

Wrotham



Parish Magazine



July 2020

ST. GEORGE'S CHURCH, WROTHAM
www.wrothamchurch.org

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More addresses and telephone numbers on back inside cover.

**This is a community magazine for the village of Wrotham
produced by St George's Church.**

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WHAT'S ON IN JULY 2020



Church Opening

Following recent government announcements a part of the Church is now open for individual private prayer on:

**Sundays and Wednesdays from 10.00am to 4.00pm
and**

**From Sunday 5th July, and the following weeks, a
service of Said Morning Prayer will take place in
the church at 9.00am**

For updated information please visit our website:
www.wrothamchurch.org

If you come into the church, please follow the government guidelines on social distancing and any instructions displayed in the church. Please stay within the marked area.

**We continue with the Zoom Services every
Sunday at 10.30am**

If you would like to join us, please email
info@wrothamchurch.org and ask to be added to the list for regular Church e-mails, or ring the rector on 01732 882211

If you need someone to speak to, please contact the rector
on rector@wrothamchurch.org or ring 01732 882211;
or a churchwarden, Sandy on 07517658582, or Pauline on
01732 886156

From the Rectory



Mass demonstrations in defiance of lockdown and fights with police on the streets seem a long way from our quiet rural community at Wrotham. I have to say when I first heard about the riots in America following the killing of George Floyd, I probably thought the trouble was a long way from our country - over there, in America, where they have greater problems in that way than we do.

Events have shown just how alive the tensions are in our nation also. We might be tempted to think the thirty-five miles up the road to London is a 'safe' distance, but we may more seriously sense that we should reflect on what is happening and how it can refresh or awaken our awareness of important issues.

For me consciousness has been heightened in two main areas. The first is the ever present need in our world for reconciliation. Over a period of my past life I was privileged to be involved in a number of gatherings arranged for reconciliation. These were set up in the context of Christian faith, but occasionally overlapped with the more political or public realm.

The gatherings happened in many different places - from Northern Ireland to East Africa; from small groups to a meeting of over 8000, from a tiny mud walled church to Nairobi Cathedral. In all the different circumstances, what came through



St Peter's Church, Drogheda, where the steeple was fired by Cromwell's army, burning those inside who had sought refuge. The cry had gone up 'No quarter'

was the very deep hurt that past corporate wounds and injustices inflict on people's hearts. The hurts are carried by being part of a nation or people group who have suffered, and certainly carry down through history, as we've seen. They are often well covered in individuals, and time and again I have been surprised at the depth and strength of feeling that breaks out when the wound is touched.

To give just one example: a group of us from England went on a carefully pre-arranged visit to Ireland. We were staying at a retreat centre, and a lady on the team there gave us a very friendly welcome. I happened to be sitting near her as we had a cup of tea, and we were getting on well, until I mentioned, in answer to a question, that one of my ancestors had gone over to Ireland with Cromwell's army. This meant he was implicated in the massacres that took place, most notoriously at the town of

Drogheda, near Dublin. She stopped talking to me immediately, clearly highly discomfited. It was a day and a half before she felt able to approach me again, and we made peace. And that was more than 350 years after the events.

Later we were invited to a reception with the Mayor at the Town Hall in Drogheda. Even in that 'official' setting tears were shed by most of the people present, including the Mayor, as acknowledgement was made of past wrongs, and reconciliation sought. It was a profound and moving experience for all involved.

It is some years since I have been involved in these planned and corporate acts of reconciliation, but the present tensions have reminded me that I can still be an agent of reconciliation in more everyday ways - as can all of us. The need for reconcilers in the post lockdown days ahead is likely to be marked, not only in the area of racial injustice. There will be many personal and economic challenges to be negotiated, and then that most divisive issue of Brexit looms.

God is on a mission of reconciliation: "For it pleased the *Father that in Christ* all the fullness should dwell, and by Him to **reconcile all things** to Himself" (*Colossians 1. 19,20*). And 'he has committed to us the message of reconciliation' (*2 Corinthians 5.18*).

Stay aware - Control division – Save peace!

Recent events have also reminded us that attitudes do change significantly over time, and that fact alerts us to be prepared to change ourselves. A major shift has been expressed in a very symbolic way through the wide media coverage of the actions and debates around the statues. I

wonder what your views are about these ? Personally, I was quite surprised to hear that there was still a statue of a slave trader in Bristol. We cannot rewrite history, but views do change, as have those regarding slavery. In today's culture, it now seems clear that the continued public honouring of a man who traded human beings for profit is a mistake. I did think it a good solution to retrieve the statue of Edward Colston so that it could be put in a museum, where he can remain as part of the history it is important to remember.

As I write it seems also that the vote by Oriel College, Oxford, to remove the statue of Cecil Rhodes will be implemented. After many years of intense debate, and arguments about history, Rhode's Scholarships and so on, it seems attitudes have shifted sufficiently to see



him go. Again, I hope it will be to a museum, where his place in history can be remembered.

We may not be in a position to determine the fate of statues, but we can consider how we might allow the necessary adjustments of this time to shift our attitudes. The pandemic and lockdown has highlighted various issues. We have become more aware of the extent of racial injustice, of economic inequality, and of the changing world of work. We are warned that the gaps in our society will widen.

We have become more properly appreciative of those who serve our health and care for the elderly. We have put the lives of individual human beings, and especially the most vulnerable, ahead of economic considerations. We have done without so much transport, and valued the reports of clearer seas and skies, and the quoted global fall of Carbon emissions by 7%.

Will we simply revert to old patterns when the plague passes? Or will our eyes have been opened just far enough that we will keep looking, and push on with changing attitudes long enough to make a difference?



Edward (rector@wrothamchurch.org 01732 882211)

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With no events possible, the church has come up with an idea for a bit of a fundraiser - send the

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(About 13 miles, so they say)





Charity for July 2020

Leonard Cheshire Disability Care Home

On May 22 1948, RAF pilot Leonard Cheshire took a dying man, who had nowhere to go, into his home. With no money, Leonard nursed the man himself. This one act of kindness was the beginning of what we now know as the charity Leonard Cheshire homes. Supporting individuals to live life as they decide, whether independently in modern assisted living or residential care.

Supporting children with disabilities into education in Asia and Africa, and young people with disability everywhere, as they acquire confidence from volunteering, experiences and IT skills. Supporting adults with disability as they develop their chosen education, work experience and internship opportunities, and progressing into employment or entrepreneurship.



WROTHAM
HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Please be advised that all further meetings and events of the society are CANCELLED

If possible, the society may arrange a new programme commencing September 2020.

Full information on the Society and the future programme of events can be found on: www.wrothamhistorical.org.uk

JANE AUSTEN'S WROTHAM WEEKEND

It is a truth universally acknowledged that a writer in need of inspiration must be in want of a spell in Wrotham.

In my research for last month's article on the Gorings, I came across an unexpected link between the village and Jane Austen, of which some of you may already be aware.

In 1813, the celebrated novelist spent a weekend at Court Lodge, then the home of the Reverend George Moore and his wife Harriet – the sister-in-law of Jane's brother Edward.

She first mentioned the village five years before, in 1808, when she wrote about a journey from her brother's estate at Godmersham, near Canterbury, to her own home in Southampton.

She commented that Edward was in a great hurry "tho' Harriet is very earnest with Edward to make Wrotham in his Journey".



George Moore

On that occasion, they passed nearby but didn't stop at the village. On another, in 1812, Jane met up with the Rev. George Moore, Harriet and their son George while visiting friends in Canterbury.

In a letter to her sister Cassandra she wrote: "Owing to a difference of clocks the coachman did not bring the carriage so soon as he ought by half an hour; anything like a breach of punctuality was a great offence, and Mr. Moore was very angry, which I was rather glad of. I wanted to see him angry; and, though he spoke to his servant in a very loud voice and with a good deal of heat, I was happy to perceive that he did not scold Harriet at all. Indeed, there is nothing to object to in his manners to her, and I do believe that he makes her – or she makes herself – very happy. They do not spoil their boy."

The Pride and Prejudice writer finally arrived at the grand Court Lodge on Saturday 13 November 1813, and Fanny Knight, Jane's favourite niece, wrote: "Papa (Edward), Aunt. J. & I came to Wrotham, waiting some time at Lenham".



Cassandra

Fanny also recorded two visits to church the following day.

Jane and Harriet had been friends for many years and for the next three days, Jane enjoyed her company and became better acquainted with Rev. George Moore.

But she may also have paid a visit to St. Clere, the home of William Evelyn, known to be an old friend of the Austen family who mixed in the same social circles in Bath, where he had a second home and where Jane lived from 1801 to 1806.

A much older married man, Evelyn had caused something of a scandal when it was rumoured that he had an adulterous affair with a Miss Mary Cassandra Twistleton, a distant cousin of Jane's.

Although we do not know if they met in 1813, the mischievous writer recalled a "bewitching" afternoon with the reputed lothario some 12 years before, in a letter to her sister Cassandra.

The pair had enjoyed a ride in Evelyn's "Phaeton" – a sporty, open-topped horsedrawn carriage with huge wheels which was popular in the early 1800s and had a reputation for being fast and dangerous.

On 26 May 1801, she wrote: "I assure you inspite of what I might chuse to insinuate in a former letter, that I have seen very little of Mr Evelyn since my coming here."

“I met him this morning for only the 4th time, & as to my anecdote about Sydney Gardens, ... he only asked me whether I were to be at Sidney Gardens in the evening or not. There is now something like an engagement between us & the Phaeton.”

On the following day Jane received a note from Mr Evelyn “soon after breakfast” and joined him for a drive “to the top of Kingsdown” in “the very bewitching Phaeton & four.”

Austen biographer, Park Honan, sees no romantic connection between Austin and Evelyn but says she seems well aware that her choice to spend time with him pushed the boundaries of what was deemed acceptable from unmarried society ladies.

“The significance of the Evelyn incident would not be worth observing, perhaps, if it did not show that her quiet independence allowed her to enjoy the company of an interesting man whose adultery was his concern,” he writes.

Despite being a clergyman, Reverend George Moore enjoyed the finer things in life and his home at Court Lodge rebuilt shortly after he arrived in the village, in 1800, and was sumptuously furnished.

Jane’s visit came shortly before she wrote *Mansfield Park* and, in an article on the Reverend, writer Margaret Wilson noted, “the character of Dr Grant in *Mansfield Park* is sometimes compared to George Moore, for he also enjoyed a luxurious life style.”

Whether she based her character on the Reverend or not, it is beyond doubt that Court Lodge once played host to one of Britain’s greatest ever writers. AM



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WHERE ARE YOU NOW?

I ask you not in a spiritual way, but geographically. Of course, you probably know; you are at home, finally in the pub or somewhere else in Wrotham!

But why is this an important question? Well, we all hope that this does not happen but let's imagine for a moment that you were involved in or came across an incident that would require the emergency services to attend. Somebody needs to call 999 and that person could be you.

Many of you will be able to elucidate to others your exact location by means of an address, trigonometry, phone tracking, grid references or street names. These methods by themselves are 'ok' but not ideal for every situation. What if you're in a field or woods with no map and find an injured or at-risk person. How could you explain or describe to someone else where you are EXACTLY? Local knowledge is one thing, but consider this, what if someone was trying to call 999 for you and did not know the area as well as you? Moreover, the stress of the situation may cloud memory or details become skewed.

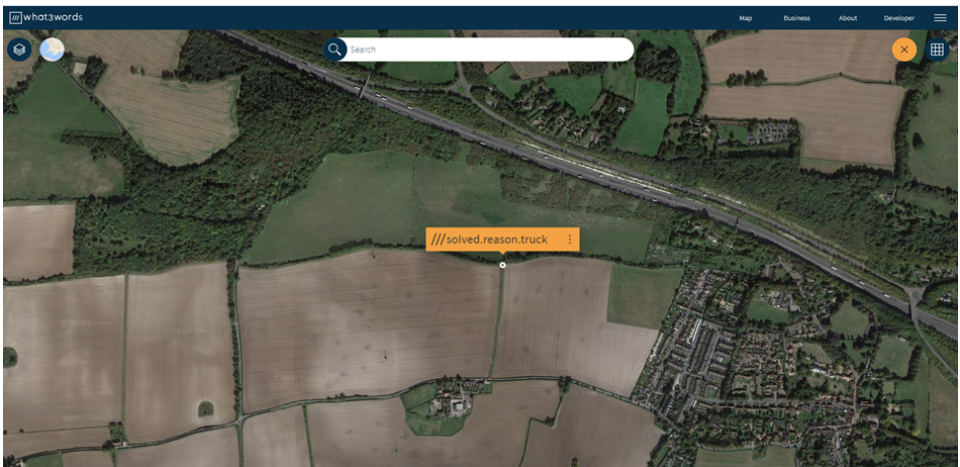
I will be honest; I have forgotten on a few occasions as to which floor of the carpark I have parked on and I don't believe I'm alone in saying that! Yes, I should have made a mental note of the cars' locality before I exited the building. But like many others, I'm on a mission to buy something in the shops and I look forward, (in both senses of the word), to where I'm going and not where I've been! However, this issue is just an inconvenience to myself and maybe it would cost me more in parking charges; but when faced with a casualty scenario that you couldn't foresee or risk assess then what do you do?

Time, of course, in many situations is important so let me give you two examples of purely hypothetical scenario so you can see for yourself what the difference might be and how it could change the course of the future.

It's a lovely hot summer day and you have gone for an hour long walk along a route you are relatively familiar with. You are wearing just casual clothes, carrying a water bottle and phone. You have no first aid kit or map. As your journey continues you come across someone who has fallen off their bicycle and needs some medical attention. It's time to dial 999 to get some further help. The operator asks of the location of the incident.

Example one: "I'm at a T-junction of a footpath on the North Downs Way near Wrotham village. There are trees that line the path from East to West. I have walked past a garden allotment on my right about half a mile. I can hear the motorway nearby".

Example two: "I'm at what3words `///solved.reason.truck`".



What do you think, do you know this path like the back of your hand? Example one may have got you thinking that your location is accessible by car from the motorway, maybe even the casualty could be extricated by some other means. What we do know is that each moment spent thinking about how and where to get to is time consuming so it is vital that clear and precise information is given and gathered to aid rescue.

Example two sounds quick, concise and straight to the point. But what is what3words EXACTLY?

What3words is a great solution, and one that will save time, and more importantly, help to save lives. To put it simply, what3words is an easy way to talk about any precise location in the world. It gives every 3m x 3m square a unique combination of three words: a what3words address.

This is free to use and can be used on many devices including watches. You can use it for deliveries, personal addresses and even send your location to friends and family if you happen to be in a field at a music festival. To get children involved you could also devise a treasure hunt!

I hope that you will find this to be useful and if you have any questions then please see p17&18 or get in touch.

As ever, stay safe

Peter Bambling



Tell emergency services exactly where you are with what3words

what3words has divided the world into 3m x 3m squares and given each one a unique 3 word address. In an emergency, when giving your accurate location is crucial, a 3 word address could be the easiest way to communicate exactly where help is needed so emergency services can find you quickly.



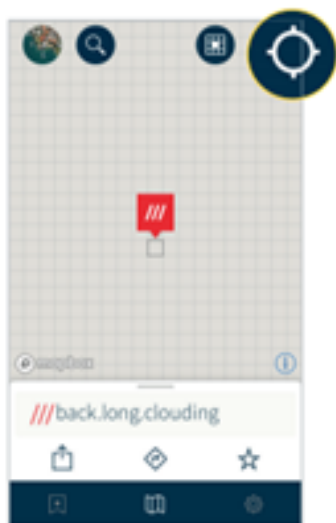
Be prepared, download the free **what3words** app and try finding the 3 word address of your current location, so you know what to do in an emergency.




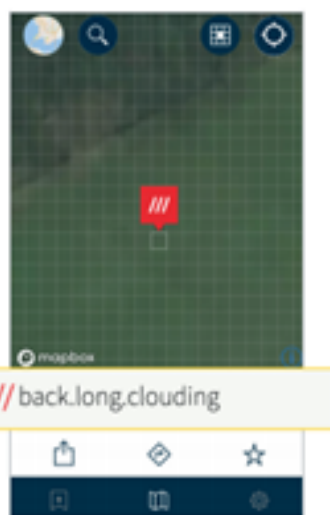
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How to give emergency services your 3 word address

Use the what3words app to find the 3 word address for the exact location of an incident where you are.




1. Open the what3words app and tap  to see your current location.



2. The 3 word address is displayed at the bottom of the screen.

Once you have the 3 word address, you can say it over the phone or copy it and paste it into a text message.

N.B. Please wait for the blue dot to stabilise to ensure you have the most accurate 3 word address. You can also use compass mode to check your accuracy. GPS signal is weak inside buildings, so it's easier to find the nearest entrance and discover its 3 word address to direct others there.

If you want to find your home 3 word address, enter the street address into the what3words app, zoom in for more detail, then select the square closest to the front entrance of your home. To save it on the app, register for an account and tap .



 [w3w.co/iOS](https://www.what3words.com/iOS) |  [w3w.co/Android](https://www.what3words.com/Android) |  [w3w.co/map](https://www.what3words.com/map)

RECIPE FOR JULY

STRAWBERRIES IN RASPBERRY SYRUP



Ingredients: 1lb Strawberries
For the Raspberry Sauce:
1lb raspberries
3ozs castor sugar
Juice of ½ lemon

Method: Wash and hull the strawberries leaving them whole. Place in a serving dish and chill while preparing the sauce. Put the raspberries in a saucepan adding half the sugar and heat very gently for about 3 minutes crushing them a little to make the juice run. When the fruit is soft, rub through a sieve to make a puree and discard the pips. Add the remaining sugar and the strained lemon juice. Pour over the strawberries and toss to coat the fruit well. Serve chilled.

GARDENING TIPS FOR JULY



POTATO BLIGHT

This is the month that an attack of blight on potato crops can prove disastrous. You rarely see potato blight so long as the dry weather lasts but after the first heavy rains this month when we get a humid atmosphere and the leaves are charged with moisture it makes its appearance and soon plays havoc with the crop. This is then the time to spray the foliage, but make sure the leaves are dry before doing so. When using make sure you spray on the underside of the leaves as well as the top of the plants. Garden centres sell excellent products to combat this disease

Tomato plants are also susceptible so spray these as well if they are growing outside.

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SUMMER INSPIRATION

I'm writing this on St Barnabas's Day and sadly it's raining at the moment. Although we need the rain after a record breaking sunny May, I'm sorry there is no sun today as the old lore 'on St Barnabus's Day the sun is come to stay' is given permission to prevail. This of course is really due to the jet stream which is now lower and allows low pressure to affect the UK and cause the associated unsettled weather pattern for June. High pressure during May led to little rain and sunny weather, which was great for all enduring the current restrictions. Traditionally St Barnabus's feast day is also the time for cutting hay to lay down for winter fodder and rain is therefore unwelcome. However, rain today favours grape growth and his protection from thunderstorms also protects the vineyards, so cheers to St Barnabus!



The saying 'Barnabus bright, Barnabus bright, the longest day and the shortest night' is puzzling as the longest day is now June 21st, the summer solstice, not June 11th. The explanation for this statement is that up to 1752 we were using the Julian calendar and then converted to the Gregorian calendar to

step in line with the rest of Europe. Eleven days were dropped in September and subsequently St Barnabus's day was in advance of the summer solstice. It was however good for my sister who celebrates her birthday on the summer solstice. This was a source of envy for me as a child as I couldn't equate fairness with her birthday enjoying the longest day and mine being much shorter.

It was very moving to see the televised report of 5 year old Tony Huddell from Kings Hill walking to raise money for his second home, the Evalina Children's Hospital. Nothing surprising about a 5 year old walking you might think but Tony had both legs amputated as a

baby, after suffering abuse by his natural parents, and now walks with prosthetic limbs and crutches to aid him. He had been somewhat reluctant to walk at all using a walking frame but was inspired by seeing Captain Tom Moore walking around his garden on his frame to raise money for the NHS and thought he could have a go as well. As we know the centenarian Tom walked his driveway every day to reach 100 lengths before his 100th birthday hoping to raise £1,000 for the NHS. That sum is now over Twenty million pounds in a staggering (no pun intended) feat which caught the public's imagination in lockdown and has grown daily along with his fame. This rather unassuming old soldier has now produced a number one chart hit and inspired numerous others of all ages

including young Tony.

There is something rather special seeing a youngster inspired by someone doing something difficult and being inspired to emulate him.

Living 100 years used to be quite unusual but now they are the fastest growing segment of the adult population.

Okinawa, Japan has the

highest number of centenarians and it may be their nutrition, simple life and lifelong physical activity that contributes to longevity. Genetic makeup is the most likely factor with families whose ancestors lived a long life are more likely to do the same. Independence, positive attitude, and resilience are key factors and not smoking or drinking excessively appear to be a feature, although not all centenarians endorse that lifestyle.

Suffice it to say that one UK centenarian has lifted hearts and minds recently and opened our purses for good causes. Inspiring young Tony has been a wonderful side effect and watching press reports, his fund raising walk for the Evalina Children's Hospital has risen into the hundred thousands of pounds and is still increasing.

Donate www.justgiving.com/fundraising/tonys-10k-walk.

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BATS NOT JUST IN THE BELFRY

Conspiracy theories about the origins of Covid 19 have been rife in recent weeks, and not just on social media. For example, Mike Pompeo (The US Secretary of State) stated recently that 'There is a significant amount of evidence that the virus came from that laboratory in Wuhan – and that it was man made'. When it was pointed out that the scientific consensus showed that the virus was not artificial or genetically modified, Pompeo replied, 'That's right. I agree with that. Yeah. I've seen that analysis, I've no reason to doubt that that is accurate'. Muddle and confusion have been the hallmark of many leaders tackling the pandemic - and for many of the rest of us trying to comprehend what has happened.

It appears that when the full facts are known (perhaps it would be better to say, *if* they are ever known) the source of the virus may well have been in the so-called 'wet markets' in Wuhan where a variety of fish and wild animals were sold, some possibly infected by bats. Whether these markets are the vital factor or not, the specific role of bats is significant. It is reinforced by evidence that the 2002 SARS outbreak appears to have originated in horse shoe bats in Guandong Province, and was first transmitted to another species (reports mention cat-like civets) and then to humans.

But before we relegate the problem of Corona viruses to the practices and behaviours found in China and South East Asia, there are other areas of the world to consider. As industrial development clears natural habitats, and as climate change wreaks it's havoc, the buying and selling of wild animals has increased in many countries. Conservationists as well as medical scientists have been trying to warn us about this for years. Some of the demand for wild animal products relates to long standing beliefs in their supposed properties (from their curative powers to their aphrodisiac qualities). Recent fads for specific animals have added to the mix.

In a fascinating, if disturbing article published ten years ago, a team of researchers led by Anne-Lise Chaber from Adelaide, Australia, reported the results of a study of 'bushmeat' arriving at Charles De Gaulle airport in Paris. The researchers inspected the luggage of 129 Air France flights from Central and West Africa - countries such as Mali, Benin, and the Ivory Coast. All those passengers carrying ice boxes and a random sample of general luggage were inspected. A total of 134 passengers were searched. They found that half were carrying meat or fish. One passenger was carrying no less than 51kg of bushmeat, even though he had no luggage. Overall it was estimated that 63.2 tonnes of meat and fish were imported from these flights on a weekly basis.

The species of bushmeat found were truly staggering. They included porcupine, cane rats, monkeys, crocodiles and giant pangolins. Many of the animals, or parts of animals, had only recently been killed. Some passengers held veterinary certificates, and claimed that this meant it was legal to bring the bushmeat into France. The motivation for the trafficking (and the hunting that lay behind it) was clear enough. Prices in Paris for such animal meat were several times higher than in Africa.

The researchers own concerns, in carrying out this study, were essentially that of conservation. The trade in these 'products' is clearly worrying for conservationists in an era of mass travel and lax border checks. In the light of the Corona virus pandemic, there is obviously the additional fear of transmission of infections from animals to humans. The conclusion seems clear. Speaking of Covid 19 as 'The Chinese Virus' misses the point. Even as this pandemic hopefully recedes, the need to reset our relationship with the natural world could not be more urgent for all countries.

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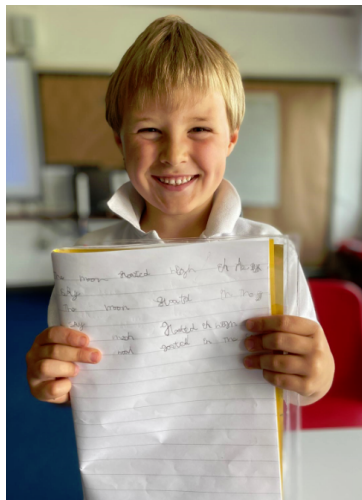
June 2020. Changes In School:

What a three months we have all experienced. These unparalleled times have affected families and communities in so many different ways, and we are constantly adapting as advice trickles through to us all. I have been astounded at the community spirit and support that has been seen and hope that this is a positive outcome that continues into the future.

Since the Government announced school closure we have remained open to support Key Worker children and quickly adapted to support our children and their families with home learning. It was a very odd time to be in school, what then seemed a very large building with no laughter, singing and chatter echoing through the corridors.

At the start of June we reopened school, albeit with staggered drop off and pick up times. Reduced numbers in 'class bubbles' now being the new school normal, but it is the children who have breathed life back into St. George's once more. Due to restrictions we have only opened for three year groups and continue to support our Key Worker families. We have a third of the school role back into education but I am looking forward to the day when **every** child can once more walk through our school gates.

Well-being is at the heart of education right now; whether it be in school or at home. We have had to continually adapt ways to ensure we can keep in contact with our children and families. This has been by email, telephone and delivering food parcels or work packs to homes. The teachers have all been working incredibly hard to adapt to new ways of working, adapting lessons and planning - despite the unprecedented pandemic I couldn't be prouder of the efforts of the staff.



Education during Covid-19:

One thing we have worked hard on with developing our curriculum this year was to ensure we maximise the beautiful grounds we are lucky to have in our school. I have to say the creativity of parents and children who have been home schooling has made us think in even more detail. Children are entitled to an enriched education, and seeing the vast array of ways they have been learning about the world through Art, DT, Cooking, Gardening, Dance... shows how important creativity is in engaging learning.

We have incorporated this into our curriculum back in school and some of our year 6 children have decided to redesign and cultivate our Reflection Garden while learning about the names of plants and insects using apps like 'Seek' to help them learn as they go. This week they identified a Himalayan honeysuckle which they are now nurturing.

Modern Technology:

It cannot go unnoticed that technology has been a lifeline with communication which has helped friends stay in touch, teachers communicate with their class and wider use for us all. I haven't met many people that haven't tried at least an online quiz or a TikTok dance. And how lucky have we been in school with Edward, our vicar, zooming into our classrooms to deliver worship to the children. Knowing how successful he's been with the Sunday Service he was keen to help in school too!

Community Spirit :

A BIG thank you goes out to all of you in our community who have helped support the 'GoFundMe' campaign set up by one of our parents to help support those in our school community with deliveries of fresh fruit and vegetables. A substantial donation was also made through church contacts which has kept this support going through this summer term.

Stay safe and well!



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Wrotham Parish Council News

Update from TMBC regarding refuse and recycling collections

Given the ongoing COVID-19 outbreak and its impact on our residents and the services we are providing, I thought it timely to provide an update on current refuse & recycling collections. I apologise for the lengthy email, but feel that it is important for Members to be fully aware of the situation we find ourselves in at this time.

In order to provide some context, we need to note the impact that the outbreak has had nationally on collection & disposal services over the past weeks. Quite soon after the outbreak started, waste industry experts started gathering data in order to assess the impact on the waste industry as a whole, but also local authority collection & disposal services. For example, the lockdown has had a huge impact on the amount of materials normally collected from commercial & retail premises, such as cardboard, glass & paper. This initially caused massive shortages of materials for re-processors, and their ability to produce packaging for food, drinks, medicines, etc. As such, Government guidance was issued to local authorities on prioritising their collection services during the outbreak, given the staff shortages that were being experienced amongst both collection & disposal companies. The guidance highlighted refuse, food & clinical collections as high priority due to potential health risk issues; dry recycling as medium due to needing to maintain the flow of packaging materials to re-processors; and bulky & garden waste collections and street cleaning operations (apart from litter bin emptying) as low.

Fortunately TMBC's Business Continuity Plan had identified the same priority levels, and we had already implemented measures to maintain those high & medium priorities as Urbaser's staff sickness & self-isolation soon impacted on their ability to fully staff services, despite the redeployment of street cleaning and agency staff. At some stages, around 50% of their staff were either on sick leave, self-isolating or "shielding", as well as leave taken to deal with caring responsibilities. Bulky & garden waste collections were suspended due to these shortages, as was the Saturday Bulky Service following Government advice issued around social distancing. Members will also be aware that our own staff's ability to carry out their normal duties has been impacted by the Government guidance/rules on working from home, self-isolation, non-essential travel and social distancing as well as their own caring responsibilities & domestic situations.

Since mid-April, a weekly national survey of local authorities has been conducted by the Association of Directors of Environment, Planning and Transport (ADEPT) in order to report on the impacts of COVID-19 on collection & disposal services. Initially, the majority of councils suspended bulky & garden

waste collections; around 60% reduced or suspended their recycling collections; and 85% suspended bulky collections and other non-priority services.

The number of local authorities reporting their refuse collections to be operating as normal has now risen to 90%; recycling to 85%; food to 80%; garden waste to 76%; and bulky collections to 60%. The remainder are reporting varying levels of disruption, from minor to complete suspension, with some councils still having to send recycling for landfill or incineration.

TMBC restarted garden waste collections on 11 May, and bulky collections from 4 May. Bulky collections only require one van with two staff, whereas garden waste is normally collected by six vehicles with three staff each. In order to deal with the high volumes of garden waste that has built up both as a result of suspension of the service and of the number of people in lockdown and generating more garden waste than normal at this time of year, two additional vehicles have been provided to assist. This has been funded in full by Kent County Council as part of its COVID-19 response to assist Kent district councils at this time. However this support will end this week, so alternative solutions are currently being discussed with Urbaser.

A number of other Kent councils have not experienced such a significant impact on their collection services, largely because their contractors have been able to redeploy staff from their own commercial waste collection arms. Due to the closure of many retail & commercial outlets, they would otherwise have had to furlough or lay off a large number of their staff. Instead, they have made them available to their local authority clients (at significant cost to the councils) in order for them to maintain as many services as possible.

Over the past few weeks staffing levels at Urbaser have significantly improved, with most staff returning from sick leave or self-isolation. However, a number of staff fall into the “shielding” category of vulnerable individuals and have not yet returned to work. There is still a relatively high dependency on agency staff and redeployed street cleaning staff. Urbaser are trying to address this by recruiting agency staff into permanent positions, but only when the member of staff is suitable for the position and is committed to providing the quality of service expected.

Clearly this has impacted on the quality of service being provided, with agency & street staff not necessarily being used to their rounds, as well as being deployed onto collection rounds where there are staff absences as and when required. There has also been a high turnover of agency staff, as well as some nervousness about working in an environment where the standard guidance on social distancing cannot be adhered to. Regarding that issue, Urbaser are adhering to national guidance issued, supported by the Health & Safety Executive, about measures to be taken in work environments where social distancing cannot realistically be achieved. The measures they have put in

place are aimed at not only protecting their own staff from the virus but also at reducing the risk infection to our residents.

Volumes of waste being collected across all services has increased significantly, mainly due to lockdown and more people being at home than normal. Waste that would otherwise have gone through other routes such as workplaces & schools has now ended up through the household streams. There has also been a huge increase in home deliveries which itself results in higher volumes of packaging than we would normally have to collect at any other time. Compared with February (last full month prior to lockdown), tonnages in April (latest full month data currently available) have seen a 30% increase in residual waste; 30% increase in glass, plastics & cans; and 40% increase in paper & card. In addition to the additional tonnage, some materials present additional challenges, such as the high volume of card being collected, with many large packaging boxes being placed out for collection than normal. This takes up more room in the vehicles, leading to them requiring additional tipping each day. Most crews that would normally tip once or twice a day are now having to do so three or four times, which clearly results in less time in the working day being able to carry out collections. It also means that there are more vehicles in the queue at the tips, leading to further downtime.

However, over the past few weeks, other issues have impacted on our ability to maintain our scheduled services. Scheduled repair works were carried out at the end of April at North Farm transfer Station and for around ten days our vehicles which would normally have delivered there were diverted to Dunbrik Transfer Station near Sevenoaks, or to Allington near Maidstone. When collecting in the southern end of the borough, this increased travel time to tip significantly, potentially impacting on crews' abilities to complete collections each day. However, due to crews being able to work later than normal each day and increased monitoring & supervision of their rounds, the potential impact on completion of collection services was reduced.

On Sunday 24 May a fire broke out at KCC's Waste Transfer Station at Dunbrik, where most of Sevenoaks DC's refuse & recycling is delivered. This led to most of their vehicles being diverted to North Farm Transfer Station in Tunbridge Wells. As around 45% of all of our refuse & recycling is delivered there, awaiting transfer to Blaise Farm, Allington or the Materials Recycling Facility, this has had a serious impact on the amount of downtime required for each vehicle to tip. Normally one tip trip would mean a downtime of around one hour from collections, including travel time there & back and time to tip. This has recently extended to up to two hours each trip. Combined with the additional number of tips required each day, mentioned above, the impact has been significant. At the other end of the Borough, Allington have also experienced similar delays, largely due to the sheer volume of waste being delivered there by TMBC, Maidstone BC and other councils. Again, this has led

to delays in collections in the northern half of the Borough. These issues are unlikely to be fully resolved until such time as lockdown eases, and volumes of materials being collected reduces. However, we may have to accept that due to the ongoing COVID-19 outbreak, this is unlikely to happen in the very near future and we are discussing any potential solutions with both KCC and Urbaser.

Finally, just to add to the North Farm issues detailed above, McDonalds have recently opened their drive-thru units, including the one at North Farm this week. On the first day of reopening, huge traffic queues formed into & around the whole estate, causing significant further delays for our collection crews delivering to the North Farm Transfer Station. We are hoping that once the initial novelty of being able to grab a Big Mac again wears off, traffic issues should improve, but again we are monitoring this closely and any crews that can practicably divert to Allington & Blaise Farm direct are doing so.

Regarding the still-suspended Saturday Bulky Service, current Government guidance on social distancing is still in place, although in some ways relaxed. Although KCC have been able to safely reopen their HWRCs through various measures such as installing traffic management systems, physical barriers on site and a booking system for users of those facilities, similar measures would be very difficult to implement on our mobile service. Once the other services have been stabilised, we will be discussing potential options with Urbaser with the aim of reinstating the service in a way where social distancing measures can be maintained for the safety of Urbaser's staff and of our residents.

I do appreciate the frustration that you and your residents may be feeling at this time due to non-completion of collections, containers not being returned correctly and missed hot spot & assisted collections. This is clearly not helped by the previous problems with the service when the new collection arrangements were introduced. I can assure you that the Waste Services team and Urbaser's management are working as hard as they can to resolve or mitigate the issues detailed above. I would be as pleased as anyone (if not more so) to get back to the improved levels of service we previously experienced – albeit be for a short time -between New Year and the COVID-19 outbreak. During that period the levels of complaints, phone calls & emails were significantly reduced and quality of work greatly improved, which does prove that Urbaser are capable of delivering the service standards we require of them, albeit without the current & ongoing challenges we face at this difficult time.

I would again apologise for the level of detail provided, as well as for the current standard of performance, but hope that this gives you a full picture of the situation we currently find ourselves in and the measures being put in place to improve matters for you and our residents. Please continue to direct any reports or complaints to waste.services@tmbc.gov.uk so that they can be recorded and actioned accordingly.

Message from Tom Tugendhat MP



As I write, Tonbridge and Malling is confirmed as the area of Kent with the lowest ‘R’ number, and confirmed Coronavirus cases. Since we have all had to sacrifice so much over recent months and my column has often shared news about the steps we should take, this month I wanted to have a more upbeat tone and recognise all the hard work that has gone towards keeping us safe.

Firstly, we should reflect on the sacrifices each of us has made. Whether it be going without seeing loved ones, being able to hug and celebrate birthdays and family events with those closest to us, or even go to work, our lives have changed fundamentally over the past few months to keep us safe.

Governments can issue guidance, and volunteers and neighbours can provide support. But ultimately only we can look after ourselves and stay alert. That is evidently what we have been doing so far in Tonbridge and Malling.

Thanks also need to go to those who have been running community support schemes. While I know the Parish Council has been active, in many areas these have happened on a street by street basis and show our villagers come together to help one another.

While the Government has given significant financial support to those workers and businesses affected, the role of Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council in making sure that the most vulnerable were looked after is something we should rightly thank them for. There have been hundreds of people who have only been able to eat because of the efforts which the Council has gone to.

Until Covid-19 is completely eradicated from our communities, we must stay alert. The recovery will take a long time and we must be prepared for it. But we should also reflect on the progress which has been made so far and appreciate the steps we have all taken. I hope the ‘R’ number falls to 0 as quickly as possible, and if we continue doing what we have been there is a good a chance of it happening here as there is anywhere.

**Office of Tom Tugendhat MBE MP
Member of Parliament for Tonbridge and Malling
House of Commons
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July at the Farmers' market

We are looking at ways we can re-open the market however, with the social distancing remaining at 2m we cannot see a way to go back to the Church and Church Approach. So we are looking at the possibility of other locations. We also feel that the pre order and pre pay solution has merit once the market re-opens.



This will be our 4th month of operating the On Line/Drive Thru market. It has proved to be very successful for both Producers and Customers alike. It keeps everyone apart, in fact Customers do not even see Producers. And with our scheduled pick up you only need to wait a few minutes whilst sitting in the comfort of your car. This is the new 'convenience shopping'.

If you have not yet used the system go to www.shipbournefm.co.uk and then click on 'SHOP NOW'. You can shop by either Producer or by category of food. If you need help just call Jenny on 07880577208 and she will guide you through the process. Even if you are unable to go on-line call Jenny and she may still be able to help. We can also offer a delivery service within 5 miles of Shipbourne for those who cannot make it to the market.

The Soft fruit season is now in full flow with Cannon fruit farm supplying cherries and raspberries and New Park Farm supplying strawberries in a fruit basket together with punnets of either gooseberries, blackberries, blueberries and currents. This is the month for jam makers. You don't have to make huge vats of the stuff – just a few jars are incredibly satisfying to produce, taste marvellous and make wonderful gifts.

Rusbridge's our Baker since the market first started has decided to concentrate on the wholesale market, which means they are unable to come on a Thursday morning. However, our now new baker is even more local, **The Bakehouse at 124**, who are located on the High Street in Tonbridge. They are part of the fast-growing artisan food revival. The Bakehouse is the brainchild of Clare Barton, a lifelong resident of Tonbridge and Hildenborough. Clare re-trained as an Artisan Baker in 2013 and is keen to give those in her home town the opportunity to feast on delicious real bread and pastries. Many of her products have won awards including Great Taste, Tiptree World Bread and Taste of Kent awards.

Renhurst Farm lamb will be available from early July. Grass-fed summer **LAMB** is now at its very finest and, as a more fatty meat than some (giving it the meat flavour and keeps it from drying out), is ideal for the BBQ.

MACKEREL is the perfect summer fish, iridescent in its blue and silver chainmail, bought fresh from the market enjoy at its very best. Try it barbecued, griddled or marinated in lime juice and chilli to slice and serve raw.

PUZZLE PAGE

by RP "The Parish Puzzler"



FROM ABOVE

Can you identify these famous places from the aerial views? A clue to their location is given.



1: London



4: Croatia



7: London



2: England



5: U.S.A.



8: Egypt



3: Canada



6: Italy

Solution

1: 30 St Mary Axe "The Cherkin" 2: Stonehenge
3: Niagara Falls 4: Dubrovnik 5: Central Park,
New York 6: Venice 7: St Paul's Cathedral
8: Pyramids at Giza

Monty Dog's Blog

Hi everyone, hope you and your humans are keeping well and surviving in these strange times.

Over the past few weeks, the High Street is getting busier with more people going to the village store and men in masks delivering parcels.



I got a bit worried when I saw men in masks and I barked at them, but I am used to seeing them now. I have noticed a few people I know are wearing them.

My human is making one, I hope it is not for me! I think they were messing about!

There is so much more to see from my perch on the back of the sofa. That's me sitting on the sofa after a long day looking out the window. Really exhausting!

What I really enjoy is having both of my humans with me almost all the time. We all watch the Government coronavirus update and I hear that some people are going back to work. I hope my humans don't leave me alone, because I am used to having them around. I hope you guys don't get lonely as I hear it is a problem.

I do see quite a few of my mates on my walks. I saw Poppy the other day and she really needs a haircut! I think that goes for humans as well!

I have some bad news. My mate Gary has left the village and gone to live up North. I will miss him, because he used to look after me when my humans went out somewhere.

I have good news too. My humans have formed a "bubble" with my mum and sister, so they are able to come and see me. They have not stayed over yet though.

I noticed that Anya is making her food for taking away from Marcel's pub. I cannot eat it because it is too hot and does something to my tummy!

Take care. Love Monty

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The Editor for the August/September double issue is Charlotte Saward.

The deadline is 10th July.

Please email PARISH.MAG@WROTHAMCHURCH.ORG

(Note - please do not use personal addresses of editors as your article may not be seen)

Wrotham MUSIC FESTIVAL

Wrotham Music Festival committee are sad to announce the cancellation of this year's festival.

We wish everyone a lovely summer and look forward to welcoming you all back next year!



Keep checking our website for further updates!
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