

Meeting Point



June 2020



Meeting Point

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The community magazine for the villages of Olveston, Tockington, Old Down, Lower Hazel, Awkley, Ingst, Aust, Elberton and Littleton upon Severn

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From the Editor

With lockdown restrictions continuing, Meeting Point is not able to bring you details about the normal range of events that would be happening during a typical June. However, thanks to our contributors, this edition includes articles on a wide variety of topics which we hope will be interesting and entertaining.

The first article this month is an account, with several lovely photographs, of just some of ways in which local people managed to celebrate VE Day. We have an update from Olveston and Tockington Women's Institute, which now meets regularly using Zoom technology. Thornbury and District Museum has begun work on an archive of local people's experiences during the pandemic and has put out a call for contributions. There is an illustrated article about local railways stations, past and present. Plus, for enthusiasts, there are some more puzzles!

Hopefully we can return to a print edition soon, but for now we remain online!

Marelin

This month's cover is by Jenny Newley

Meeting Point Founded in 1976 by the Anglican and Methodist churches in Olveston, near Bristol.

Meeting Point magazine and Meeting Point Directory are online at the Community Website: www.olvostonandaust.com

VE Day Celebrations 2020

Even though the extensive celebrations planned for our area had to be cancelled, many people managed to organise their own events on a beautiful sunny day - whilst also observing the rules on social distancing. First, Peter Floyd writes about what he saw whilst out for a stroll on VE Day.

We had hung up our flags which can only be seen by walkers in Sheepcombe valley, whilst from wooded Merryhole we can never see what is going on outside, so in the afternoon Tessa and I decided to go on a walking tour to investigate.



We emerged to find Old Down had arranged a remote 'street party' through Old Down's WhatsApp group. Families were sitting at their garden gates, close enough to the narrow, almost car free Down even to chat across it, whilst some of the children were cheerfully drawing with chalk on the road. There were flags; bunting had been hung up, even across the road from house to house, and music of the 40's was playing. Old Down had managed to create a proper street party atmosphere.



We then walked down the gloriously sunny Vicarage Lane with its views across to Wales, into Olveston where the Macaskills had opened their gates to accommodate a table and chairs, whilst overhead Angus had put up a really good big painting of a Spitfire in flight. The church, under orders, was sadly silent, but further along, at the top of Church Hill, others were enjoying food and a glass of something in the sun at their garden gates. In the picture below, a cellist is providing some musical entertainment on Vicarage Lane.



Despite the limitations due to Coronavirus, it was a sunny, cheerful day, with people in Old Down, Olveston and Tockington all quietly but happily celebrating the 75th anniversary of the relief of victory after six long years of war. I wonder if we shall ever again be able to enjoy such a happy peaceful day once 'lockdown' fades away?

Teddy Bears in The Green, Olveston, had a good time too.



From Tockington, Allison Dix writes about the celebrations on Upper Tockington Road.



On VE day we, and our neighbours, celebrated by having a safe distancing tea party at the top of our drives

My husband Calvin and our son George created 'Play Your Cards Right' and rigged up an amplifier and microphone so each household could join in the fun, all at a safe distance, whilst enjoying their afternoon tea! Even when people walked or drove by, they were able to join in too.

My Dad (Eric Garrett) dressed up as a member of the Home Guard and we decorated his house.



Dad has become quite a celebrity over the last few weeks.

Thornbury and District Museum posted on their FaceBook page an interview that was recorded about a year ago of Dad's war time memories. They posted it a few days before VE Bank Holiday weekend, and he still can't get over how viral he has become during lockdown!

Thank you to Peter and Allison for these accounts of how, despite restrictions, local people managed to celebrate VE Day. There were other events too, dotted around the area, and thank you to people who sent in photographs. It's such a shame we have not got space here to include them all.

Tea and Chat

Lynn Shelley

Sadly, we are not able to meet up at the moment due to Covid 19, but there will be a notice in Meeting Point as soon as lockdown has ended, and clubs and societies are allowed to meet again. Watch out for our notice and then do come along!

Elizabeth, one of our regular guests, writes:

'Hi everyone. I've been coming to Tea and Chat since the very first meeting a couple of years ago. After Coronavirus has ended, why don't you join us for tea and cake? It's much nicer than sitting at home all alone! I certainly look forward to my outing every month and making new friends in lovely venues'.

Transport is available. Just call Lynn on 01454 612201 or Lesley on 01454 613804

Olveston and Tockington W.I.

Vicki Townsend

The ladies of the W.I. are filling their time cooking, knitting, gardening, lots of telephone calls and social distancing on visits to the village shops. It is great to have the time to do all those little jobs that we have been putting off for ages. We have, like so many others, joined together for Zoom meetings, a bit tricky for the first attempt, but now we are up and running, but only for the meetings, not anything else

The highlight of our month has been the opportunity to present Keri Knapp with our fundraising total of £2050 for her charity Made a Mark. Many villagers would have known Mark, who worked in the local butchers and lived locally. The Made a Mark charity supplies bereavement boxes to local and national hospitals for children who have suffered the loss of a loved one. At this terrible time, the requests have increased, and our donation will enable Keri to help supply the demand. Our donation was in addition to the £1000 given by Kings Heavy Haulage, who had also chosen Made a Mark as their charity for this year. If you would like more information on this very worthwhile cause it is available on the Made a Mark website.

The great community spirit in the two villages is much appreciated by our members. The message is 'Stay Safe' and we hope to be meeting up again as soon as possible.

Oh, Mr Porter!

I.C. Awkley

Meeting Point

Transport Correspondent

Whilst we have been prevented from travelling around freely over recent months, many of us will have been thinking of journeys we would like to make in the future or remembering favourite ones made in the past. This brings us nicely to the means of transport we may have used years ago, when local public transport was far more available than today.

With this in mind, here is a question to try and answer. Assuming the Olveston Parish Hall, in Tockington, to be the centre of the map, within a five-mile radius (straight line), how many passenger railway stations used to be available to travel from? You may be surprised how many there were and remember, some closed much earlier than the infamous Beeching cuts of the 1960s. Try and list them all and see how many you can identify. Then when you have that number to hand, work out how many of them are still open. As a clue, the latter figure should include a new station that opened in the 1970s, previously being a large goods marshalling yard. You might be amazed how many railway stations were relatively close to hand, though I doubt there will be few surprises at the number remaining.



This is one of the stations – can you guess which one? Answers on page 10.

Hemlock

Angela Green



Watch out, people! This plant is very poisonous! It's called Hemlock Water-Dropwort and it is growing alongside several of the lanes here, especially where there are rhines, usually a bit further in towards the hedgerow than the cow-parsley bordering the road. It looks very like cow parsley, only a bit sturdier.

This is a close-up of the leaves.



Please make sure you do not touch it, or let children or animals touch it - it is **very toxic**.

Another Red Kite Report

Betty Harrison



I spotted a red kite circling above our garden in Old Down on 14th May. A magnificent sight, but cut short by a local crow, which harried the kite until it was persuaded to fly back towards the Severn estuary.

Oveston Parish Council

Pat Savage



Local Community Grants

Due to the present lockdown the application deadline has been extended to August.

Applications please to:

clerk@olvestonparishcouncil.gov

Village Walks

No doubt many of us will be taking long walks through the villages and countryside as part of our daily exercise. We are very fortunate, and indeed lucky, to be able to enjoy such lovely surroundings. During your walks you may have noticed some kissing gates or stiles in need of repair. If you can, please report these to the Clerk (see above) so we can pass on the request to South Glos. Council which maintains them.

Parish Footpath Warden

This item effectively follows on from the above! For the past six years Rod Williams has undertaken this task. He has now stepped down and the Council needs to recruit his successor. In the meantime, he will keep a watchful eye. In his role he will have reported damaged and broken stiles and kissing gates. Our request above will help us to co-ordinate our request to the Council particularly for those walkers who will have ventured to the far-flung parts of the Parish. The Council extends its sincere thanks to Rod for his work over the years.

Tockington Telephone Box

By the time you read the June edition of Meeting Point, the Phone Box will have been painted and decorated. We have received some interesting suggestions for its future use although the book swap remains a popular choice. Please do email the Clerk with any suggestions. Thank you to Dave Webb for restoring it to its former glory even sourcing the exact BT red paint!

Parish Website

We would like to remind all our Parishioners that any updated Parish news can be found on the website. <https://www.olvestonparishcouncil.gov.uk/>

On behalf of the Council, the Chairman John Hughes wishes all Parishioners the very best of health. Stay safe and we look forward to the ending of lockdown.

Oh, Mr Porter – continued

Within a five-mile radius of Tockington there were no less than 14 different railway stations, although two of them are near the very edge of this circle. How many did you get? The stations are listed below, together with a little bit of further information:

Thornbury, Tytherington and Iron Acton stations were on the Midland line that ran from Yate Junction to Thornbury. All the stations closed to regular passenger traffic in June 1944, though the line was used immediately after by a number of military hospital trains, the wounded servicemen being unloaded at Thornbury before going to the large US Army hospital at Leyhill. The line closed completely in September 1967 but was re-opened in 1973 for occasional stone transhipment from Grovesend Quarry. The picture on page 7 is Thornbury Station in 1956.

Severn Beach, New Passage, Cross Hands and Pilning Low Level, were all on the circular line that ran from Avonmouth (actually Holesmouth Junction)



to a connection with the main South Wales Line at Pilning Junction. The station at Cross Hands (see pic. on left) served the Pilning community, being much closer to the village than either of the two stations with Pilning in their title. Apart from Severn Beach, which is still

open, all the other stations closed on 23rd November 1964. Just above Pilning Low Level station and once connected to it by a steep set of concrete steps is



Pilning High Level (now simply Pilning), from where you could once put your car onto the train for it to be conveyed through the Severn Tunnel to Severn Tunnel Junction. (See pic. on left) Pilning is still nominally open, though only served by two trains a week and both going in the same direction making

a return journey all but impossible without a detour via South Wales. God Bless the privatised railway! Back in the 1970s I would regularly park at Pilning and together with many other commuters catch the train into Bristol and back – why this service has been stopped when our roads are so busy is a mystery to many.

New Passage Pier station, built by the Bristol and South Wales Union



Railway, was on the banks of the River Severn adjacent to the New Passage Hotel. Modern houses have been built on the site of the station and hotel. This picture shows a loaded banana train having just left Avonmouth Docks. New Passage Pier station and the associated ferry service to Portskewett,

closed in 1886 when the Severn Tunnel opened.

Henbury and **North Filton Platform** were both on the line that runs from Avonmouth to Filton (known as the Henbury loop), the latter station being within the boundary of the old Filton Airfield. Plans are in place to re-open this line to passenger traffic (currently freight only). Both stations closed on 23rd November 1964, though local workmen's trains continued to call at Filton Platform until September 1966.

Patchway, which is still open, is on the main South Wales Line, just before the junction which takes one left towards **Bristol Parkway** (opened in 1972) or right towards Bristol and the former **Filton Junction** station. Filton Junction closed in 1996 when the new Filton Abbey Wood station opened about half a mile closer to Bristol, but this is further than five miles away, so doesn't count!

Meanwhile on the direct line to London the first station beyond what was the huge Stoke Gifford marshalling yard (now Bristol Parkway) was **Winterbourne** station. This closed together with all the other smaller stations on the Swindon line in April 1961 – and, yes, it is just within the five-mile distance.

This provides just a snapshot of the extensive railway infrastructure which once surrounded our villages. Sadly, much of it has now disappeared, though memories remain.

Corona's Letter to Humanity

The earth whispered but you did not hear.
The earth spoke but you did not listen.
The earth screamed but you turned her off.

And so I was born...

I was not born to punish you... I was born to AWAKEN you.

The earth cried out for help...

Massive flooding. But you didn't listen.
Severe droughts. But you didn't listen.
Burning fires. But you didn't listen.
Strong hurricanes. But you didn't listen.

You just kept going on with your life.

It was more important to get that latest iPhone than worry about what the earth was trying to tell you.

But now I am here...

And I've made humanity STOP in its tracks.

I've made YOU listen at last...

I've made you take refuge.
I've made you stop thinking about material things

And I've made you like the earth...

I've given you fever.. just as the fires burn on earth.
I've given you respiratory issues.. just as your pollution fills the air.
I've given you weakness.. just as the earth weakens every day.

How does it feel?

I have made the world stop.

And now...

Air quality in cities has improved extensively.
Skies are clear blue because of less pollution.
The water in Venice is clean and dolphins are being seen.

And YOU are having to take time to reflect on what is important in life.

Again, I am not here to punish you... I am here to AWAKEN you...

When all this is over and I am gone... Please remember these moments...

Listen to the earth.
Listen to your soul.
Stop polluting the earth.
Stop fighting among each other.
Stop caring about material things.
And start loving your neighbours.
Start caring about the earth and all its creatures.
Start believing in a Creator.

Because next time, I may come back even stronger....

Signed, Corona - The Virus

Extracted and edited from an anonymous item on Facebook by Trevor Anderson.

Old Down Cricket Club

*Tony Gardner
07889 727729*

150 Club Winners May 2020:

£50 Tony Cudmore
£15 Archie Stenning
£5 Dave Birtle

Latest £25 Bonus Ball Winners:

25/04/20 Tony Williams
02/05/20 Bhavin Radia

At the time of writing, we have no date for the commencement of the 2020 Season. Hopefully we will have an update next month. Up the down!

2020 Carnival to be Cancelled



The Thornbury Carnival committee has made the difficult decision to cancel the 2020 event, which had been due to take place on Saturday 4th July.

The committee is already turning its attention to the 2021 event which will take place on Saturday 3rd July 2021.

Thornbury & District Museum & Life under Lockdown

Thornbury & District Museum needs your help with a history project. Please help us to gather and keep the local history of the 2020 Covid-19 coronavirus outbreak. In future classrooms, children will be learning about this unique period of history. As a museum, it is our responsibility to gather, document and keep preserved for the future those aspects of this unprecedented time that relate to Thornbury and the surrounding district.



We are hoping that many of you will be prepared to share written notes and/or photos of your experiences - good *and* bad - during this time. They might relate to shopping, medical and health issues, travelling, keeping in touch with others, schooling at home, schooling in school, working from home, going out to work and so on. We would like to hear about anything, no matter how insignificant you may think it is. We want as varied a response as possible - everyone's experiences count. If you're part of a family at home, maybe produce something from all of you?

You can send us information at any time - right now if you like! - or you may prefer to wait until this episode in our history has passed. By submitting information, you will be assumed to be giving your permission for the material to be used in the future. This could be in print, on-line or in one of our exhibitions. We have set up a special email address for this project, to which you can send notes and/or photos: museum.thornbury@gmail.com But you may prefer to put something down in writing and send it by post to: *Thornbury & District Museum, c/o The Town Hall, 35 High Street, Thornbury BS35 2AR.*

We are currently closed. We shall not re-open until we can do so safely for our visitors and volunteer staff. But, in the meantime, volunteers are working from home - and that includes organising this project. Please help us by sharing this appeal as widely as possible. When the museum re-opens, we shall start to go through all that we have received from you. We realise this is a huge request at this time, but we do hope you will be able to help with the project. Our Museum, by the way, is called Thornbury and District because our collecting area covers 14 parishes besides Thornbury:- one being the parish of Aust (the villages of Aust, Elberton and Littleton-upon-Severn) and another being the parish of Olveston (the villages of Olveston, Old Down and Tockington).

David Barrass

Pat Thirkettle

David was born in Malta in 1951 to a Royal Air Force family, and so enjoyed a peripatetic childhood. His link to the West Country began in his early years as his father was posted to RAF Locking, near Weston Super Mare, and much of his early education was at Locking primary school on the RAF camp. Following this time and secondary education in Scotland, Hong Kong & Bury St Edmunds, David went to Newcastle University to study Chemical Engineering. While there he served as Deputy President of the Students Union and President of the Rag Week for one year.

On graduation, David's first job in 1972 was as a Design Engineer with Courtaulds in Coventry. To his delight, his first assignment involved travelling each week to their plant at Carrickfergus in Northern Ireland, at the height of the troubles, flying from Elmdon Airport (now Birmingham International) to Belfast. In this time he met his wife Sue, they were soon married and she used to ferry him home each week from the Airport. She quickly encouraged him to apply for a post with Esso in Southampton as an Energy Conservation Engineer, and they moved to Fawley in the New Forest, and then to Maidenhead from where David commuted to London for several years.

In 1985 David was head hunted by DRG in Bristol and so the family moved from Maidenhead to the village. House hunting in the Bristol area, David visited the White Hart in Olveston, fell in love with the pub and its cast of local characters and bought the New House on the site of the Old Forge on Aust Road.

Within twelve months he decided the Corporate life was not for him, and he and a colleague from Esso established a Serviced Office business in Bristol, which they subsequently sold to a National Property Company in 1992. Following this, he co-founded a Commercial Property Consultancy based in Aztec West which successfully developed into a national concern and was subsequently acquired by a corporate competitor in 2016.

David and Sue's children, Nicola and Chris, were three and one respectively at the time of the family's move to the village. They both attended Olveston School, where David served as Finance Governor at the busy time when budgets and financial responsibility was devolved to schools from the Local Authority. Nicola chose to go to Castle School followed by UWE, and Chris went to Marlwood followed by Loughborough University. He had played football as goalie for both Olveston, Marlwood and a local youth team, Stoke Lane Athletic, based in Patchway. David became involved as Secretary and Chairman in the administration and running of Stoke Lane, which at that time comprised twenty teams running from Under 6's through to Under 16's.

Nicola now lives in Hortham with her husband Aaron and their two children Maxwell aged five and Grace aged two. Max attends Olveston School and will be followed in due course by his younger sister. Chris now lives in Harpenden with his wife Caroline and both work in central London. Sue has many craft interests and works hard on her allotment, which is nice to have nearby.



In 2016, David was diagnosed with Prostate Cancer and was successfully treated at Southmead and BRI. Always a keen cyclist, he decided to raise funds for Prostate Cancer UK and has successfully completed the annual Ride London Charity Cycle Event on three consecutive years, raising over £5,000 for the Charity. (See photograph)

In 2019 David suffered a stroke from which he has made an excellent recovery. He now looks forward to resuming his cycling adventures and fund-raising in his retirement. In these restrictive times, David now walks round the villages every day and is always ready for a socially distanced chat!

David is particularly interested in the subject of Bill Gates' 2015 address, and associated books by renowned

epidemiologist Dr Michael T Osterholm, concerning the possibility of a future pandemic and recommendations urging research and actions to cope with it. Both items make chilling reading, as they accurately forecast our situation today. Should you wish to view/read the link(s) are:

- https://www.ted.com/talks/bill_gates_the_next_outbreak_we_re_not_ready?language=en
- Deadliest Enemy – Our War Against Killer Germs by Dr Michael T Osterholm,

David suggests these challenging times underline the importance of family and community, and maybe this experience might influence our future considerations regarding climate change, globalisation and travel, which are all ultimately linked. Despite this, David feels it also underlines how fortunate we are to live in such a beautiful area and supportive community, all of which is positive and will help us eventually emerge from this situation better informed and constructively optimistic.

Puzzles

Jan Winter

Here are the answers to last month's puzzles:

1. Number puzzle

Answer: 54. This is the only solution for multiplying by 6. In general, the only possibility is 9 times the number you are multiplying by, but interestingly for multiplying by 7 there are several possibilities.

2. Sequences

- a) Ans: 212223. Say what each sequence contains: starting with 'Two ones', then 'one one and one two' and so on. So the next term is 'two ones, two twos and two threes'.
- b) Ans: E. The first letters of words for numbers, one, two, three, etc. So eight is next.
- c) Ans: Sorry – a mistake! This sequence should have been 1, 2, 5, 10, 20 so they are coin values in pence and the next is 50. Did anyone find a possible sequence as it appeared without 2?

3. House numbers

Answer: 95

4. Mini Kakuro

3	9		12
1	2	4	7
	5	8	13
4	16	12	

Some more puzzles

They may look a bit mathematical, but just think about shapes! Draw some pictures to help:

1. An equilateral triangle of area 99cm^2 has three equilateral triangles cut from it, one at each corner. The resulting shape is a regular hexagon (with six sides). What is the new area?
2. What is the greatest number of circles of radius 1cm that can be drawn inside a circle of radius 5cm?
3. A diagonal of a shape is a line joining two corners that does not run along an edge. For example, a square has two diagonals in a cross and a pentagon has 5, making a star shape. Can you find a pattern in the number of diagonals a shape will have for bigger numbers of sides? It's easier to stick with regular shapes, ie ones whose sides and angles are all equal, so they don't have any 'dents'.

Literate Allsorts

Chris Bolton

As readers know, this year's Thornbury Arts Festival has been another casualty of the pandemic. It was to have been the launch pad for a project by a rather special group from the local U3A (University of the Third Age), called Thornbury U3A Writers. This Group has produced a book of some of their recent short stories and poems, entitled *Literate Allsorts*.

Seven talented writers have contributed 27 items to the compilation, some prose, some poetry. Actually, though, as so often happens, some of the more

poetic writing is contained in the prose, evoking some wonderful images and emotional responses.

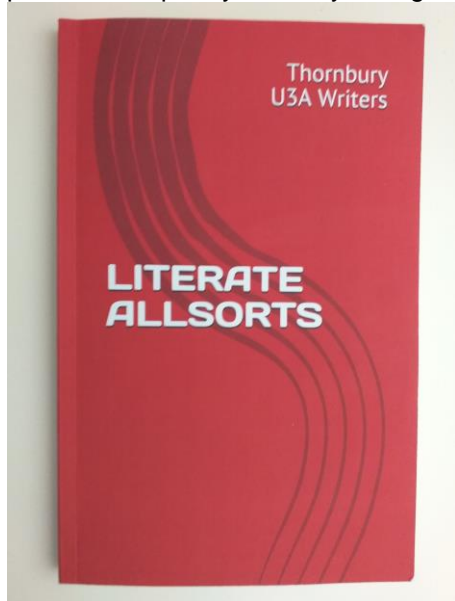
The stories range through the humorous – some particularly funny ones from Doug Easthope, and Mariann Dale (notably a dark tale of an old lady in a retirement home confessing gaily to a pair of past murders) – to the fanciful (Tony Demaille's amusing notion of the U3A spiritualist group springs to mind, and Kate Taylor's concept of an International Bank Holiday in 100 years' time to celebrate humanity's attainment of a sort of nirvana).

The writers address several themes, such as: light and dark (a fine poem by Christine Deahl, and both a poem

and a brief prose piece by Jane Tucker); solitariness (two poignant poems by Sue Rowley); and ageing (as befits the U3A, and illustrated by several prose pieces and poems, including a splendid couple by Christine Deahl).

The theme of loneliness is of course at the heart of the Beatles song Eleanor Rigby, and Tony Domaille brings off a rather beautiful exploration of the backstories of Eleanor and Father Mackenzie, fictionalising the gaps in the story with more detail, and giving us a conclusion to think about that is certainly not in the song.

I felt that this book, of a little over 100 pages, was a very enjoyable and entertaining read, perhaps even ideal for diverting the mind from other matters during the pandemic. Copies are available from Amazon, at £4. To order you can use the ISBN 9798627705149. Any profits will go to the Bristol Children's Hospital.



Lemon Flummery

Tessa Floyd

Half-pint water
 $\frac{3}{4}$ oz butter
1 large lemon
1 rounded tablespoons of flour
4oz caster sugar
1 egg
Digestive biscuits and cream for serving

Put water, butter and grated lemon rind in a pan and bring to the boil. Mix flour and sugar in a bowl and slowly pour on the hot liquid, whisking to avoid lumps. Put egg yolk in a bowl, stir in a little of the hot mix, return all to pan and simmer stirring for 5 minutes. Whisk egg white until stiff. Stir lemon juice into mixture and fold in egg white. Leave to cool. Scatter over crumbled digestive biscuits just before serving.



Marlwood School News

The students and staff of Marlwood School have handled these unprecedented times with such fortitude and resilience. They have pulled together to carry on as the super-supportive community that they are! All the staff are very proud of the excellent learning carrying on and, in particular, how the

students have commemorated VE Day (at a distance!) with their families and neighbours and celebrated this in their work. Mr Planter shared some of this brilliant work in his Headteacher's Newsletter.

Here's what George Peacock, who lives in Olveston, wrote:

My Family in WW2 – by George Peacock



I come from a family of heroes. I have talked to my grandparents, and previously to my great, great Aunty Hilly, and I would like to share their stories with you.

Plucky Peacocks!

My Great Grandad, George Ellis

Peacock, was in the Royal Engineers bomb disposal unit. His job was to dig down and diffuse the bomb before bringing it up. In 1941 he was posted to Iceland to build an air strip, but unfortunately George got blown-up whilst diffusing a bomb. He broke an arm and a leg and lost his teeth! I am named after my Great Grandad George!

Victorious Vincents

My Great-Grandpa, Gordon Vincent, was in the Royal Air Force (RAF). He was posted to India from 1942 to 1946. Gordon was a bit apprehensive about going to India. However, when he got there, he didn't do any fighting. The RAF thought he had a posh voice, so they told him to be on the radio tannoy to deliver messages to the troops!

Wonder Women

My Great-Granny, Frances, was an ambulance driver in Bristol during the blitz. Her sister, my Great-Great Aunt Hilly, joined the WRENS. She was posted in Portsmouth and operated a radio.

Sadly, Hilly died last year when she was 94, but I remember interviewing her about this for another school project. She told me she went to the party in London on VE day. She would have been 20 years old then.



The Gallant Gundrys

Great-Great Uncle Ken was a fighter pilot in the RAF. He flew Hurricanes in The Battle of Britain in 1940. Ken loved flying in a Hurricane. He sent mission reports and letters home saying how he loved it and some of these are in the British War Museum in London today.

Thornbury Library

Whilst library buildings remain closed, our online library remains open; go to bit.ly/d1gitalLibraryServices to discover free digital magazines, comics, eBooks and eAudio available to download 24/7.

NEW! Free access to Ancestry Library Edition from home. Usually only available in library buildings, as long as they remain closed, we are able to provide 24/7 access for library members to Ancestry Library Edition with kind permission from ProQuest and Ancestry.



Delve into your family history with access to: the Index to civil registrations of births, marriages and deaths; Census returns for England & Wales from 1841 to 1911 and an increasing number of family history datasets from all over the world. Get access from home in 3 simple steps:

1. Click 'Log in' on www.librarieswest.org.uk and enter your library membership number (or Temporary ID if you have recently joined online) & PIN
2. Click on the link to Ancestry which should appear at the top of the page (only visible when you are logged into the LibrariesWest homepage).
3. Start exploring your family history!

Not a member yet? No problem

Don't worry, you can join online now at bit.ly/joinLW and membership is free. You will receive a Temporary ID number which will work for our digital services right away.

Where the form asks "Pin" and next "Re-enter Pin" it is asking you to choose your own 4-digit PIN and then to re-enter it to confirm your choice. Please provide your email address when you join online, as this will give you more control of your account and allow you to reset your PIN easily if you forget it

Online Lego club

Look out on Facebook every Monday for Lego Club online, have fun building a model to meet the challenge for the week and share it with us!

So far we've enjoyed seeing some fabulous monsters, space craft and sea creatures.



Yours Faithfully

Michael Matthews

The Vine House of Prayer, Awkley

Writing as I am in the first few days of May, it is still difficult to predict what position we will be in come the time this article is published and how successful, or not, we will be to re-adjusting to what is already being termed the 'new normal'.

As within the range of all human experiences there will be those who have actually found the lockdown crisis an opportunity to re-prioritise and have found the process quite enjoyable, whilst at the other end lives have been affected in ways that cannot be remedied. Then there are the multitudes in between that all have a story to tell about how they and their lives have been affected.

Viewed through human eyes it is difficult, if not impossible, to recall a time or event that has so connected the world's population with a common crisis of this magnitude, a crisis that is not yet over, and many may have to live under this shadow for a long time to come.

But in this time of reflection I am reminded there has been a much greater crisis that has existed almost since time began, one that is generally given much less publicity even in our own day. It is a crisis that almost passed unnoticed remembrance just a few weeks ago – we call it Easter!

It was a remembrance of a pivotal time in history when the Son of God, Jesus, was manifested upon the earth and through His death we learn, 'that God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting men's sins against them', and if 'we were reconciled to him through the death of his Son, how much more, having been reconciled, shall we be saved through his life'!

This factual experience when appropriated personally can release an unshakeable hope described in the Bible as an 'anchor for the soul', the soul (putting it simply) the seat of our thoughts, will, and emotions, and has an eternal nature.

My prayer and longing is that a new 'song' resounds around for all to hear - Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! In his great mercy he has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead,



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