottles were disgorged – a process that removes the sediment that has been adding flavour and complexity to the wine as it lies in bottle – and dosed – a process to replace the volume lost in disgorging. Then we had yet another wait, this time three months, to allow the dose to integrate with the wine. So it was only in April 2018, a full six years and eleven months after the first vines

went into the ground, that we got to see if we had all made a terrible mistake. We gathered, popped the cork and sipped... and then we smiled – a member of the Festival team memorably commented 'Thank God, it's not ****!'

For the last five years, as mentioned, we have been using the services of the talented team at Hattingley Valley Winery to transform these 'good grapes' into delicious sparkling wines but now, having had three years of proof that those grapes can in fact produce good wine, we have recently applied for planning permission to build a winery of our own in the derelict farm building just north of the vineyard. While we have had a very successful time in the safe hands of the team at Hattingley, we feel our own winery will grant us more control over our wine-making, allow us to experiment with different blends and, with luck, lead us to a distinctive and delicious house style that will come close to our initial dream – to capture the magic of the shimmering beauty of this corner of the South Downs in high summer...

Zam Baring www.thegrangewine.co.uk

Comings and Goings



Avington is delighted to officially welcome our newest resident, Felix Day-Robinson, to Loulou and Dan, Anoushka and Rafael of Ivy Cottage, Avington.

Felix was born in early April, but Loulou was in hospital for a number of weeks after that, which was a very worrying time. I'm happy to say that all are doing well now.

Penny Russell



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Bird of the Month - Green Woodpecker



This lovely bird, the largest of all our woodpeckers, can often be seen feeding on ants on lawns or in fields. Its old name 'the yaffle' is derived from its distinctive laughing call.

Elaine Labram

The Practical Gardener

So, at last some rain and a return to a normal summer. The spell of hot weather has brought everything on. Flowers have a new intensity of colour. One particular rose is just stunning. I've just dug my first potatoes. The crop is small as it's a bit early as I was a month later planting. The ground is still very dry, not good. Yet my recycled water system has been in overdrive and I have almost emptied the tank. I have still had trouble in getting some seeds to germinate. One solution was to find a cooler place. It's worked with beans but the second sowing of peas is



delayed: new seed, new variety different place. All the challenges of gardening. However, the pea crop is just wonderful and the flavour very sweet.

I have at last found an answer to controlling whitefly. I went to greengardening and bought some cards which contain sap zapping insects. Anyway, they do work and I see in the greenhouse things are now under control. Picked my first tomato (14 June), lovely. Tomatoes are very demanding and getting the watering right is not easy. I have five varieties this year and six pots outside in a warm, sheltered spot.

I can also now report on experiences of buying plants online. Suttons are OK, very communicative and the plants arrive in good shape. Woolmans are even better and the plants are excellent, well packed and growing well. I bought trailing begonias and am pleased to report after ten days they are now in flower. They make a wonderful display in a hanging basket (pictured). However, Thompson and Morgan are a big disappointment. I have bought a lot of fuchsias, many of which arrived damaged and in poor condition. I complained (phone was disconnected) but it took many emails to get a reply about replacement



plants. I'll never use them again. Meantime the vegetable garden is a hive of activity as everything is earlier than usual. I've just harvested garlic which will last a whole year. I'm trying new ideas in using space, basically putting more crops into the ground that is recommended. Let's see how it works as it might be a great idea for those with little space.

It's a great time to do reshaping of some shrubs. Everything that is cut can be shredded and put into the compost heap. Mine at present is too hot to touch, aided by grass clippings. That is a great way to destroy annual weeds. Compost is the green way to recycle garden material!

Happy Gardening!

Tony Gaster.

Wildflower of the Month

The small leaved lime, (photograph opposite) with smaller leaves than the stately limes west of Avington Park. There are pretty examples to be seen near Avington

Simon and Dorothy Broadley

Local monthly information

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