

# The Sundridge Village News

## May 2020

In this issue we bring you a history lesson for some, nostalgia for others as we celebrate VE Day. Unfortunately, our plans for a celebration at St Mary's Church with the bells ringing and fizz flowing will no longer happen, but the Editorial Team hope this edition gives a flavour of what some of you may remember. In this issue, find out what your Parish Council and volunteers have been doing, an update from the Coronavirus Support Team, rainbows to make you smile and free streaming services to relieve the boredom.



### VE Day



#### The Day

The announcement that the war had ended in Europe was broadcast to the British people over the radio late in the day on 7th May. The BBC interrupted its scheduled programming with a news flash announcing that Victory in Europe Day would be a national holiday, to take place the following day.



Many people in Britain didn't wait for the official day of celebration and began the festivities as soon as they heard the news. After years of wartime restrictions and dangers - from food and clothes rationing to blackouts and bombing raids - it was understandable how eager they were finally to be able to let loose and enjoy themselves. On the eve of VE Day, bonfires were lit, people danced and the pubs were full of revellers.



A nation-wide holiday was declared in Britain for 8th May. That morning Churchill had gained assurances from the Ministry of Food that there were enough beer supplies in the capital and the Board of Trade announced that people could purchase red, white and blue bunting without using ration coupons. There were even commemorative items hastily produced in time for the celebrations, including "VE Day" mugs. Some restaurants had special 'Victory' menus, too.

Various events were organised to mark the occasion, including parades, thanksgiving services and street parties. Communities came together to share the moment. London's St Paul's Cathedral held ten consecutive services giving thanks for peace, each one attended by thousands of people.

At 3pm on VE Day, Churchill made a national radio broadcast. In it he announced the welcome news that the war had ended in Europe - but he included a note of caution, saying "We may allow ourselves a brief period of rejoicing, but let us not forget for a moment the toil and



efforts that lie ahead". Churchill appeared on the balcony of the Ministry of Health building in central London and gave an impromptu speech. Huge cheering crowds gathered below and he declared, "This is your victory". The crowds shouted back, "No - it's yours!"

Huge crowds surged down the Mall to Buckingham Palace where King George VI, Queen Elizabeth and their daughters, Princess Elizabeth and Princess Margaret, soon appeared on the balcony to wave to the cheering crowds. In total, the King and Queen made eight appearances on the balcony and, at one point, were joined by Winston Churchill. While the King and Queen were waving to the



crowds for the last time that evening, their daughters were secretly mingling with the jubilant crowds below them, having been allowed to leave the Palace and take part - anonymously - in the party atmosphere. Princess Elizabeth later recalled, "We stood outside and shouted, "We want the King" . . . I think it was one of the most memorable nights of my life."



## This is Our First Peace-Time Story

From VICTOR LEWIS  
*'Daily Sketch' Air correspondent*  
London Midnight Monday 7th May 1945

The sirens wail and London looks as if it is in flames. That is the first peacetime story of the war. Officially it is not yet over. But unofficially the celebrations are on.

From the roof of 'The Daily Sketch' building the whole of London seems alight. Buildings are silhouetted against the background of fire. But London isn't burning. The fires are the peace beacons lit by hundreds of people from the bomb-battered East End to the borders of Hertfordshire.

The sirens are from the ships in the Thames. The clang is the clang of joybells – anything from the dinner-bell to a bicycle.

Certainly we looked at aircraft – but they were ours. From the moment that Doenitz declared his surrender more than a hundred planes roared over London in daylight. Practically every type of Allied plane – from Spitfire to Fortress - appeared over London during the last hours of light. A Mosquito – its Berlin raids done – did a daring victory roll over the city. Neat little formations of Fortresses cruised over the expectant capital.

### Timely Words of Faith

Thanks unto the Father . . . Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness.  
*Colossians 1, 12 – 13*

The VE Day celebrations continued well into the night. Whilst the largest crowds in Britain were in the capital, people all around the country took part in the parties, singing and dancing. Many bonfires and fireworks were lit to mark the occasion. An estimated 50,000 people were crowded around Piccadilly Circus by midnight. The joy of the day broke down social conventions and people spoke and embraced each other. Music was provided by gramophones, accordions and barrel organs. Licensing hours were extended so that people could toast the end of the war with a drink (or two) and dance halls stayed open until midnight.



*Ed – I had planned to visit the Imperial War Museum to assist me in writing this article but was unable to, due to travel restrictions. Instead, I used their on-line resources and a donation has been made.*



## Victory Lines for London

Taken from 'The Daily Sketch', Tuesday May 8th 1945

"The King's broadcast speech at 9pm will be relayed by loudspeakers to crowds in various places."

"Buckingham Palace and Government buildings will be floodlit tonight."

"There will be a searchlight display over Central London and suburbs from 11.45 o'clock tonight to 12.15am."

"All London schools will be closed today and tomorrow."

"Mr. Alfred Denville MP for Newcastle Central is giving £5 to every mother in his constituency who has a baby on VE Day."

"Rochester, Chatham and Gillingham have been taken off the coastal belt towns still affected by the dim-out."

"Skegness, remembering how its streets were lit up by searchlights during air raids, is thinking of using this form of lighting instead of the usual street gas lamps."

"Public houses and other licensed premises may sell alcoholic liquor until midnight today."

## Memories of VE Day

I was a five year old living in Stirling in a house which had no electricity. VE Day was the first time that I was allowed to stay up till midnight. The street put on a party and I was enraptured by a string of lights that someone had strung up between the lampposts outside our house. It was only years later that I fully understood what had been celebrated.

It is a cherished legend in my family, at least cherished by me, that on the night of VE Day my mother was brought home from the pub in a wheelbarrow. I was only six at the time (well, six and three-quarters), so took no part in the celebrations, but I was thrilled beyond belief when, the following morning, I heard what had occurred.

I arrived home from school to find a glass bowl in the middle of the dining table containing three curious curved yellow tubes. My older sister, who knew about such things, announced that they were bananas. That evening my mother peeled one of the exotic tubes and my sister and I shared the literal fruits of victory. I declared it to be delicious, although actually I was a bit disappointed.

The most common crime of the night was to knock a policeman's helmet off; the most frequent act of vandalism was to climb a lamp post. Total strangers linked arms in the comradeship of happiness, kissing and hugging was the order of the night, there was dancing on the streets whenever and wherever space could be found, when the crowd was not singing it was cheering, when it was not cheering it was laughing. The pubs ran dry, but who cared?

On VE night, we had a bonfire on the street. We were allowed to stop up quite late, I can't remember what time we went to bed but it was quite late and we got the next day off school.

The man next door had saved up a box of fireworks from before the war to celebrate if and when we ever won it. He took the fireworks down to the fire and he started letting one or two rockets off. Suddenly a spark from the fire must have got into the box as the whole box went off. They were all fizzling and exploding, sparks and stars shooting out.

My mother was evacuated with me as a baby to a tiny village in rural Hertfordshire. She knew nobody, of course; there was no television, no telephone, no electricity. Food was scarce and supplies unreliable, and the fear of invasion permanent. Most of that time she had no knowledge of where my father was fighting during the war, or even if he was still alive, and this went on for almost five years.

I was 11 and living along the Seal Road in Sevenoaks. There was an afternoon children's party on top of the hill opposite Pinewood. I think that the party was held on a Saturday so, as May 8th that year was a Tuesday, it must have taken some organisation. My main memory of it is of the food. Because of rationing, each family provided something from saved coupons: sandwiches, cakes, biscuits. It was a lovely day, I remember. I had a blue and white dress with which I wore my white straw school hat. (I felt sophisticated in this outfit since I didn't usually wear dresses in leisure time - too much horse riding!) My eldest brother was already away at college in Durham studying agriculture and my middle brother, at 13 and at Sevenoaks School, had to attend school, even on a Saturday afternoon.

One other memory of the war stands out: Dad went out *in slippers* to help catch a German who'd parachuted down and been caught in one of the big pine trees. (Those pine trees are still there!)  
*Pam Okey*

## The World Makes Whoopie

Here is an account of how the news was received as told in cables from all over the globe.

**NEW YORK** - Ticker tape and bits of torn-up phone books fluttering down from skyscrapers proclaimed that the city was celebrating. Streets are knee-deep in paper, all telephones are dead and traffic diverted. Roar of planes and Hudson river sirens added to the ceaseless honking of motor, horns and yelling crowds.

**CHICAGO** - Nearly all work stopped. People celebrated amid shrieking factory whistles and clanging church bells.

**STOCKHOLM** - Streams of confetti floated through the sunny air of the Drottningatan, Stockholm's Oxford

Street, as typists tore up paper and threw it through the windows with shrieks of joy. Norwegian refugees wearing rosettes in their national colours rushed through the streets shouting "The war's over".

**PARIS** - Crowds cheered wildly outside a big newspaper office in a main Paris thoroughfare as loud-speakers announced the German capitulation.

**ROME** - Sirens sounded in the city while church bells, including those of St. Peter's, rang. British and American troops have started to "make whoopie".

**JOHANNESBURG** - South Africa celebrated immediately. Flags and bunting went up. Newspaper sellers were mobbed and excited crowds snatched the papers from them and threw the money on the pavements.



# St. Mary's Church, Sundridge

Our church remains closed but, if you do get a chance to walk round the churchyard during your regulatory exercise period, please admire the work of the first grass-cut of the season. Our contractor has done a marvellous job weaving in and around the delicate primroses. Unfortunately, because of the imposed restrictions, the Community Payback team is not allowed to work in the churchyard, so please be patient if some of the areas become wild.

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## Letter from the Rector

Dear Friends,

At the start of the year none of us could have imagined how our lives would be so different by the time we reached the month of May. The past 8 weeks have seen our lives going *through* so many different changes and we still have no clear pathway before us. Our daily routines have taken on a new format as we try to get *through* each day. Did you know that '*through*' is a favourite word of God's?

Isaiah 43:2 reads, "When you pass *through* the waters, I will be with you; and *through* the rivers, they shall not overflow you. When you walk *through* the fire, you shall not be burned, nor shall the flame scorch you."

Sometimes life feels like it's shutting down all around us. The government shuts down. Communication with our family cuts off. Our marriage is on the rocks. Our health goes downhill. And then, during a pandemic, we face the very real shut downs everywhere we turn.

How do we get through? We can't logic our way past the problems. Or yell our way out. And we certainly can't drink our way to an exit ramp.

Let's be honest. Life can be pretty rough, and some times it gets worse before it gets better.

Just ask Joseph, Jacob's son - the one with the coat of many colours and brothers from two different mothers? Those brothers threw him into a pit, and it went downhill from there. Abandonment led to enslavement, then entrapment and finally imprisonment. He was sold out,

## Message from Ruth and Angela

The Barrows' garden over the Easter weekend shows Lionel's tulips with their colourful blooms from dry bulbs reminding us of resurrection. In contrast, the message of the compost is that Jesus has dealt with our wrong-doing! The edge of the vegetable garden prepared for next year's produce reminds us of the future hope we have in Jesus. We have a confident hope in a future after this strangest of Easters.

The Christian hope is not a vague possibility, but a well founded certainty. The resurrection of Jesus vindicates all his claims as the Son of God, promising forgiveness and new life for those who turn to him - and his presence with us now and for ever.

The Bible is amazingly relevant in these extraordinary times. Look at the Psalms - for example, 13, 46, 91, 121. Or, if you really want to know more, read a Gospel (Mark is the shortest) and ask God to meet you in Jesus.

There is certain hope on offer!

*Ruth Barrow and Angela Baker*

mistreated. People made promises only to break them, offered gifts only to take them back. Life shut down. Sound familiar?

But Joseph never gave up. Bitterness never staked its claim. Anger never turned into hatred. His heart never hardened; his resolve never vanished. He not only survived; he thrived. He ascended like a helium balloon. An Egyptian official promoted him to chief servant. The prison warden placed him over the inmates. And Pharaoh, the highest ruler on the planet, shoulder-tapped Joseph to serve as his prime minister. And then he used this authority for great good. It's not an exaggeration to state that he saved the world from starvation.

What did he know? How did he flourish in the midst of tragedy and difficulty? Joseph knew that in God's hands intended evil becomes eventual good. He worked a plan and he trusted God. He knew that, with God's help, he would get through. This is still true today.

To be sure, the times are difficult. Just as Joseph did, we face governmental uncertainty, family dysfunction and personal suffering but just like Joseph, we can trust God to trump evil. It may not be painless, or quick. But God will use this mess for good. Don't give in to despair.

With God's help, we'll get through this. May God bless each one of you as we go through this pandemic.

Your friend, Pam, *Rector*

Phone 01959 467223 Church Facebook page

<https://www.facebook.com/Sundridgeparishchurches/>



## The Battle of the Bumble Bee

Opening the doors of the cottage to let in the spring air, was somewhat taken aback when a 2" projectile came zooming in with a loud whirring, straight through from back door to front window. Well, fine. All one had to do was to persuade it gently from unopenable window round the 90° of the inner door, down the step into the porch and then 180° degrees out of the front door. However, easier said than done



when in temporary possession of only one working leg. And with enough medication flowing through the system, I didn't think that yet another injection – this time from a brown and yellow striped creature, however furry it was – would contribute greatly to the general well-being... In fact, the answer lay in one of the plants so kindly sent by friends. As the bee guzzled contentedly, I carefully manoeuvred pot, stakes, orchid, bee and walking frame round the various obstructions, down a step (a big challenge, that) and finally towards the front door. Mission accomplished - although it must have taken the best part of 15 minutes.



On the first morning home from hospital, lying on a strange bed downstairs in the sitting room, was astonished to hear a tap-tapping on the window. It was far too early even for noble friends to be enquiring as to how I'd slept (slept? And what might that be?) but it was very persistent for a dawn call. It turned out to be a long tailed tit who proceeded to turn up several times a day, attacking the window



as if his worst enemy was hidden just the other side of the glass. A couple of weeks later he was joined by his mate who alternated more of the window stabbing with dizzying turns of balletic rises and falls, just like those of a hummingbird.\*\* The day before my first outing - oh, the excitements of going in an ambulance for an Xray - they disappeared, which I took as a sign that I no longer needed their companionship. However, as the news of further incarceration was issued by the medical profession, back they came after a couple of days' leave.



And Brer Fox. I noticed him sunbathing in the back garden one lunchtime and, possibly unfairly, urged him rather loudly to leave whilst flapping my crutches at him. That first day he did – eventually – turn tail and slink away. However, by the following lunchtime, it had obviously

dawned on him that this mad woman had no viable form of locomotion and could therefore not reach him. So, upon further loud voices and flapping of crutches, he opened an eye, shut it again and remained exactly where he was. Now we keep an eye open for one another and I greatly enjoy his presence.

And the noble friends. When I arrived home, they had turned my downstairs into sitting room/bedroom/study complete with laptop and printer – and, still with only two sockets, access to my TV and DVDs as well. A miracle of engineering, that! Food arrives, books arrive, medicines arrive, phone calls are received – all this whilst they are also helping to sustain the vulnerable within the village during this pandemic – and, if I decide to have a pyjama day when I can't cope anymore, I know that they will understand and not judge. My gratitude goes to all of them for their generosity of time and love and spirit.

\*\* An ornithologically-inclined friend suggested that they were tapping out insects and lichen from the window frame.

## Easter Bunny

On Easter Sunday the Easter Bunny visited Manor Road. She delivered Easter eggs to all the children in the road, leaving the eggs on drives, much to the children's delight! Bunny had even used the appropriate disinfectant to make sure that no virus was passed on.



## The June edition

If you'd like to contribute to the virus-free Sundridge Village News please email by Thursday 22nd May to:- [sundridgevillagenews@gmail.com](mailto:sundridgevillagenews@gmail.com)

## Sundridge & Ide Hill Coronavirus Support

The Sundridge and Ide Hill Support Group is continuing to provide valuable help at these challenging times to anyone in the community who needs it, either by picking up prescriptions, helping with shopping or even a chat on the telephone. The group at the moment has 87 volunteers and 86 people who they are assisting. Due to the generosity of a son of one of the clients, they have managed to procure enough 3-ply hospital standard masks to ensure that all their volunteers stay safe for at least a month. The White Horse and the Social Club alternate in providing homemade soups and a cooked meal 6 days of the week to 35 people. This has been made

possible by donations from the County Council, Parish council, two local charities and members of the community. We would welcome donations from any reader who would like to contribute to this fund. The money will go towards buying food to provide the nourishing meals, protective clothing for the volunteers and the 'Happier Times' newsletter which has been posted through everyone's door, providing some good news stories to bring a glimmer of light into peoples lives.

For contributions, please email Nick White at: [nwhite2012@btinternet.com](mailto:nwhite2012@btinternet.com) or call Barbara Lockey (churchwarden) on 01959 564249.

## All Hail to the Rail(ings)



On 29th March the Parish Council and Fundridge were due to hold the annual Great British Spring Clean and Duck Race. Sadly, this had to be cancelled because of the coronavirus pandemic. As part of the clean-up there was due to be a number of additional beautification activities taking place, one of which was to paint the grey concrete posts that run along the footpath on the east entrance to the village. You might have noticed that these posts were

volunteers gave up its time to do the work, all for free. John Evans took on the task of rebuilding the broken concert posts and clearing the roots and ivy from round them as, over time, this had been destroying the posts. With 10 posts needing to be completely replaced and 31 re-patched, he had his work cut out.



A big thanks to John, our Parish Council Chairman, for this brilliant work. Then a fantastic team of Steve & Sam Nash, Gill & Graham Hughes, John & Trisha Evans, Trevor Jones, Wendy O'Reilly and Ian MacMillan painted every one of the approx. 160 posts and 320 rails.

A huge thank you to them all for their incredibly hard work. We hope you all agree how wonderful they look and that they have really brightened the road into the village, all in time for spring.



in a bad state of repair and were not the welcoming sight to the village that it deserves. The Parish Council had been due to get contractors in to repair them ahead of the community painting at the village event. Unfortunately, that was no longer possible. However, a brilliant team of



After the pandemic is over, look out for further improvements from the Parish Council including flower planters on the rails and replacement of the lost trees on Coronation Gardens.

*Vikki Allgood*



## Rainbows



During the coronavirus pandemic, the rainbow has become a symbol of support for people wishing to show solidarity with NHS workers on the front line.

Quite simply, people have been putting the colourful pictures on their windows to cheer up passers-by. The rainbows aim to make people smile while they're walking by and also offer a message of hope.

Rainbows are used as a symbol of peace and hope as they often appear when the sun follows a heavy rainfall. They serve to remind us that there is hope and light to follow, even after dark times. The following pictures of rainbows were taken in and around the village. Can you spot yours?



## Exploiting the elderly!

A 99 year-old Army veteran thought that it might be a good idea to get a little exercise by walking around his garden with his Zimmer frame – and raise a little cash for an NHS charity while doing so. Tom Moore, or Captain Tom, as he is known, set himself a target of completing 100 laps of his garden before his next birthday, due at the end of April. He completes 10 laps a day. His original target of raising £1,000 for the health workers he calls “national heroes” has far exceeded that amount as his mission has gone ‘viral’ and, by the time this went to print, more than £29 million has been raised.

His daughter, Hannah said that he was an early riser and his morning routine would begin with letting the dogs out of the house before settling down to read the newspaper before embarking on his regular 10 laps of the driveway and garden. She said her father was overwhelmed when he learned he had raised £1 million, responding with a determination to walk even more.

Captain Tom is dismissive of the current enemy in our midst and says he has no fear of the coronavirus. During his fundraising walk he adopted the mantra, “tomorrow will be a good day”. He urged the nation to remain positive. “We must believe together we will be united and we will get through this,” he said. “We will come out the other side. The sun will shine on you again”.



## To Raise a Smile in Lockdown

We need to be careful because people are going crazy from being in Lockdown! Actually, I've just been talking about this with the microwave and toaster while drinking coffee and we all agreed that things are getting bad. I didn't mention anything to the washing machine as she puts a different spin on everything. Certainly not to the fridge as he is acting cold and distant. In the end, the iron straightened me out as she said everything will be fine, no situation too pressing. The vacuum was unsympathetic - told me to just suck it up, but the fan was more optimistic and said it would all soon blow over! The toilet looked a bit flushed when I asked its opinion and didn't say anything, but the doorknob told me to get a grip. The front door said I was unhinged and so the curtains told me to - yes, you guessed it - pull myself together!

*From a reader -*

"They said that wearing a mask and gloves was enough to go to the shops..... They were lying. Everybody else was wearing clothes."

## How to stave off boredom during lockdown

### Free theatre

The BBC has a number of theatre productions as part of Culture in Quarantine, its "virtual festival of the arts", including new filmed recordings of Mike Bartlett's play "Albion," Emma Rice's "Wise Children," and six Royal Shakespeare Company productions, including its 2016 "Hamlet" and 2018 "Macbeth".

You can also stream a NT Live production on YouTube for free every Thursday - these are then available for 7 days. The Editor has just watched the production of "One Man, Two Guvnors" starring James Corden and still hasn't quite recovered!

### Free gigs

The Montreux Jazz Festival has just made more than 50 festival concerts available to stream for free, including performances by Ray Charles, Wu-Tang Clan, Johnny Cash, Nuna Simone, Marvin Gaye, Deep Purple and Carlos Santana. You can access them for free for 30 days. Go to [stingray.com/FREEMJF1M](http://stingray.com/FREEMJF1M) and enter the code FREEMJF1M

### Free exercise classes

Fitness guru Joe Wicks has become the nation's PE teacher and offers many sessions on his YouTube channel, just type in the name and choose your level of pain!

### Free digital books

Audible, part of Amazon.com, has released a collection of hundreds of free audiobooks for children kept home from school. Go to [stories.audible.com/start-listen](http://stories.audible.com/start-listen)

### Free opera and ballet

The Royal Opera House is closed - but in the meantime is offering free online broadcasts that you can access anywhere, at any time. A range of ROH productions can be accessed for free via its Facebook and YouTube channels. Each day the Metropolitan Opera in New York is making a different presentation available for free on its website. Go to [MetOpera.org](http://MetOpera.org)

## Box of delights

This disused phone box in Muthill, Perth and Kinross has been given a new lease of life as a vital drop-off and collection point for villagers in need.

The rural village is home to around 675 people and since April 9th, when the initiative was launched, it has been packed with donations ranging from tinned goods to chocolate lollies, toiletries, fresh fruit and vegetables, jigsaws and books.

It was the idea of a couple of friends who normally head up Muthill in Bloom, but turned their community spirit to helping out in a crisis.



## And finally . . .

Several readers commented how much they'd enjoyed the Matt cartoon last month, so I make no apology for sharing another one with you.



*No player may move, collect money, or buy anything*