

# The Sundridge Village News

## June 2020

In this issue we bring you a glimpse into the nation's most popular purchases during lockdown, news from the school and how the staff, parents and children have adapted to the challenges, news of the Sundridge Village News website, some VE Day local history and what our Community Support Group has been doing.



### St Mary's Church

Sadly, our church remains closed but there is a glimmer of hope. In last Sunday's "Telegraph" I read that Tory MPs are calling for "further, faster" reopening of places of worship, citing that shoppers could go to a busy supermarket to buy food and drinks but worshippers in need of spiritual sustenance could not pray in a largely empty church. The Government's recovery strategy, published earlier this month, puts churches and other public places of worship in the same bracket as pubs and cinemas and said they could not reopen until July 4th at the earliest.



With time on my hands, I've been busy keeping the churchyard tidy. One plea please, if you are tending graves, I'd be really grateful if you would take your plastic pots home with you rather than filling up the rubbish bin in the churchyard. Some of our churchyard 'angels' have returned once again to tend graves of loved ones and trim around them and some have taken on the overgrown areas of the churchyard, for which I'm very grateful. The yews in the Bishop Porteous tomb have also been neatly trimmed. Unfortunately, the church mower decided to conk out this week, so I'm at the mercy of Sevenoaks Mowers. Obviously the Good Lord had other things for me to be doing!

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#### Churchwardens

##### Sundridge

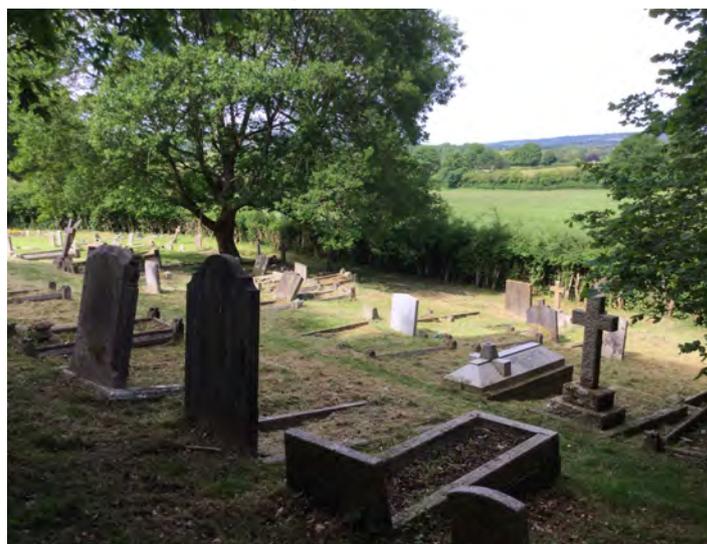
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It's been lovely to see so many families walking round the churchyard enjoying this wonderful weather. The local school has been open to children of key workers and has made good use of the lovely weather by exploring the churchyard. It's been a joy to hear their voices.



I hope to bring you positive news regarding when our churches can be open for private prayer. Watch this space as I'll need an army of volunteers with hoovers, dusters and polish at the ready, please!

## VE Day Memories

The flags you see adorning our gates are original 1945 flags with wooden poles with beautiful arrowhead finials.



They belonged to my paternal grandmother and these flags she hung out to welcome my father, her son, home from India – not on VE day but sometime after VJ day when he was sent home by ship to England (with my mother and sister). My father had served as a war-time

Colonel in the Indian Army; he served in India and the Sudan. The flags have holes in them now thanks to the moths and not due to having been shot at, as my grandchildren like to believe!

The history of The Red House saw a completely different aspect of WWII – it was requisitioned by the Air Ministry and housed Sir Hector McNeal and his two adult twin daughters. Sir Hector worked with Lord Beaverbrook increasing the number of aircraft needed to defend the UK and his girls, together with Beaverbrook's daughter, flew planes from factories to airfields. The McNeal family entertained many of the Biggin Hill pilots on a very regular basis, one of whom wrote his autobiography there whilst convalescing after being shot down. It was very poignant on VE Day for us to think about those brave men and women and think how they must have partied on VE Day at The Red House.

*Jane Belle*

## Greetings from Sundridge & Brasted CE Primary School!

The past months have presented new and numerous challenges for the whole community and we have seen phenomenal levels of creativity, kindness and support: this is true of our school community as well as the community beyond.

We were forced to close the school to the majority of children quite quickly in mid-March but, determined to support our children and their families at home, the staff worked incredibly hard to put a home learning package together for each year group. Obviously, we have had to rely enormously on e-learning but the e-resources have been fantastic.

We also provided a number of work books and exercise books, plenty of scrap paper and a huge box of fiction books, thanks to a lovely donation from a kind supporter of the school.

Our parents have been superb, working hard with their children and encouraging them to work through the home learning that our teachers have updated every day, following the usual curriculum topics such as minibests, optical art, Winston Churchill, Tudor Queens and, of course, VE day. We have the Class Dojo app within school which allows the staff to post messages to individual children, parents, classes or the whole school which has provided a wonderful forum for communication. Class emails have also proved to be invaluable in allowing completed work

to be sent through to the teachers. Work has included some wonderful writing, drawings, presentations and videos! Many children have also taken the opportunity to focus on their own projects such as learning to ride their bike, home baking, gardening, planting vegetables and even carpentry. Our families have been so creative!



Our staff have been incredibly creative and set interesting and varied challenges each day, involving the children in a huge range of learning opportunities within the somewhat limited circumstances of lockdown. Using Class Dojo the staff have read to their class, joined them in song and praise, set family quizzes, guided them through making their own creations and

much more.

Throughout this period we have also been open to the children of our key workers. You may have seen the banner thanking the NHS for their continued and outstanding work hanging on the school fence for a few days. This was the work of the children and staff in school.

While we look towards reopening and seeing the children and families again soon, I am incredibly proud of the staff at Sundridge & Brasted and all of our families too, for their continued support and hard work.

We are thinking of everyone in the community and hope that they stay safe and well in these difficult times.

*Sundridge & Brasted CE Primary School*

## Sundridge Village News Website

Sundridge Village News now has its very own website, [sundridgevillagenews.co.uk](http://sundridgevillagenews.co.uk)

It has a complete listing of all previous colour editions of the Sundridge Village News, useful telephone numbers,

and some interesting facts about Sundridge's past, a simple way to send your articles or ideas for future editions and for those of you who haven't already subscribed to receive your copy every month a subscription form.

## Pause, Reflect, Continue

Have you ever considered a daily pause, a mindful two minutes of calm and relaxation? The idea has come from the 'Action for Happiness' co-founder, Sir Anthony Seldon.

The idea is simply just to be still wherever one is, to sit down or to stand, to breathe in and out deeply and to just take stock and notice whatever one's thinking or feeling and to accept that. There's so much in the current crisis that we have no control over and it's a way of accepting whatever is happening. The crisis brings a particular purpose to it, a particular resonance to just 'be' and to feel grateful for what one has and grateful for all the people around about who are helping and doing such wonderful and heroic things. It's particularly important at this time to learn how to 'be' and to accept and find a consolation in simply just accepting what we have and where we are. This breathing can be done at any time, but it's quite a nice time to do it in the morning at the start of the day. It's time just to let go of everything at home. It creates a pause.

At the end of the day it's quite a nice idea to sit still for just 2 minutes and simply to be a human being, not a human doing.

## Duck Rescue in Swanley

Kent Fire and Rescue Service was called to rescue five ducklings who had got themselves into a bit of a flap.



Crews arrived in one fire engine and used ladders to reach the baby ducks, who were stuck inside a chimney at a property in Hawthorn Park, Swanley, where their mother had made a nest. The fluffy offspring were lifted out of the chimney and carried safely to the ground, where they were reunited with their mum. The feathered family was passed into the care of the RSPCA before being relocated to their new home at a nearby lake.

## The July/August edition

If you'd like to contribute to the virus-free Sundridge Village News please email by Wednesday 24th June to:- [sundridgevillagenews@gmail.com](mailto:sundridgevillagenews@gmail.com)

## Thank you

Jill Johnson would like to thank everyone for their kindness, offers of help, cards and telephone calls following her recent bereavement. She has also just had a birthday and was delighted to receive lots of cards and telephone calls. This helped her enormously in getting through the day. There are too many people for Jill to thank individually so, if you sent cards, chatted on the phone or offered to get shopping, a big thank you, and if you know anyone else who did help Jill, please pass on her thanks.



## What to do on a Sunday

What do churchwardens do during lockdown when there are no church services to prepare for? No more checking that the hymns have been correctly displayed, is the altar frontal the correct colour - red for saints, gold for celebrations, purple for during the penitential season and green for everything else? No more having to find an obscure reading in the Bible and bookmark the page, find the correct service sheets, fill up the urn before fixing the world with a welcome smile.

For the first six weeks I tried to find a church that was live streaming a service that I wanted to watch. There were so many to choose from that it was difficult to pick out one, so sometimes I watched two. Facebook 'Live', which is a feature of the Facebook social network, helpfully allows one to analyse the data. One can see how many people watched the broadcast 'live', for how long did they remain watching – apparently the average viewing time for services that lasted about 25 minutes was one minute. When people lose interest in what is on a screen, they change to something else, whereas we don't measure how long people zone out in a church service!

The closure of our churches has brought about a completely different sort of church for everyone. I'm now embracing the Daily Service - 15 minutes of Christian worship and music. It has become part of my daily routine, but I don't listen to it live, I download it from the BBC Sounds app and listen to it whilst preparing the supper. To me this is the best part – choosing when to listen – so I bring you a word of warning. When we do manage to gather together to worship, I may be absent catching up 'virtually' somewhere else! I'm sure the Lord will forgive me.

## NOW and THEN

With VE Day bunting still brightening up our village, I'd like to share this with you, sent to me by a friend. Obviously, some of the Government guidelines have changed, but it gives us something to ponder on . . .

**2020** We just have to stay in for a couple of months.

**WWII** You have to leave your loved ones and might never see them again.

**2020** But my kids need some fresh air so we're all going to the park.

**WWII** Your kids have to be evacuated and live miles away with random good Samaritans for their safety.

**2020** I can only Facetime my family and friends, I can't see them.

**WWII** I have written letters, I'm hoping they're received and I get a response this year.

**2020** I'm trying to order my food shop online, it's taking ages. I need alcohol and all the other foods that I'm craving.

**WWII** Are you going to queue-up in the line for our rations – potato soup every day of the week?

**2020** The Government hasn't said we can't go out, they just said we can but only once to exercise so I'm going to go and meet my friends and do what I want.

**WWII** I'm not going to go out just in case a bomb drops, so I will stay in listening to some music quietly because the air raid siren might go off.

**2020** Netflix needs to sort the streaming out as I can't even watch a series without it crashing.

**WWII** We are sitting the dark around a candle playing cards, keeping as much light in as possible so the war-planes don't see us from above.

**2020** Every man for himself, so I'm going to stock-pile as much as I can because we are more important than anyone else, never mind the elderly that gave us this freedom.

**WWII** I'm so grateful for this community, everyone is helping each other out when and where we can. We must stay strong.



## Lockdown Idling

Many of my friends have used the lockdown as a time to try a new skill such as learning to play the ukulele or learn a foreign language. Realising that I wouldn't progress very far at either, I decided to time-travel back to my childhood and grow some sprouting seeds, not by using the cotton wool/kitchen paper/egg shell method, but by growing them hydroponically.

At the back of a drawer I found a packet of mung bean shoots. The instructions on the back told me to soak the beans overnight and then cover the bottom of a tray with a damp cloth and lay the beans on top. Several more days of washing and re-arranging would, I read, produce some bean sprouts. I wasn't impressed so I turned to the internet for some horticultural advice.



Armed with this new-found knowledge, I set about scouring the greenhouse and then the kitchen for a suitable container since I didn't have the suggested soil-less micro-green grower! The steamer seemed to be the best option

as it was fairly deep-sided complete with ready-made holes in the bottom, thus saving me trying to puncture a plant pot resulting in a potential trip to A&E. I filled the bottom of the steamer with double-filtered, reverse osmosis, ph balanced de-ionised water – in other words, just the stuff straight out of the tap. I placed the steamer on the top and a handful of mung beans that had been soaked for 24 hours. On went the lid and I pondered over the next few days meals as I was now minus one steamer.

The science behind this type of growing is that the roots will look for the water and grow down, whereas the sprouting shoots will reach for the skies and grow vertically. My husband was very sceptical but sensibly didn't air his thoughts out loud. After a couple of days I lifted the lid and to my delight I could definitely see activity in the vertical direction. Gently lifting the steamer away from the base revealed the roots happily in the water. We've now eaten them and survived and I have my steamer back – at least for the time being.



## Puzzle-doer, cook or cocktail maker?

Britain has moved on from being a nation of stockpilers during lockdown to becoming keen hobbyists, cooks and cocktail makers, according to a report from John Lewis and Waitrose. Documenting lockdown life through sales figures and shopping habits, the report shows that the public has favoured home improvements, cooking and jigsaw puzzles.

## What have we been buying in Lockdown?

### Week 1 – March 15th – 21st

The week before the lockdown is announced sees a spike in sales of lavatory paper, baked beans and tinned soup. Sales of pasta trebled.

### Week 2 – March 22nd – 28th

With schools shut there was a rise in demand for puzzles, Swing-ball, Lego and craft kits. Puzzles increased by 223%, Lego sets by 240% and a Swing-ball set was sold every minute.

### Week 3 – March 29th – April 4th

Demand for wine, bakeware and pasta machines spike as people spend more time in the kitchen. Wine sales increased by 57% and amateur bakers sent sales of bread flour up by 145%. Fast forward 4 weeks and flour is still a much-prized item on the supermarket shelf. Cocktail shakers saw a rise in sales of 50%.

### Week 4 – April 5th – 11th

As the weather warms up sales of burgers, barbecues and outdoor furniture rise.

### Week 5 – April 12th – 19th

Sales of skincare products and face masks up by almost 200% and male grooming products are up fourfold (but not in this household!)

### Week 6 – April 20th – 27th

Online orders have 49% more items and weigh a third more than usual.

Research by the firm found that around four in 10 people had taken part in a virtual pub quiz while 20% had “been to” an online cocktail party.

Shoppers also prioritised beauty products and fitness equipment, which the report dubbed the “Joe Wicks effect” after the television fitness coach.

So, what have your spending habits been during lockdown?

Do tell.

## Our Community Support Volunteers

Not even a recent fire at the re-cycling centre could deter our volunteers from their work at the garden centre. One of our volunteers was at the scene very quickly to assess the situation. Six fire engines were called to the blaze early on Sunday morning and the police closed the road. It looked as if our volunteers would be promoted from sanitising trolleys to directing the traffic but fortunately the road was reopened sooner than had been previously thought.



For those of you who are unaware, the Sevenoaks Garden Centre had been closed since lockdown. As they sold pet food, they could have remained open, but the Government's strict social distancing rules would have been hard to implement for them and so they decided to close. They were inundated with requests for plants from their on-line business which brought forward their decision to try to see how they could work within the parameters of the Government's social distancing policy to make everyone safe. Together with help from the Community volunteers to assist with the social distancing and sanitising of trolleys, the garden centre is now up and running and blooming. The range of bedding plants is absolutely stunning, with new stock arriving regularly. Do please support this local business. You'll get a warm welcome from everyone.



## And finally . . .

The Associate Minister unveiled the church's new campaign slogan last Sunday:  
I Upped My Pledge – Up Yours!!