



May 2020

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The Newsletter and "What's On" Guide for
Residents & Friends of Chelsfield Village

What to do - Virtually

Do you miss going out and want to go to the theatre, see a show, visit a museum, art gallery, a pub or restaurant?

Well you still can - Virtually - Read On

National Theatre at Home, are streaming a new play of theirs for free from 7pm every Thursday, and is available on demand until 7pm the next Thursday. For details see <https://www.nationaltheatre.org.uk>

A different Lloyd Webber musical will stream each week on The Shows Must Go On!, a new YouTube channel devoted to this project. Full length performances will go live on the channel on Friday at 7pm and will remain viewable for 48 hours

Many museums and art galleries have virtual tours.

Try googling courtauldinstitute youtube for a number of gallery tours
- one less serious with the swaggering Bill Nighy

The Rijksmuseum Gallery in Amsterdam has a good virtual tour with lots of information – find out why in The Night Watch by Rembrandt, there is a little girl in white, carrying a chicken upside down.

www.rijksmuseum.nl/en/masterpeices-up-close

Want to do some family history? If you have a library account, log in and within My Library Account, Click on 'Ancestry Library Edition' to use the Ancestry database normally available only within the library.

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With so many of us now confined to our homes, and wondering what to do with ourselves through this very difficult period make this time your opportunity to write something for the Village Voice?

Share your concerns, your experiences and thoughts

Please send anything you feel suitable for the

June 2020 issue to:
chelsfieldvillagevoice@gmail.com
or post to:

**Chelsfield Village Voice
2 Bucks Cross Cottages
Chelsfield Village BR6 7RN**

**to arrive by
Thursday 28th May
2020**

The Skylark

During this unusual time I'm spending a lot of my time in the garden: weather permitting. I have recently moved my birdfeeder close to the house in an attempt to make life more difficult for the squirrels. And as I read a lot just feet away from this feeder I was interested to see which species were willing to take food and which would spy me and stay away. To my surprise the most wary of the common garden species that like to use feeders was the robin although I think this is down to the individual personality of the bird in question. I have found robins that will feed from the hand while others stay their distance. At the other end of the spectrum were the long tailed tits who did not seem in the least bit concerned about me. I particularly enjoyed their visits as they are one of my favourite species. And on the subject of favourite species, this month I'm going to talk about the skylark (*Alauda arvensis*).

I was walking during the virus lockdown (for exercise and mental wellbeing you understand) and heading out towards

Lullingstone way where there are a lot of open fields which make for good 'skylark country'. This bird, as drab in plumage as the nightingale, is not as well known as common garden species but anybody who walks in open countryside will know this bird which is almost always heard but rarely seen. As a boy cycling around Kent I frequently watched as a skylark hung almost out of sight due to its great height yet its clear and complex song created that quintessential English backdrop. If one were to liken birdsong to different genre of music then the nightingale could be described as ones favourite: jazz or rock maybe. But if so, then the skylark's song would have to be classical music. Even if one does not enjoy it, one cannot argue that it is not the most complex and accomplished of them all. And other than perhaps the nightingale, few birds have generated as much poetry as the skylark.

Chaucer, Coleridge, Wordsworth, Browning and Shelley have all used the skylark as inspiration. George Meredith created

a wonderfully descriptive image of the bird. The first sentence of his poem *The Lark Ascending* being:

*He rises and begins to round,
He drops the silver chain of sound,
Of many links without a break,
In chirrup, whistle, slur and shake,
All interwoven and spreading wide,
Like water-dimples down a tide,
Where ripples ripple overcurls
And eddy into eddy whirls.*

This poem inspired Ralph Vaughan Williams to write his famous piece of the same name, considered one of Britain's favourite pieces of classical music.

But despite the skylark's fame, this bird was once seen as little more than food. An account from 1501 suggests skylarks were highly regarded food.

'The cheefe foode of the Englishman consisteth in fleshe of wild burdes, pheasants, quayles, owseles, thrushes and larkes. This last burde, in winter season, the wether being not to owtragios,

*dothe waxe wonderous
fatte, at which time a
wonderful nombre of them
is caught, so that of all
others they cheffe
garnishe menn's tables.'*

Indeed, an old and now redundant proverb refers to a 'land where the larks fall ready roasted'. In earlier times these birds would be captured in their thousands during winter when they would congregate in large flocks – the collective noun for a flock of skylarks being an exultation. Nowadays these groups are rarely more than a few dozen. In Victorian times larks cost one shilling and sixpence a dozen and Mrs Beeton included in her famous 'Book of household management' a recipe using nine birds stuffed and baked with beef, bacon and shallots. At the end of the Victorian era songbirds were becoming less common as a source of food but were used on celebratory occasions such as the opening of the Forth Bridge in 1890 when a huge pie was presented which included 300 birds. The eating of larks only declined with conservation efforts and the eventual banning of the catching of larks in 1931. Yet it is only in recent years that their numbers have suffered



and one has to wonder if this bird suffers from the use of modern farming techniques. I found one reference decrying the decline of this bird with the words:

It makes me furious to observe the decline of the skylark, the very voice of English air and soil. I fear the connection between the bird, the land, the music, the suffering (the lark ascending is frequently used for Remembrance Day) and the soil could all be lost forever, for the sake of weed control, winter ploughing and a larger yield. - Maybe the Millers could tell us how modern farming techniques (winter sown crops for instance) have changed since the war to this bird's detriment as this seems to be a reoccurring theme when I read about the bird's

decline in numbers.

I'll finish on an interesting point about this bird's habit of flying high and singing for all the world to hear. Such a strategy is highly risky as it exposes the bird to the dangers of predators. Yet this seems to be an example of something called the 'handicap principle'. This is where an animal endangers itself to show potential mates how 'fit' it is by putting itself at risk.

Well, hopefully nobody will be at risk as presumably we come to the end of this current 'lock-down' process and we can all get back to our normal lives.

Steve Fuller
May 2020

Mutterings From The Millers

What lovely weather we had in April, just what we all needed.

All the crops germinated well after their planting at the end of March and the dose of fertiliser Peter applied at the end of April has fed all the plants. We had a little rain just after he did this which was great and now all the plants are looking green and healthy. The picture is of spring oats. We will now just be carefully



monitoring the crops as they grow and apply fungicide if needed. We have been told by our Agronomist (over the telephone obviously) that parts of Kent are being

decimated by flea beetle in the oil seed rape crops but we are not growing this fortunately. Still awaiting to hear about our farm inspection. We had the sprayer tested at the end of April as its certificate was due and keeping the farm records up to date in readiness.

It is lovely to see so many people using the footpath to the church from Warren Road, but it is getting wider due to the number

of people using it and trying to social distance which we understand. We won't have to spray the path off this year that is for sure. I noticed four young lads doing

wheelies right across the wheat and then they cycled over to the far hedge. I managed to call a couple of them over nearer to me and calmly explained that I appreciate they needed somewhere to cycle but doing wheelies and skids over the emerging wheat plants was a bit upsetting. I also explained that we hadn't managed to get the crop in last year due to the rain so these plants were quite precious to us. They nodded and said all right and off they went. I think lock down is getting to me!

You may have noticed that we have lost the plastic covering on our poly tunnel. Unfortunately we were broken into a couple of weeks ago and someone tried to steal a trailer. For some unknown reason, they cut a doorway out of the side of the poly tunnel instead of using the double doors which were open. We then had strong winds for the next week which tore the rest of the plastic off. The trailer had a flat tyre so they were not able to push it far fortunately. The straw that was in there we managed to

move to a barn.

We have been busy trimming some of the trees in Church Road. This work is normally done during the winter but it was too wet to get on the land. We are doing this for two reasons, the ash trees are diseased with ash die back and the sight line along the road very difficult. Trying to come out of The Grove to cross Church Road into Sparrowhawks is very dangerous, so now we and the drivers can see better. If we left the diseased trees they could fall onto the power/ telephone wires or across the road, a few branches had already fallen. In the autumn we will box this hedge up which will help the wildlife. Whilst doing the work, Steve heard a long bang (it must have been loud because he is nearly deaf) and realised

he has run over something and one of the tyres burst resulting in a very large hole in the tyre. He very slowly drove it back to the yard and called the tyre man. Unfortunately all four tyres needed changing so £1200 later we had new shiny tyres complete with decent treads!

We were thrilled to see our first swallow arrive at the farm on the 5th April and the second one came two weeks later. At the time of writing this, end of April, no more have arrived but we hope to report lots more next month. We have a wren nesting in our log store next to the house, blue tits in the nest box, pied wagtails in the yard and sparrows close by. I decided to attack the ivy growing up the wall and through into the workshop but was stopped abruptly

by finding a nest with eggs in. I quickly left the ivy and a robin returned to sit on the eggs, phew. Needless to say the ivy will have to wait until the autumn to be removed. It is always lovely to see and hear the birds but the swallows always seem to bring joy of a forthcoming summer.

A slight variation on red sky at night weather quote for this month:-

If the evening is red and the morning grey

It is a sign of a bonnie day.

If the evening's grey and the morning red,

The lamb and the ewe go wet to bed.

*Chris Miller
Court Lodge Farm*

Roundabout Update

As many residents have been asking me questions, I contacted Bromley Council regarding the new roundabout at the Warren Road / A224 junction as I was concerned that although I appreciated that all construction work

was at a standstill during this difficult time if Bromley Council suffered financial losses due to the Corona virus pandemic the money allocated for the roundabout would disappear.

However, I am pleased to

say that I have been assured that the funding is ring fenced for that project and work will commence as soon as it is possible but the Council will have to depend, to a certain extent, on Government guidance.

Pam Ames

St Martin of Tours - We Are Here For You



ST MARTIN OF TOURS – YOUR LOCAL PARISH CHURCH

Rector: Rev John Tranter Tel: (01689) 825749

Email: rector@stmartinchelsfield.org.uk

As you will know by now, the church building has to stay closed while we're in the 'lock-down' scenario that is happening at the time of writing, but St Martin's is still alive and active for everyone, just in a different way. We now have a YouTube channel where you can catch a weekly service, as well as a presence on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram. On the church's own website you'll find a weekly newsletter with prayers and readings, and we're also putting the monthly parish magazine on there so please do share your stories and messages with us. We're putting prayers, messages and other information on our social media pages, so please do check them out if you would like to stay in touch or know more.

Worship – Rev John will continue to pray daily on your behalf at the following times:

Sunday	10.00am	Holy Communion
Monday	9.30am	Morning Prayer
Tuesday	11.30am	Holy Communion
Wednesday	9.30am	Morning Prayer
Thursday	7.00pm	Evening Prayer
Friday	11.30am	Holy Communion
Saturday	9.30am	Morning Prayer

Prayer – if you have specific prayer requests or wish to have a candle lit in church for a suffering loved one, please provide Rev John with brief details (contact info above) and he will act on your behalf. For private prayer, there are many resources available on the Church of England and Diocese of Rochester websites, and our social media accounts are posting daily prayers.

You can call Rev John at any time for prayer or a chat using the contact details above. Keep safe, keep secure and keep in touch.

Church website www.stmartinchelsfield.org.uk

Search for 'Chelsfield St Martins' on these social media sites to find our pages:



Chelsfield Players Goes Digital - Part 2

In our last despatch I said how the Players were looking to go online with Zoom for play readings. Since then we have met 7pm on a Tuesday and have read through several prospective plays for the delectation of our audiences.

These include;-

◆One that we had to pull 20 years back when the director broker her leg

◆A John Godber classic

◆Another which we all loved where we are hoping to secure the first amateur rights. All very hush-hush. All very exciting.

Brain buds have also been stretched with some quizzes while word rehearsals are continuing apace for *Funny Money*, which was pulled for lockdown, so that we can hopefully return with this production sometime in the Autumn.

After the quiz, reading or rehearsal is done, people tend to stay online chatting. Time is not an issue as one of our members has taken out the full Zoom package. It's no way a substitute for crowding into the 5 Bells for pints and wines and crisps but we do our best with drinks and nibbles until Kay and Ade can at last open up again.

*Jo East
Chelsfield Players*

Help Through The Lockdown

**Chelsfield Volunteers
07767 211891**

As this edition of Village Voice reaches you we will be into our sixth week of lockdown, and also our sixth week of Chelsfield Volunteers.

For those who have to stay in their homes to avoid getting or spreading Covid 19, Chelsfield Volunteers have been fetching groceries and collecting prescriptions, posting letters and parcels, offering phone support and walking dogs. We

now have over 40 volunteers offering to help people in and around Chelsfield, and the generosity and goodwill of all those who have come forward has been one of the big positives during these difficult times.

We have delivered on over 320 calls for practical assistance since we started on 23 March, and offered reassurance and advice to many more callers.

We know many older people really want to help



Here's Dollie ready for her walk!

but are themselves not able to go out at the moment. One of our callers told us, "I don't

like to ask for help but we all need to do what we can to get through this crisis. The best I can do is stay home, it doesn't feel like much but it really matters!" The messages of support for the volunteers have been warm and heartfelt.

We have been working closely with the local pharmacies, Lloyds, Stevens and Rowlands in Green Street Green, and we have a good rota system operating for delivering prescriptions to those who cannot collect.

We have also been able to get urgent medication to people who have been very unwell. Mark went

on to our Facebook page to say "Thank you so much for collecting my transplant medication".

A lot of people don't use online services, or cannot get a supermarket slot. We have been delivering groceries to these people to keep them supplied.

If you need support please contact Chelsfield Volunteers on 07767 211891 Or email:

chelsfieldvolunteers@gmail.com

Sadly there are scammers about. We will never cold call – all contact will be arranged

through these details. We are working closely with the neighbouring volunteer groups on our boundaries, and it is great to see that there is now volunteer support across the whole Orpington area. Life has changed, but it has been hugely encouraging to see how people can come together when the chips are down and to get to know our neighbours a little better.

Visit us on Facebook – Chelsfield Volunteers Covid-19 Mutual Aid Group
https://www.facebook.com/groups/2920719837986066/?ref=group_header

Pam Temple

Chelsfield's Casualties of World War 2

This month we commemorate two people who appear on the War Memorial in the church and who died 80 years ago in the service of their country, Edward Clarke and Leonard Webber. Some of you may recognise the second as 'Leonard Frank Webber' is the last name to be read out every Remembrance Sunday before the bell tolls 11 and the Last Post

is played. I have researched as much as I can about Edward Clarke, but there is very little information available about his life before the war or his family. Back in 2013, Anne Taylor and John Barnes researched the life of Leonard Webber as my goddaughter Steph had discovered he was a bellringer. Following the section on Edward Clarke is the article John

produced at the time for the parish magazine using Anne's research.

**Sergeant
Edward Clarke
Observer,
40 Squadron, RAF
15 May 1940, in
Belgium, aged 20**

580485 Sergeant Edward Clarke was the son of Alfred and Ellen Clarke of Chelsfield. He died on a mission on 15 May 1940,

aged 20, and is buried in Belgium 15/05/1945. Clarke was an Observer in 40 Squadron of the Royal Air Force. At the start of the war No. 40 Squadron was part of the Advanced Air Striking Force sent to France. At this point the Squadron were using Blenheim Mk IV's as a general reconnaissance aircraft – more information on these here:

www.historyofwar.org/articles/weapons_bristol_blenheim_IV.html

On 10 May 1940 the Germans began their heavy onslaught, and No.40 Squadron's Blenheims were immediately forced into the battle. The website:

http://www.epibreren.com/ww2/raf/40_squadron.html

has a report of the mission on 15 May and the fate of Clarke's plane and crew. The mission was to bomb the bridges over the Meuse in the Dinant-Celles area, but they encountered German Luftwaffe before they got there and were shot down north-west of Charleroi.



Clarke's fellow crew were Wing Commander (Pilot) Ernest C. Barlow, RAF 15181, and Leading Aircraftman (W. Op/Air) Albert E. Millard, RAF 615087. The report says they flew from Wyton at 0930 and were shot down near Ecaussinnes d'Enghien (Hainaut), 18 km NE of Mons, Belgium, together with aircraft P4913. Clarke was buried with the other members of his crew at the Ecaussinne d'Enghien Communal Cemetery in Belgium, which is not a war cemetery but a local village burial ground. He, his fellow crewmen and those of the other plane are the only war graves there. The inscription the family chose for his grave was

*'And through the years
Shall shine
Their undimmed youth'*

Here is the entry for Edward Clarke on the Commonwealth War Graves Commission website:

<https://www.cwgc.org/find-war-dead/casualty/2254370/clarke,-edward/>

**Lance Corporal
Leonard Frank Webber
27 May 1940, near
Calais, aged 19
Bell Ringer, St Martin of
Tours, Chelsfield**

A few months ago, in the course of her studies for her Master's Degree, Stephanie Rueff, granddaughter of the late Allan and Barbara Barter, was studying the conservation of records. A bell ringer, she consulted Alan Regin, Trustee of the Rolls of Honour of the Central Council of Church Bell Ringers, about the conditions in which the Rolls are kept. They are lodged at St Paul's Cathedral, London, and there, amazingly, in her investigations, she discovered that in 1940 Leonard Frank Webber, a Chelsfield ringer, had given his life for his country in France. Anne Taylor, a present-day Chelsfield ringer, followed

up the story, and succeeding in finding references on a World War Two website. She consulted Hazel Basford, Kent County Association Librarian, who in turn also contacted Alan Regin, and I have drawn upon their research in writing this article. Steve McCann put me in touch with Philip Horton, whose home, "The Haven", 26 Oxenden Wood Road, Chelsfield, was from 1929 to 1965 the home of the Webber family. Philip has kindly supplied much material about that family. He was in touch with Winifred Amadon, Leonard's sister, until her death in July 2013 and has put me in touch with her daughter, Margaret Denny, who lives in Chicago. She has sent many details. I also acknowledge the help I have received from Hilary Hinde, Bob Hogben, Philip Lane, Ian Oram, Geoffrey Copus and Mrs Michaela Foley, Head Teacher of Chelsfield Primary School, and School Secretary Jan. I acknowledge with gratitude the photograph of Leonard taken in 1937 when he was seventeen, sent by Margaret Denny, and the photograph of

Leonard's gravestone, taken for us recently by Alan Regin. Our thanks also to Alan for the photograph of Leonard's entry in the Rolls of Honour. It will be noticed that in the 1937 photo the seventeen years old young man was proudly wearing his Scout badge.

On the Ancestry website there is record of the marriage in Lambeth District in summer 1914 between Leonard A Webber and Cecilia F Dyer; Margaret Denny confirms the date as 12 September. It appears that the family's first home was at New

Malden, Surrey, and when they moved to Orpington, they lived first at "Khyra", Oatfield Road, Leonard (and, I imagine, Albert) attending Chislehurst Road Primary School. About June 1929 they moved to "The Haven", Oxenden Wood Road. Built two years earlier, in 1927, it was first purchased by William Tebay and was a bungalow sited on a three quarters of an acre site. Albert, born on 23 March 1917, was aged twelve, young Leonard, born on 1st October 1920, was aged eight and Winifred, born on Christmas Day, 1924, was four years old. Their father worked in Glyn Mills Bank in Whitehall. The Admissions Register at Chelsfield Primary School shows that, whilst there is no record of Albert Webber, Leonard transferred from Chislehurst Road School, Orpington, to Chelsfield Primary School on 11 June 1929. He left on 4 August 1933, aged twelve, when he transferred to Beckenham Art School. Transferring with him was Rex Dunmall, stated to have won a scholarship. Winifred started at



17-year-old Leonard Frank Webber

Chelsfield School on 27 April 1931 and transferred eventually to Orpington Central School, later known as Charterhouse Road Secondary School. Sadly their mother Cecilia died in 1935 aged 47, when young Leonard was fourteen, and was buried in Chelsfield Churchyard. Grandmother Dyer then came to live at "The Haven". As Winifred was married at Orpington Methodist Church on 8 July 1945, it confirms that they were a Methodist family. Leonard was to lose his schoolfriend Rex who died as a result of a motor cycle accident in 1938 on Star Hill, Knockholt. Rex was certainly artistic: Mary Haines has a picture painted by him and remembers him living at Maple House (sic), Maypole Road.

At the outbreak of war in 1939, Leonard volunteered for the army promptly. Sadly, in 1940 the Rector of Chelsfield, Canon Herbert W Mackay, wrote of Leonard's death in our Parish Magazine:

"One of our men on our Roll (of Service) is now

known to have been killed in action, the first of our Chelsfield lads to give up his life for his country and its righteous cause. Leonard Frank Webber "joined up" as a volunteer last year. He was only 19, and was killed while taking part in the heroic defence of Calais. He had been a choir boy, had helped with the Bell-ringing, and was a King's Scout (a great honour). All who knew him spoke of him with affection and esteem."

6898432 Lance Corporal Leonard Webber was serving in the 2nd Battalion the Queen Victoria's Rifles, King's Royal Rifle Corps. On 6th March 1940 he sailed for France as part of the British Expeditionary Force to join units already there. From a forum on the www.ww2talk.com website we have found that on 27 May 1940 there were two British soldiers on a farm near where the Roman Road crosses the Esquelbecq to Zegers-Chappel road at a place called 'Huntsman's Rest'. One soldier was LCpl Webber and we believe that the other may have been an officer. This was the time

of the retreat to Dunkirk, about twenty-five miles away, and the two men were cut off by the advancing German army. A firefright broke out and carried on until the ammunition of the two men ran out. They were then killed. Two days later, the German SS having departed, the owner of the farm returned to find the bodies of the two men in a pigsty. They had been partially stripped and had been robbed of their belongings. Such is the brutality of war.

It is thought that the officer who died beside Leonard Webber was Second Lieutenant Piers Richard Edgcombe. If so, had he survived the war, he would, because of tragedy elsewhere, have become the Sixth Earl of Mount Edgcombe.

LCpl Webber is buried in Esquelbecq Military Cemetery. [The inscription on his headstone chosen by the family reads 'His Life He Gave That Others Might Live' - PR] It would seem that Leonard Webber had not yet joined the Kent County Association of Change Ringers. The



Photo courtesy of Anne Rueff

Association's Annual Reports do not list individual members of bands until 1956, apart from details of Tower Correspondents, but its

records indicate that no Chelsfield ringers of the period were members. Had he been a member, the name of the Association would have been included beside his name in the Rolls of Honour.

Mr Webber senior continued to live at the family home until his death in 1965. He too is buried in Chelsfield Churchyard, as is Cecilia Dyer, his mother-in-law, who died on 22 August 1936. Another niece of young Leonard, Christine Green, Albert Webber's daughter, lives with her husband Tony in Chilham, near Canterbury. There are also two more nieces and a nephew on the North

American continent.

John Barnes [October 2013]

Here is the entry for Leonard Webber on the Commonwealth War Graves Commission website:

<https://www.cwgc.org/find-war-dead/casualty/2276572/wEBBER,-leonard-frank/>

If you have any information about the rest of the names on our war memorial I'd love to hear from you. Please contact me on:

pjrookeAThotmailDOTcom

*Philippa Rooke
07826 516481*

Update From Mike Botting

Dear all,

I hope that this message finds you all well?

If you have not already seen this information I am sending it for the benefit of you and your residents. There is so much information coming out of the centre on a daily basis that I would encourage you all to keep

an eye on the Government websites, LBB Council website and your Chelsfield Councillors Facebook page.

The information that I have attached will be of particular interest to your elderly and vulnerable residents, your business owners and parents of school children. If I come

across anything of particular interest I will of course forward to you but am conscious that I do not want to swamp you.

COVID-19. SHIELDING VULNERABLE PEOPLE

To update you on the progress we are making to support residents. Bromley now has just over 4200 volunteers

registered, available to support residents who are making contact with us on a daily basis requesting varying levels of assistance. Around 850 residents are receiving support from the volunteers who have stepped forwards. All this is in addition to the 1550 residents who are receiving regular food parcels as part of the national shielding programme, who we are in contact with and are part of the 4150 residents identified within the shielding initiative.

COVID-19 assistance helpline
Tel: 020 8313 4484

I must please stress that the Covid-19 helpline phone number is for residents who DO NOT HAVE ACCESS TO THE INTERNET only. If everyone tries to use it will overwhelm the system and it will crash which will benefit no one.

BUSINESS SUPPORT

If you need help and advice to support a small business a new portal

has been set up on the London Borough of Bromley web site and we are here to offer our support in any way we can.

<https://www.bromley.gov.uk/COVID-19BusinessSupport>

SCHOOLS

Bromley schools continue to impress us with their dedicated focus on vulnerable children and continued provision over the Easter period. Our Director of Education, Jared Nehra continues to provide daily advice and guidance and an escalation point to the DfE for any significant issues or queries that arise. Just over 40 schools have remained open over Easter, including bank holidays. This has included a number of schools acting as a hub for children from other schools.

Our online form for parents to request a place is now well embedded and I am pleased to confirm that we have been able to accommodate all eligible requests to date. The department is anticipating



THE LONDON BOROUGH

COVID-19 Shielding Initiative

4200+ Volunteers

850 residents receiving support

HELPLINE
020 8313 4484



an increase in requests from next week and is well prepared for this. We are aware from regular discussions with the DfE, Ofsted and other local authorities, that the number of vulnerable children and young people attending schools is low across the country. In Bromley, we are working with families to increase the number of vulnerable children accessing schools and additionally focused on ensuring regular contact with our vulnerable families and signposting to a comprehensive offer of support.

Safeguarding of vulnerable children remains our top priority and Children, Education and Families services continue to work closely with schools and partners for the safety of our children.

Primary National Offer Day 2020

Primary National Offer Day went ahead as planned on Thursday 16th April and I am delighted that we once again maintained a very high level of parental

preferences for 2020 admissions with more than 98 percent of children receiving a preference named on their application. This is ahead of the London average which stands at 97 per cent.

That figure includes 3,347 families who were offered their first preference, taking the percentage of first-choice placements to more than 85 per cent. Over the first three preferences, Bromley achieved an impressive 96.5 per cent, more than a percentage point above the London average.

Over the coming weeks, the Bromley Admissions team is on hand to help with any queries. The lines for the admissions team will be open Monday - Friday 12 noon to 3pm on 020 8313 4044.

Free School Meals

The Government's national voucher scheme for free school meals is in place and many schools have been able to utilise this service to support families. However we have received some

reports of issues with the service provided by Edenred, which were immediately escalated to senior DfE officials. I am pleased that we secured confirmation that schools can continue to reclaim the cost of locally sourced arrangements from DfE, which will help ensure that families can continue to access this support without delay.

Early Years

Bromley Early Years Team continues to work closely with providers, settings and childminders and are supporting them through this challenging time, including ensuring continued access to funding. In excess of 100 settings will remain open for eligible children from next week, including the Council's two maintained nurseries.

Specialist Provision

We continue to work closely with special schools and additionally resourced provisions to continue providing access to care, where their collaborative risk assessment indicates children and young people cannot be safely

cared for at home. Those children open to CSC continue to have their statutory needs met in accordance with regulations and our practice standards. The Local Offer has been updated with details to assist our families with timely access to support and advice. We have also issued the special edition of our SENDMatters newsletter, providing frequently asked

questions and details of a variety of services and support.

I hope that you find the above of interest.

Please stay safe

Kind regards

Mike Botting
Councillor for Chelsfield & Pratts Bottom (including Green Street Green)

Tel: 07976-280511
Mike.Botting@bromley.gov.uk

Is your journey really necessary?
We are encouraging residents and businesses needing to contact the council to do so via the website and not by visiting the Civic Centre. Latest updates at:

Coronavirus (COVID-19) – what you need to

Local History Group - Part 2

Pneumatic Railways

Following on his talk about the Great Kent Atmospheric Railway Nick Reynolds gave a

description of other uses of air pressure for propulsion.

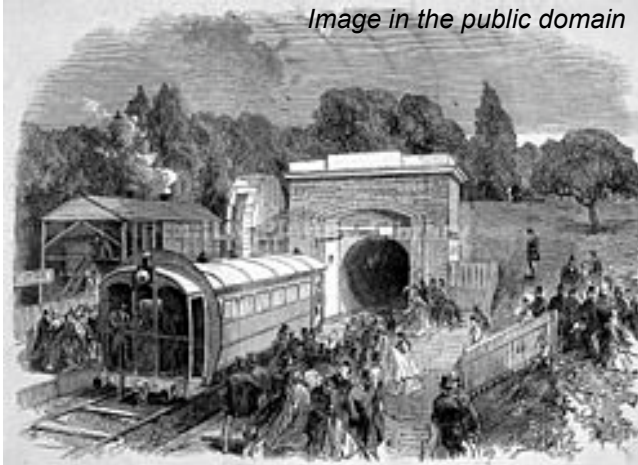
In 1861 Joseph Latimer Clark built a

demonstration pneumatic railway along side the River Thames. This was designed to carry packages, not passengers, inside a tube. This concept was taken up by the Post Office. The London Pneumatic Despatch Company was formed by the Post Office and ran from 1863-74. The track, designed by Thomas Webster Rammell, ran from Euston to Holborn.

In 1864 Rammell built a demonstration broad gauge track was built from Crystal Palace to Norwood. It was 1800 feet long and carried people.



Image in the public domain



From 1865-6 this railway became the Waterloo and Whitehall Railway but it was abandoned half way, its tunnel later being used by the Bakerloo Line. At the same time a pneumatic railway in an elevated tube was constructed in New York and used for joy rides.

Smaller scale pneumatic despatch systems were longer lasting. In 1853 a 675 feet line, 1.5 inches in diameter, was built to connect the Telegraph Company's Offices in with London's Stock Exchange. In 1870 J W Willmott developed a double sluice valve which allowed rapid despatching of successive capsules. By 1886 London's Post Office telegraph service

alone had 34 miles of pneumatic tunnels. From 1893 five US cities had pneumatic postal systems. The New York system carries 55% of the city's letter mail and operated until 1952. Several automatic routing systems were developed, one based on musical notes. Pneumatic cash despatch systems were

also use.

In 1872-4 the Mekarski system air engine was developed using a pressurised cylinder reservoir. This was used to power a tram system in Nantes, France from 1879-1917

Compressed air powered torpedoes were developed in 1866. The air was stored at a pressure of 370psi. The range was 200 yds and the speed 6.5 knots. By 1906 the range had increased to 1,100 yds and the speed to 35 knots.

Since the 1920s inventors have been striving to develop air powered cars. The production of vehicles is always just a few years



away. Scientific principles are not favourable to the success of this concept. A successful development of compressed air power is in railways where a compressed air reservoir is used. These vehicles are long lived and still used in shunting and mining applications. They have the advantage of being cheap to run, safe and ready to use when required.

Modern atmospheric railways are in use today in Brazil and Jakarta, Indonesia. The aeromovel is a wind driven elevated train in Jakarta. The rail beam is actually a wind tunnel and flaps under the train

use the wind's kinetics energy in a manner similar to the sail of the boat. Modern materials are used to seal the slot in the tube.

Looking to the future, American engineer Max Schlienger has built a large scale model of a

passenger railway in his Californian vineyard driven by a vacuum which propels a "thrust carriage" which is connected to the train via powerful magnets.

You can find it here.

www.wired.com/story/flight-rail-vector-atmospheric-railway-train/



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Talks About Talks

One of the many side effects of this enforced isolation and distancing, has been the mass cancellations of talks and presentations to groups and organisations. For myself, it all began (before Corona was nothing more than a cordial that was delivered to the home in the 1950's) when we were due to perform our Christmas Carol bash at

a local pub in Littleington just before Christmas. Jayne and I got marooned by floodwater near Alfriston and had to be rescued. My next scheduled 2020 talk was to present My Music Talk to the local National Trust, planned 2 years ago to an audience of some 200 people. This was sadly cancelled after much debate due to the possible infection risk of

the dreaded virus. I am now honing my music on keyboard and accordion in the forlorn hope that, in due course, not only will I still be able to lift the latter, but my audience is still able and willing to listen!

Chatting to my Dad tonight (103) he recounted his many exploits giving slide show talks on flora and fauna

to numerous groups in Bromley area and Kent. For many years I too had been giving similar illuminated talks on Old Chelsfield and District, where my greatest adversaries were the numerous old Chelsfieldians, still alive and kicking, keen to put me right, when I might wrongly attribute a photo to the wrong family, date, or event! Nora Lander and Clare Hogben, not to mention Anne Mead, were my particular "Factual Correcters".

As these delightful people moved into their respective Heavenly Archives, I was free to say what I liked, embellished with a degree of colourful suppositions that nobody dare, nor were qualified

to dispute....

I actually wrote and acted in a One Man Show and used a character, Leonard Trotter (see attached) whom I had played with the Chelsfield Players. For my show I took a series of photos of obscure subjects such as "Cast Iron Draincovers of Southern England"; "Housebricks"; "Municipal Street Signs of Bromley and Orpington".

I performed this 2 hour show 6 times over two years, and in the final show accidentally tipped all the slides on the stage and had to put them back into the magazine at random, whilst staying in character. Audience thought it was in the script... Dad recounted doing this at a huge talk

just before the start and lost *his* closely scripted presentation, that was supposed to be most serious!

Over the last 20 odd years I have given talks on Old Chelsfield, Aerial Photography, St Martins Church (narrated by Ann Blatcher fortunately!) and My Music. The latter has proved very popular as I have written many pieces of music for keyboard, piano and accordion.

Sadly it looks like all talks for 2020 will be cancelled. For many years, whilst still living in Chelsfield, I was asked back several times to a Jewish group in Lewisham. I still come back to Orpington for music talks, especially St John's in Lynwood Grove.



Amongst the many humorous anecdotes that befell me during these hundreds of talks worthy of mention:

- *Struggling to find a hall, room or private house at night. Often only part of the main Hall, round the back, nobody unlocks till last moment!*

- *Struggling to find*

somewhere to park close to the venue to offload my equipment.

● *Discovering from a phone call the evening before that they were expecting my talk not to be the one I prepared. (equally awkward was a local WI talk when another speaker turned up whilst I was setting up my music talk! I won this battle coz I was there first. Not my fault)*

● *Giving my Music Talk with theatrical attachments to a huge group in Hayes, in my alter ego as "Grangewood School Headmistress, Miss Lavinia Gibson" (their request), whereby I was using the back room to*

change and store my gear during the 'Hayes Business' section. When I returned after half an hour there was an art class meeting in that room who had moved my wig and all my clothes. I had to create a secluded space behind the backstage drapes using my floodlights and make-up mirror. I had to show myself again to them all once dressed and nearly ended up as their model! (I wished I'd actually turned up already as Miss G!) The afternoon was a big hit and they paid me double.

So there we have it. We have been using this period of enforced lockdown, during this lovely weather, to sort

out the garden at Sea Hiolly House (Jayne;s hard work here), rebuild and weatherproof my workshop and garage, and generally address the enormous amount of stuff we brought down from Chelsfield. Surrounded by the wonderful South Downs and sea, and having our family not too far away, the main problem has been to keep in touch with Dad in Chelsfield Lane and ensure that the house, garden and everything is in order. His main carer Claire is his own guardian angel during this difficult time. My visits have to be less frequent and without contact of course. He has been living there for 67 years.....!

Phil Lane April 20

Canadian Cousins - Part 1

The last time I wrote about family history it concerned how I discovered my paternal grandfather using DNA analysis. This time I'd like to write about how I discovered Canadian cousins by sheer good fortune. So I will begin by giving a little background information as to how the family wings became separated.

It all starts with a distant

living relative I found via the Ancestry website some years ago while researching my ancestors who lived in a small Norfolk village called Skeyton just north of Norwich. Her name is Cathie Matice and at the time she lived in Rochester, New York but has recently moved to Florida to avoid the cold winters. It seems we have a common ancestor by the name of Phillip Neal who

was born in 1780. He was my 3rd Gt Grandfather and Cathie's 5th making us 4th cousins twice removed. We have on occasion helped each other with our respective research and back in August 2015 I mentioned to her that I was going to take a trip to Skeyton for a few days to look around and take a few photographs etc. Cathie asked if I could keep an eye open for the farm from

which her ancestors emigrated to the US in 1889 and of course I was more than willing to help. She did not know the name of the farm but had a photograph to help in the search.



Initially I searched out the church where I knew Phillip had been buried in 1859 as I had previously visited the area back in the 1980s. The church is dedicated to St Andrew and is situated in a local village by the name of Lammas. The first photo shows it to be a very pretty church without a metalled road running to its entrance. The second photo shows Philip and his wife (Phillis') gravestone situated behind the church



(and in front of the tree trunk in the photo). I noted that in the 1980s I could read the details on the stone but now, after the effects of 40 years of acid rain, only the largest text can be read. Interestingly Anna Sewell, the author of 'Black Beauty' is also buried in this graveyard. I'm going to digress a little from the main theme of the story here a little because there is an interesting piece of evidence I found many years ago relating to Phillip and think readers may be interested. While researching the family back in the 80s I was in the Norfolk record office looking at original documents and found a reference to a court case held in 1821 relating to the village of Skeyton. I ordered the document and found that the case centred on whom was responsible for repairing a stretch of washed out road in the village of Lammas. The road led to Buxton mill but was on the land of a Mr Palgrave. So who was responsible for the cost of repair: Mr Palgrave or the villagers who used the road? A little confusingly the document was titled 'The King against the inhabitants of Lammas'

despite the King not being mentioned in the document again (Lammas is a hamlet of Skeyton and is variously spelt with and without the second 'm'). The document also talks in both the past and future tense which is a little confusing! So a number of people gave evidence at the case and one of them was Phillip and his evidence was:

Phillip Neal of Lammas, aged 40 years, will prove that he lived as carter to Mr Palgrave at Buxton Mills about 15 years since, that Mr Welsh, the clerk set him five or six different times to repair the road between the mills and weirs during the 18 months he continued in Mr Palgrave's service – and that he never knew or heard of a Lamas surveyor performing any highway duty upon said road.

Such information may not be pivotal in any historic saga but it gives an interesting insight into the everyday life of an ancestor who lived 200 years ago. The sort of informational gem that makes family history such an absorbing pastime.

Steve Fuller

To be continued.....

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

ALL DIARY DATES ARE SUSPENDED UNTIL FURTHER NOTICE