

Elmsted with Hastingleigh Community News

*St James the Great
Elmsted*



*St Mary the Virgin
Hastingleigh*

May 2020

40p



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May

As these uncertain times continue, we are all adapting to a different way of living. I am seeing so many lovely stories of people helping others. We are grateful to all those that have still provided articles for this month's edition, and would still love to see new content in the magazine, so please do send us any articles, puzzles or recipes you would like to share. I would like to say a big thank you to the Community News team, who are working hard to make sure you still receive a copy of the magazine, and our wonderful distributors are still happy to deliver the printed version to your homes. All the time our printers are printing, we will endeavour to make sure the community news is delivered, and if they do have to close, we will produce an electronic version. If this becomes necessary and you would like receive an electronic copy please send your email address to the newsletter secretary at secretary.communitynews@gmail.com, GDPR will be adhered to.

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Submissions

The *Community News* takes no responsibility for misleading advertising or incorrect editorial supplied to us in good faith.

Please provide any promotional or editorial content in Word format rather than pdf. For length, grammar and style issues the Editor reserves the right to edit it.

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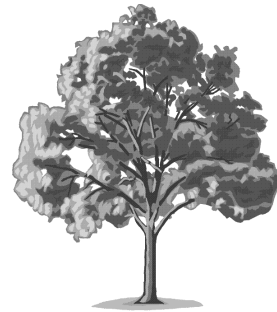
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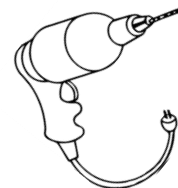
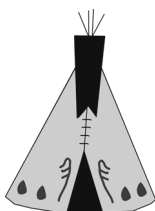
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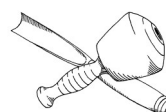
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Hastingleigh with Elmsted WI

W.I during WWII

By 1939 the WI was a well established pillar of rural life, with institutes in 5,500 villages. Due to having taken a strong anti-war stance, the National Executive Committee struggled to decide if the WI would be able to help the war effort. However, the chairman at that time, Lady Denman, realised that WI members would want to “do their bit”, and suggested that they might be called upon to help with evacuees and rural food production; a prediction that proved correct.

During the war WI members made significant contributions to rural food production: operating market stalls to sell surplus fruit and veg from members allotments and smallholders plots; helping the women’s voluntary service to distribute and sell pies to agricultural workers as part of the rural district pie scheme; growing onions after the fall of France in 1940 meant importing food was no longer possible, one WI federation harvested 13 tons of onions; collecting rosehips for pharmacists to make into rosehip syrup for vitamin C as oranges, an important source of vitamin C, were scarce and children were prioritised when they were available. One aspect of rural food production during the war has become synonymous with the WI; jam making. In 1939, it became obvious that the bumper summer harvest of fruit would be wasted, unless it was turned into jam. The WI headquarters secured sugar supplies direct from the Ministry of Food, and so WI members started making jam on an epic scale, making a significant contribution to British food supplies. It is estimated that in the first wave of jam making, 450 tons of fruit were saved from rotting. From 1940, once rationing came into force, there were tighter controls on sugar supplies and when and where jam could be sold. Strict records had to be kept and the Ministry of Food supervised the jam making more closely, with preservation centres set up in villages or close to where the fruit was harvested.

Due to the current climate, we are unable to meet at the moment but held virtual competitions for flower of the month and the monthly competition. The Flower of the Month winner for April was Sally Morley-Smith, and the winner of the April competition (something white, purple and green) was Lorraine Lawrence.

In accordance with the guidance on social distancing, meetings are cancelled until further notice.

Marie Wenham

In The Garden

We live in strange times. After a continually wet winter when it became next to impossible to work the soil in our gardens and we were all behind with our work, late March and into mid April at least turned unremittingly dry and the top soil became parched.

We live in strange times. Not only are the garden centres shut to visitors with the possibility of millions of plants being thrown away, but suddenly there has been an unprecedented demand for seeds, particularly vegetable seeds I understand. The great majority of villagers on these hills are lucky enough to have a garden for sunshine, recreation and fresh air and to grow plants. But not everybody is so lucky in this lock-down time.

So what can you grow in your garden that will give a quick return and how much space do you need? Actually you can grow quite a bit in a very small space, or even a couple of window boxes or a pot or two in a conservatory and there is no reason flowers and vegetables should not be mixed up in the same beds. To a degree you can also grow vertically with climbing beans, tall growing peas and cordon tomatoes.

But you do need seeds, and buying on line may take a bit longer than in normal times as merchants and seed houses work extra hours dispatching orders to cope with the demand. When they arrive and you have not got any seed or multi-purpose compost you may be able to scrape or sieve some fine soil from an existing bed. The papier-maché wells from egg cartons can serve as a pot for the soil, compost and seeds as well as the cut down cardboard centre from toilet rolls – I have it on good authority that the panic buying of loo paper has eased!

It will all take some time; moisture and a good temperature is vital for germination and then your tiny plants will need nurturing to grow before you can plant them out. Realistically, it's a job of weeks. But, no matter. I hope this will start a trend and you will decide to make it a habit and plan and think in the long term to help feed yourself and your family.

Seeds are fascinating items and each one contains the essence and energy of the whole plant. (As the old Grace for our food on the table says '...The bread within a grain, the apple within a pip, the mystery of nature gift wrapped for us to sow.....'). F1 hybrid seeds will not

reproduce true if you retain the ripe seeds from mature plants, but the spin-off will be the potential for greater yields and some disease resistance. The down side is a loss of bio-diversity for the future well-being of the planet. Most of the seeds I buy and use are 'open pollinated' and their seeds will breed true just as they have for countless past generations. They will, of course, happily cross-pollinate so you could get some 'interesting' results you weren't looking for! Distance from the same type of plants is critical. However, in this way I have some plants such as beans, peas and shallots, for example, that I have grown, saved seed from and planted the next year and so on for more years than I care to remember.

And another thing, seed packet labels will inform you that the seeds were packed by such-and-such a date. True. But this does not necessarily mean that they were grown within the date declared. They may be older and this is a reason why the germination of your own saved seeds can be better than bought ones.

Fred

'So they do say.!

Our solar system lies about 2/3 from the centre of our galaxy, the Milky Way Galaxy, which is so huge that light takes 100,000 years to travel from one end to the other traveling at 186,000 miles per second. The Moon is about 265,000 miles from earth and the light takes about 1½ seconds to reach Earth. Light from the Sun: 8.5 minutes. THAT is 'massive'.

A butterfly has sensory hairs in its feet which allow it to detect the health of a tree where it is considering laying its eggs. It is able to 'taste' 6 different substances which assures it that the tree is healthy and long-lived enough to allow the eggs to hatch and the caterpillar to reach maturity.

This is a genuine joke from the 14th century:-
One merchant asks another, *"Are you married?"*
The second merchant replies, *"I had three wives but they all hanged themselves from a tree in my garden".*
The first one says, *"Pray give me a cutting from this miraculous tree!"*

TW

A Mystery

Unearthed, but Not Solved!

In 2014, Sir Charles Jessel wrote an article for this magazine, explaining why he thought St. Mary the Virgin church was built in the valley and not higher up on the hills, like many of the other churches nearby.

As a dowser who can detect underground water and 'energy' telluric lines, he suggested that, possibly, St. Augustine and Pope Gregory had instructed their Christian followers to build churches on top of heathen sites of worship instead of destroying them. Sir Charles suggested that there may have been some form of heathen temple where St. Mary's stands and that, possibly, 'standing stones' may have marked the site. The energy ley lines flow from north to south, through the north entrance to the church (which is a Norman doorway - now leading to the new extension) and across to the south entrance (which has been blocked up for hundreds of years).

Outside the church, by this blocked-up south doorway, is a stone slab which has been partially covered by vegetation. It is a large stone, being 6' 5" (195cms) long, and 2'6" (73cm) at the widest point, tapering a little to 18" (46cm). Its depth is 6" (15.26cm). This stone is not of local material, like chalk, sandstone (brash) or flint; and it must have been difficult to move to this site from wherever it originated.

Could it be a 'standing stone' from some time before Christianity came to these parts after 600AD?? Or what...?

Ideas, please!

Roz Bacon



VE75 Celebrations - 8th May 2020

Unfortunately, the celebration of the 75th anniversary of VE Day on the 8th May has been postponed due to the Coronavirus lockdown. Further details as and when.

The Flute Studio

After 30 years, the Flute Studio has closed. Since it began in 1990, 173 students and teachers have attended from Australia, Austria, Belgium, Canada, China, Croatia, France, Germany, Holland, Japan (21) Korea, Latvia, Lithuania, Malaysia, Norway, Poland, Russia, Singapore, Sweden, Taiwan (9), USA (46) and the UK. The oldest student was 58 and the youngest 17.

During that 30 years we gave 27 Christmas Concerts at St Mary's Church usually followed by Supper at the Village Hall and also played for the Gardening Society Christmas meeting many times too.

The students are holding principal positions with several of the world's famous Symphony Orchestras including Tokyo, Melbourne, Los Angeles, Cape Town, Lisbon, Toronto, Detroit etc.

During the studio time, distinguished visitors visited the Studio to give specialist classes including Sir James Galway who came several times.

The past students keep in touch several times a year, sending letters and photos of family via the Studio Newsletter.

The students stayed at various places in the two Villages: for 20 years with Carol and Andy Jakeman at the New Dairy, and with the Brownings at the Old Dairy; with Anne and James Nichols at Oak Cottage, and with Jenny and George Denny in Elmsted. They also stayed with Sarah and Chris Pell, and latterly at the Old Sawmill with Caroline PGilson in Hastingleigh. Paul and Sue Boxall have been very helpful to them in emergencies and entertained them too as well as annually teaching them whist, and Robin Helmer recorded their efforts at Concerts, giving them all DVD each year!

A big Thank You to you all, and to others in the Village, for your help and hospitality to our visitors.

TW



Tails from Wales

Part One (from Hastingleigh)



I have been asked a few times to write something for the Community News but hadn't found the time. I've now been furloughed from my job as a small animal vet in south Wales so have plenty of time and no excuse.

I first began to have an interest in working with animals while caring for some of Elmsted Court Farm's sock lambs in the garden aged about six or seven, from then on I said I was going to be a vet rather than an astronaut.

The idea of becoming a vet remained in the back of my mind but I didn't look into what it would require until choosing A levels. The universities wanted biology and chemistry with one other subject so I took those two with physics and history for the first year and dropped physics for the second level. There is more to the application than just getting the grades however. The four universities I applied to all asked for a number of weeks of work experience before applying, both with vets and in other animal settings. I spent two weeks lambing at Dean Farm (and am very grateful I was able to go back there for the following six years in my Easter breaks), a couple of days on a dairy farm, a day at a pig farm and five weeks in local vet practices. I was also lucky enough to get a weeks placement at the Big Cat Sanctuary in Smarden, helping with maintenance around the site and getting very close to some of the cats.

The application process involved writing a 4000 character personal statement covering my academic work, work experience and extracurricular interests, all trying to sell myself and secure an interview. I must have written something they liked because I was offered an interview at all four universities I applied to, the Royal Veterinary College (RVC) in London, Bristol, Nottingham and the new vet school at Surrey who's first intake was my year.

The interviews varied slightly but all involved a series of five minute stations with calculations, discussions about ethical issues

and questions about my personal statement amongst other things. One of the stations had a list of jobs to do at a vet practice first thing in the morning which we were asked to put in the order we would do them and justify our reasoning, another had a box of different length wires and instructions to make a shape using one of the lengths of wire. The discussions included what would happen if I had put the wrong dog to sleep and how I would explain to an owner that I had lost a dog's blanket after their dog had been euthanised. At another of the stations I was met with a series of photographs, a working donkey, a barking dog and a supermarket frozen chicken with a price label on it, amongst others, and had to put them in order of what I viewed to be most ethically acceptable. This led to me being asked what I thought of the price of the frozen chicken, not an easy question as I had never bought one at the time. Some also had panel interviews, group interviews or a practical interview.

I must have said something right in the interviews as I was offered a place at both RVC and Bristol. The RVC was my preferred choice so I accepted their offer, made the grades they asked for so moved to London the following September.

RJB



Club

The ECP will hold all the outstanding draws once the isolation period has finished and the community can once again meet at the hall for a coffee and a chat.

Bodsham School

Egg-Decorating Competition

Even though Bodsham is missing it's children and teachers we have still managed to stay a community by carrying on our tradition of egg decorating! Every year the children decorate eggs and the teachers vote for the most creative, this year we put the judging out to the local community!

This year there were joint winners:



Boris Johnson "We're in this together"
by Cally MacLennan



Thank to the NHS
By Emily and Jack Edwards



2nd Joe Wicks
by Edward Baur Shaw



3rd Egg Shell Croc
by Joe Hanton

From the Vicarage

The Big Lock In

Well, here we all are, locked up in a situation none of us have ever experienced before! It's beyond any of our life experiences to be caught up in a global pandemic, facing an illness, which for some is no worse than a couple of days feeling poorly, right through to being hospitalised in intensive care, or even not coming through it at all.

Firstly, if anyone who is reading this has lost someone to Covid 19, then I can only say how very sorry I am for your loss. I can't even begin to imagine how you feel, and to make things even worse, you can't seek the solace of other loved ones, you can't find comfort in the arms of a friend, and you can't even keep your mind off how bad you feel with all the usual business of planning a funeral. It's awful, and I'm truly sorry for anyone who finds themselves in this position. Also, for anyone who is grieving for a loved one who has died for other non Covid related reasons, my heart goes out to you all, and my prayers go with you.

Never before have we had to put our post into quarantine, sterilise our food before we put it away, or shout to neighbours from great distances to ascertain that they are ok!

We have all been the givers and receivers of things and sentiments we have never thought of, let alone needed, before. Yet, in amongst all these strange, uncertain, unfamiliar and worrying times, I have been witness, either first or second hand, to some of the most extraordinary things, actions, sentiments and events I am ever likely to see, or come across again.

A few people started this by exhibiting some of the worst traits of human nature: they panicked and behaved incredibly selfishly, hopefully actions which they now regret. However, instead of the majority saying; 'if they can do it, so can I!' people were disappointed in their fellow man. They continued to shop just for

what they actually needed. They continued to shop for vulnerable neighbours who couldn't get out. People went to sometimes extraordinary lengths to help others, even those they barely knew. Streets became full of friends and neighbours instead of strangers and those on nodding acquaintance. Folk have given away produce at the garden gate; they have phoned, emailed, Facetimed, Skyped, Zoomed, Facebooked and YouTubed.

We're probably talking to each other more now than we did when we were all out and about, seeing each other in the flesh!

There will always be some in whom, this kind of event brings out the worst, but for the vast majority, it is thrilling and uplifting to see how much adversity brings out the best in us all.

Virtual church, community and school groups, to name but a few categories, have sprung up all over the web, and people are joining them, including those who would never have joined the same group in regular circumstances. As a Christian, I am of course pleased to see people turning to each other for spiritual and real support. I am so encouraged by my fellow human being, in seeing how much we care, how much we are prepared to give and how much we can do, for our fellow travellers on this scary new journey that none of us have walked before.

My blessings, my love and my best wishes go out to you all, those who this has affected badly, those whom this has affected mildly, and those whose lives will never quite be the same again. Thank you for being the 'best you' that you can be. Keep making a difference for good and keep as safe as you possibly can.

If there is anyone reading this who is involved in healthcare, or any other frontline service, our heartfelt thanks go out to you, our prayers go with you, and thank God that there are people like you who are willing to step up and put themselves in the firing line, in order to try and keep the rest of us safe.

Thank you, everyone, for being the best you can be, doing the best you can do, and together we will come through this. If however, you are not working to get the rest of us through this, then please, we ask only one thing! **STAY INDOORS.** LL

Farming Notebook

It is a cliché, but we are living in extraordinary times. No one could ever have imagined the whole country closing down and most of the population staying at home for weeks on end. But needs must, and let us hope that all our collective efforts bring the desired results.

We are so fortunate, not only living in the countryside, but also being a key industry where work goes on almost as normal. I cannot imagine what it would be like self-isolating as part of a large family in a small flat in a high-rise block in London.

Fortunately, the last of the potatoes were graded and despatched just after “lock down” and so there is no further need for a grading gang. However, we are just starting to plant this season’s potato crop and this involves a minimum of four people. Most of the time each individual involved is in their own tractor and so self-distancing is quite straightforward. We have put rules in place that only the planter driver may operate the forklift in the field. He is provided with gloves, sterile wipes and hand wash to further increase safety. Should at any time, the forklift be required to load grain or feed cattle it is my responsibility to wipe and clean the cab surfaces before it is returned to the planting field.

We have banned all social visitors. There are clearly marked areas where deliveries and post must be left. Nothing is signed for. The farm gates, usually open during the working day remain closed. My road trips have been limited to the boundaries of the farm. My car has had so little use that the battery has gone flat! Essential meetings, such as those with the agronomist, are held in the garden strictly observing social distancing guidelines.

There are two reasons for observing these protocols. Firstly, it is common sense to abide by the rules to limit the spread of the Coronavirus and thus protect ourselves and our staff. Secondly it is to set a good example and show that, despite our key worker status, we take the rules very seriously.

It was Elizabeth’s birthday yesterday. Both our children are in London and both locked down. We all celebrated with a virtual supper party. We agreed the menu, and at the allotted hour we sat down to eat

with the laptop open in front of us. Both children logged on and we could see them enjoying their meal on the laptop and they could see us. We had a lively three-way conversation for over an hour. It really was the next best thing to having the family together in the flesh. The wonders of modern technology....
Now, back to farming...

It has not rained for over a month now and this has allowed us to plant all of the spring beans and now start potatoes. Ironically the challenge has been to create suitable seedbeds. There has been a biting east wind for weeks and this has been extremely desiccating. We have had to cultivate to break up the soil surface and allow the ground to dry out. Even left for 48 hours and the surface clods turned to dry boulders and were almost impossible to break down into a seedbed. One field felt as though I was planting into a seedbed of house bricks! We planted the beans as deep as we could hoping they would sit in the top of the still wet subsoil. It is usual for us to do nothing after the drilling process, but this year I decided to ring roll the fields to break up the clods, and, believe it or not, to conserve moisture!!! Happily over the last few days the beans have begun to emerge.

Potato planting similarly has required careful soil preparation. The soil is moved to a much greater depth and has to be allowed to dry, but not so much that we create unbreakable clods. It is the aim to form the beds for the de-stoner no more than 24 hours in advance. The bed former, de-stoner, planter and harvester are all based on two rows of potatoes. All very straight forward. The haulm topper that we use at the end of the season, prior to harvest, is a six row machine. To make this work properly it is essential that each pair of rows at planting are exactly 182.88cm wide and exactly parallel. With GPS on most of the tractors this is a very doable task, but it has taken several hours to set up. The lines created by the first process, the bed former, are logged and down loaded onto a USB stick. These lines are then loaded into the planter so that it follows exactly the same path. The end result should be a perfect fit for the six row topper later in the summer. I will keep you posted.....

At last the wheat crops are beginning to move. They have had most of their nitrogen now. If only I could say the same for the oilseed rape. It is a crop that continues to disappoint, and one I can foresee us

dropping from the rotation.

The grain store is now empty except for 150 tonnes of seed wheat which will soon go to be processed for planting this autumn. This is very unusual, but with so little wheat in the ground, seed is going to be in short supply.

Lastly, we are in the thick of calving. Although the cattle have been outside for some weeks, the expectant mums are still housed the barn overnight so that we can keep a close eye on them. Each calf is kept inside for 48 hours with its mother before being tagged and rung (if it is male!) and then turned out onto fresh grass. Shelter is provided by a zig zag of big straw bales so the youngsters can keep out of the keen easterly wind. When the sun is out the calves chase each other round and round the bales having a whale of a time...

When this article is complete I will clean the keypad , the mouse and desktop with sterilising wipes so that it is hygienic for the next visit of Charlotte, our secretary. This I would never have dreamt of doing a few weeks ago. Our lives have changed. I still cling to the hope that some of the changes will be for the better...

W Wilson-Haffenden



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We would love to hear from you.

We also need volunteers to help at the boot fairs.

We need new ideas for events here at Park House and we want you to get involved. Please email or phone us.

The Hastingleigh-Duckpit Nailbourne

Anailbourne refers to an occasional flowing stream, occurring in mainly chalkland valleys after prolonged rain. The underground chalk acts as a huge storage tank.

In our area, the catchment around the Nailbourne extends into the valleys which run toward Evington Corner from Hastingleigh church direction, and from east of Kingsmill Down. This is joined by more water from the sides of the valley along which Duckpit Lane runs.

The year 2000 was the wettest for 200 years, and the rainfall in the preceding three years was almost identical to that of the three years before the previous wettest year, in 1937.

In 2000, when the Nailbourne flowed from below Dean Farm and all the way to Godmersham, the rainfall was 1208mm (47.5 in). The stream rose in Petham on 11th November. By 19th November, it was flowing from Dean Farm. This process usually takes a fortnight, but in 2000 there had been 23 inches of rain in 66 days!!

Mr Combe, of Ansdore, measures the level of the water in a well at Little Bucket Farm and says that, on average, it takes 5-6 weeks from the time of the rain falling until it gets to the aquifer level.

Our Nailbourne also ran in 2014; but, after a dry Summer, this last wet Autumn and Winter of 2019-2020 did not fill the aquifer enough, in Mr Combe's opinion, to trigger the appearance of the stream. However, with the February rainfall falling partly in two big storms (Ciara and Dennis - 120 mm in February), and the beginning of March being very wet (on Thursday, 5th March, 26.6mm of rain was recorded), the level in the well reached a point where flooding was imminent...and the Duckpit stream started flowing at the end of the month. But rather than a continuous stream to Petham, it has been intermittent and has not flowed below the Chartham Downs road towards Godmersham.

Sadly, the recent hot, dry spell may well have put paid to any further sighting of the Nailbourne this year.

RB

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