

Summer 2020

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In Henstridge



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A non-profit making magazine published quarterly for the parish of Henstridge. Advertising funds the printing of the magazine only. All other elements of the publication including editing, production and distribution are provided by volunteers from the community.

We welcome all advertisements, articles and letters submitted for inclusion in the magazine but the editor reserves the right to refuse, alter or amend material for any reason. The editor accepts no responsibility for, nor necessarily agrees with, views expressed in such submissions.

Please email any items for the next edition of the magazine to WotsOnEditor@gmail.com by
1 August 2020 at the latest.

Whilst we make every effort to ensure the accuracy of the information printed in this magazine, the editor cannot accept responsibility for the consequences or any errors or omissions that may occur.

In our previous issue we wished our readers an agreeable 2020. When we went to print in early February the UK had confirmed its third case of coronavirus, but there had been no Coronavirus deaths outside Asia. Since then a pandemic has developed and the year has proven to be far from agreeable.

With Henstridge locked down and many self-isolating, our magazine this time is necessarily light on activities. However many of our readers have still been very busy, such as key workers, volunteers and home teachers. Many have been looking after others and working from home. There have been many initiatives from local groups and individuals, posted on Nextdoor Henstridge, mailed through letter boxes and otherwise advertised. Despite the pubs being closed and the Church shuttered and silent, the heart of the village continues to beat and there is mounting optimism that that life for most will soon start to improve.

We have covered the development of the Youth Club in previous issues. This has taken a lot of hard work by Victoria De Villiers and a number of volunteers, and we are pleased to provide an update from Jane Rose on how this early work is being built upon for the benefit of our younger residents. The doors of this new Youth Club should be ready to open once it is deemed safe to do so.

One of the social casualties was the planned VE Day celebration. There is a military flavour to this issue however. Our industrious historian Caroline weaves yet another fascinating tale, this time involving the English Civil Wars and The

Clubmen of the Blackmore Vale. Going forwards in time you can learn about Cliff Frost's fascinating memories of World War II and Barry Lazenbury's post-war memories of village life. Our interview with John Smales, a much more recent resident, tells us about his military career and also of his wife Anne's equally fulfilling professional life.

At the time of writing, we do not know if this issue will be electronic only, or if Aurora Print & Design of Wincanton will be able to print and our band of supporters be able to deliver to your door. However you are reading this, take care and we wish you well.

And finally, a thank you to Edward Mitchell for his rainbow picture that brightens up our cover!

WotsOn Team

Contents

Personalities	2
The Young Ones	5
Church Matters	6
Parish Council	8
Regular Activities	8
Upcoming Activities	9
News & Events	10
Special Feature - WWII Memories	15
Special Feature -Henstridge Memories	25
Clubs & Societies	27
Henstridge History	30
In the Garden	41
Summer Recipe	42
Fun & Games	43
Useful Information	44

John Smales

John and Anne Smales moved into Henstridge from Norfolk in May 2015, to live in a smaller house and to be nearer John's family, who live in the South-West. He and Anne already had many friends in the area, and John's parents had lived for many years in Blackford and North Cheriton.

John's career was as a soldier. He was commissioned from Sandhurst in 1963, joining the 14th/20th King's Hussars in Libya, where he led a troop of Armoured Cars. Here he learned to lead men in testing conditions and all the basic skills required of a young officer. His life was eventful, exciting and enormous fun. It was here that the pattern of his life was set and here that he learned to love the desert.

As a result the first 10 years of his career were spent in in such places as Aden, Muscat, the Trucial Oman, and culminating with command of a squadron of 93 Arab soldiers and 15 Armoured Cars in the Abu Dhabi Defence Force, which he had the privilege of commanding on operations in the Musandam Peninsula.

It was in Libya too that he developed his already existing love of horses. Local horses were cheap (his first Polo Pony cost him £15) and he was soon running the regimental stables of 36 horses.

His career also took him to Germany where the regiment was equipped with tanks in The Cold War, to Northern Ireland, to England and to the prairies of Alberta in Canada, where he spent two happy years supervising the training and safety of British units on live-firing exercises there.



Having attended the Army Staff College, when he was selected for promotion to Lieutenant Colonel he was sent there as an instructor. Such a posting is usually considered a great feather in an officer's cap, indicating the possibility of high rank later. Smales was rather deflated, but also delighted, to be told that he had been selected because he could take a horse cross country and understood hunting, so could be Master of the Staff College Drag Hounds, in addition to his instructional duties.

This he did for three years, to 1984; and this year was the most important one in his life for two reasons. First, he married Anne. They had known each other since John was 20 and Anne 16, as her father had commanded the Regiment. After a friendship of 25 years love struck, and they were married in April of that year.

Anne is an amazingly gifted girl. She had been a student in Paris and speaks French perfectly. She joined the Foreign Office and was stationed in London, Senegal and Germany. On leaving she was selected to be Personal Assistant to Sir Michael Jenkins and was the first person to go to Brussels to open the office there when the British joined the European Economic Community in 1973. Subsequently she became PA to Willie Whitelaw, Deputy Leader of the Conservative Party. After a brief marriage she then became a craft bookbinder and soon became one of the most respected in the country.

The second reason is that in June of that year John reached the pinnacle of his military career, and took command of his regiment, the 14th/20th King's Hussars.

They were part of the British Army of the Rhine, as an Armoured Regiment (62 Challenger tanks, eight Anti-tank Missile Launchers, numerous other armoured vehicles and over 400 men). After a year there, he brought the regiment back to Catterick in England to be a training regiment.

When this sadly came to an end he was promoted Colonel and sent as Chief of Staff to the Director of the Royal Armoured Corps in Bovington, Dorset, and then as Chief of Staff to an Armoured Division in Germany, and had the exciting experience of being there when the Soviet Union folded and Germany re-united.

In 1993 he was promoted to Brigadier and sent to Northern Ireland, to Command 107 (Ulster) Brigade. This brigade consisted of several units ranging from a Reconnaissance Squadron to a Field Hospital. It also included a band. The one common factor was that every man and woman was from Ulster, and a more enthusiastic and cheerful set it would be hard to find. As John was both the first Englishman and the first cavalryman to command the brigade he was regarded with some suspicion at first, but when they realized that he enjoyed Guinness, oysters and Bushmills whiskey, and could sing a song having done so, he was quickly accepted. It was while commanding this brigade that he had the honour of being made one of The Queen's Aides - de - Camp.

His last posting was in England as a staff officer running the TA and Cadets.

Leaving the service after a full career is always traumatic, even painful. John was

lucky in that he was able to spend time in retirement in pursuing some of his enthusiasms. He has always been interested in the Cadet Movement, and had an expertise in target shooting, so accepted the role of Chairman of Council for Cadet Rifle Shooting (CCRS). This is a charity devoted to encouraging and training young people in the safe and skilful handling of firearms. It was started in 1910, and is particularly proud of two facts. Not one single person trained by the CCRS has ever been guilty of a firearms offence, and over 90% of members of British International Target Shooting Teams started their competitive shooting with CCRS. He remains a Vice President.

His dedication to the horse world led him to becoming Chairman of the British Grooms Association (BGA), a professional body concerned with the interests of those who work "hands-on" with horses, and have often been undervalued, neglected and inadequately rewarded. He remains Vice President of BGA too.

His main employment for six years was as Chief Executive to the International League for the Protection of Horses, a charity dedicated to "A world where horses are used but never abused". Its work was worldwide in rescuing and retraining horses, teaching people the necessary skills, and campaigning for better treatment.

He was also for fourteen years on the managing committee of the National Equine Forum, an organization designed to bring together and share ideas, skills problems and developments in the equine world in an annual conference.

In addition he can indulge his interest in

military history and his passion to teaching (and talking!) by conducting Battlefield Tours. This he does mainly for the United States Army who use such tours as a training aid, principally to see how the lessons of the past can be applied to the battles of the future. He does this perhaps half a dozen times a year. It keeps him intellectually alert and challenged!

John and Anne share many interests, gardening and dogs being the main ones. But both enjoy good food and drink, the company of friends, music, literature and poetry. John in addition enjoys shooting and fishing. They are immensely proud of their daughter Emma 31, and their son Hugo, 29. They both have degrees, the first people so qualified in the history of the Smales family!

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News From Explorers Pre-School

Before we went into lockdown, the children had been very busy as usual at Explorers. They had been involved in dressing up for World Book Day as their favourite book characters, running around the school field and exercising in aid of Sport Relief and enjoying playing in the garden.



Some of the children were able to paint some ceramic rabbits for Easter that were donated by Ros Browning and the line dancers. We thank them very much as they loved painting them and were able to take some home to finish as well.

At the time of writing this piece, Explorers is closed, however we are opening again on Monday 4th May for some children of key workers.

As a setting we use the Tapestry online journal and we are able to keep in touch with the children and their parents during this uncertain time. Each week the staff add photographs to the journal of what they have been doing and Lola and Dave (our Pre-School mascots) also post pictures of what they have been doing whilst they

are being looked after by Anna, the Supervisor. Parents also post pictures of their children and it has been great for the staff to see that they are all well.

We held our first Zoom Meeting with the children last week and as this has proved to be a success we are planning to continue with this once a week.

Thank you to everyone who has continued to support Explorers through these difficult times and we hope that we can all be back together very soon.

You can still contact Explorers via email: explorers.preschool@hotmail.co.uk

Take care and stay safe.....
Mrs Anna Swinburn- Supervisor.



Rainbows and Brownies

Currently not meeting due to coronavirus.

Contact: **Jane Jeanes**

(aka Woodpecker or Brown Owl)

Tel: 01963 370769 or 07712 824747

email:

lowerbowdenfarm@btconnect.com

From the Rector

Our media take great delight in exposing cover-ups, and we take great delight in these exposures. It was no different in Jesus' day. The chief priests and the Pharisees gathered before Pilate and said, 'Sir, we remember what that Jesus said while he was still alive, "After three days I will rise again." Therefore command that the tomb be made secure until the third day; otherwise his disciples may go and steal him away, and tell the people, "He has been raised from the dead". So they went with the guard and made the tomb secure by sealing the stone.



St Nicholas Church Henstridge

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*The Vicarage, Church Street,
Henstridge BA8 0QE*

Tel: 01963 363832

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Officers of the PCC:

Vice Chair

Jane Jeanes

Redlands

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Dorset DT9 4PD

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Treasurer

Jane Raymond

Details to follow

And suddenly there was a great earthquake; for an angel of the Lord, descending from heaven, came and rolled back the stone and sat on it. His appearance was like lightning, and his clothing white as snow. For fear of him the guards shook and became like dead men. But the angel said to the women, 'Do not be afraid; I know that you are looking for Jesus who was crucified. He is not here; for he has been raised, as he said. So they left the tomb quickly with fear and great joy, and ran to tell his disciples. Suddenly Jesus met them and said, 'Greetings!' And they came to him, took hold of his feet, and worshipped him.

While they were going, some of the guard went into the city and told the chief priests everything that had happened. After the priests had assembled with the elders, they devised a plan to give a large sum of money to the soldiers, telling them, 'You must say, "His disciples came by night and stole him away while we were asleep." If this comes to the governor's ears, we will satisfy him and keep you out of trouble.' So they took the money and did as they were directed. And this story is still told among the Jews to this day.

What a laugh, trying to cover up the resurrection! And it got even more embarrassing when Jesus kept appearing, to over 500 people in different locations over a 40-day period. Some stories just need to be exposed. Jesus lived. Jesus died. Jesus rose again. Jesus will come again. Until then, we worship and adore him.

May the joy and comfort of the resurrection sustain you in these

challenging days.

Rev Kevin

The Choir Stalls

The beautiful choir stall frontals have been reinstated thanks to the hard work of Hugo Barton and John Graham. Performances by the Henstridge choir and other visiting choirs will now be easier as they will have somewhere to put their music. Originally installed with the choir stalls back in the Victorian era, they were removed several years ago and had been stored in the side chapel.

There is a plate on the end of one of the pews that reads:

"To the Glory of God and in ever loving memory of Major H.J.J.STERN. Late 13th Hussars."

Oonagh Langrishe

Church Services during Corona Virus Lockdown

Church services are being held via Zoom every Sunday at 10.00am and Evening Prayer is said every evening at 7.00pm via Zoom. More details can be found on our website:

<https://www.achurchnearyou.com/>

Church Flowers

*Jane Jeanes, 01963 370769, 07712 824747
or lowerbowdenfarm@btconnect.com*

Church Cleaning

*Jane Jeanes, 01963 370769, 07712 824747
or lowerbowdenfarm@btconnect.com*

Henstridge Parish Council

Emma Curtis – Parish Clerk & RFO

Henstridge Parish Council

14 Everlanes Close

Milborne Port

Sherborne

Dorset

DT9 5FT

Mob: 07745 270285

Tel: 01963 250015

Email: clerk@henstridgeparishcouncil.org.uk

Web: www.henstridgeparishcouncil.org.uk

Meet the Parish Council:

Ken Courtenay - Chair

David Nichols - Deputy Chair

Howard Bentley-Marchant Barry Howlett

Peter Crocker

Simon Cullum

Adrian Gaymer

Elsbeth Graham

John Graham

Carolyn Nichols

Andrew McMillan

Jean Oswick

Jane Rose

Administration for the council is dealt with by the Clerk and Proper officer, Emma Curtis.

In the first instance, all enquiries should be made to the Clerk.

District Councillors are: Hayward Burt and William Wallace (who is also County Councillor)

Activities

Keep in Touch!

Refer to the Henstridge Online web-site for more details and up to date information—

www.henstridgeonline.co.uk or look for Henstridge Village Hall on Facebook, or check out the “events” in

Nextdoor Henstridge.

Due to Corona Virus, most of the regular activities are on hold. Check notices in the shop, Henstridge Online, Facebook and Nextdoor Henstridge for notices when our activities restart.

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News from the Village Hall

We live in very strange times living on small holding in the country I feel as though I am on an island I have not known the world to be this quiet since I was a very small child, the only difference is the lack of the sound of insects.

We have very little news from the hall except that it is hopefully going to be put to use by Felicity, our Village Agent, and the members of the Balsam Centre to help in their food parcel distribution.

Can I ask that everyone who walks in the park keeps an eye on the hall as most of the committee are either key workers or are of an age where they are not going out. We have had one instance of vandalism already. So if you see anything amiss please get in touch.

Many of you, through your dealings with the hall, will know Malcolm Stobart. He was our bookings administrator and treasurer etc. etc. and over the years has put an enormous amount of time and effort into helping make the hall the success it is today. Malcolm has now retired and I am sure everyone in the village would like to thank him and wish him all the best. I have taken over as bookings administrator until such time we find a replacement. If there is anyone who feels they could help the hall by taking on that role please let me or one of the other members of the committee know. It is not necessary for the holder of this role to be a trustee or sit on the committee- it would be for that person to decide how involved they wished to be.

A big thank you to Barry Howlett who has joined us as our new treasurer, and is settling into his position.

We hope that it will not be too long before we are able get back to our regular schedule, of events clubs and activities. Until then stay safe.

Carolyn Nichols, Chairman

carolyn.nichols@mail.com

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Finley Thompson

Back in February half term, our very talented drummer Finley Thompson of Henstridge accompanied the Wincanton Amateur Dramatic Society's production of Treasure Island.

On Saturday 18th April we were sat watching The Voice on TV when our phones started going crazy with text messages from performers and friends from the aforementioned performance. All were congratulating him for winning a prestigious Cinderella trophy award for best solo accompanist from the Somerset Fellowship of Drama (SFD).

SFD is an independent umbrella organisa-



tion with 82 theatre groups as members.

Tamzin Thompson

Editor: Congratulations from all of us, Finley!

MEMORIES OF HENSTRIDGE

IF YOU HAVE MEMORIES OF LIFE IN HENSTRIDGE, WHETHER YOUR OWN OR YOUR FAMILY'S, ANYTHING AT ALL, PLEASE WRITE AN EMAIL OR A LETTER OR CALL US TO TALK ABOUT THEM. EVEN ANONYMOUS MEMORIES WILL DO 😊

WE WOULD LIKE TO PULL TOGETHER THE RECENT HISTORY OF HENSTRIDGE BEFORE MODERN TECHNOLOGY TAKES OVER.

EG WE SHOULD CAPTURE THE FETES AND SHOWS THAT BRIDGET HALLETT USED TO PUT ON. I'VE EVEN HEARD A RUMOUR THAT WE USED TO HAVE GOOD FOOTBALL AND CRICKET TEAMS. CAN ANYONE TELL US ABOUT THEM?

Contact: helenbeale27@hotmail.co.uk or CALL: 01963 363722

Hedgehogs

Since the lockdown the Hedgehogs in Henstridge have been thriving. Just as they were coming out of hibernation the lockdown started and due to the lack of traffic there are lots of Hogs about. For several weeks now I have had 7 Hogs in my garden each night. They all arrive around the same time each evening, hungrily gobble up the mealworms I put out and then disappear onto the next restaurant. A few that are courting hang around longer. Their courting and mating is very noisy and funny to watch the way they shuffle and nudge each other. On a clear night with a full Moon you can watch them without the need for artificial light which deters them somewhat.

Then, last night, all of a sudden the numbers were down from 7 to 3. This is where the downside of the lockdown comes in, and actually this time of year in general but more so now people are at home. There are several reasons for Hog numbers to decline and mostly they are due to humans. The main one is people restricting their movements. Hogs travel a fair distance each night in search of food and a mate. They tend to keep to their known routes which include going under fences across gardens. So, if anyone is currently landscaping their garden or putting up new fences etc. please be aware that Hogs might need to come through. Please leave at least one gap on each side of your garden of at least 13 x 13cm. This is the minimum needed for a large adult to squeeze through. With regard to leaving gaps under fences, I am aware that a lot of people fit gravel boards under their fence. The

wooden ones can easily have a hole cut. The concrete ones are a little more difficult but can be done with the use of a stone saw, or a builder would be able to do it for you, or some suppliers can now even supply them with a readymade hole.

Another man-made reason for decline is that at this time of year precious plant shoots are beginning to appear and people are using slug pellets. The Hogs then eat the slugs thus poisoning themselves. The organic pellets are also not environmentally or wildlife friendly and the latest type, made from sheep's wool, are extremely dangerous to frogs as well as Hogs. I love my plants and have lots of the slugs' favourites coming up, like Hostas. I have found a thin layer of horticultural course grit works as well as any slug pellets, and if you encourage the Hogs and frogs into your garden you will have little problem with slugs and other pests.

Another reason, again due to man, is the use of strimmers. Hogs sometimes spend their days sleeping under bushes, shrubs and hedges and a lot of injuries and fatalities occur due to being strimmed. If you must use a strimmer, please check for Hogs first.

The only other reason that I am aware of for declining numbers is badgers. Normally they do not bother the Hogs, but, if we have a prolonged hot and dry period when the soil is baked and solid, then the badgers will find it difficult to snuffle up the earth to find their normal food. Then they will turn their attention to Hogs which they are able to prise open with their very powerful claws. To my knowledge this has happened only once in the last 10 years, about 6 years ago after a hot, dry May. The

Hogs numbers have only really started to rise significantly in the last year or so. Unfortunately I should think the lockdown will be coming to an end round about the time the first Hoglets are appearing. So far more traffic about. Please kill your speed, not a Hedgehog and keep a close eye out for them. They do not stick to the pavement and do not understand crossings!

Please be Hedgehog aware and help to protect these beautiful creatures that we are so lucky to have.

Angelica Houston

Henstridge Summer Fair

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Derek Etherington Dip(I.T.) BSc (Hons)

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Henstridge Coronavirus Helpline

If you are shielding or self-isolating and in need of essential items such as food or medicine or if you have other practical difficulties please call one of these numbers:

The Henstridge Coronavirus helpline **07784 810799**

Henstridge Village Agent **01823 331222**

We are also looking for volunteers to assist with shopping, deliveries, taking phone calls. Please call the HCV helpline if you are able to help

Other useful numbers/websites:

If you are experiencing emotional difficulties or struggling to cope
Somerset Mindline offers 24/7 support please call 01823 276892

South Somerset District Council has published a range of useful advice including help for businesses <https://www.southsomerset.gov.uk/your-council>

Henstridge Parish Council are regularly updating their website with useful information please visit www.henstridgeparishcouncil.org.uk

Henstridge Coronavirus Helpline is supported by:

The Balsam Centre, Henstridge Parish Council and Somerset Village and Community Agents.



A child's WW2 Memories

Extract of files written in the late 1990's

Because of the threatening war with Germany on the 1st September 1939, the government launched a campaign to "get the children away to safety" known as "Operation Pied Piper". Many thousands of children were carted off to the countryside away from the potential centres of the anticipated aerial bombing campaign.

I can vividly remember being taken with Teddy under my arm in order to catch the Trolley bus to the Green Gate, there to catch the City Coach to Harold Wood, only 8 miles away, to be 'evacuated' to Grandma's house.

A trolleybus (see picture right) was an electric bus that draws its power using spring-loaded poles from two overhead wires suspended from roadside posts (*unlike the trams, which had one overhead line, the return electric path being via the rails upon which they ran*). Where I lived was blessed with

a fleet of the latest versions of these high tech busses (route 691) as a result of an order for South Africa being cancelled when the war broke out. They had very soft suspension, their acceleration was spectacular and their brakes were fierce. They also tended to roll and pitch as if at sea, so if the driver thought he was really a rac-

ing driver, I would soon get severe motion sickness. Occasionally one or other of the poles would jump off its wire. Then the Conductor

(which

every bus had at that time) had to get out a long bamboo pole (stored under the bus) with a large hook on the end and retrieve the renegade pole and hook it back onto its correct wire.

I hadn't been at Grandma's long before I went down with what I was told later was glandular fever – not at all funny in those



days. So after a couple of weeks I was brought back home to stay in bed in the back bedroom. We lived only a couple of miles (as the spitfire flies) from the R.A.F. Fairlop where Spitfires and Hurricanes operated.

My Dad was 46 and virtually blind in his right eye (*conscription stopped at 41 at that time, but later rose to 51 in December 41*), volunteered to join the Fire Guards. The Fire Guards (*initially called the Fire Watchers in September 1940, then the Fire Watcher Service in January 1941 and reformed as the Fire Guard in August 1941*), were responsible for a particular area and monitored the incendiary bombs (IBs) and pass on news about fires that broke out to the National Fire Service.

The Fire Guards also dealt with individual IBs by smothering them in buckets of sand. After a number of training sessions, Dad got appointed as Senior Fire Guard at the local Fire Guard Post (*Post 9*), and became responsible for training our neighbours into the mystic arts of firefighting these IB's. Apparently this position also meant we had to have a telephone – a very rare thing in those days, as well as fascinating detailed engineering drawings of IB's, and some dummies for training sessions.

As well as training material we also acquired a couple of actual defused devices, one of which was a standard IB, the other was a much nastier device. It was fitted with a detachable high explosive head which when one saw the bomb burning and went to smother it with sand, the high explosive part, which had detached and lay somewhere else in the house, would explode injuring the fire-fighter. This was

the only anti-personnel device that I actually came across, but later learned that 'Jerry' sometimes dropped small grenades for kids like us to play with.

Exercises involved "practice IB's" which were rather like large fireworks containing a mixture of magnesium and iron filings the size of a 1 pint cardboard milk bottle, with a long fuse. The exercises were often held during the daytime (*and at weekends*), and if us lads were around at the time, we would go out into the street and watch where the Warden, (*who was the trainer/examiner*) was planting the practice IB's, before lighting them. Now the fuses took several minutes to burn down, so we would then knock on the door of the nearest house, where we could see someone behind the door waiting to be called out, and let them know exactly where it was thus improving our street's ability to get good points for re-action time.

Each house was issued with a Stirrup Pump (below), a bucket of sand, and another bucket filled with water with which to tackle the IB. The IB cases were made out of solid magnesium, which once ignited, burned extremely fiercely. If you put water onto it directly as it burned, it would explode the fire all over the place, so the

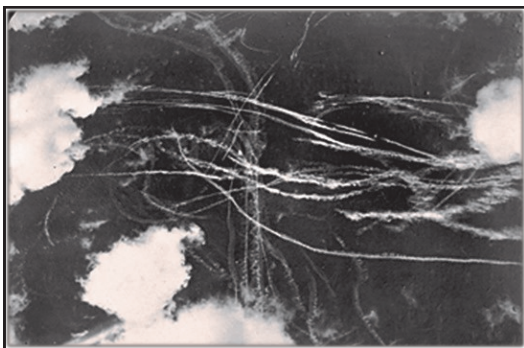


correct procedure was to smother the bomb with sand and then damp the fire down with the water.

One Sunday morning my Dad got a call from a neighbouring Post covering some open fields, asking for help. Apparently "Jerry" had dropped a canister of incendiary bombs (*a canister could hold up to 700 or more small incendiary bomblets*), which had opened up over the fields depositing its contents onto soft, wet, ground, preventing them from going off. The result was that they were all sticking up out of the wet ground like mushrooms, and apparently the local kids (*not us I hasten to add*) were down there, pulling them up and throwing them around!

Food rationing started on 8th January 1940 and my mother became very adept at making something to eat out of very little.

The period from 1st September 1939 through to August 1940 was known as "The Phoney War", where not much "action" happened except practicing getting to and from public air raid shelters,



and putting on our gas masks whenever the air-raid warning went off. The gas masks were issued to everyone in case of a gas attack which had played such a large part in The Great War of 1914 – 1918. They were a real pain to put on, and take off.

One brilliant summer Saturday afternoon which I later found out to be the 14th September 1940, I was actually playing in the garden watching part of what became known as the "Battle of Britain" being fought high overhead. The Luftwaffe was targeting airfields as part of a plan to eventually invade England. The (on line) picture above shows British and German fighter and bombers condensation trails, as they fought.



The next (on line) picture is taken from a Spitfire, attacking a German bomber with tracer bullets. There were literally hundreds of aircraft weaving in and out, at an altitude which I understood was between 15 to 20 thousand feet, like a swarm of bees and wasps attacking each other.

My most vivid memory

of that event was of a plane that had been hit, and was going down in smoke. Being a Saturday afternoon, many of our neighbours were out in their gardens watching, and all started to cheer as the plane came down. However as the aircraft rolled over a deathly hush fell on the scene when we saw the roundels on its wings - an RAF fighter! Then the silence was broken by shouts of "did he get out?" - "where is he?" - and then "there he is!" as a parachute was spotted. The aircraft crashed onto some houses about a mile away from us, but whether the pilot was badly injured I do not know. I was later to learn that many of our fighter pilots got severely burnt when shot down - particularly those in Hurricanes.

This battle was able to finally convince the Germans that the RAF was apparently more powerful than they had expected, and so postponed their invasion plans. After that they changed tactics and on the night of the 7th October 1940, the "Blitz" started with a terrific series of air raids in which great areas of East London and the docks were destroyed and over 400 people were killed. The "Blitz" went on for 56 consecutive days and nights. During which time an average of some 40 high explosive bombs per acre were dropped on Greater London.

For a short while during the "Blitz", I slept in the Anderson Shelter (on line picture below) that Dad and my brother erected at the bottom of the garden some 120 feet away from the house. The shelter could accommodate up to six people. Six curved steel corrugated panels were bolted together at the top, forming the main body



of the shelter, and four more straight panels were fixed two at each end, one containing the door.

The shelters were 6ft (1.8 m) high, 4ft 6 inches (1.4 m) wide, and 6ft 6 inches (2 m) long, and were designed to be buried 4ft (1.2 m) deep in the soil and covered with a minimum of 15 inches (0.4 m) of soil above the roof. They were issued free to all householders earning less than £250 a year, and those with a higher income were charged £7. The earth banks created were sometimes planted with vegetables and flowers and even became the subject of competitions of the best-planted shelter among householders in a particular neighbourhood. The internal fitting out of the shelter was left to the householder. 1.5 million shelters were distributed from February 1939 to the outbreak of war, with a further 2.1 million later.

During winter they became very cold and damp, and often flooded in wet weather, and so their occupancy rate was often low. It was also realised that there were quite a lot of houses with cellars, and so a new version was developed for indoor use. Named after Herbert Morrison the then Minister of Home Security, the indoor shelters came in kit form. They were approximately 6ft 6in (2 m) long, 4ft (1.2 m)

wide and 2ft 6in (0.75 m) high, had a solid 1/8in (3 mm) steel plate "table" top, welded wire mesh sides, and a metal lath "mattress"- type floor. Altogether it had 359 parts and had 3 tools supplied with the pack. Again they were free to households whose combined income was less than £350 per year. The Morrison shelter was not designed to take a direct hit, but as most injuries were as a result of the upper floor of a typical two-storey house undergoing a partial collapse, it was designed to absorb this energy by plastic deformation. It was big enough to enable the family to sleep under the shelter at night during raids, and also use it as a dining table in the daytime. 500,000 Morrison shelters were distributed by the end of 1941, with a further 100,000 being added in 1943 to prepare the population for the German V-1 flying bomb (doodlebug) attacks.

In our case because of the high water table at the bottom of our garden (*where an underground spring ran along the back gardens*) our Anderson shelter was only sunk about a foot into the ground. It was covered with about a foot of earth and turf, with a brick blast wall at the entrance. The shelter was therefore inevitably damp. By now I had developed juvenile asthma quite badly, accompanied by eczema, so the conditions were not good and after only a few nights in the shelter my bed was brought downstairs and put into the drawing room against the central supporting wall.

I cannot remember using the shelter again at night, but we certainly used it when the air raid warning went off in daytime or evening. Late one evening I was allowed to stand in the doorway of

the shelter to watch the German bombers, illuminated by both the searchlights and the fires that burned beneath them, unloading their firestorm over the London docks, about 5 miles away – a truly horrific sight. At the end of the war, households with Anderson shelters were expected to remove them and local authorities began the task of reclaiming the steel. In our case the hole left in the ground had a small retaining brick wall put round it, the inside was concreted and so became a pond.

Late one Sunday night about 11.30, whilst in bed in the drawing room, the air raid sirens woke me. There was one hell of a lot of noise going on. In those days some of the anti-aircraft guns were mounted on trailers and would travel around from place to place to give the impression the area was better defended than it actually was. On this occasion one was parked right outside our house making a hell of a noise which rattled the windows. 'Jerry' dropped a bomb right onto a house just 6 doors away from us. The explosion was followed by a lot of running feet, and shouting. Of course Dad had to go out to attend to it. He told me later that a party had been going on next door to the house that was bombed. Luckily the terraced house was empty because the owners were



all at the party next door, and the bomb was fairly small, possibly about 25lb, and so no one was hurt.

Now the morning after such an exciting event, us lads would rush out to see the damage, and to see if there were any good pieces of shrapnel to be found. This was a serious exercise for us, because there was a sort of competition to see who had the "best" bits. Such prize possessions could be swapped at school, and "good" pieces gave one real "street cred". I even found an anti-aircraft shell nose cone with some form of dial on it which made me the talk of the playground that day.

What was very weird was that at almost the exact same time the following Sunday, during another raid, the 'Jerry's' dropped another bomb right on the house where the party had been held the previous week! Luckily the owners had been evacuated because of the damage caused in the previous week's raid, so again no one was hurt. When I went to see the damage next morning it was very weird to see that all that was left of both terraced houses was the central dividing chimneybreast standing all on its own, surrounded on both sides by rubble, similar to this picture.

The picture to the right taken in the summer of 1941 shows a young soldier with his wooden rifle and tin hat, ready to do battle if "Jerry" invaded. In the right hand background is the Air Raid Shelter with its blast wall. Next door's shelter can just be seen on the left buried deep under a mound of earth with flowers on it.

During the war I contracted a number of illnesses including mumps, chicken pox, as well as the glandular fever and infantile

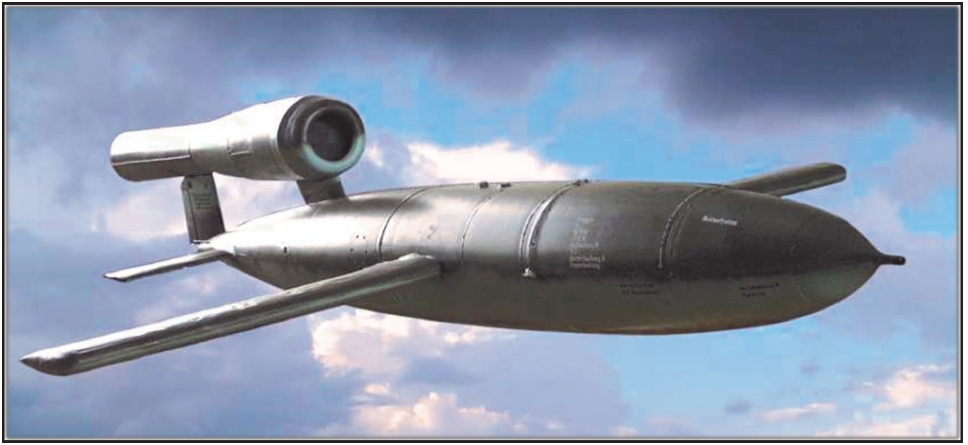
asthma. However none of these were as traumatic, as when I contracted scarlet fever. In those days this was treated as a life threatening condition, and as soon as the doctor had been, I was taken away in an ambulance and incarcerated in the local Isolation Hospital.

I have a lasting memory of being terrified (*whilst apparently hallucinating*) when what I believe was a giant cricket, came in through the window, and sat chirping at me on the picture rail of my room, before jumping on my bed. To me it looked about the size of a dog, and I screamed the place down, until a nurse came running in and sorted the situation out.

When I was feeling better I was allowed to play in the hospital grounds with another young inmate, when two spitfires came over very low on their way back to Fairlop doing victory rolls. They were so low and made so much sudden noise they scared the living daylight out of us (*it was not unknown at the time for Jerry aircraft to machine gun civilians whenever they got the chance*)

Once home again one night we had a particularly heavy air raid and later learnt that a delayed action bomb had fallen in a road just 100 yards away. This caused the area to be closed off while the Bomb Disposal boys worked on it. Later that morn-





ing whilst in class at school, we heard a big bang which shook the windows, and saw a great column of smoke and dirt and bits shooting up into the sky some $\frac{1}{4}$ of a mile away, which was very frightening. We later learnt that the Bomb Disposal man died whilst trying to defuse the bomb - poor devil.

On another night-time air raid, my father spent the whole night hosing down the internal wall in the loft of a house in a nearby street, next door to where a phosphorous bomb had been dropped, causing a fierce fire. The situation was made worse by the fact that at more or less the same time, a high explosive bomb had dropped in the road outside, and fractured a 4-inch gas main causing a massive fire.

Quite often during a night-time air raid, 'Jerry' would drop flares to illuminate the area while looking for the RAF Fairlop Airfield. These magnesium flares would light up the area as if it was daytime for a considerable time as they drifted down slowly on their parachutes. Being farmland at the back of us it was a night roost for seagulls, and in the light and noise they would take off and circle round and

round. Then when the flares burnt-out and the area was plunged back into darkness they would be left flying around blind and taking ages to regain their night vision, so that they could land safely. In the mean time they would squawk loudly at each other, making a dreadful racket.

One night the air-raid warning went off, and I heard a very strange sounding aircraft approaching (*resembling a Harley Davidson motor bike without silencers*). Mum and I looked out of the back bedroom window to see what looked like an aircraft with its tail on fire, followed by a string of anti-aircraft tracer bullets like a string of sausages, chasing it along the line of the a local main road. We learnt next day that it exploded somewhere in London. It was reported later that the explosion was a gas main had exploded. It was in fact one of the first of a new secret German weapon the V-1 (*later known as Doodlebugs pictured above*).

On the morning of 13th July 1944 (*one week after D Day*) a V1 hit the railway bridge in Bow, railway lines were torn up, houses and a pub were severely damaged and six people were killed. V1 was an abbrevia-

tion for Vergeltungswaffe Eins (Retaliation Weapon One) in response to Allied bombing of German cities, and was a nasty automatic pilotless flying bomb (*slightly smaller than a Spitfire*) propelled by a pulse ramjet fuelled by paraffin. They were designed for terror bombing of London, and carried a half-ton of high explosive.

It became recognised that while you could hear them, you were fairly safe, and could keep your eyes open to see where they were. The time you really had to start worrying was when the engine stopped, because then the internal giro would topple, and the beast would spiral towards the ground. They were one of the fastest things in the air at the time and initially even the Spitfires had to have their wings polished with floor polish (*I do not jest*), to enable them to catch up with it and tip it over – a very dangerous manoeuvre.

At its peak more than one hundred V1s a day were fired at southeast England, 9,521 in total; of which 2,419 reached London, killing about 6,184 people and injured 17,981. They continued to arrive until October 1944, when the last V-1 site was overrun by Allied forces. The only really effective techniques used to destroy them were, first interception by Spitfires over the channel, followed by being shot at by batteries of synchronised anti-aircraft guns, and even later by firing banks of rockets at them.

At School if during an extended air raid everything had gone quiet, those of us with parental permission were allowed to run home as quickly as possible. One particular afternoon I was on my way home when I heard a Doodlebug coming. Keep-

ing a very wary eye open in the direction of where the noise was coming from, I ran the last few yards. The noise got louder, and louder, and I knew it was coming our way. As I neared our house, Dad was at the front gate looking for me and quickly ushered me inside the hallway to where Mum was waiting – but where to go?

We were hovering in the hallway between the front and back room doors, when the decision was made for us. There was a tremendous explosion, the noise of shattering glass, the front door burst open and we were thrown into a heap in the front room. I landed on an eiderdown on the floor with Mum and Dad on top of me. As soon as we realised that we were not injured we got up to survey the damage. The front door catch was broken, and the French doors in the back room were swinging in the breeze. It was then that we noticed that the catch from the French doors was buried in the middle wall between the front and back rooms. Had we gone into the back room, one of us might have had a cast iron catch buried in their head – what an escape. The next thing to do was to find out where it had landed, so upstairs to look out of the back bedroom window – which was still intact. Leaning out I could see lots of flames and smoke rising from the Farm at the bottom of our road. The farm and its barns were built of enormous oak beams with thatched roofs, and inside the barns the farmer kept 240 pigs – something we knew about especially during the hotter days with an easterly wind. The whole installation was in flames, and there was a lot of squealing and shouting. Then there was a lot of screaming in the street in front of the house, so I went into the front bedroom to see what was happening. Here I could see pigs running about all

over the road, being chased by what we thought were farm workers – but were actually neighbours, policemen and fireman trying to round them up. The screaming came from one particular pig that had been caught, and was vehemently complaining about being transported back up the road, upside down with two firemen holding an ear each, and a policeman holding his tail. Patently the pig was not amused by this treatment, and unless you have ever heard a terrified pig shouting the odds, you have no idea how much noise they can really make. Of course I thought this was very funny at the time, and it broke the immediate tension. Later we learnt that the poor pig herder had been killed in the stampede when he released the pigs from their burning sties.

The V1's were soon superseded by the V2's, (*Vergeltungswaffe 2*, i.e. *retaliation weapon 2*) which were altogether different beasts (*see pictured below*). They were the



first type of ballistic missile carrying 1 ton of high explosive, which could not be seen or heard coming. They just dropped out of the stratosphere and did tremendous damage. Somehow they were not so frightening because they were silent, and could not be predicted.

Another day whilst playing in the street two American soldiers came by and started talking to us. They eventually made us boys race for baseball ball. As I got to it first I was allowed to keep it. It was a fascinating thing, made of soft calf leather, and I played with it for a number of years.

A friend and I also rode our bikes around the area, and on one occasion we walked through the Central Line underground station under pass at Gants Hill to avoid having to navigate the roundabout. Here we saw lots of the women Plessey workers at work in the station entrance halls to avoid having to leave their work during air raids.

Other times we would go over to Fairlop Airfield to see what was going on, where over time we saw the aircraft change from Spitfires and Hurricanes, to the American Typhoons (*painted to look like sharks – very mean and noisy machines*) and Crusader bombers. I can also remember seeing the aircraft painted with white stripes on their wings, which I later learnt was put on to help identify friend and foe on D Day.

In the summer of 1944 I went to a secondary school in Ilford. The Ilford Broadway was a major junction between trolley buses going north, south, east and west, resulting in what can only be called an gigantic cat's cradle of 600 volt cables suspended all over the junction. This in itself was a nuisance when the driver took the

wrong route and jumped his wires, but one day we had an air raid warning, during which one of the last Doodlebugs deposited itself gently on top of this nest of wires, and failed to go off. This brought the centre of Ilford to a complete standstill for a long time, whilst some very brave poor soul defused it, dismantled it and removed it, and the wires were repaired.

In May of 1945 victory was declared in Europe (VE day), and there was great excitement everywhere. In the August of that year victory in Japan (VJ) day was announced. After the excitement and celebrations for VE day, this second event went off quite quietly. It was as though the nation was so relieved after so long a trial, and didn't have the strength to celebrate any more. Indeed the armies in the Far East fighting the Japanese became known as the Forgotten Army, which was really unforgivable considering the absolute hell they went through.

Cliff Frost

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Barry Lazenbury - Memories of Henstridge

Our family tree has been traced back to 1545, Henry the VIII was on the throne and it was the year the Mary Rose sank. Our ancestors lived in North and South Cadbury, Alford, Charlton Musgrove, Yeovil, Sherbourne, Milborne Port and finally Henstridge in the 1930's and leaving the area in the 1950's. We didn't move far in 400 years.

I was born in Templecombe hospital in 1944, it should have been a home birth, the same as my three brothers, but apparently I did not want to come out. My two younger brothers (Phillip and Nigel) had the privilege of the green Morris minor turning up with the Midwife and me being told to go out and play across the fields. Because of the age difference (five years), we younger brothers did not see too much of elderbury (Michael), he had his older friends.

Our Mum Kath had a hard time in the 1940's bringing up four boys. Our Father served in the RAF and was always stationed away, mainly in Germany. We looked forward to parcels he would send us, the top layer of the parcel were bags of sweets, and beneath were tins of rolling tobacco - the naughty man -. Discipline on us whilst he was abroad being administered by the village policeman, PC Norman. Whenever we saw his bicycle parked up at Gran Yeatman's cottage or our own next door we would stay out until he disappeared.

My playmates around the time (early

1950's) were Pete and Anne Viner, and great friend Rita Skinner, always out on station road and generally annoying Mr Jackson the station master. Derek, Colin and Dee Mogg were almost family. I remember going to Derek's house one day which was full of the villagers all staring at this strange device in the corner. It was a large piece of furniture with a small round moving picture emanating from it, yes, T.V had arrived in the village, a first I believe.

School holidays seemed to go on forever. I was given a train spotters book, so had to rush to the station to collect another number, only to find out we didn't have that many different engines on our branch line, so Mr Jackson encouraged me to travel to Templecombe station, where there were more. Hence, taking a couple of sandwiches and off we went to spend the day at Templecombe. A train driver I got to know fairly well even took me one day on the footplate of his engine. Would not happen these days.

Other days would be spent carrying a galvanized bathtub all the way to the river Stour and rowing along it, ensuring we landed the tub before going over the weir. I am amazed we survived as we could not swim at that time. Any small fish we caught were taken home and place in Gran Yeatman's rain water tub, which she used for washing in, no wonder she looked good in her eighties, but was not amused when she discovered boiled fish on using it.

Once a week, with my meager amount of pocket money I would head up the road and make a beeline for Dewfalls, hand over my blue ration coupon and get 2 ounces of pear drops. I made sure that

these were eaten up before reaching station road as I did not want to share with anyone else. No wonder I lost most of my milk teeth in one go.

School was fairly strict under Mr and Mrs Maslin, with Mrs Burgess teaching the infants. Derek and I ended up one day facing punishment, the cane, from Mr Maslin. I dutifully held out each hand and received the hits, Derek held his hand out but took it away at the very last moment, the cane came crashing down and smashed the ink pots on Mr Maslin's desk. There was red and blue ink everywhere. The grins on our faces ensured we had another two wacks. However, the teachers did a pretty good job on the whole as I did make it to the Bristol Technical School.

I must mention the fifth brother, cousin David Offley who came to stay at Gran Yeatman's, two years older than myself. Currently living near Sherborne and can still be seen around the village now and again.

Moving to Bristol as an eleven year old was a different life altogether. Our playground now were streets full of Edwardian houses and smog, instead of wide open spaces and fields, ponds and apple orchards ripe for scrumping. Life was so much easier and less stressful (apart from PC Norman).

On my occasional visits to the village now to pay my respects to those who are buried in the graveyard I can only marvel at how nice and peaceful it looks, and say a well done to the residents for keeping it clean and tidy. As my good friend Derek Mogg says, it's our "Spiritual Home" and so it is.

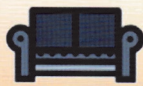
Barry Lazenbury



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Henstridge Line Dancers

Well I hope everyone at home is practising! For homework look up Hillbilly Rock Hillbilly Roll on the Emmerdance album by The Woolpackers.

Also for Honky Tonk Boogie music, Honky Tonk Man by Dwight Yoakam.

If anyone else wants to try, please do. Then after Lock Down we could have the whole Village dancing.

Like everyone else who can, I am keeping busy in the garden and enjoying the great weather.

Just to say Stay Safe and if you want to talk call me.

Ros Browning— 01963 363016

The Henstridge Flyers WI

Sue Latimer - 01963 365765

email: susanlatimer155@gmail.com

Henstridge Book Club

Like most of the rest of the village clubs, the Book Club did not meet in March or April, and likely won't meet in May either. But we have not given up reading! In case you are at a loose end these days, here are our suggestions for some good crime fiction reads. We voted on our favourite books and here are our top 6 choices:

The Deepest Grave by Harry Bingham

Smoke and Ashes by Abir Mukherjee

Missing Presumed by Susie Steiner

Kill the Father by Sandrone Dazieri

The Royal Baths Murder by J R Ellis

Snap by Belinda Bauer

Happy reading!

Gail Cullum - 01963 362878

email – gailpcullum@gmail.com

The Art Group

Enquiries to Liz Holbrook on 01963 363193 or just turn up for a warm welcome.

CAMEO

Well our last meeting was at The Bird in Hand for Skittles, and was well supported. Due to all the news that was flying round, we wondered if anyone would turn up. Chris made us plenty of food for half time.

At the moment of course we have no idea when we will be back at the Village Hall. The speakers that we were hoping for I will try and get them for next year.

Just to say Stay Safe, and if anyone wants to talk, please call me.

Ros Browning—01963 363016

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Henstridge Family History Group

I should now have been reporting on the small exhibition we had planned to have in the Church, at the time of national VE Day commemorations. Sadly this is not to be, which is a great shame as there were people from our village who had wonderful stories to tell.

However, we go onwards as a small group with projects and giving help to those who request it. Family research is very much a growing hobby for all ages. There is much online that can be found for free, and there are many sites that require a fee but the information and old documents available to view, make a subscription very good value.

For the Family History Group, it is a possibility that we could photograph some of the old graves in the churchyard and upload them onto a worldwide website that is widely accessible to all. Regrettably many of the graves are now illegible and others in poor state of repair. Some have even been removed for safety issues, so it would be good to have a permanent record of those that remain in a reasonable condition.

In the meantime, if you wish to start researching your family tree in this time of “lockdown” please do contact us if you need assistance or advice. Starter “tree charts” can be emailed to you on request.

Linda Farnsworth

01963 365802 or 07884 072548

henstridgefhs@gmail.com

Youth Club

As Parish Council Representative for Youth I recognise that the youth of our village are the future of our village.

I have been working for some months now with the previous Youth Club Committee, Young Somerset and our Parish Council, discussing plans to re-establish our Youth Club within a new and sustainable framework.

Building on the dedicated work of the previous committee and hardworking volunteers, I am very grateful to our wonderful Parish Council who have committed to a year's funding for Young Somerset to take over the running of the Youth Club and all of the administration. In addition we have several new volunteers, offering to give generously of their time and 'waiting in the wings' so to speak for when these plans are completed. This is an exciting time for the Youth Club's development, with a new committee, new volunteers and spearheaded by Young Somerset.

The aim of both myself and Young Somerset is to utilise the time afforded by the present lock down in a positive way for our youth, so that we are ready to open the doors of our Youth Club as soon as it is deemed safe to do so. Our meetings continue in the background and we will keep you updated!

If you are interested in supporting our Youth Club within this new and innovative approach, please contact Jane Rose - Representative for Youth.

jane.rose@henstridgeparishcouncil.org.uk

Phone: 01963 362048

Loose Ends

David Rabone—01963 362892
drabone10@btinternet.com

Henstridge Sports Club

Steve Penny Sports club Chairman

News from the Hive

Please get in touch with Ken or Jane Jeanes
lowerbowdenfarm@btconnect.com

Ken Jeanes - 01963 370769

News from the Lions Den

Welcome to this short news bulletin from the BLACKMORE VALE LIONS CLUB.

Lion's closed their operations until the end of May, however it looks as if that will be extended. Many Lions are well over 70 and some are vulnerable so it has been difficult to continue with our usual activities.

However we have been able to make some donations; these include to the Freewheelers (blood bikers), Yeatman Hospital towards a hoverbed, also Riding for the Disabled and following obtaining a grant from Lions UK gave a donation to each of our main local food banks based at Gillingham and Sherborne from where they serve local villages including Henstridge.

Many items on our calendar have been cancelled for this year but as soon as we are given the go ahead we will be back !

In the meantime please give a thought to joining us. Should you be interested please call me (details below)

Lion Peter Oswick 01963 363281

Peter.oswick@btinternet.com

Bell Ringing

Our bells are silent!

Because of lockdown, social distancing and the Church being closed, our weekly practice sessions and Sunday service pealing is not able to take place.

The bell ringers are missing their twice weekly exercise, as are the villagers missing the sound of the lovely bells that we have in the tower. It is hoped that this recreation will resume in the near future and how delighted we would be if some new volunteers came forward to enjoy a hobby that is also good for the body and mind.

Ellen Edwards

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“Captain Bynge” – King of the Clubmen – and the Uncivil War

England 1599-1600

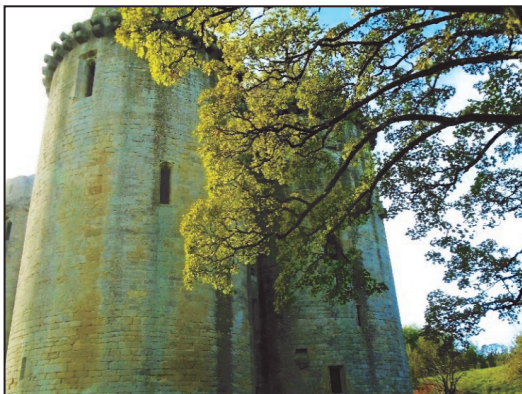
Two men, born in separate parts of the kingdom, who had never met, are set on a collision course, meeting some 40 years later with the most devastating consequences for England.

They did not bargain on encountering their nemesis, the courageous ‘Captain Bynge.’

‘A subject and sovereign are clean different things.’

The year before baby Charles was born in Fife, Scotland, a boy was born in Huntingdon, near Cambridge. This boy was Grammar school educated and went on to inherit his father’s modest estate, becoming a yeoman farmer. The year before Charles attends his first parliament in 1621, this man marries Elizabeth Bouchier and settles down to family life; they have nine children, six surviving. During this time Charles is crowned king, and just as this man becomes MP for Cambridge, Charles dismisses parliament in 1629. As Charles starts to raise his family, this man is briefly imprisoned before turning back to farming. By 1636 this man is a *‘religious convert.’* Three years later in 1639 when Charles faces humiliation by the Scottish Army, this man is still not involved with national politics. The two separate lives meet on a collision course in 1642 when Charles tries to arrest five MPs for treason. Parliament makes a stand and the rickety bridge across the deadly chasm splinters into oblivion. This man, Oliver Cromwell, a Puritan, is sufficiently

The Roman Legion marches on



Nunney Castle, near Frome, 17th century seat of the Prater family. Now managed by English Heritage. No admission fee is charged. Image by the author.

roused to raise troops to defend parliament. Charles raises his standard in Nottingham and the most tempestuous time in history begins.

‘What if a man should take upon him to be king?’



Courtesy of the National Archives

The Divine Right of the Monarchy

When James 1st of England (VI of Scotland) dies in 1625, he is succeeded by his second son Charles; his oldest son Henry having died of typhoid in 1612. The Stuart dynasty is established and its second monarch, Charles, a deeply religious man,



Old Wardour Castle, Wiltshire, 17th century seat of the Arundell family. Now managed by English Heritage. Image courtesy of Doug Green.

is said to be the 'first truly Protestant king of England.' He marries Henrietta Maria, a Catholic and daughter of Henry IV, king of France. Charles and his father James believe in the 'Divine Right of Kings' – 'the monarch is God's regent on Earth,' answerable only to divine judgement after death. The road ahead, undermined by legacies of religious dissent and national debt, will be fraught with political intrigue and rebellion.

Religious Dissent - the first bequest

The first bequest of the monarchy of Charles 1st is a raging furnace of spiritual



Charles and Henrietta courtesy of www.schoolhistory.co.uk

differences, the legacy of the Reformation and the Tudors. Parliament, already anxious over the royal match, a Protestant-Catholic alliance, fears it may undermine the official establishment of the reformed Church of England. Some historians maintain religion is a major cause of the later Civil War. Protestantism is the dominant religion, Catholicism outlawed and Puritanism a strong force influencing parliament for a 'godly reform.'

National Debt - the second bequest

The second bequest is the inheritance of a national debt of staggering proportions. Parliament expects the monarchs' private income to finance royal expenses, those of court and the government. This proves challenging without government subsidies. Charles repeated request for money from parliament is eventually refused. Even though the Magna Carta laid out taxes could not be raised without consent of parliament, Charles believes he can raise money without it, by evoking an ancient custom of 'ships money.' Charles uses the emergency levy, originally to raise money for the Navy, to raise taxes from everyone. *It is a source of major tension and hated throughout the land.*

Monarchy and Parliament

Previous clashes between the monarchy and parliament means the lines are now blurred between the monarch's prerogative – what can be done without consulting the government – and the legitimate interests of parliaments – the right to uphold the laws of the land, freedom of speech and make policy. Parliament believes the monarch has to act within the laws of the land. *Charles has*

other ideas – a monarch has no need of a parliament - and in 1629 closes it down for 11 years to rule alone. To reinforce his decision Charles excludes from office members of his influential advisory body, 'the Court.' Provincial gentry and county officials, whose religious, cultural, and political opinions inform the rule of the monarchy and government, are now divorced from the governing part of monarchy. Many members are arrested and locked away as Charles goes it alone, apart from a few favourites; he keeps on the Duke of Buckingham (George Villiers.) Remember when court members talk about 'my country' they really mean 'my county,' often where their loyalties lay. **Exclusion is a shocking move and some former court members will extract their revenge at a later date.**

As a result, the reign of Charles 1st is characterised with national debt, religious dissent, the spread of Puritanism and ultimately the Irish Rebellion in 1641. The penultimate breaking point comes when 'the Catholic population rises against the English colonists and the Puritan government.' Parliament will not send the army to

Ireland unless it can send its military rather an army in the king's command. **The divide widens disastrously between monarchy and parliament.**

Troubles with parliament boil to a head in 1642, when Charles tries to arrest five members of the House of Commons. Morrill [*Revolt of the Provinces* 1976] maintains the most significant factor about the eruption of the Civil War is not 'why the Crown was confronted by an organised opposition. It is how the Crown gained a party of its own.'



Troopers of the English Civil War by William Barnes Wollen courtesy of British Army Museum <https://collection.nam.ac.uk/>



Oliver Cromwell courtesy www.olivercromwell.net

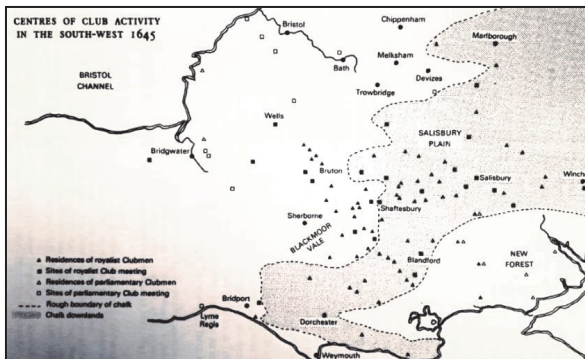
The English Civil Wars of 1642-1651

The three main conflicts, the First Civil War 1642-46, the Second Civil War 1648, and the Scottish War of 1650-51 are known collectively as the English Civil Wars and are a watershed in English history, the greatest crisis of this country until 1914. **Morrill maintains 'there could be no Civil War before 1642 because there was no Royalist party.'** Yet, all was not clear cut in the Civil War, the country was not strictly divided into a Royalist North and West and a Parliamentary South and East. Furthermore, the deep-rooted

understanding of two sides Royalist (*Cavaliers*) and Parliamentarians (*Roundheads*) is far more complicated. Ordinary people fought back. Uprisings from movements like the 'Levellers' and 'Diggers,' are perhaps better-known, but it is the 'Clubmen' who are especially relevant to the Blackmore Vale region. [Underdown, *The Chalk and the Cheese: Contrasts among the English Clubmen in Past and Present* No 85 1979]

The Clubmen of the Blackmore Vale

People did not sit idly by and let advancing armies conquer them without a fight. They prepared to take up arms against both sides, the Royalists and Cromwells' New Model Army. They fought back using whatever tactics they could to survive. "*When the Sherborne Royalists demanded of a suspected spy which side he was for, the answer was easy: for both*" [Arthur Rutter Bailey *The*



Map showing the Clubmen in South West – note the spread of Royalist Clubmen which suggests Henstridge is amongst the villages between Shaftesbury and Sherborne. Reproduced courtesy of David Underdown *The Chalk and the Cheese*.

Great Civil War in Dorset 1910 p.70.] The popular allegiances in this twisting tumultuous time are of great interest.

War touched every part of the country as armies marched up and down, taking and re-taking strategic towns and ransacking villages along the way. Ordinary peoples' lives are severely disrupted, churches pillaged and lead organ pipes, a favourite amongst both sides, melted down to make bullets. [Underdown, *Somerset in the Civil*



The Clubmen banner, captured by Cromwell's army on 4th August 1645, the motto was recorded and recreated by dux homunculorum.' courtesy of <https://bylinetimes.com>

War and Interregnum.] Quartering is hated, as soldiers force themselves on local people, taking over the best houses, eating the best food, stealing horses, bolts of cloth and even one man's hair shirt.

The risings of the Clubmen in the south west show a calculated response to Civil War which is far more organised than first thought. Those from the villages of the Blackmore Vale easily fitting in with activities of the Dorset and Wiltshire Association of Clubmen rather than the west Somerset Association centred around Taunton. 'Captain Bynge' raises a strong force, leading one of the many county Clubmen

Associations in Hampshire, Sussex, Devon and Cornwall, Dorset, Wiltshire, and Somerset. The leaders, socially and politically prominent people, clearly demonstrate loyalty to their county, traditional hierarchical structures, and families. Tacit involvement of the clergy, landowners and county officials, including expelled members of 'Court,' lend a weighty endorsement to the associations. Neutrality espoused by the Clubmen was a tactical response; all wanted the war to ended quickly. That being said, *'it took a great deal of courage to stand in the face of the rampaging armies and fight as a 'neutral.'*

Blackmore Vale Clubmen - organised and prepared.

Solicitor Thomas Young from Manston draws up the *'Desires and Resolutions'* of the Dorset and Wiltshire men. Demands and terms agreed at the Gore Hedge Corner meeting on 25th May 1645¹. Approval for the manifesto rang out at a

mass gathering of *'4000 armed with clubs, swords, bills and pitchforks'* at Badbury Rings, near Blandford. All pledged to protect themselves from *'plunder and all other unlawful violence.'* Amazingly organised with *'every town, parish and great hamlet'* represented by *'three or more of the ablest men of wisdom, valour and estate.'*

Constables, tythingmen (collector of tithes) and other officials were tasked as watchmen, with powers to enter houses, disarm and arrest plundering soldiers. Watchmen being responsible for raising the 'intruder' alarm of church bells ringing, as well as collecting the weekly money demanded by parliament to fund the New Model Army. [Manifesto Bayley Civil War p472-474] Valiant attempts to alleviate the hated quartering were cemented within the manifesto, designed to force rampaging soldiers to behave honourably and decently; the terms demanding compensation from offenders via the Dorset Standing Committee. A proviso to outlaw a member from taking sides by forfeiting the right of protection from the Association, reinforced by terms blocking membership from anyone known to belong to either king or parliament or who *'is known to be no Protestant.'* Telling information which hints at underlying Royalist sympathies despite the terms of neutrality contained within. The manifesto, designed to protect the identity of the Clubmen and the covert activities made necessary by the war, also hinders identifying which particular villages the men originated from. The rendezvous chosen by clubmen give hints to where gatherings happen from which can be identified their tactical headquarters at Duncliffe Woods, near Shaftesbury.

Henstridge History continued

The Clubmen, a sufficiently resilient force to be taken seriously in parliament with Fairfax, Parliamentary Commander in Chief, reporting they *'wear white ribbons to show desires for peace and that they meet with drums and flying colours, have muskets, fowling pieces, pikes, halberds, and great clubs.'* Fairfax did not underestimate the strength of their resolve to enforce respect, nor their supremacy to



A halberd courtesy of www.coldsteel.com

hinder and harass both armies. [Journal of House of Lords Volume 7 1645 p.484]

Underdown says the Blackmore Vale Clubmen were *'firmly Royalist,'* meetings taking place at Shaftesbury, Wincanton, Cucklington and Henstridge. Legend has it the 'Carent' effigies in the church were beheaded during this time.² The existence of vicar Jonathan Palmer 'Intruder'³ in 1665 potentially implies the previous vicar of no name was an ejected Royalist sympathiser replaced by a Puritan or vice versa.⁴

Underdown says the Wincanton area was *'at the centre and heart of all the malignants of Somerset.'* Many clubmen and residents had previously suffered

from violent clashes with Waller's southern army under Cromwell's



"Old" Sherborne Castle, one-time country seat of Sir Walter Raleigh and then the Digby family. Sacked during the Civil War. Now managed by English Heritage. Image by the author.

direction, as well as clashes with Royalists.

Cromwell's Raid on the Duncliffe HQ

During August 1645 Sherborne Castle came under attack for the second time in three years. The clubmen rallied against Cromwell's army. The siege lasted 16 days, the castle defence commanded by Sir Lewis Dyve against Thomas Fairfax's Parliamentary Army. Goring's Royalist army was advancing towards Yeovil to raise the siege⁵, as Fairfax and Cromwell continued to battle at Sherborne. At last Cromwell gains intelligence on the location of the Clubmen's HQ and is told of a rallying call to rendezvous near Shaftesbury. Fears the clubmen may be

ready to help break the siege, Cromwell departs with a large number of dragoons. Shaftesbury is surrounded and leaders of the clubmen arrested and taken to Sherborne.

The imprisonment of the leaders at Sherborne leads to a huge rally cry amongst the Somerset, Dorset, and Wiltshire Clubmen Associations. The mass assembly at Dunccliffe meet to decide tactics for getting the prisoners released, and ways to curtail the activities of the rampaging armies travelling through the area. Cromwell and Fairfax believe the clubmen have sufficient local influence and manpower to weaken their military plans. The flag is flying high above Dunccliffe when Cromwell arrives at the bottom of the dense wood. A lieutenant is dispatched to bring Nicholas Bingham and Richard Newman to Cromwell to make their demands. With assurances from Cromwell that they would bring offending soldiers to justice as well as free innocent prisoners, Cromwell writes to Lord Fairfax who address parliament. Fairfax reads out a list of clubmen leaders *'country gentlemen and ministers,'* whereby members of the House of Commons resolve to send prisoners to London and to set free *'such others of the meaner sort'* as Fairfax *'shall think fit.'* [House of Commons Journal 8th August 1645.] It is not clear who, if any, actually went to London. Nicholas Bingham, John Lovell of Henstridge *'a notable stickler against Godly men,'* and Richard Newman of Fifehead Magdalen were amongst the leaders. [Wakeford History of Henstridge] As well as Francis Abbott, Captain Thomas Bennett (Pythouse), , Dr Edward Davenant (vicar of Gillingham) Thomas Jervis, William Lanning, John Pope and Thomas Young



Dunccliffe Wood near Shaftesbury, HQ of the Blackmore Vale Clubmen. Courtesy of Richard Walker www.flickr.com/photos/richwall100/11314691475

who drew up the manifesto.

The last incident took place on the same day at Hambledon Hill, near Child Okeford, led by Compton Abbas vicar Thomas Bravell. Here there were fatalities and eventually Cromwell and his troops apprehended the leaders in Shroton church. Bravell was sequestered and lost his living and home; he returned as vicar after the war. [Minutes of Dorset Standing Committee.]

'Captain Bynge', leader of the Clubmen is revealed

Henstridge is a hornet's nest of ambiguities and lost records. The prize is the fascinating discovery of Clubman leader, Nicholas Bingham, courageous leader of local resistance to the armies from both sides. Nicholas lived in Yenston and was married to Anna Bingham. Their son Anglican Nicolai Bingham junior was baptised at Henstridge on 24th September 1640 [Bishops Transcripts D/P/Hens 2/1/1] Nicholas 'Captain Bynge' dies on 13th February 1657 and Nicholas junior on 2nd April 1673.⁶ [Henstridge Parish Registers] The Bingham memorial stone in St Nicholas Church reads **'to the memory of**

The Bingham's' and commemorates Robert Bingham who died in 1695 aged 58. Robert was a linen weaver from Yenston. No mention of Nicholas Bingham. The Latin inscription also records it lies beside the grave of Dr Edward Bingham who died in 1750. *Great news to find the images and other church inscriptions available online, especially during the current lock down.*

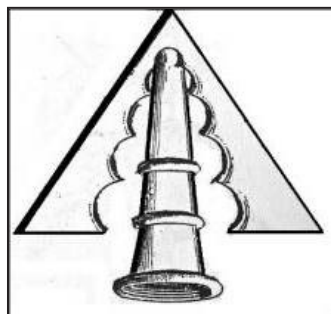


The image taken by John Atkinson can be viewed at henstridgeonline.co.uk/churchinscriptions

Thanks to John Atkinson.

The will of Robert Bingham in 1696 shows he was a man of extensive property and land in Yenston and Henstridge including 'chapmans tenement' which was *'flatly (implying no money?) bought from Richard Bingham of Bingham's Melcombe'* - the father of Strode and Colonel John Bingham – see later. He leaves to his sons Edward and John, lands, and property in Yenston, Henstridge and Wincanton.

An indenture dated 22nd February 1699 reveals a contract between Nicholas Bingham, a 'clothier' of 'New Sarum' Wiltshire and Nathaniel Dalton of Cucklington. Nicholas being the son and



A pheon - 'a stylised metal arrowhead)

heir of Nichols Bingham of Yenston – 'Captain Bynge.' Details show the purchase by Dalton of Henstridge Farm belonging to 'Captain Bynge' and since his death occupied by Jonathan Cooth, gent of Yenston who died on 4th May 1649, and then his son John. Additional land belonging to Nicholas Bingham in Henstridge and Yenston being rented by Dalton for a year. The heraldic seal on the indenture shows 3 pheons – befitting of a clubman? [SDNQ Vol 15] The witnesses are John Partridge of Sherborne, Thomas Nicholls of Shaftesbury, and Lionel Stiebbbs of Stour Provost. *Henstridge Farm could refer to Pond Farm?*

Bayley records of Nicholas Bingham it is '*a pity any of that family are malignants*' (a derogatory term referring to a person who fought for Charles 1st.) The '*family*' reference potentially alluding to John Bingham 'a Puritan' and young colonel in the Parliamentary Army.⁷ Colonel John Bingham plays a lead role in the sacking of Corfe Castle and his home at Bingham's Melcombe is the headquarters of the Parliamentary forces in the area. He is an influential member of the Standing Committee for Dorset set up on 23rd September 1646 to supervise the finances of the wartime army which remained in

force until 1650. [*The Minute Book of the Dorset Standing Committee 1646-1650*].

Strode Bingham, the brother of Colonel John Bingham, was baptised on 24th February 1621. Strode died on 19th



Corfe Castle Dorset, seat of the Bankes family and sacked during the Civil War. Now managed by the National Trust. Image by the author.

December 1673 at Henstridge where he had property. Strode married Cicely, daughter of Thomas Chapman of Yenston. They had 3 daughters, Jane, Dorothy, and Rachel and two sons, Richard and Francis who was born in 1625. Colonel John

Bingham died in 1673 and was succeeded by the son of his brother Strode, his nephew Richard.⁸

Was there a family connection between Nicholas Bingham, Anglican and brothers Strode Bingham and Colonel John Bingham Puritan? There is reason to believe that Nicholas Bingham 'Captain Bynge' and his family are somehow connected with Salisbury.⁹ Robert Bingham born in 1637 could have been the nephew of Strode and Colonel John Bingham or the son of Colonel John? Colonel John and Strode Bingham both died in 1673. Is this just a fluke? *What do you think?*

Bingham heraldic crest in the church is worn even though it was re-polished in 1873 by Edward Clarke. John says looks as if it has been re-cut and may account for the illegible motto which should read '*Spes mia Christus*' – Christ is my hope.¹⁰ Bingham of Henstridge and Melcombe Bingham share the same heraldic crest. A stained-glass window in the church shows the Bingham shield.

A twist of fate?

Ironically, it was the raid on the Duncliffe headquarters that reveals the names of the



The Bingham family crest and motto in St Nicholas Church. Image courtesy of John Atkinson www.henstridgeonline.co.uk



Binghams Window in St Nicholas Church by author

leaders of the Blackmore Vale Clubmen. Men deemed important enough to be discussed in parliament by Fairfax's father, Sir Thomas Fairfax, and worthy of a place in history. [*House of Commons Journal*]

Nicholas Bingham of Henstridge, the courageous 'Captain Bynge' leader of the Clubmen, and a leader amongst men. A protagonist prepared to stand up for local people and fight for civility and humility during what became an increasingly chaotic uncivil war.

You may recall another well-known Bingham of the 20th century and I will leave you to figure that one out!

Footnotes

¹Gore Hedge Corner potentially referring to Alderton in Wiltshire and Gore Hedge a subtle reference to the High Sheriff of Wiltshire at this time.

²House of Commons Journals records William Carent MP for Milborne Port in 1645 was possibly only 'tolerated' in the Long Parliament of 1640-1660. William Carent took leave to go to the country in April 1646 and again in March 1647. As an MP William Carent may have given the Clubmen of Henstridge an ally in parliament? He sat nine times on the Militia Committee before withdrawing from public life after the establishment of the Protectorate or Interregnum in 1653. [*Somerset Militia Commissioners 1649*] William Carent the elder died 25th November 1665.

³ Between the appointment of Richard Flamstead in 1639 and the 'Intruder' Jonathan Palmer, is a blank space of 14 years. Richard Huson was in charge of

Parish Registers in 1653. Palmer was appointed vicar in 1656, he died on 6th February 1669 and buried at Henstridge on 12th February.

⁴Church records for this period are unsurprisingly sparse to help to identify the vicar. Wakeford records Richard Flamstead L.L.O. was vicar of Henstridge appointed on 20th January 1639 and William Watts was the Prebendary from 1633. Flamstead's appointment may have been a temporary one. On 6th June 1638 Richard Flamstead/Flamstead/Flamsted was installed in the prebend of East Harptry on the death of Richard Hadley and on 16th July 1640 at Ilton on the death of Anthony Methwyn. Here he lasted two days before resigning in favour of Henry Anketell. Richard Flamstead was dead by 8th November 1641. [*The Calendar of Manuscripts of the Dean and Chapter of Wells Volume 2*] No name of the vicar has been discovered despite extensive searching, including finding fresh prebendaries temporarily attached to the parish from places such as Barford St David and Templecombe. As the Standing Committee records for Somerset are lost, it is not possible – yet - to learn if he was sequestered indicating a Royalist. Neither do parish records or Bishops Transcripts of the burial records list any occupations.

⁵George, Lord Goring 1608 – 1657, one of Royalist commanders in the west with Prince Rupert and Sir Ralph Hopton and beaten at Taunton and Langport.

⁶ Confirmed as Anna Bingham is recorded as a widow in 1667 when her daughter Elizabeth dies.

⁷ Colonel John Bingham, a descendent of Ralph de Bingham de Bingham. John's

father, Richard married Jane the daughter of Sir Arthur Hopton, knight of Witham Abbey, west of Witham Friary, Somerset. Richard and Jane had seven children, of which John was the eldest and heir to Bingham's Melcombe. John Bingham was the Governor of Guernsey and then the Governor of Poole during the Civil War. [Burke's Genealogical and Heraldic History of the Landed Gentry 1842]

⁸The Binghams, an old established Dorset family of Saxon origin, held a country seat at Bingham's Melcombe in Dorset. Robert Bingham acquired Bingham's Melcombe in 13th century and is a descendent of the Bingham's of Sutton Bingham in Somerset. Ralph de Bingham had two sons, Ralph, the heir, and Robert. Robert became

Bishop of Salisbury in 1229 and credited with the progressing the building of Salisbury Cathedral where he is buried in a tomb.

⁹ Codford St Peter in Wiltshire baptism record for Thomas Bingham son of Nicholas Bingham baptised on 29th December 1597.

¹⁰ The Bingham motto accompanies the heraldic crest of a bend cottised between 6 crosses-patee. [SDNQ Vol 23.]

Caroline Rowland ©January 2020



Summer Gardening and Veg

With time on your hands how about growing a few vegetables in the garden? There is still time to grow vegetable and salad plants from seeds (until the end of June) either in a pot on a sunny windowsill or in a clear patch in the garden. Leeks take up very little space and will keep growing on even through Winter months. Radishes grow quickly as do a few lettuces. Seeds, plants and vegetable seedlings can be ordered and delivered by Grassroots in Henstridge (01963 365 803) or Castle Gardens.

Mix your planting. Growing flowers amongst your veg or locating a weed patch nearby will attract beneficial insects such as hoverflies, lacewings and ladybirds. These will act as predators on sap-sucking aphids such as greenfly.

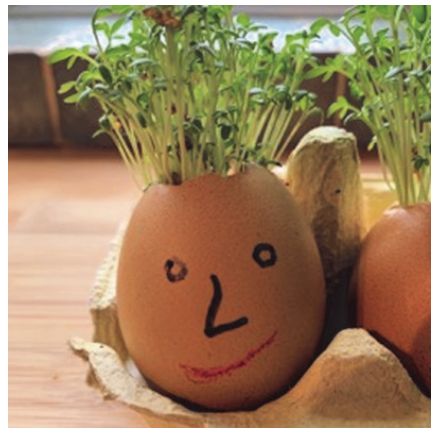
Create barriers. A barrier of coarse bark, crushed eggshells or sharp gravel around veg or flower beds helps to deter slugs and snails. If you have raised beds, try running some copper wire around the sides

Do you have a few old potatoes that have

sprouted? You could plant them either in a tub or a bin-bag filled half full with compost. Plant 3 or 4 potatoes 4 inches deep and when they have sent up green some shoots pour in some more compost. Keep them watered and somewhere sunny and after 3-4 months you will have a tub full of new potatoes.

Children might enjoy growing cress heads. You need an egg box, a few empty eggshells (make a small hole at the top to tip the contents out for cooking later) washed inside, some cotton wool and a packet of cress seeds. Draw a face on the eggshell and stand in the eggbox. Fill the shell with cotton wool (or compost if preferred) upto 1 cm from the top. Sprinkle a few cress seeds in the top and pour two teaspoons of water on. Give them a little water every other day (a Calpol syringe is useful here) and they will soon start to sprout. Ten days later you can trim the cress to have in a delicious egg-and-cress sandwich and then start again!

Helen Howlett



Cress Heads

It isn't always easy to get the ingredients you want during this period of lock-down. I am self-isolating, and not used to having to think far in advance if I want to bake. Usually it is a matter of getting in the car and driving into Stalbridge, or even better, crossing the road to the Late Shop. Flour is particularly hard to find at the moment, so I decided that my favourite flourless recipe for flapjacks would be ideal. It was only then that I discovered that I had very few of the other ingredients either. One of the reasons I like it is that it is rather different from the standard mix of porridge oats, butter and syrup. My friend Bridget had added all sorts of nuts and seeds to make it more virtuous – or at least that was her explanation. Here is the original recipe, with my alternatives in brackets:

NOT-QUITE-BRIDGET'S FLAPJACKS.

425g mixed fruit and nut muesli plus a little extra flour if necessary:

325g porridge oats;

25g sunflower seeds;

50g bran;

25g mixed flaked almonds and sesame seeds;

225 g butter (or sunflower spread)

110g soft brown sugar, or demerara (use a little less if the muesli is sweetened)

4 tbsps golden syrup, or honey, or molasses

A squeeze or two of lemon juice.

Line a Swiss-roll tin with baking parchment. Preheat the oven to 155°C. Put all the dry ingredients, except the sugar, into a large bowl. If you are using the muesli, blitz it briefly in a food processor for a finer result. Of course you can use it whole for an extra crunchy finish, but any whole nuts are better chopped up a little. Over a low heat, melt together the sugar, butter or spread and the syrup or honey or molasses, then stir this into the dry ingredients, together with the lemon juice. The texture should be quite stiff – if it is too runny, because the muesli is very high class and doesn't have many porridge oats in it, add some flour – wholemeal would be good – until it thickens. Spread evenly into the lined baking tin and cook for about 25 minutes until the top is crisp. Cut into squares while the flapjack is still warm, then turn out of the tin. The alternatives do work OK – luckily flapjacks are forgiving – but the original is best.

Simone Sekers © 2020

Wot's On Wordsearch Summer 2020 Issue

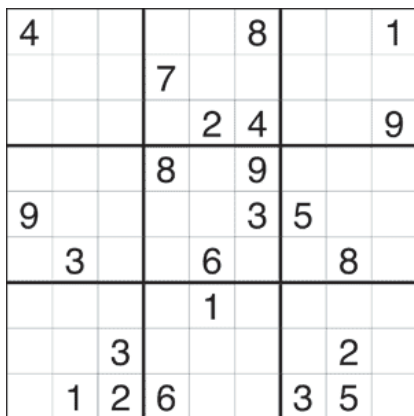


CoronaVirus
Save Lives
VE Day
Youth Club
Harry Bingham
Clap for carers

Lockdown
John Smales
Cliff Frost
Barry Lazenbury
Captain Byngie
Volunteer Responder

Self Isolation
Lola and Dave
Finley Thompson
Social Distance
Cress Heads
Stay Safe

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