

The Gossip

H O R N T O N

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Dun Cow digs deep

Hornton pub pulls out all the stops to help village through coronavirus crisis

Steve and Rebecca Yates, who in mid-May celebrated their first anniversary as the proprietors of the Dun Cow, have proved themselves to be pub landlords par excellence and earned the admiration and gratitude of the village.

Not only have they set up and run successfully a takeaway service that has proved a godsend for many but they have also sourced a number of staple food products and delivered them to people who are unable to shop – and without a mark-up.

But it hasn't all been plain sailing for Steve and Rebecca. After almost a year of hard work, many improvements at the Dun Cow and a warm reception by the village, the government ordered the closure of all pubs. It seemed to the Yates that their luck had run out.

"We had to think fast and the only way we could see a future was to switch to takeaways," said Rebecca. "We are currently doing about 45 orders a week which means that Will, our chef, has been able to stay with us. But we've had lots of problems mainly with many of our suppliers closing down."

Steve and Rebecca also have the responsibility of home schooling. Their two daughters, Molly and Chloe, found lockdown rather difficult at first but are adapting to their new classroom – the Dun Cow restaurant.

One ray of sunshine is that the closure of the pub has given Steve and Rebecca more time to do work to the Dun Cow, "We have fixed and painted the barn doors, painted all the windows and doors and refurbished



the toilets," said Steve. "We've also planted up the window boxes, thanks to Ed, Maggie, Andrew and Martin who gave us the flowers."

"We can't wait to welcome everyone back to the Dun Cow once we all get through this pandemic. Best wishes to everyone, keep well and, from all of us at the pub, thank you for your continued support."

.....**Stop press.....Stop press.....**

On May 14, just as *The Gossip* was off to the printer, news came of the Parish Council's presentation to Steve and Rebecca of a bouquet of flowers and a letter. The latter expressed thanks to

the couple, on behalf of the village, for their hard work and commitment in restoring the village pub to an integral part of our village life.

"From the outset, it was apparent that you were the ideal team," the PC said. "The immediate start of work on refurbishments, the way you integrated in to the village and the effort you have put in throughout your first year have impressed us all."

The letter concluded with thanks to Steve & Rebecca for transforming the pub into an idyllic village focal point. *The Gossip* says: High praise and much deserved!

For Dun Cow delivery menu - see back page

Goodbye to Sheila



It is with great sadness that I am writing to report the death of Sheila Hillman on April 13. She had been ill for the past six months but had been brave and strong throughout her illness.

Sheila lived in Hornton for 51 years, all her married life, where she and Richard raised their daughter Rosemary. Sheila was a pillar of the community, taking a quiet and unassuming but very active role in the Parochial Church Council and Ladies Working Party, attending the church garden, cleaning the church and arranging flowers on the rota with the rest of the working party. She always took great pride in her work.

Sheila also attended the keep fit classes, which she really enjoyed, then ending the evening having a drink and a chat with her friends. She was a member of the Women's Institute and was also on the committee and an active member of the Gardening Club.

Apart from the clubs that Sheila belonged to she was always there if anyone needed help and she will be greatly missed by us all but especially by Richard, Rosemary, Scott and her grandsons Liam and Drew whom she adored.

Sadly, due to Covid-19, Sheila has not been able to have a village service but Richard is planning to arrange one in due course so the village can say goodbye to Sheila in the style she deserves. She really was one of the kindest, gentlest people that many of us knew and loved and she will always be remembered.

Isabelle Harris

Parish Council does Hornton proud

Swift action taken by Hornton's Parish Council to establish and respond to the need within the village for help during the coronavirus crisis has met with widespread praise.

On March 17, within two days of a Government warning that the over-70s and those with underlying health issues would be asked to self-isolate, and several days before official lockdown was ordered, a letter from Hornton PC dropped through every resident's letterbox.

The letter included a questionnaire which invited villagers to identify themselves as those needing help or those willing to help.

"The response was immediate and amazing," said councillor Steve Woodcock. "We had so many offers of help that supply exceeded demand two-fold and we were able to provide people requesting help with two 'buddies'."

Offers of help with a variety of tasks poured in from a village known for its community spirit. Most help, however, has centred around shopping and prescription collection – and just being there.

Setting up the Parish Council help scheme was a major task in itself. Thanks are due to all councillors for their prescience and prompt action, and to councillors Steve Woodcock and Louise McKenzie and council clerk Cindy Koberl for all their hard work in administering the scheme.

Top of the pops

The Hornton on-line choir's debut number, *True Colours*, was so successful and such fun that at the time *The Gossip* went to print, a second potential hit was being uploaded to YouTube.

Fields of Gold, written and first performed by Sting, was again arranged for the choir by Pete Whitehead who, a few weeks earlier, had been interviewed about the *True Colours* experience by BBC Radio Oxford.

Initial experiments with a video conferencing app to rehearse the choir were unsuccessful so instead thereafter choir members individually rehearsed their parts then videoed themselves performing before editor Tom Wain pulled it all together.



The cherry blossom in the centre of the village was more beautiful than ever this year.

A family affair

This issue of *The Gossip* is sponsored by Maggie Higgins. Here she describes how her grandparents came to Hornton and her family's continued commitment to it.



Maggie's grandparents beside the back door of Holloway House

My family's association with Hornton began when my grandparents, James and Elsie Archdale, purchased Holloway House in 1955. They lived in Edgbaston, Birmingham and were looking for somewhere in the country, not too far from Edgbaston, that they could visit at weekends and that my parents could use when they came back from overseas.

At that time, my father was stationed with the army in Malaya where my sister Helen was born. Shortly after my grandparents bought the house, my parents relocated to Germany, where I was born in 1955. I was followed by my brother Alastair in 1957, though in that case my mother opted to return to the UK to avoid another delivery in a British military hospital (a not-to-be-repeated experience according to my Mum!) and he was born in what is now our bedroom in Holloway House.

There was initially a lot of work required on the Hornton property: this



Helen, Alastair and Maggie in the Hornton playground

started with the building of the three garages with a flat over them on the site of what was then a "hovel". If you look carefully above the middle garage you will see a stone that has the inscription "J.A. 1956". This was followed by the complete rebuilding of Holloway Cottages, which were taken right down to ground level, starting as six cottages and ending as four, which were then occupied by long-standing village families.

My grandfather was a successful industrialist who ran the family machine-tools business in Birmingham (the factory was later moved to Worcester) with his three brothers. He was also a philanthropist and was keen to support the community of Hornton in any way he could. His contributions included the church organ (since gone); the planting of the willow tree on the green by our vegetable garden as well as some of the original cherry trees; and the York paving stones on the footpaths in the centre of the village.

In 1957, he wanted to put four staddle stones on the circular green in front of Holloway House "to deter vehicles from over-running the kerb" (some things don't change!), but this was vetoed by the Parish Council, which considered that they "would be over large in proportion to the size of the green and somewhat unsightly". I still have the original correspondence!

My grandfather was also an accomplished pianist and somehow

managed to get a baby grand into the flat. There are still people alive who remember hearing him play when the windows were open!

I came to Hornton a lot as a child but never envisaged ending up here with my own children. Following five years overseas in the Sudan and North Yemen, Andrew and I finally came to rest in Hornton in 1989 and haven't looked back since!

We have continued to maintain the property and environs: modernising the cottages over the last 25 years; tending to the upkeep of the surrounding area, including mowing the grass and planting the tubs on the circular green outside our house with the indispensable and much appreciated help of Malcolm Cross, whose father-in-law, Harry Spike, used to tend the vegetable garden for my grandparents.

This spring we planted an ornamental pear tree, *pyrus Chanticleer*, to replace the laburnum tree that my grandfather placed outside 4 Holloway Cottages and which, sadly, had to be cut down last November due to old age and disease.

So, we continue my grandfather's legacy and hope that he would approve of what we have done to the property that he purchased 65 years ago. It has been a great place to bring up our two boys, Peter and Jamie, and we look forward in due course to introducing our grandchildren to the delights of village life in this wonderful part of north Oxfordshire. We feel blessed to have ended up in such an exceptional village with its unique community spirit. Thank you, Hornton!

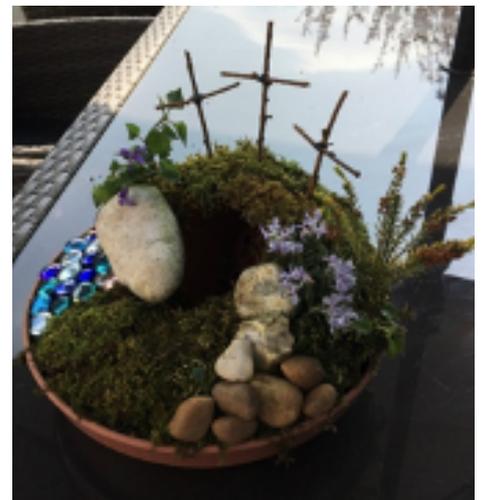
Maggie Higgins



Maggie with two of her three dogs

Easter artistry

Artistic talent was much in evidence in the village over Easter. The magnificent floral cross at the Chapel was created by Sarah Walther. The decorated window on Bell Street was the work of the Tyrrell family. And the mini Easter gardens were just three of the eleven produced in response to the Churches Together challenge. They were created by, top to bottom, Paula Hewlett, the Matthews family and Lynne Miles.





Pete and Alex Bebb with Amelie and Monty

Pete Bebb

Hornton's Pete Bebb talks about his job producing the visual effects that won him an Academy Award.

Pete, 44, was born in Stoke on Trent and studied Industrial Design at Wolverhampton and Stafford Universities. But he decided he wanted to use his computing skills in feature films and joined the world-leading visual effects company Double Negative as a runner. Twenty years later, he still works for them, now as the visual effects supervisor on a string of blockbusters, ranging from Harry Potter films to the Batman series. In 2011 he won an Oscar for his work on the film *Inception*. Pete moved to Hornton six years ago and lives on Millers Lane with wife Alex and their two children, Amelie and Monty.

"I would normally be up around 6am, not through choice but because of a young baby and, when I'm working in London, I take the train in. I enjoy the commuting: because of the long hours and pressure of my job, I regard it as a bit of downtime.

At the moment, I'm working in Los Angeles, supervising the visual effects on a feature film called *Infinite*, an action thriller starring Mark Wahlberg. Until a few weeks ago, I'd drive to Paramount Studios in Hollywood to be in work by about 8am. But now the whole city is in lockdown. Only essential trips are allowed – food, medicine, one form of exercise. I'm working from home, a top-floor apartment near Venice Beach in Santa Monica, but at least Alex and the children are here with me.

Earlier in my career, I created visual effects but now I supervise teams of people

doing it, sometimes as many as 1,500 people. That's because it takes a huge amount of work over many months to create photo-real visual effects on a film – and it's very expensive.

To give you some idea, if you had to create an eight to ten second shot of a dinosaur walking through the centre of Hornton, you'd have to start by filming shots in the village itself. Then you'd use them to create a computer-generated 3D



version of Hornton. Just that would take about three months.

Then you'd have to create a dinosaur on computer. You build the monster from the skeleton up, adding the muscle and the skin so that, when it walks, it's as realistic as possible. That's another six months' work. Only then can you put the monster into the scene of Hornton that you've created, which would take another two months or so. The whole process would take 200-300 people and cost something like £65,000 – all for a shot lasting less than ten seconds!

At the moment, we're creating a huge explosion on a street in New York. But we didn't film the street in New York – we filmed it in Cardiff – and we didn't film an explosion on set, either. It's our job, through visual effects, to create that explosion and make it look like New York.

This film has all been shot so, if we weren't in lockdown, I would usually spend the afternoon in an editing suite with the film's director and film editor. And that's the most exciting thing about supervising visual effects rather than creating them. You're there when the film is being put together, helping the director to make it.

I work on a film longer than anyone – the same length of time as the director. I'm there on set from the first day of filming and, after the main shoot is over, I often have to direct the film crew myself in what we call *elements* shoots – extra shots we need to create the effects. In this film, for instance, we did some ultra-slow motion shots – filming at around 10,000 frames a second, which is one *four hundredth* the speed of a normal camera. They were shot in a specialist studio in Wembley.

Here in LA, I used to get home around 7pm, though it could be a lot later, depending on how late the director wants to work. My wife, Alex, is quite forgiving in that I don't tend to be home for dinner that much. But the film's in hiatus because of Covid-19. I can still do my job from home. It's just lacking that person-to-person feel and trying to explain something creative to someone when they're not in the room with you and making sure they don't go off on a tangent is very difficult, I find.

After I finish a film I try to take a big break of three to four months to be with the family because I've been solidly working for a year or even two. But I'm absolutely passionate about what I do, especially the creative side of my job. It's what drives me.

In 2011 I was lucky enough to win both an Oscar and a Bafta, as part of the visual effects team on Christopher Nolan's film, *Inception*. The Oscar is in a safe place. When I won it, they said to me that, if you lose it, you don't get another one!"

Interview by Roger Corke

Happy birthday to us

This month *The Gossip* celebrates the first anniversary of its publication under the new editorial team; this will be the fifth issue that we have produced.

It's an apt moment to thank everyone who has helped us over the last 12 months: our advertisers, sponsors and the growing body of willing contributors.

Above all, thanks are due to all those who have made generous donations towards our running costs in recent months: the Dun Cow from its quiz collection; the Pavilion Committee from the proceeds of its film night; and Roger Corke, who donated what will be the last payment he'll receive from his Banbury Guardian column.

Flag & glasses raised on VE Day

At 6.00pm on May 8 front doors in Hornton opened and villagers emerged to see the Union Jack raised on the village green to mark the 75th anniversary of victory in Europe.

Observing social distancing rules, residents also raised glasses and chatted to friends and neighbours on a lovely sunny evening. Vera Lynn favourites boomed across the village.

Many people had decorated their houses with red, white and blue bunting and this and the sociable event raised everyone's spirits.



Ian Harris, who organised the VE Day celebration and was appropriately attired, prepares to raise the Union Jack.

Fixing a water leak in the time of coronavirus



Repairs to another more recent leak were also completed in impressive time.

Maggie Higgins spills the beans about a leak outside 2 Holloway Cottages in March.

Day 1: a Thames Water man arrives with his leak detection wand, identifies the location of the leak and marks the area with blue spray.

Day 3: two days later, a Sunday, two vehicles turn up, one pulling a trailer on which sits a mini digger, which subsequently proves surplus to requirement. "Men at work" signs are erected, a hole approximately two-feet square and two-feet deep is dug in the area marked and then surrounded with safety barriers.

Day 4: Clancy Docwra arrive: two men, one in a van, the other in a 10-tonne truck filled with earth and a grabber - again surplus to requirement! They borrow a bucket to remove the water in the hole, mend the pipe and fill in the hole using the *in situ* excavated earth and gravel and replace the safety barriers around the now filled-in area.

Day 5: a Thames Water mini truck turns up to put topsoil and grass seed on the previously excavated area. They pile up the safety barriers against an adjacent tree.

Day 6: Two Thames Water vehicles turn up to remove the safety barriers!

In these days of coronavirus, some things happen much more quickly than previously - the last water leak in the same place took weeks, if not months, to resolve!

Job done!

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How *Headspace* helps

By Jess Mills



I never thought I'd become an advocate for meditation. For years I largely saw it as a joke. Yet when I came to university, stressed-out and homesick, I became one of the 60 million to download the *Headspace* app, and it was one of the best decisions I have ever made.

Headspace is a platform with guided meditation packs on topics ranging from stress to parenting, including an NBA Sports inspired mental fitness programme. Just ten days of *Headspace* is proven to reduce stress by up to 14%. Co-founder Andy Puddicombe began developing the app after ten years of travelling around the world to study meditation. Unsurprisingly, Puddicombe is considered an expert in this area and is a successful writer and presenter on the subject. He's also an ordained Tibetan Buddhist monk.

A host of new features and voice actors have been added to the latest *Headspace* update, including group and everyday meditations. I especially love the section dedicated to sleep, with a soothing, low-light design. They also developed a free pack in March called 'Weathering the Storm' to help guide people through these challenging and uncertain times.

Even when revisiting it at university, the initial embarrassment of meditating made me hyper-aware of what I was doing rather than focusing on the exercise. Sitting alone in a dark room, concentrating on my breathing, made hundreds of unwanted thoughts come flooding to the surface. The most prominent being that I was doomed

to be stressed forever. But, as Puddicombe iterates time and time again in each meditation, this is perfectly normal and almost expected when you first begin.

The trick is to note intrusive thoughts as opposed to trying to dismiss them, gently allowing them to float away once being acknowledged. For example, say you're working from home and suddenly you remember that you haven't replied to your partner's latest text, despite reading it several hours ago. Rather than leaping up and replying to the message, interrupting your creative flow, Puddicombe tells us to pause and identify the distraction as 'thought' or 'feeling'. This allows us to be aware of the distraction, but not engage with it. Consequently, the process of noting gives us a sense of having dealt with it, allowing us to let go and return to our current task before re-engaging with the other task later if it's still a concern.

The key to successful meditation is routine. It doesn't matter when you do it as long as you *actually* do it. Regularly. I find that doing a three-minute sleep exercise before bed works best for me.

The app is (unfortunately) more effective if you go for the paid plan, with only ten 'Basics' sessions being one of the few options available without a subscription. The 'Basics' pack offers pretty much what you'd expect: a guided approach to the fundamental techniques of meditation with a broad focus. Rather than addressing a specific topic like the other packs, they slowly introduce concepts such as noting distractions by focusing on the body and breathing. This pack also provides a short animated step-by-step guide on how to introduce meditation to your daily routine.

Fortunately, if you're a poor student like me, you can get *Headspace* for free with a Spotify Premium Student account for only £4.99 a month – as opposed to £9.99.

You're Kidding...

Q: What did the fisherman say to the magician?

A: Pick a cod, any cod...

Q: Why did the chicken cross the road?

A: To be at a social distance...

Q: Knock knock Who's there?

A: ... no-one...

Omelette & Quiche jokes

Where the wild things are

Mike Prentice of Starveall Barn on Quarry Road encourages us to help with conservation by observing and recording the wildlife we see.

With so many of us working from home or in isolation we are perhaps even more aware of the wildlife in our gardens or on our local exercise walk.

The warblers, swallows and house martins have returned from Africa and the winter thrushes – fieldfares and redwings – have recently departed. There are plenty of early butterflies on the wing – brimstones, orange-tips, small tortoiseshells and peacocks.

If you are noticing this activity there are opportunities to record what you see which will help the various wildlife groups build up their knowledge and assist with conservation. The BTO (British Trust for Ornithology) have waived the normal charge for their Garden Birdwatch so it is currently free. You record the birds you see in your garden every week together with a little information on whether you provide food and water. Their website is www.bto.org

If you wish to record the butterflies you see there is a smartphone app iRecordButterflies. This allows you to record individual butterflies or survey an area. You don't need to be an expert and there is a guide to help you identify species. All of the records you submit go to the Butterflies for the New Millennium project run by Butterfly Conservation.

There is also an app for mammal records - Mammal Mapper – which submits records to the Mammal Society. This app also has a guide to all British species with photos to help with identification.

On our recent local walks we have seen 10 species of butterfly, brown hares, roe deer and muntjac – all in and around Hornton. If you are interested in wildlife do consider submitting records of what you see – all of this information, even of common species, is valuable.



Coping with coronavirus crisis

The coronavirus pandemic and the lock-down it necessitated have affected people in different ways. Hornton is no exception. In this and the following two pages we hear from a few villagers – a businessman, a single person, a mother with young children, a couple unable to get back to Hornton and another more at risk than most – who share with us how they are coping.

A serious challenge



Simon Protheroe looks back at how his business, Procters Speciality Sausages, was launched and the uncertain future it now faces

In 1991 I opened a restaurant in London, on Procters Street, High Holborn. Around that time in London there was a sausage renaissance movement in full swing – no, really – and so my business partner at the time and I decided we'd spread the word beyond the bounds of the M25 and in February 1994 we opened the first Procters Speciality Sausages retail outlet. It was followed later the same year with outlets in Suffolk and Cambridgeshire, thus cementing our resolve to continue our parallel lives as both restaurateurs and sausage-makers.

The landlord of the restaurant site had other ideas and in 1999 took back possession for major redevelopment. It was a good time to take stock and try to rationalise my time. The option of a day job sausage-making was compelling, particularly for Ali who was very busy at home in North Oxfordshire raising the youngsters and keen to have me involved!

I invested in a sausage production unit in Ipswich and set about developing the business-to-business side to complement the thriving retail outlets. The subsequent twenty years have been, as with all small businesses, a fun ride of ups and downs, with the business model steadily moving towards food service (pubs, restaurants, cafes etc) and away from retailing.

Anybody remember Mad Cow Disease? Foot and Mouth? Avian Flu? The 2008 financial crash? All serious challenges for food production businesses but ultimately survivable.

And now comes coronavirus, which is a bit different. With 95% of our production going into food service outlets, which were all forced to close, we limped along for another week with our remaining retail outlet in Ipswich town centre. We hoped that perhaps we could keep a bit of cash flow coming, but once the town market and indeed almost all other retail outlets had closed, footfall dried up and we had no option but to close as well. In honesty, for the sake of the safety of my shop staff, I'm happy that was a decision forced upon me.

Which leaves us in this very curious limbo. We're a small team – six stalwarts plus me – and we've all been together for a very long time, so keeping communication lines open is very easy and there is no question of my staff not understanding and accepting the need for furloughing and what it means for them.

I'm informed by the local authority that the small business grant is on its way. I hope HMRC will be ready in time for the end-of-month wage payments to affect quick rebates to employers. I hope all my customers are in a position to sit it out, as we can for now, and still be my customers on the other side. I hope they can keep paying their accounts due to me, so I can keep paying mine! I hope my landlords take an enlightened view as to rents due in this time of closedown. I hope this doesn't go on for too long and become an existential threat to so many small businesses, not just mine.

So, as I sit here writing this, a lot of hoping going on. Yes, this is indeed a bit different.

Oh to be in Hornton

Greetings, Hornton, from across the Atlantic! It's Kaivel Ann & Stan of Honey Bee Cottage here in semi-isolation in Fountain Hills, Arizona.

For those of you who don't know us, we both work for Delta Air Lines. I am a Boeing 767 Captain and Kaivel Ann is a Flight Attendant, and things have been rather grim for our company. Delta has parked nearly 600 airplanes so far and cut flights by 80-90%. Kaivel Ann is taking a voluntary leave for the rest of the year but I am still flying.

Flight schedules change daily, if not hourly, so it has been a real challenge. One minute I'm flying an airplane with a handful of people to New York City then it

cancels and I'm then flying an empty airplane to a remote airport somewhere to just park it in storage for the duration of this crisis.

Some might wonder why Delta is even flying at all but there is still a fair amount of essential cargo to transport and essential people that need to get from here to there during this pandemic.

In early/mid-March Kaivel Ann and I both had bags packed and were on our way back to Hornton when travel restrictions became ever more severe. In the end we decided to stay put here in Arizona and wait things out. We had been so excited at the thought of getting back to Hornton for springtime but it just wasn't to be.

So we are in semi-isolation in Arizona. I say "semi-isolation" because we aren't really under a tight lock-down. Restaurants, bars, hairdressers and many retail stores are shut but overall Arizona is quite lightly affected by coronavirus. Not like New York City, 2400 miles away. Here we are able to go out to the grocery stores and get other necessities easily enough. Oh and, yes, there is a run on toilet paper here too! The store shelves are fairly well stocked though there are some shortages in paper products, pasta and limits on purchases of milk and eggs.

The stores all have the six-foot marks on the floors to signal to people to keep a distance. I guess we're allowed to be six



Stan & Kaivel Ann at their Arizona home

inches closer than you are due to antiquated measuring methods. A lot more people have started wearing masks as they seem to be easier to get hold of now. Most everybody is staying home and doing the social distancing thing. Take away food is still readily available here. The weather is delightful this time of year so getting outside for exercise with a walk, a hike or a run (Kaivel Ann is the runner) is nice while still being able to keep a social-distance.

We have been staying in touch with Hornton through the Roger Corke emails and Pete Lemon's "Daily Quiz" among others. We are so delighted by the sense of community in Hornton and wish we could be there to chip in. We miss our Honey Bee Cottage and all of you in Hornton.

"Til we meet again!

Home alone



When I heard about the great lock-in, writes Glennis Griffiths, I thought, with enthusiasm, that I could paint a masterpiece, embroider a tablecloth or create a replica of Kew Gardens. Did any of this happen? No. I can't understand where my creativity has gone. I can't settle to do anything arty. Most odd. I have, though, made a good start on Kew Gardens as ordered plants have arrived and the weather is lovely. What a blessing (if there is one) all this is happening now and not in the winter.

I actually feel a bit of a fraud as I'm not really in isolation, for two reasons. First, I have lived on my own for many years (apart from a couple of episodes which some of you will remember). The second reason is down to Hornton village, the best place to be locked-in in, if you see what I mean.

If I'm in the front garden, people passing by in the road stop for a chat as

people also do when I'm putting out the rubbish. If I'm gardening in the back garden I have chats with the neighbours and people going up to the allotments. This is the best time of year to isolate!

I do get depressed and (perish the thought) a bit weepy occasionally but it's usually around three o'clock in the morning when the world and I are at our lowest ebb. Then I realise that I could have been banged up in the flat over our shops in Willesden High Road – no contest there.

I do sometimes wonder if my brain is affected by isolation or perhaps just old age because one week I did all the washing with fabric conditioner by mistake. When I realised this, I had to use shampoo for the last wash. No comments please!

I couldn't get through all this without the help I'm getting from the village. My friend who lives in Ruislip, London, hasn't had any contact with her neighbours since all this started. So I'd like to take this opportunity to thank: Claire who does my shopping and checks up on me; Chris and Steve who have dragged me into the twenty-first century to organise Zoom so I can talk to Florida and Berlin; Kevin and Tom who organised Netflix; Roger who always phones before going to Tesco; Lynn who calls in when out walking; Adrian who is looking after my seedlings; Paul who leaves me veggies outside the back door; and Sandra who comes down to see me. Oh – mustn't forget the Dun Cow and the fish and chips and promise of party time when this is all over!

I am now trying to find out who kindly sent me three taster bottles of Sipsmiths gin (for self-medication) addressed to Gladys Emmanuel Griffiths (long story) as I would like to thank them.

One thing I'm really missing are my visits to the Oxfam bookshop in Banbury and the Chapel library. I've got 1,105 books (I've just counted them out of curiosity) and some I haven't read. Now's the time to start but I might just have a peep at Amazon

I'll end this with a big thank you to Hornton, the best possible place to be banged up in, and I leave you with a quote from my favourite all time US cop show, Hill Street Blues: "Be careful out there".

Love from Glennis – partial isolationist.

Following the rules

Steve and Julia Whitby moved to Chapel Cottage, Millers Lane in 1987. Steve has Parkinson's disease and other medical conditions and must therefore be particularly careful that he doesn't contract Covid-19. Here, he and Julia explain how they have been coping.

"When we received the questionnaire from the Parish Council we completed and returned it immediately as we knew our

circumstances meant we were at risk," says Steve. "We were allocated 'buddies': Steve and Lesley Tilling and Mark Dawson and Nikki Beale. Julia and I are very grateful for the support we've received from them, particularly in collecting prescriptions from the surgery for us. This has been very important as any contamination, directly or indirectly, would be very serious because of my medical conditions.

"Once isolated we started a routine, like many others, which involved day-to-day chores and 'estate' duties. It also included a set of exercises, prescribed by my specialist physiotherapist.

"Gardening has become an important part of the schedule and concludes with a nice glass of wine. We also read, cook and watch the daily Downing Street briefings."

Julia adds: "We both think it's most important to follow the rules stipulated by the Government concerning staying at home. We owe it to the NHS and all the essential people involved.

"We stay in touch with members of our family and friends, contacting them on a regular basis. My auntie is 96, lives at home and still fends for herself, with the help of neighbours. She has a very positive, stoical attitude.

"We are very lucky to live in a village with such a strong community spirit and now a good pub. Things could be worse: on a pre-virus trip to North Yorkshire we discovered that the area had suffered the worst flooding in over 50 years! In comparison, we are very lucky. Let's hope it continues."



... continued on next page

When the going gets tough



(L-R) Orson, Max and Arlo

Jennie Tyrrell tells us of the highs and lows of lock-in with three young children.

When I was asked to give an account of what life in lockdown is like with three young boys my first thought was: where do I begin without it getting too dark too quickly!

We started off ambitiously. Timetable printed off and laminated (ex-teacher, so any excuse to laminate!), workbooks ready, craft activities purchased, mummy brimming with excitement and hope that maybe it wouldn't be so bad after all...

The timetable lasted all of three days before Orson, my four-year-old summer-born baby decided that actually, doing school work at home wasn't for him. No

amount of bribery and cajoling could convince him otherwise; he was adamant. After many tears and tantrums (mostly mine) and the added bonus of a teething 17-month-old (Rex, who is as quick as lightning and can climb anything) I decided that it just wasn't worth it!

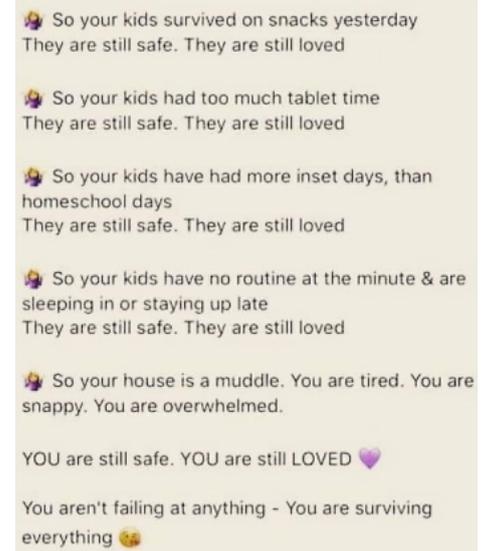
So we moved our learning outside. Great idea, I thought, until I remembered that the garden isn't exactly kid friendly and Rex has a habit of running down our sloped lawn and seeing how close he can get to the edge without falling off.

So we're in the process of making what is basically an outdoor pen for him in the garden. It's involved the removal of a lot of concrete and dirt and the boys have had the best time. I'm sure the neighbours have been alarmed by the amount of times they've heard: "No not the pick axe!" and: "Put the sledgehammer down, it's not a toy!" But we've finally got the turf down and the fence up. The trampoline is back from the allotment, I suspect much to the relief of our allotment neighbours who will no longer have to witness the fights and hear the screams of: "I hate you, you poo face!" from the biggest two. (Is that Arlo and Orson or Ben and me? I'll let you decide for yourselves).

As a play therapist, my main concern has been everyone's wellbeing. Orson in particular has been experiencing some very big emotions. It's been hard for him as he knows things are different and we have to stay at home but he doesn't understand why he can't see his friends or his family. So with all of that going through his little mind I can see why he doesn't want to do his schoolwork, particularly when the setting and routine is completely different!

Arlo, 6, has been generally very good about doing his schoolwork. The hardest part with him is limiting screen time; he loves playing games on his kindle and will get up before anyone else so he can play in secret! He often has the attitude of a 16-year-old rather than a six-year-old but actually overall it's not been as bad as we were anticipating, fight club wise! We've also been lucky that daddy is working from home and although he's busy with work he is still able to join in the fun and chaos!

Don't get me wrong, there have been some epic fights but also a lot of fun and laughter. Which is what I want us to remember above everything else. I've seen a lot of positive posts on Facebook and Instagram but one in particular stuck with me which is below. We are still safe and we are still loved.



Success of Fitness Club allows generous gestures

A generous donation in memory of Sheila Hillman has been made to Katherine House Hospice by Alex Birch and the Hornton Fitness Club whose weekly classes are now virtual.

"The weekly subs from the growing number of club members enabled us to make the donation – at Jane Wain's suggestion – and to continue paying rent to the Pavilion where income has been badly affected by current restrictions," said Alex. "Sheila was a stalwart of the Hornton keep-fit community over many years."

After help from Kevin and Tom Wain in testing a video conferencing app, Alex held the first on-line workout on Tuesday, March 24 when a dozen keep fitters took part.

"It was really fun seeing everyone simultaneously on screen," he said. "There was a genuine sense of community and, of course, we got a good workout too."

Since that first virtual workout the number of regular participants has doubled and Alex has also introduced a Thursday evening flexibility and mobility session.

"I hope the combination of strength and cardio on Tuesday with stretching and mobility on Thursday will further broaden the appeal of keeping fit during these unprecedented times," he said.

Anyone who would like to learn more about the Hornton Fitness Club should contact Alex at acw.birch@btinternet.com.



Alex conducts his classes from the kitchen at The Mount on Eastgate

On the farm

The first in a regular feature on farming life in and around Hornton has been contributed by Ted Fox



Ted Fox on his tractor with grandson Alfie.

Clare and I moved to Hornton four years ago in the hope of a quieter life (for Clare) and to get me away from the farm. The truth is that because of the very active social life in the village, Clare is busier than ever and I still seem to be at the farm most days.

I farm about 550 acres from a base in Wroxton covering four parishes: Wroxton, Balscote, North Newington and Drayton. My grandfather moved to Laurels Farm in the 1920s from Manor Farm, Balscote, farming about 100 acres there. I remember back in the 1960s there being seven farms in the village and now there is only one. How times have changed.

I grow arable crops - wheat, barley and oil seed rape - and have a breeding flock of sheep, lambing about 220 texel cross and north country mules which my nephew Michael runs.

Environmental schemes are also a part of the farm management plans including wild bird covers and over wintered stubbles for ground nesting birds and other wild life.

This winter has been one of the wettest on record and brought with it many challenges, not least our cropping programme (I have lost crops to the winter) and the state in which the weather has left our soils.

Lambing started in early January and finished towards the end of March. After early difficulties the lambing went well and the sheep are all now out to grass.

The Covid19 pandemic has not affected me too greatly so far as I have self-isolated on my tractor, finishing spring drilling on April 1, but it is just starting to affect commodity prices and, going forward, this will have an effect on all of us.

Clearly difficulties lie ahead for all of us but I would like to think that some of the barley I am growing will end up in the barrels of beer the Dun Cow will be stocking up on in the near future and we can enjoy a pint or two together again.

Watch out!

There are thieves about! Overnight on April 26/27 a lawnmower was stolen from Holloway House's walled vegetable garden. Other incidents have been reported from Quarry Road and Arlescote.

Sally Spencer, Hornton's Neighbourhood Watch co-ordinator, reminds us all to be vigilant: "If you have a theft or misdemeanour at your property call the police on 101, in the first instance, or contact BanburyRuralNHPT@thamesvalley.pnn.police.uk" she says. "I have the back-up and support of the local PCSOs should you need any assistance."

Put your stamp on it

A reminder - please continue to save used postage stamps and pop them through the letterbox at Holloway House. The money raised through this simple stamp collection helps BARKS, Banbury Animal Rescue and Kindness Service, continue to care for animals at a time when other fund-raising events are all cancelled.

Newcomers

A warm Hornton welcome to two families who have been rather unlucky in arriving in the village at a time when they cannot enjoy all that it has to offer.

They are the Davies family - Ralph and Caroline with children Giorgia, Lee, Caprice, Tiana and granddaughter Aria - who are renting Prentice House on Millers Lane and the Rackleys, Graham and Zena who have moved into Thorn Cottage with their youngest son Josh.



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Wind wreaks havoc

As storm Denis wrought havoc across the country in February, Hornton did not escape unscathed, with the model windmill in the garden of Bellevue on Bell Street its principal victim.



"An apple tree was brought down by the gale and, in falling, smashed one of the sails of the windmill," said Isabelle Harris.

Isabelle was particularly upset because the damaged windmill had been built by her father, Eric Turner, who died 15 years ago. Disappointed by the demolition of the original windmill on Holloway in the late 1960s, Eric built the one-third size replica in his back garden to preserve the memory of the old one.

Hornton's old stone tower mill with domed cap stood in a field at the top of Holloway for centuries. It was a wind-powered corn mill with chain weathering gear and common sails, the simplest type of sails. Its roof was constructed from copper on lead.

No-one seems to know when it was built or whether it replaced an earlier mill but it was shown on 1787 and 1882 maps. It stopped working for a period around 1869 but was working again by the early twentieth century. By the beginning of the First World War it had fallen into disuse and in time lost its sails, doors and windows.

"Finally it was bulldozed down early one Sunday morning in, I think, 1969," said Paul Burden, whose parents, Harold and Hazel, had rented the adjacent mill cottage for a while when Paul was a baby. "The village was sorry that the mill and its cottage could not be saved."

The model windmill will be saved. Repairs to the storm damage are being undertaken by Ian Harris with the help of Paul Burden. They will ensure that the sails of the windmill continue to turn and that, particularly at Christmas, festooned with lights, the little windmill will continue to delight Hornton.



A pen-and-ink drawing of Hornton Mill made by artist Karl Wood in 1934

The long and the short of it

Not my finest hour, says Jo Langton.

When Bob took delivery of a very impressive pair of hairdressing scissors and professional clippers in March, I asked him why he had bought them. He explained that as he was not able to go to the barbers I could cut his hair. Help, I thought. I can't cut a straight line on paper, never mind curly hair.

Could Bob have forgotten? When I last cut his hair I managed to cut off more around one ear than the other. He had to wear glasses to cover up the gap. Good job he had really thick hair and it grew quickly.

Having spent some hours looking at on-line videos on how to cut hair, I decided the most helpful one was a woman in America and followed her instructions to cut Bob's rather long hair. I knew that if I made a complete hash of it nobody would be going to see it and perhaps after 12 weeks I would try again and do a better job. But, I don't have a very good track record.

Confession time. When I was three years old my father was looking after me and, being a very indulgent man, he allowed me to play hairdressers with him. What he didn't know was that I had a pair of scissors, curlers and comb. While he read the paper I played. Then there was a loud snip of the scissors and a large lump of hair from the top of his head fell into his lap. My dad laughed but my mother did not have the same sense of humour and we were both in trouble.

On another occasion, and one which landed me in serious trouble, I cut off my best friend's plaits. I was six years old. She'd said that she didn't want them: they were long and heavy and took a long time to dry when we had been swimming. Being a helpful friend I cut them off. Jillian was happy with the result. Her mother was not. I was marched home and had a bad week.

Years later my mother told me that she and my father had laughed about that incident and that I had been punished to learn a lesson. Now, perhaps cutting Bob's hair was my last chance to do a good job. The result? See below. You judge.



Bob bows out

As Bob Langton hands over the chairmanship of the Banbury Museum Trust after eight years of dedicated service, he looks back at the creation of the Trust and the significant contribution it has made to the success of the Museum and its bright future.

In August 2012 Cherwell District Council decided it no longer wanted to take responsibility for running the Banbury Museum – that great red block that links Castle Quay, across the canal towards where all that new development is taking place.

They approached me to see if I would find a group of local business people with the necessary skills to form a new charitable trust and take over the running of the Museum. Those skills included finance, legal, education, marketing, fundraising and actual experience of running a museum – so we got the deputy director of the Ashmolean involved.

Within four weeks I had found eight other people with the skills we needed to join me in establishing a trust. We began as a shadow board for 15 months and in November 2013 we finally came into being as Banbury Museum Trust, with a long lease from the district council and sufficient funding in place to ensure a long-term viable future.

It has been a challenging eight years but most rewarding too. We were able to completely re-organise the way the Museum was run. All staff who were used to a council way of working suddenly found they were being run like a private sector business which had to be the way forward if the Museum was to survive a difficult funding journey ahead.

Our shop has continued to thrive, the café has had its ups and downs, we have raised over £400,000 for huge improvements including the new Pye Gallery, new Rosemarie Higham Library (due to open when the current closure ends) and we are halfway through a new programme to revamp the glass bridge exhibition area over the Oxford Canal. We also have planning consent for a £7-10 million three storey extension to the rear of our building which one day will overlook Castle Quay II.

On one night we raised £60,000 at a special dinner held at the White Tower at the Tower of London, hosted by Sir Tony Baldry our patron and the Royal Palaces marketing director who just happened to be one of our trustees. We raised all that money, mostly locally, without assistance from the Arts Council or National Lottery.

Simon Townsend, our director, has been inspired by the board of trustees and his team has changed, as the needs of the Museum and its business plan has evolved. We have also been lucky enough to attract a growing team of volunteers to supplement our paid full-time and part-time staff. We have had some fantastic exhibitions of national and international importance since the new gallery opened 18 months ago and many more are planned for when the Museum reopens.

I am sad to leave but the time was right after eight years at the helm as Banbury Museum Trust chairman. It came about just before coronavirus hit us, but rest assured we have an excellent new chairman, with 20 years' experience at the British Science Museum behind her, to lead the team of trustees into a bright new future when the Museum can open again.

Bob Langton

Taxi! Taxi!

There was a good turnout for Andrew Overton's talk, *The London Taxi – from Horse-drawn to Electric* at the Church on March 13. £235 was raised for St John the Baptist Church.

Andrew told how his grandfather founded Mann and Overton in 1899 and from 1906 the family firm spent over 100 years making and selling London cabs. Andrew himself was in the business for 41 years.

The interesting illustrated talk was followed by a lively question and answer session.

Gardening Club cancels events

The Three Hs Gardening Club has cancelled all meetings, bingo and its plant sale until further notice. "We hope to hold the flower show in August and will publish schedules as soon as we can," said Sally Tweedsmuir.

History Group go detectoring



Kevin Wain and Steve Woodcock try detectoring in the garden of Home Farm.

Led by our new member, historian and archaeologist Peter Spackman, the Hornton History Group tried its hand at metal detectoring in March in the garden of Home Farm House.

Peter explained the basic principles and methodology of the activity and then demonstrated how best to use the equipment. Everyone had a go, with varying degrees of success. Our haul included a sweet little belt buckle, various nails and screws, cartridge cap, bolts, Mansion Polish tin lid, broken plough shear, door lock, bits of farm equipment and a bundle of wire. Sadly no Anglo-Saxon hoard!

All good fun, followed by coffee and delicious cake provided by Lorna.

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Yipee! – Quarry Nurseries have opened...

Rhubarb charlotte

Serves 4 but you could scale it up.

Ingredients:

- 2lb or so rhubarb - sliced into 1 inch pieces
- Juice and zest of an orange
- 2oz sugar (to taste)
- Bread, brioche or panettone cut into 1 inch slices
- 3 1/2 oz butter, melted

Method:

- Preheat oven to 180C.
- Poach the rhubarb in the orange juice/zest and add the sugar. Mash or stir the fruit to break up any large pieces but do not puree.
- Choose an oven proof dish with quite high sides - about 7 x 5. Using a pastry brush smooth a layer of melted butter over the bottom and sides of the dish. Sprinkle with a little sugar and shake the dish to distribute the sugar over the sides and base.
- Cut the crusts off the bread and then cut with scissors to fit the bottom and sides of the dish, reserving some bread for the top. Brush both sides of the bread with melted butter and lay them in and around the dish.
- Spoon in the fruit mixture and cover with the remaining bread then brush generously with melted butter.
- Bake for at least 40 minutes until the top is golden brown. Serve with something yummy of your choice - enjoy!

Lynn Corke

And now for something savoury...



Sweet and sour rhubarb

Good as a chutney / sauce, particularly with chicken

Ingredients:

- 150g granulated sugar
- 100ml cold water
- 1 small onion, peeled and finely chopped
- 15g fresh root ginger, finely chopped
- 25g approx black peppercorns
- 8 crushed juniper berries
- 2 tsp approx sea salt
- 300g rhubarb cut into 2cm pieces

Method:

- Place all the ingredients, apart from the rhubarb, into a saucepan and bring to the boil. Simmer for about 5 minutes.
- Add the rhubarb and return to the boil. Once simmering take off the stove, cover and leave to cool. Spoon into sterilised jars and leave to cool - you can sterilise jars by heating on high in a microwave for 60 seconds, the lids should be boiled on the cooker for 10 minutes and then dried off.

Will store in a dark place for up to 3 months.

Lynn Corke

The Gossip

The copy deadline for the May issue of *The Gossip* is Thursday 6 August 2020 - submissions please to abbott@hornton.myzen.co.uk. To advertise in the next issue, please contact Cindy Koberl at ckoberl@btinternet.com.

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Twenty Questions

Jane Wain has submitted this quiz - have a go! This month we have birds!

1. This can result in being out of condition (6)
2. Gareth Malone would probably have loved one of these (7)
3. Jodie Foster portrayed Clarice in a horror film (8)
4. Obviously for a very tiny lock (4)
5. Traditionally he resides in a fruit tree (9)
6. Baby William uses this at mealtimes (9)
7. A bit of a joker with a story to tell (7)
8. The home of Luther King (5,6)
9. In the past a useful detector for use in the dark (6)
10. Features prominently in Arizona (7)
11. Christopher left his mark in several places (4)
12. A botanical supporter or a bringer of bundles of joy (5)
13. This bird is always crossing over somewhere (7)
14. Do you remember this comic? (5)
15. Hunted down under (6)
16. Despite being baked it still survives (9)
17. A well respected book publisher (7)
18. When the fats flying we should all know how to do this! (4)
19. A dangerous game to play on the highway (7)
20. Part of a colourful tool kit (6,6)

Answers in the next issue.

Answers to February's Twenty Questions quiz

1. Bacon. 2. Trifle 3. Pumpkin 4. Rhubarb
5. Prunes 6. Tea bags 7. Peanuts 8. Hot Cross Buns 9. Squash 10. Plain Flour
11. Swiss Roll 12. Cabbage 13. Carrots
14. Parsnips 15. Lettuce 16. Cream Crackers 17. Leeks 18. Gravy Granule
19. Brown Sauce 20. Sardine



Gliding on thermals...

As soon as warm, sunny weather comes to Hornton it brings with it the spectacular sight of red kites gliding on the thermals over the valley. Or are they buzzards?

The main difference between the two is their tails: deeply forked in the red kite and fanned in the buzzard. The buzzard is slightly smaller, heavier, and 'stumpier' than the kite, with a wingspan of one to one-and-a-half metres whilst the kite is larger, lighter and has an angled wing span of almost two metres.



In protected environments both species have been known to reach 25 years of age, but in the real world threequarters of buzzards die of starvation before maturing and those that survive live for about eight years. Red kites average four years. Both, given their imposing eagle-like appearance, have rather silly voices: a plaintive 'mew' when we'd expect a throaty growl.

The buzzard is a bird of prey which actively hunts for small mammals and birds and only takes carrion and worms when other food is in short supply. The kite's talons are weaker and it is more of a vulture, eating mainly carrion and worms and only opportunistically taking small mammals and exposed chicks. The two share airspace and feeding grounds but the kite will not surrender its food and will fight off any attempts at theft. Kites are intelligent birds and if they are attacked or threatened they will not return to that place. If captured, kites will play dead rather than fight back and are easily tamed.

It is wonderful to watch red kites fly. They can effortlessly and tirelessly reach enormous heights and can float on a thermal without one beat of a wing for fifteen minutes or more.

They are social birds and do not defend territory except for their nests, which they build at the tops of tall trees and line with fur, wool, feathers, paper and even plastic. They will use the same nest for several years. The female lays only one set of three eggs per year; she incubates them for 37 - 38 days while the male feeds her. The chicks hatch with down that is, amazingly, already camouflaged to match the interior of the nest. The female stays in the nest with them for the next two weeks.

The chicks are aggressive to one another but this rarely leads to death and about six weeks after hatching they will venture out on to neighbouring branches. Depending on how strong and well-fed the chicks are they will take their first flight 48 to 70 days after hatching and stay around their parents for a further 15 to 20 days before becoming independent.

Since the 1970s, when the red kite was on the verge of extinction, the population has grown by 805 per cent. Indeed, in the Thames Valley where there are 1,000 plus breeding pairs they have become a pest. This is mainly due to people feeding them so that, like gulls, they have naturally become demanding and aggressive and forgotten their table manners when they see a human eating a sandwich. Thanks to legal protection, buzzard numbers have also increased dramatically by 438 per cent since the 70s.

The RSB continues to insist that protection for raptors is necessary and that they do not pose a danger to the small bird population. However, many ornithologists would disagree, and logic tells us that since they have no natural predators to keep numbers down then this continued protection must at some point impact on smaller native birds.

Now can you tell who's who?

Birdbrain





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