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# Barkham Newsletter

Issue 132 Summer 2020

from the Barkham Village Residents Association

<http://www.barkham.org.uk>

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## The BVRA Needs Your Support

As a result of the current covid19 crisis our distributors have been unable to collect all of the annual subscriptions. To date we have collected only 75% of our expected revenue. We do not expect to be able to collect money at the door for some considerable time.

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

**To create a debit please go to:**

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**where full details are available.**

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

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### Chairman's Chat

I hope that you are all keeping well in these difficult and strange times. If you are a front-line worker in any of the roles that are keeping the country and the local area functioning, we salute you and thank you unconditionally. As I walk around Barkham (as part of my daily exercise) I am really pleased to see the demonstrations of support for the NHS with colourful and sometimes elaborate rainbow pictures. The community spirit of the local area is first rate. I know many people are helping neighbours who have

to self-isolate, collecting shopping, prescriptions and generally helping each other. People have commented that Barkham is a great place to live at a time like this! I would especially like to mention the Barkham Post Office. It has always been a key aspect of the local community and this has been further demonstrated with the current situation. Thanks to all of the staff for keeping it going in a friendly and community spirited way. We know it hasn't been easy, but I am sure I speak for all of the residents in saying "we appreciate everything you are doing".

We have taken the decision to publish this summer newsletter as we believe that it is important to continue the communication with the local community. The content may be a bit different to past issues, but we have adapted. I would like to say a special thanks to all of the volunteers who have been involved in the production and distribution of this edition.

Continuing to publish and deliver was never taken for granted. We have taken the decision not to collect outstanding subscriptions for safety reasons. As stated on the front cover we would appreciate anyone who has not paid their £2 subscription for 2020 to do so by Direct Debit.

We have used some of this newsletter to highlight things that people have been doing and the resources that can be accessed for support and help. Please stay safe and continue to support each other over the coming months.

I am pleased to announce that we have a couple of new faces on the BVRA Committee; Richard Roberts has taken over as Secretary, and Val Percival will take up her Membership role with the distribution of the summer edition.

Alan Dixon  
BVRA Chairman.

### BVRA 2019/20 GENERAL COMMITTEE MEMBERS

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

# Barkham Diary

As we are still under lockdown and government restrictions advise social distancing all social groups and meetings are suspended, so there is no diary of events being published in this edition.

Please refer to the BVRA website for more up to date information.



### Advertising and Newsletter Contributions

Newsletter articles / contributions for the Autumn edition should be in by 7 August 2020. It helps if these can be submitted in electronic form by email to newsletter@barkham.org.uk.

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

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

### Farley Hill Bowls Club News

Because of the coronavirus lockdown, like most Bowls clubs in the UK, we cancelled all our matches until the end of June, with an expectation that none would be possible this season. Yesterday we learnt from Bowls England that sufficient easement of the lockdown rules may make it possible for singles and maybe even doubles matches to be played, but between club members only. We await clarification and further guidance. If you are keen enough to want to try this sport this year, it may be possible to arrange this on a one to one basis only.

We are a small friendly club in a country village setting, with ample easy parking; at the Victory Hall Church Road Farley Hill RG7 1TR; which is less than 1 mile off the A327 between Eversley and Arborfield. If you want any further help or information, please contact Bill Dowling, Club Secretary, on 01344772130 or E-mail: secretary@farleyhillbowlsclub.org.uk. or visit our website: www.farleyhillbowlsclub.org.uk



### Editorial

Welcome to the Summer 2020 issue. With the world currently suffering the effects of the Coronavirus many of our musical societies are in 'lockdown' but we

do have our usual reports from the BVRA and Parish council, a seasonal warning from the Rural Police and a couple of interesting articles on Crafting in lockdown and Positivity in the pandemic which just shows what ordinary people can achieve when given a great cause.

There are plenty of opportunities to volunteer to help the community and more information can be found on page 21. I am also pleased to bring you an extended garden section and also a picture quiz and finally, we celebrate both Ian Overton and Laurence Heath who have recently stepped down

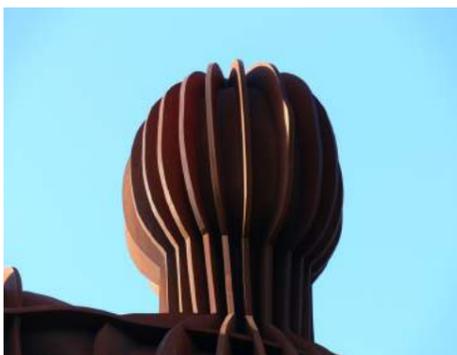
from their roles, we thank them for all the time and valuable contribution over the years.

Take care of yourselves and if there is any benefit to come out of this horrible virus then let's hope when we come out the other side of this we will all be more patient, respectful and a little bit kinder of our fellow beings.

## Summer Quiz

We've all been "locked down" for nearly a couple of months at the time of writing so the topic for this edition's quiz is "Where in the World"; places you may have been or want to go when the crisis abates. This our first attempt at a "pictures only" quiz – hopefully you'll enjoy it! Some questions should be reasonably easy but anyone who gets all (or nearly all) the answers (without Google) get a (virtual) gold star!

1. Starting off in the UK – whose head is this?



2. Venturing into the Southern Hemisphere for one of the most spectacular waterfalls in the world. What is it called and where is it?



3. North from Q2 (quite a long way), what is the name of this



structure, in which country is it and which people built it?

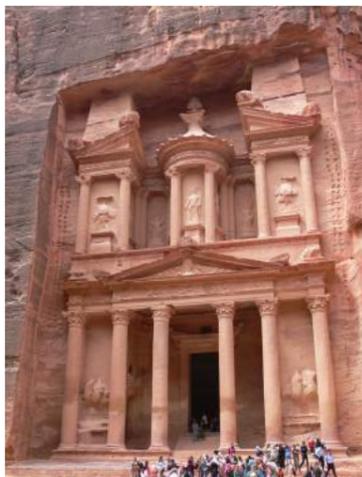
4. Back in the UK, this marks an event. Where is it and what was the event?



5. A long way south, where is this signpost?



6. North to Asia, this is "a rose red city half as old as time". What is the name of the ancient city, in which country is it and what is the name of the building in the photo?



7. Back across the Atlantic, this is the famous house of the third President of the United States. What was the name of the president, what is the name of his house and in which State is it?



8. Now to Africa – where is this and what is it called?



9. North again – this spectacular waterfall is one of many in this country. Which country and if you're really clever, what is the name of the waterfall?



10. Finishing back in England, this building is said to have been part of the inspiration for a gothic novel. What is the building and what is the novel?



Answers on page 23



### Message from the Fields Neighbourhood Policing Team

We would like to thank those members of the community who are staying at home in order to protect our NHS and the vulnerable during this unprecedented time. We are also very grateful for the keyworkers and volunteers who are working tirelessly to support the community.

Sadly, there has been an increase in thefts from garages and sheds in the area. If you have any information, CCTV, video doorbell or Dashcam footage you feel may relate to this, please report online at [www.thamesvalley.police.uk](http://www.thamesvalley.police.uk) or call 101.

Although it might sound like stating the obvious, never leave your garage or shed door unlocked if you are not around.

The top five most common items stolen from sheds are:

1. Bikes
2. Mowers
3. Sports equipment
4. Power tools
5. Garden tools

Consider checking that your insurance covers the contents of your shed or outbuildings from theft. It is worth having a good padlock on the door with no exposed screws. Pay attention to hinges, as these are sometimes easily removable. If you have windows then these could be vulnerable unless they are secured with wire mesh or grills. And keep it locked at all times. Consider a battery-operated shed alarm. They look low key but they respond to movement or door contact with an extremely loud siren. Do not give thieves the opportunity or the tools to commit a crime. Lock everything away securely. Tools can be locked inside a locker or box or secured with a chain. Secure your bike to the ground or a lockable stand with-

## Where in Barkham?

This month it is a tricky one but we've got plenty of time to walk in the woods! It's in the Coombes a few yards off the footpath.

Answer on page 23



in a locked shed or garage. It is always worth draping an old sheet or blanket over the top of bikes or mowers to keep them covered from view. Property marking your items is advisable and some tools can be painted with your name or post-code. Forensic marking is also an option and you can register some items on the Immobilise website for free. For more information visit [www.immobilise.com](http://www.immobilise.com).

You can find further crime prevention advice on our website <https://www.thamesvalley.police.uk/cp/crime-prevention/>

You can contact your local neighbourhood team via

[FieldsNHPT@thamesvalley.pnn.police.uk](mailto:FieldsNHPT@thamesvalley.pnn.police.uk) – Please note this email address cannot be used to report crimes or for any urgent matters.

Information about the police enforcement powers put in place to reduce the spread of the coronavirus can be found on the Government's website. You can visit the NHS website for information and advice about coronavirus.

## Laurence Heath “retires” as a Barkham Newsletter contributor

Laurence stood down from membership of the Barkham Parish Council a few months ago, where he had been Vice Chairman and Chair of the Planning Committee. He has now also “retired” as a Barkham Newsletter contributor and Graeme Dexter has kindly agreed to take on his role. Regular readers of this Newsletter will know that Laurence has been a mainstay with regard to planning matters for many years. Looking back, I think he first started to write a regular column under his own byline in 2012 but he would have contributed articles on behalf of the parish council well before then.

He was passionate about protecting Barkham’s character from uncontrolled and unsuitable development. He led, or was actively involved in, such projects as the Barkham Village Design Statement (2005) and the recently published and adopted Arborfield and Barkham Neighbourhood Plan. Review of and contributions to, the Wokingham Borough Council’s Local Plan took place over a number of years and in 2019 Laurence was active with other councillors and the BVRA to promote the Barkham Square petition which achieved over 4000 signatures. He was always also very supportive of the Barkham Development Watch

and our activities in recent years to protect The Coombes from development.

We understand that BPC will be acknowledging Laurence’s tremendous contribution to the parish council and local planning matters in the next edition of the newsletter.

On behalf of the Residents’ Association I would like to thank Laurence for his unstinting support of the BVRA and its activities and especially his contributions to this newsletter over many years. He will be greatly missed.

Stewart Richardson



## Neighbourhood Plan is finally adopted

The Arborfield and Barkham Neighbourhood Plan was eventually adopted by WBC at a “virtual” meeting which took place on Wednesday 22 April. This was the final step in completing the Neighbourhood Plan process, following the overwhelming vote in support at the referendum on 6 February. The Policies in the Plan give assurance that the wishes of residents will have real force in planning decisions made by Wokingham Borough Council and by the Planning Inspectorate if any planning application goes to appeal.

Following the Plan’s adoption, the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group is now being disbanded and responsibility for the Plan will revert to the two parish councils. As a consequence, the dedicated website is being closed and the relevant documents and supporting information transferred to the Arborfield and Newland Parish website. Ultimately this material will also be shown on the Barkham Parish website. The Neighbourhood Plan email account will also be closed and the associated distribution list of email addresses will be deleted.

On behalf of the Steering Group, I would like to thank all the many

residents who have supported the development of the Neighbourhood Plan over many years. This includes responses to surveys and consultations and attendance at the various public events held over the last few years, and of course the votes at the referendum. Without all this support, we would not have reached this successful conclusion.

I would also like to mention that as I am no longer on the Parish Council, my usual writing slot in the BVRA Newsletter will be taken over by Graeme Dexter. I am certain he will diligently keep residents up to date with planning matters in the parish. Graeme was a valuable member of the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group, so he will ensure that the Plan is properly represented in forthcoming planning decisions.

Many thanks,  
Laurence Heath  
Chair of Arborfield & Barkham Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group

## The BVRA Treasurer retires

Ian Overton, the long standing Treasurer of the BVRA, has just “retired” after nearly 20 years in the role. In recognition of his sterling support of the residents association, we bought Ian a retirement gift of a terracotta planter.

He has kept the BVRA on a sound financial footing to ensure we have a “fighting fund” if that proves necessary, whilst supporting spending money on “special events” for Barkham such as the 2012 celebration of the Queen’s Diamond Jubilee

In recent years he has been seen at BVRA social events running the bar with his wife, Evelyn. He has also been an ever-present at the popular Carols in Park just before Christmas, directing traffic and collecting donations for the band.

When Ian announced his wish to step down, we were very pleased that Alison Gouge came forward to take on the Treasurer role and they have just completed the handover. Our Chairman, Alan Dixon, welcomed Alison in the spring edition.

I am sure Barkham residents will want to join me in wishing Ian many thanks for his service to the BVRA and best wishes for his “retirement”.

Stewart Richardson  
BVRA Committee Member



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## Local Plan Update Consultation and Beyond

Who could have imagined how our lives would change in the short time from when the draft Local Plan Update (LPU) consultation period began on 03 Feb to when it ended two months later on 03 April 2020? Like so many things in our everyday life, it appears that the draft LPU is not immune to the Coronavirus.

The key features of the LPU were to continue progressing the four Strategic Development Locations (Arborfield Garrison, Shinfield, South and North Wokingham) from the earlier 2020 Core Plan, the construction of a new, fully integrated garden town at Grazeley and a number of other relatively small sites. For Barkham this included 140 homes on the Reading FC Training Ground at Hogwood Park and 15 Gypsy and Traveller pitches in Wood Lane.

It is too early to predict how the LPU will further develop following the consultation responses and other changes that have been reported over the weeks but let's quickly summarise what these changes are.

There should be a review of the housing numbers. There are already 483 unoccupied new build homes across the Borough and one must question whether this portends the post Covid-19 UK economy? Oh, and don't forget Brexit that has been nudged into the media shadows during recent weeks. A grant from central government to provide the upfront infrastructure for Grazeley will not be forthcoming as such funds are now being channelled to stimulate the northern economy in line with election promises. Surely

it does not make sense to create competition for investment in the North by maintaining development in the South at the current pace. This is another reason to review the housing numbers. There is now a requirement to extend the emergency planning zone around the AWE site at Burghfield. This expansion will include the proposed Grazeley development which, although this does not imply any additional risk, is hardly a good marketing ploy.

As part of the ongoing review, WBC have re-opened the housing numbers discussion with Central Government. An increased focus on affordable housing and sustainability by considering the re-purposing of commercial sites around the main centres and utilising brown-field locations near railway stations is included in that review.

Time and time again, you, the residents of Barkham, have expressed your concerns about overdevelopment in the area and the effect it will have on traffic and the countryside. This includes response to the Neighbourhood Plan questionnaire, opposition to significant planning applications, the 4000 names petition and the resounding support for the Neighbourhood Plan in the recent referendum.

The draft LPU suggested that Shute End had been listening to your fears about further large-scale development such as Barkham Square. The petition team, hopefully with the ongoing support of Barkham residents, will strive to ensure this continues.

Graeme Dexter



### Covid 19

The world suddenly changed on 29th February when the first Coronavirus case was announced in Wokingham.

Video conferencing, (Zoom, teams, skype, google hangouts or meet) is now the norm. Who had heard of Zoom two months ago? Now it's on everyone's lips! There is a new dictionary which has replaced "backstop" and "level playing field" with "R", "PPE", "Lockdown", "Social distancing", "New Normal" and more. My life has become dawn to dusk meetings at home. Initially from the council's emergency planning team quickly extending to every aspect of life for which we as a Council have responsibility.

The deaths and suffering have been tragic. My deepest sympathies go out to family and friends. Only time will tell whether they could reasonably have been avoided.

The Council and its staff have along with volunteer's have worked tirelessly. We have managed to marshal a willing voluntary sector to assigned tasks creating a food distribution hub, a telephone monitoring service and a pharmacy distribution. We have worked with the domestic violence agencies to attempt to identify and intervene where we believe there is a risk.

These actions coupled with the amazing neighbourhood networks which have sprung up everywhere in the Borough have

given the Borough huge resilience to weather the storm.

We have had numerous lists of the vulnerable and the shielded. Our own. The Government's. The NHS and the GPs. We have established contact with each one of those. The neighbourhood networks have had their own. My constant fear is that we have missed someone. So, if you find it strange that Borough staff are knocking on doors, it is double checking that we have not missed anyone.

We have engaged with the supermarkets with varying degrees of success. The problem, it seems, is that Central Government heralded the passing of shielding lists to them, but they really did not know what to do with them as their priority customers are determined by loyalties. I believe that they now have welded the two together, but it is still imperfect. I would like to say the response of the local village shops and farm shops has been excellent and have continued to provide the essentials of life and have been a source of many items not available in the larger shops and supermarkets at the same time making it safe to shop with social distancing in place and practiced not only providing supplies but protecting us their customers so my thanks goes out to them for providing this vital service.

One of the strangest things is to see the buses passing by with their lonely drivers with no or very few passengers and again I would like to thank these drivers for the daily risk they take getting those few but vital workers to their place of work which no doubt includes hospitals and care homes across the borough.

Wokingham Borough Council (WBC) have adopted, slightly contrary to our neighbours, a regime of keeping stuff open and being permissive relying upon

the intelligence of our residents and by and large have proved to be correct. We have had to close our leisure centres, libraries and tips but the staff involved have been redeployed to other activities allowing for example increased doorstep collections of large items of waste and continued with green waste unlike a lot of councils.

Our communications team has been second to none constantly updating the Borough with whatever is new including guidance from central government – there have been more than 1000 and not surprisingly all consistent.

### So where to now

What's certain is that we shall not revert to where we were. At the time of writing it is that lockdown is likely to be lifted from Mid-May onwards, but social distancing, deep cleaning and shielding will go on for much longer and probably until a universally available vaccine exists.

If the above predictions are correct, then pretty much every organisation will have to embrace deep cleaning and social distancing as part of their normal work practices. Interestingly, the motor manufacturers intend to start work and have incorporated deep cleaning and social distancing as part of their normal work practices; supermarkets have already done so. The Council is doing the same.

The Household Waste Recycling centres are likely to be reopened with a booking system, social distancing and deep cleaning every day. Leisure Companies believe that they can reopen and maintain these regulations.

### But it's not all bad

Every evening, I marvel at the stars. It's been a long time since we've been able to clearly see the sky at night. The pollution levels have dropped noticeably.

The silence is wonderful with the loudest noise being birdsong. No traffic.

The emergency has demonstrated that we can make great strides in Climate Change; it would be shameful if we were to revert to that which was before. Hopefully, we shall learn the lesson and continue to work virtually where possible, perfecting those modes, so that they are doing everything which we had before but better. This could reduce carbon emissions permanently and make the world a better place to live.

### Lastly

I would like to end by thanking everybody again – particularly the neighbourhood groups, who have in many ways been an exemplar.

Please commemorate all those who have tragically died. All our thoughts are with them.

I would like to thank on behalf of all the Council and residents, all those who are keeping us safe particularly the NHS and care sector.

If I can be of any help or answer any questions with regards the borough council please don't hesitate to contact me, please keep safe and follow government guidance to keep others safe

John Kaiser

Councillor for Barkham,  
Deputy Leader  
and executive member  
for finance and housing

Wokingham Borough Council

Mobile 07714 192 352

Email:  
john.kaiser@wokingham.gov.uk

## Positivity during the Pandemic

As we are hearing all the time at the moment this is an unprecedented situation. No one has ever experienced anything like this. The Corona virus wasn't even around this time last year and yet, here we are now, in Lockdown, prevented from seeing friends and relatives, home-schooling our children and queuing to get into supermarkets.

The situation evolved really rapidly and there was a lot of fear from all that we saw in the media about the dreadful consequences of Covid-19. As a GPI was aware of colleagues on the frontline who were dying and the fact that there just wasn't enough PPE available at that time to protect healthcare professionals and frontline workers.

Early on we decided at Finchampstead Surgery that we needed to modify our way of working in order to protect ourselves, our patients and our families. One of these modifications was that we would no longer wear our own clothes to work but would switch to scrubs – these could then be easily washed at a high temperature in order to kill any virus that we had come in to contact with. Even though it was early days and we were quick off the mark we were struggling to order any scrubs through the usual suppliers.

PPE being in short supply I posted an appeal on Facebook locally which was then shared across other community groups and the number of people who responded was awe inspiring! From this post we were given science goggles from local schools who could spare them – thank you to Bohunt, Holme Grange,

St Neots, Wellington College and The Holt. We were able to share these with other local surgeries and care agencies including care homes and nursing homes. Campaign Paintball donated us 50 pairs of goggles too.

Then Amie Pinder, a local resident contacted me – she had a 3D printer at home and wondered whether visors made on a 3D printer would be useful. There followed four weeks of production in a group (again on Facebook) called 3D Printers for NHS Heroes of a few thousand visors which we were able to distribute between hospitals, locally and further afield, surgeries, pharmacies, community nursing teams and even some post office staff. The feeling in this group was amazing. This particular group has stopped operating for the moment as a lot of the people involved are trying to work and home school their children as well as making visors and all of the requests had been fulfilled which is such an achievement.

Berkshire – For the Love of Scrubs has grown from a phone call with one of my friends – only a few days before my good friend Vicki Lynskey had mentioned that, like so many people, she wanted to help in some way. Vicki runs Totally Towelling – a company specialising in towelling robes for wrapping up in after swimming and robes for dogs after muddy walks. She had the expertise and wondered what she could do. No one could have predicted what then followed.

It really has been a whirlwind, so many people have given up their time, raised money and been

making scrubs. Others have been involved in cutting and distributing the patterns. People have been driving round hospitals, hot hubs and surgeries dropping off the finished products. Even now, several weeks in, orders are still coming through for scrubs from hospital departments and various community healthcare providers. These orders are being made up by what is now a team of 1300 people across Berkshire, from their homes, with their sewing machines. As well as making scrubs they are making scrub bags – drawstring bags that scrubs once taken off can be put in to, carried home and washed within the bag in order to minimise any potential contact with the virus. The positivity has been absolutely incredible – as a doctor knowing that people are giving up their own time and effort (and in a lot of cases, cash) to help keep staff safe and the NHS to keep functioning is humbling. I think, too, that for some people having a task to do in such a circumstance as odd as lockdown helps to kill time, makes them feel proud to be part of a team that is doing such good and is great for their own mental health (apart from when, I've gleaned from their social media posts, your overlocker is playing up!)

To date the scrub count is 910 pairs of scrubs (top and trousers), 2232 scrub bags, 1874 headbands (headbands with large buttons on that face masks can be attached to – the pain of the elastic behind your ears for a 12 hour shift is awful without) and 157 scrub hats. Apparently there are still a few bags to be unpacked too!



This article wouldn't be complete without a big thank you going out to all the members of the Facebook group Berkshire – For the Love of Scrubs, all the admins of this group (you know who you are!) who work tirelessly to make sure members are approved and issued with their patterns or pre cut fabric as soon as they can, the drivers who are picking up scrubs at the designated drop off points and then dropping them off again to where they have been needed (all done within the social distancing guidelines), Waitrose for allowing completed scrubs to be dropped off at their various branches to await collection, all the people who have donated money via the Justgiving site to enable the fabric to be bought, all those who have copied the patterns to make sure they can get distributed as soon as possible and a huge, For the Love of Scrubs THANK YOU, to Stitch Exhibition who have not only donated fabric but the use of their warehouse to cut patterns, get them ready to send out and receive the completed scrubs and their time to help sort out all the above.

The whole situation has highlighted what people are capable of when they work together for an important cause and how kind they are. If you wish to get involved with making scrubs there is still time – if you are on Facebook please get in touch via the group or send enquiries via the magazine. I think we have shown there are jobs for all sorts of people with varying talents.

Jane Spurgeon  
GP, Finchampstead Surgery



### Social Matters

that life will be able to return to some sort of normality by then to enable these events to take place. I am sure many of you would have celebrated VE Day 75 with garden parties, fetes and general social gatherings, so instead here are some photos of another patriotic event we held back in 2012, can you spot anyone you know?

This must be the strangest report I have had to write for the Social Matters in the Newsletter.

As I do this it's early May, the weather is wonderfully sunny and warm, the gardens are looking great with flowering shrubs and a few tulips are still giving us the last colour of Spring. Birds are singing and are very busy nesting, with a few fledglings already appearing.

But things are so different this year. It's so peaceful and quiet, no traffic noise, no planes in the sky (well only the odd one or two) and we are all staying at home because we are in the middle of the Coronavirus crisis. These are very strange times indeed.

It means all our social activities have ceased; hence I now report that our Family Skittles evening in March did not take place, and the Children's Easter Egg Hunt on Easter Sunday was cancelled too.

We really don't know when the time for us to socialise again will take place as we have to ride out this huge pandemic first.

We do have events planned and booked for September 26th, the Barn Dance, and November 14th, the Quiz, so we can only hope

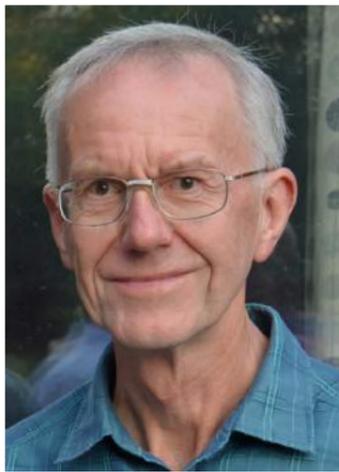


I hope you and your families, and friends, all stay safe and well, and when we are told it is safe for us to do so, we will again put on the events, and have fun times!

The BVRA website ( [www.barkham.org.uk](http://www.barkham.org.uk) ) and Facebook pages will have updates on the situation, so please do check these from time to time. Also if you would like to receive email alerts on forthcoming

social events then please register at <https://bit.ly/2T4kRXs> Hoping to see you all again before too long.

Shirley Warner  
Social Committee Member



Alan's Patch

to believe that I have had to water a few seedlings despite all that rain. Of course, there's plenty of water deep down so once plants become established they're fine. No danger of a hosepipe ban for a while!

It's a wonderful time of year in my patch – everything is springing into life all over again as it does every year. Here is a general view of the main veg patch with eight beds, each 6x1.2 metres. My autumn sowing of broad beans is doing very well, they're flowering already, no sign of the dreaded black fly yet. This year I am watching daily! When I spot some, I will spray with soft soap, an organic remedy. The spring sowing in mid-March has emerged too. The first sowing of peas also sown then are doing nicely – I sow in succession every few weeks. The potatoes are emerging. I've hoed them into ridges which encourages growth as well disturbing and weakening the weeds. The yellow hoops (old gas pipe) are ready to protect them from frost, always a risk until near the end of May. I'll put some insect netting over them should frost be forecast.

I also sowed carrots and parsnips in mid-March, the parsnips have come through well but the carrots not so. I've just sowed some more and hope these will germinate, perhaps the soil got too dry despite watering before sowing. I planted some spare shallots from last year's crop in early March, a bit late really. The stick has CD's hanging from string. They reflect sunlight and deter birds. The green top is to reduce the risk of poking my eye!



I'm growing three crops this year that I've not grown before. First is Jerusalem artichokes, a root crop. I planted the tubers towards the end of March and they are just emerging, nothing much to see at the moment. Second is Swiss chard, a leaf and stem crop, a member of the beetroot family and finally sweet potatoes. Normally I've seen these grown locally in the Caribbean but apparently, they can be grown in



this country with care. I'll let you know how I get on in due course. These arrived as small plantlets ready to be put into pots and later planted out in the ground in a sheltered sunny position.

I've still a few potatoes, carrots, parsnips, spinach and beetroot to eat from last season's efforts. Among the frozen produce there are still some tomatoes, courgettes, broad beans, gooseberries, raspberries, damsons and rhubarb, but it looks like I won't need the last mentioned because there is fresh rhubarb to eat now and it tastes wonderful. A couple of the new summer raspberry canes have shoots so they are alive,

four more to show yet. The new blueberries survived the winter and are also showing signs of life.

Caterpillars massacred the cauliflower plants last summer and I had given up hope of any crops. During the winter I ate some leaves as cabbage, then during the spring I was amazed to be offered two lovely cauliflower heads a few weeks ago. A real bonus.

In the greenhouse the tomatoes are progressing well, still in their pots at the moment. By the time you read this I expect to have planted them in the soil in the greenhouse. I can't wait for my tomatoes, those in the shops are so tasteless! The aubergines and cucumbers are looking good, the peppers less so, maybe they'll perk up. The sweet corn and various beans were sown around Easter a couple of weeks later they were just appearing. I sowed them into compost in root trainers which helps them establish a good root structure and because of their clam shell design there is less disturbance to the roots when I transplant them into the soil in late May. Also in the greenhouse there are some nice tasty radishes and today I had my first lettuce. If you are new to vegetable gardening then salads are a good place to start – lettuce, radish, spring onions, beetroot. Rake some soil to a fine tilth (not lumpy), mark the ends of the rows with sticks, rake out a v-shaped drill with the back of a rake or similar and water the drill so as to keep the seeds moist. Then sow the seeds sparingly and cover them with dry soil which you 'tamp' down with the back of the rake to exclude the air. It's a good idea to label them somehow. I use a sheet of paper to mark what I put where and when. I started doing this when the kids were young because they

would pull out the white labels! Meanwhile I have removed a shrub bed and dug out the roots of a couple of ash trees that had self-seeded. They are far too close to the house as roots might eventually have damaged the foundations. This is going to be my new herb bed as it gets more sun than the current one. I'll show you progress in future editions.



Herbs don't take up much space and are also easy to grow. My favourites are thyme, rosemary, coriander and oregano but I also grow mint, parsley, sage and basil too. You could grow a few herbs in a single large pot on the patio.

The wildlife is very active at this time of year. The birds are very noisy and musical – a joy to hear. I have a lot of fun with the pheasants. They visit my patch most days. There is a cock pheasant and two hens, one grey and the other white. They have to fly over the fence to get into the garden. It takes a lot of effort for them to take off, but when disturbed they flap their wings furiously and squawk like crazy as they take off and get airborne. While in the garden the

cock gets very confused when he approaches the greenhouse. He sees a reflection of himself and, thinking it is a rival cock, is concerned because he wants to protect his hens. He moves his head from side to side. Then he walks back and forth around the greenhouse trying to find him. What makes it so amusing is that he comes back every day and does the same thing! He doesn't seem

to learn. Their heads are so small, as must be their brains!

I was out early one morning and I spotted the roe deer in the field. Two adults and two young fawns. The fawns got excited and ran around in the field chasing each other and generally frolicking around. Dad just stood and watched and I could imagine him thinking "What are they up to? Energy is wasted on the young" and resumed feeding, stretching to reach some tasty morsels in the hedge.

Well I hope we can get rid of this wretched virus and get our lives back to normal but it could be some time yet. Meanwhile I'll get back to work in my patch.



### **'The building is closed; the church is open'**

I won't lie: it really was a sad moment when, the morning after Boris Johnson announced the lockdown, I had to pop in to lock Barkham Church building for the foreseeable future.

For all the headaches it causes us over the years, we miss the place. When God thinks of the 'Church' there's no doubt he thinks of the people who make it up, rather than the buildings in which we meet. But even so, there's still something rather special about spaces where so many Christian brothers and sisters have gathered to worship Him and encourage one another over the years. And we miss one another. It may sound ridiculous, given everything else we're all facing at the moment, but one of the most painful things about lockdown is not being able to meet on Sundays as we used to. Jesus spoke of the church as his family. And, in our better moments, that is what it feels like: a bunch of very diverse, very flawed individuals who are deeply united by the same grateful trust in him. (Of course, as you may have spotted, we also have plenty of bad moments when it doesn't feel or look much like this at all, but perhaps that's a topic for another day...)

But the pain of not being able to meet goes even deeper than

missing seeing each other. Jesus said that when we do meet as the church, in some wonderful but mysterious way he joins us too. When the Bible is read and preached, he says it's his voice we hear. When we share Communion, he himself hosts us at his table. So not being able to gather to do these things hurts lots.

But – like every family kept apart during lockdown - we still want to take every opportunity to live out who we are. Thanks to the patience of some technically adept church members, we've stumbled a little further into the technological world. We've learned how to put together online Sunday services and midweek podcasts, how to record and edit video assemblies for the Coombes School, and how to run virtual youth groups and remote prayer meetings too. I'm definitely an introvert, so it's certainly not my natural inclination to pick up the 'phone to call people as many times in a day as I now do, but actually, it's been lovely to hear people's voices, how they're doing, and of so many examples of how others are loving others as the family we know we are.

We've also continued to pray regularly for our local community in Barkham. I know there have been lots of people offering help in this difficult time, but please let us know, via the Church Office (office@abch.org.uk and / or 0118 976 0285), if there is anything we can do to help you or someone else you know of. We have people safely recruited to help with urgent shopping, who would be willing to talk over the 'phone, or who could even to drop round a Bible if someone wanted to read one.

And, of course, you'd always be very welcome to join us for our online services. Just visit [abch.org.uk](http://abch.org.uk) and click on the link for 'Barkham Church' and you'll find the details of our latest Sunday service at the top of the page. It's been lovely hearing of lots of new people joining us in this way over the last few weeks. Why not give it a try?

Please stay safe, and we very much hope to be able to see you when lockdown ends. Our post-lockdown meetings may well look a bit different from what we've been used to for quite a while to come. But bring on the Sunday they can begin again!

David Horrocks

### **Barkham Village Hall**

Next to St James' Church, beautiful rural setting for weddings, christenings and parties.

From as little as £23/hr for both halls. £26.50/hr after 6.00 p.m. on Saturday.

Can accommodate 175 guests and now has a new fully equipped kitchen. Plus with the benefit of Lottery Funding a new ceiling and lighting have been installed which can be fully dimmable for evening celebrations.

If you are a group who needs somewhere to meet on a regular basis why not use your local village hall, we have plenty of tables and chairs and spacious car park and grounds for use during the summer. We offer very competitive rates for regular users.

Further information can be obtained from the parish council web site with photographs of the hall plus a calendar with availability. Please contact Judith Neuhofer on 979 0296 or email [judith.neuhofer@btinternet.com](mailto:judith.neuhofer@btinternet.com)



The Coronavirus pandemic crisis we are sadly experiencing at present has meant that we are not able to have our usual monthly meetings. Social distancing and staying at home has led to all our social activities and events being cancelled.

However, before we had to distance ourselves and lockdown we did have our AGM on February 2nd. We reviewed the past year,

discussed meetings, events and speakers for the coming year, and then enjoyed a Silent Auction. A large number of items had been brought in by our Ladies; some unwanted gifts and other items not required or used anymore, and we did raise a tidy sum to boost our club's funds. And some of us went home with some very nice bargains too!

Our first Speaker Meeting of 2020 was on March 4th when Kevin Little paid a return visit to talk about 'True Fishy Tales' - a very interesting mix of previously unknown stories.

Our April 1st meeting was sadly cancelled, and our speaker, Alan

Gould, from Henry Street Garden Centre had said he looks forward to arranging a new date when we are able to. So, until further notice we are staying at home, and keeping in touch with each other by emailing, telephoning and texting from time to time to check on how we are all coping during this strange situation.

As soon as we are able to resume meetings I shall contact the Ladies - we all look forward to that time very much!

Shirley Warner  
Chairman

### **Trustee Required for Wokingham Respite Care Charity**

Crossroads Care Wokingham is looking for a new trustee to join its board of directors.

Crossroads Care Wokingham, a network partner of Carers Trust, has been the leading provider of home-based respite breaks for unpaid carers, and the people they care for, in Wokingham, Bracknell and the surrounding areas since 1994. Our mission is to give unpaid carers the peace of mind to enjoy life alongside caring, by allowing them to take short breaks to enhance their quality of life, and that of those they care for.

This is non-executive role, and the Board is responsible for the strategic direction of the organisation, ensuring good governance, sound finances, efficient operation and compliance with legal and professional frameworks.

There are currently 7 other trustees. The time commitment is seven two-hour meetings per year, plus a small amount of work to be undertaken outside meetings. The meetings are held bi-monthly at Wokingham Hospital, on Wednesday evenings.

To help achieve a good balance of skills within the Board's



membership, we are particularly keen to recruit someone with a background in procurement, IT or related areas of business.

This is a chance to help make a difference in an important community-based service operating to meet the needs of local carers in a challenging environment.

For more details and an informal discussion of the role please contact Julia Tredwell on 07709 946 824

## Barkham Hookers crafting activities during lockdown

The Barkham Hookers continue to meet up twice-weekly over Zoom sessions. It is a chance to get together over coffee and chat, ponder the weirdness of life under lockdown and help each other focus on the positive. We share crochet experiences with the Coronavirus Crochet Along blanket which I have been designing since Week 1 of lockdown. A new section is published twice a week; each has an uplifting quote and the crochet matches. We have had bees, rainbows, trees of green, NHS Blue, hearts for Mother's Day, blossom and bluebells etc. If you wish to join in the pattern is free and can be found on the Confessions of a Barkham Hooker blog. <http://gaynorwhite.blogspot.com/2020/03/keep-calm-and-crochet.html>

The Hookers have also been busy crocheting 'ear savers', as medical workers who wear the face masks have reported very raw and sore ears so these simple straps have buttons which the elastic attaches round instead of the ears. We have made and distributed over 300 already to Wokingham Hospital, local GP surgeries, chemists, shops and especially Care Homes.

We are also starting to crochet blue poppies to celebrate the NHS as there is a new initiative being set up to have an NHS day each year in recognition of all that the front line have done during this crisis. We shall be using rainbow buttons and selling them locally with 100% of the money collected going to the charity. I don't know when this will start but some of my group have already made some for friends and family in

the NHS. We would be delighted to take requests. A group called the Rainbow Trail was set up on FaceBook and lots of Barkham Hookers have been crocheting rainbows to hang outside their houses in the area.



We have also been raising money for Alzheimer's by selling FORGET-ME-NOT crocheted brooches and have been lending out our giant Forget Me Not hula hoops to care homes to brighten up their gardens. We have raised over £500 in Lockdown by asking for donations on JustGiving... Forget Me Nots for Care Homes.

We support each other and help keep spirits up during these testing times. Recently we spent a rather amusing evening

with wine and bubbles as well as silly dressing up...no comment!

If you are interested in learning more about the group I can be contacted at: [familywhite25@gmail.com](mailto:familywhite25@gmail.com).

Gaynor White  
Barkham Hookers Madam



## Wokingham Borough Connect Donations Required

If you can, please donate to our borough wide community response. We need food and other essentials, as well as items for wellbeing and goodybags. See attached for more details about what items we need.

Donation drop off times and locations:

Lower Earley, Twyford and Woodley Libraries, Monday, Wednesday, Friday, 10am–12pm  
\*\*Please note: No library services will be available, this is a drop off point only

St Crispins Leisure Centre, Monday to Saturday from 8.30am to 4.30pm

We have recently launched an email newsletter to send our residents important information about how to access support and updates on our services during the Covid-19 pandemic and beyond. We are currently sending alerts to nearly 40,000 residents across the borough. If you aren't already receiving them, sign up now and encourage your friends and neighbours to as well.

<https://bit.ly/2LxbfOA>

### Wokingham FoodBank

The foodbank in Wokingham town centre is for people who cannot afford to buy food. In the last five weeks they've seen a 400% increase in demand. People may be furloughed but their drop in income has left them struggling. They may be self-employed or on zero hour contracts, or are



waiting for their Universal Credit payments to start.

The foodbank is slightly different to the Wokingham Borough Community Response hub. The hub also supports people who can afford food, but they may be self-isolating or shielding at home and can't get a supermarket delivery slot, nor have friends or family to shop for them.

### Food donations update – can you help?

Toilet roll, long life milk, tinned carrots, sugar and hot meals (such as tinned ravioli, meatballs, and curry) are currently needed.

You can leave your small foodbank donations at collection points in Waitrose, Tesco, Morrisons and Sainsburys. For larger donations email: [info@wokingham.foodbank.org.uk](mailto:info@wokingham.foodbank.org.uk)

Referrals for both the foodbank and the hub currently go via Citizens Advice Wokingham on 0300 330 1189, Monday to Saturday, 9am to 5pm.

THANK YOU for your generosity, you've been fantastic!

### Free bike loans for key workers and volunteers

Avanti Cycling is offering free bike loans to key workers and volunteers. The company normally provides Bikeability cycle training in our primary schools.



With traffic on local roads pretty light at the moment getting back into cycling, or giving it go, might not seem so daunting.

To find out more email: [greg@avanticycling.co.uk](mailto:greg@avanticycling.co.uk)



Charitable Incorporated  
Organisation number: 1161498

Contact: 0118 977 0749

Our opening hours are:  
Monday to Thursday 9:30am to 2:30pm  
Friday 9:30am to 1:30pm  
Saturday and Sunday Closed

### What We Do

We Place Volunteers  
Provide Support and training to charities  
Promote Volunteering  
Transport Scheme  
Green 'n Tidy

### Why Volunteer

Learn New Skills  
Ease Yourself Back  
Career Choices  
Make New Friends  
Give Back

We are a registered charity that works with and places volunteers in a wide range of community, voluntary and charitable groups across the borough. We work with, and support, groups and organisations that require volunteers (including providing training). We promote the benefits of volunteering to the local community and run a number of schemes including the Wokingham Transport Scheme and the Green'n' Tidy community gardening service.

## Time for us girls

*I'm normally a social girl  
I love to meet my mates  
But lately with the virus here  
We can't go out the gates.*

*You see, we are the 'oldies' now  
We need to stay inside  
If they haven't seen us for a while  
They'll think we've upped  
and died.*

*They'll never know the things  
we did  
Before we got this old  
There wasn't any Facebook  
So not everything was told.*

*We may seem sweet old ladies  
Who would never be uncouth  
But we grew up in the 60s –  
If you only knew the truth!*

*There was sex and drugs and  
rock 'n roll  
The pill and miniskirts  
We smoked, we drank, we partied  
And were quite outrageous flirts.*

*Then we settled down, got married  
And turned into someone's mum,  
Somebody's wife, then nana,  
Who on earth did we become?*

*We didn't mind the change of pace  
Because our lives were full  
But to bury us before we're dead  
Is like red rag to a bull!*

*So here you find me stuck inside  
For 4 weeks, maybe more  
I finally found myself again  
Then I had to close the door!*

*It didn't really bother me  
I'd while away the hour  
I'd bake for all the family  
But I've got no bloody flour!*

*Now Netflix is just wonderful  
I like a gutsy thriller  
I'm swooning over Idris  
Or some random sexy killer.*

*At least I've got a stash of booze  
For when I'm being idle  
There's wine and whiskey, even gin  
If I'm feeling suicidal!*

*So let's all drink to lockdown  
To recovery and health  
And hope this bloody virus  
Doesn't decimate our wealth.*

*We'll all get through the crisis  
And be back to join our mates  
Just hoping I'm not far too wide  
To fit through the flaming gates!*

Poem attributed to Pam Ayres

## Notes From an Empty Beach (with apologies to Bill Bryson)

Here we are beside the seaside, but not as we know it. After the wettest windiest Valentine's Day in memory, with much sympathy from our new neighbours who assured us it's unusual to have weather like that here, we arrived in a whirl of dripping anoraks and soggy packing cases. After the short settling in phase one thing we didn't expect was a world calamity. We are now having to learn rare words and phrases like Furlough, lockdown, virtual, PPE, and the "new normal", instead of finding out where the best pub is, where we put the wellies, the garage key and so on.

Just when we thought we were fit and active, apparently we are old and vulnerable and need caring for, social distancing and self-isolation is our new mantra. Thank goodness for the Milford on Sea Mutual Aid volunteers, so helpful, and of course our nearby family who are making sure we don't starve. Thank goodness too that we have a house and garden to spend time in; it needed much TLC after standing empty for so many months, busy times still ahead meaning we haven't had much time to walk, let alone visit new places we were hoping to explore. However, after having used several bottles of cleaning products and elbow grease we are comfortably and tidily ensconced in our new home, with a pretty garden now appearing from the undergrowth. One thing we appreciate here is the good supply of tradesmen for window cleaning, hedge cutting, grass-cutting and so on. All bodes well for advancing into our dotage!

Barkham has the still beautiful Coombes to walk through,

pleased to see that the fight to keep it protected is looking successful so far. Milford has the lovely cliff path with the Danestream woodland behind us with its winding paths and wild flowers too. The beach car parks



are closed, beach huts barred and bolted, just a few dog walkers on the beach even on the sunny Easter holiday days. Where are they all? The roads are so empty we can walk down the middle,



the atmosphere is quite weird, far more birds around and rabbits all over the place.

All in all we consider ourselves very lucky. Local eateries deliver hot meals to the door, we've had a Happy 100th Birthday singalong, with social distancing, outside a

friend's home as he had to cancel his birthday bash to stay home. We seem to have mastered Zoom family meetings, just the one so far, hopefully more to follow, so a little socialising helps the lonelier days.

Milford on Sea has been a well-kept secret and is a delightful village to live in. After moving from Barkham following many happy years, leaving our good friends and neighbours, we are

still pleased to be down by the seaside, even with the empty beaches!

Best wishes to Barkham from J and B Hicks

## CROWTHORNE Symphony ORCHESTRA

With our Spring and Summer Concerts cancelled we hope you will sign up for our eNewsletter – we will be producing an edition every few weeks with interesting musical items and links. You can subscribe by going to our website and the link is on the left of our home page [www.crowthorneorchestra.com](http://www.crowthorneorchestra.com)

We hope to be able to perform the Spring Concert programme in November – check out the information on the 'concerts' tab of the website or on Facebook.

"Music is the shorthand of emotion" (Tolstoy) - keep playing, singing or listening!

Chris Gadsby

- Summer Quiz Answers**
1. The Angel of the North
  2. Iguazu Falls on the border between Argentina and Brazil.
  3. Chichen Iza in Mexico (Yucatan), built by the Maya.
  4. The Stratford Gate entrance to the Olympic Park, London 2012
  5. Cape Town
  6. Petra in Jordan. The building carved into the rock face is The Treasury.
  7. This is Monticello, Thomas Jefferson's house in Virginia.
  8. Abu Simbel temples in southern Egypt. The temples were (amazingly) moved to this higher ground locations when the Aswan Dam created Lake Nasser and flooded its previous location in the 1960's.
  9. Iceland – Skogafoss waterfall
  10. Whitby Abbey. Whitby, including the abbey was part of the inspiration for Bram Stoker's novel, Dracula.

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**Where in Barkham answer**

Just a few yards off the path into the woodland at the junction of Coombes Lane and the path running south towards Barkham Manor.

OS: SU778678  
Lat/Long: 51.4039, -0.8829

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