

Alkham Monthly Newsletter

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IN LAST MONTH'S NEWSLETTER I said that it was unlikely that there would be a June edition because of the virus. However, several people contacted me and said that they would provide some items which are included in this edition. Next month will probably be the same so please email articles to brianwimsett@hotmail.com or phone 01304 824969.



V.E. DAY – Bunting was put around the end of the village green by the valley road and opposite along the front of Halton Court to remember V.E. Day in Alkham on May 8th.

COVID 19 - What an experience! I think I can echo everyone's voice when I say this situation can't be over quick enough. Perhaps though it has brought the best out of us. We have always had wonderful camaraderie in Alkham and feel that these past weeks have showed deeper compassion and care for others. No one has been rushing anywhere with no time to chat, the roads and lanes have been remarkably quiet and life seems to have taken a slower pace. We have been truly blessed with so much fabulous weather, so gardens are looking amazing with landscaping, newly dug ponds and refurbished garden furniture. Being in lockdown, and using our daily exercise time, we have been able to explore areas of Alkham, and discovered more walks, woods and bridle ways than we knew about. I think the Thursday night clap is a wonderful national event and thank goodness for Zoom, Skype and Facetime. It's been deeply upsetting hearing daily number of deaths, being reminded of those struggling financially, and all of us who have been deprived of visiting family and friends. I cannot comprehend how families without gardens have managed, and very relieved that outside areas are now open again. As we move forward, I can only hope that we will finally come through better people. I hope the kindness, caring and compassion remains. For sure, this pandemic has humbled me, opened my eyes even wider and allowed me to stand still and breathe. **Irene Barnard**

RIDE ON MOWER - Larry cuts a lot of grass around the centre of the village and his old ride on mower has been scrapped and he would like to get another. If you have one for sale or know of one, please ring him on 01304 822365

A POEM written by Jo Cooke who is a consultant at William Harvey Hospital and sent by Ruth Marczin-Bundy.

Corona used to be a beer,
They garnished it with limes,
But now it's filled the world with fear,
These days are scary times.

Cease from travel, cease from flying,
Shops stripped bare by panic buying,
No shaking hands, no social hugs
They've even closed the clubs and pubs.

Keep your distance, stay away,
Now's not the time for simple play,
Stay indoors, self-isolate,
More stringent measures, well they await.

But never fear, for we are here,
Your frontline team, a healthcare dream,
With PPE, gown, gloves, face shields,
Onwards we venture, to the battlefield.

Come on you virus, bring it on,
Do your worst, we'll take you on,
For we have spirit, compassion and love,
We shall destroy you and rise above.

Months, years from now, you'll be no more,
A mere memory of what passed through our shore,
Carry on we will, the human race,
Supporting each other, our saving grace.

And another from Gail Swainston, The Minnis

I am sparrowhawk
Sometimes I hit the hedge
And yet I miss
So open up your heart
To my last kiss
The flying arrow that
Betokens bliss
Will take you to another
Part of this.



And some further comments from the Minnis regarding lockdown.

I'm living the dream.

I love it. I'm starting to appreciate the little things in life.

Is it too late to prune a hydrangea?

It's all right. At least we're painting our gates.

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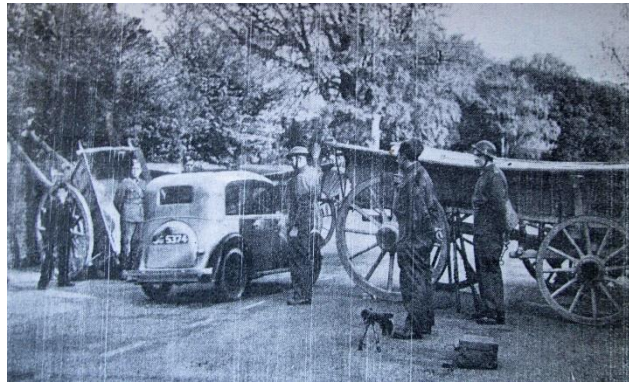


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CHECKPOINT on the Alkham Valley Road at Kearsney at the outbreak of WWII from Sue Lee's records. Identity cards are inspected, and a machine gun is ready just in case.

ALKHAM HEROES - I have finally been able to update the village website page (alkham.org) on the men whose names are inscribed on the war memorial. Although I am intending to step back from this project, I am sure more information will come to light to add to the individual stories and Brian has kindly agreed to update as required in the future. I have come to feel a connection to these men and have been pleased to be able to add a bit more colour to their story than a simple inscription on a monument can do. "We will remember them". **Mark Robson**

BUSES - A resident says she has been told that the village bus service (No 91) is still running, but every 2 hours at present - i.e. 9.30, 11.30, 13.30 etc. from The Marquis to Folkestone.

BRIAN CROUCHER writes that on **New Year's Eve 2009** they had been in Alkham since that October and were thinking what a lovely quiet little village Alkham was, tucked away between Dover and Folkestone with no HGV 's travelling along the valley road. They had not met anyone but had several welcoming cards although no one really knew they were there, not even the Inland Revenue let alone the Old Bill. Their kids went out partying and they were about to switch on Jools and Hootenanny but decided to pop down to the Marquis for a quick one before midnight instead. There was nobody they knew, and no hellos so after a swift one they walked home via St Anthony's church and passing the open door voices were heard shouting 'Hop it', 'On your way' and 'Begone'. With that they moved on a bit sharpish and later learnt the bell ringers were shouting the old year out followed by the bells ushering in the New Year. Arriving back at midnight and having a Hogmanay night cap there was a sudden rat tat tat at the front door and standing there were Bruce and Sue from the manor, Dr Ian and his wife Lucy and Ben and Jaques their neighbours down from London for the holidays. They were practicing the old Scot's custom of 'first footing' and carrying three items, one representing sustenance as a piece of bread, a piece of coal for warmth and three a penny for wealth plus Bruce had a few bottles of booze. Jaques 'first footed' as a tall dark stranger across the threshold and they partied on till all the booze was consumed. They now consider that they are truly part of the village and Sue and Bruce remain close friends to this day.

ELDERFLOWER CORDIAL - When elderflowers are fully open, and in full sunshine, pick 24 flowerheads. Put 3lbs sugar in a large bowl or bucket (not metal) and pour on 3 pints boiling water to dissolve and then add a 50g tub of citric acid (from Wilco or pharmacy), stir and cool. Grate the rind of 3 lemons, slice lemons, shake flowerheads to remove insects and add pushing down well. Cover and leave for 24 hours, stirring occasionally then strain through nylon sieve. It freezes well and keeps in fridge for about 7 days; dilute to taste. **Janet Adamson**

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OZ on FURLOUGH – No, the title isn't a description of my current status, just the meanings and derivation of the word 'furlough'. At the end of March this year the UK government introduced the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme, part of which subsidized many employers to pay workers during lockdown; the ancient word 'furlough' was resurrected to describe this action. The word derives from the German military 'verlaub', meaning 'for leave' in the Middle Ages, and later from the Dutch as 'verlof'. After the English language imported the word, the number of spelling variants and meanings grew. For example, in 1631, Ben Jonson, in his play *The Staple of News*, declares: "The deed...is a thing of greater consequence, than to be borne about in a black boxe, Like a Low-countray vorlofffe, or Welsh-briefe." The first modern spelling of the word is recorded in the *Oxford English Dictionary* as that of Nathaniel Greene in a 1738 letter to George Washington: "The Northern Army does not choose to be furloughed." Britain caught up with America on both spelling and meaning in 1804 when the Duke of Wellington ordered that "Officers not on furlough...are to join their corps without delay." Nowadays, in both the UK and the US, the word is used as a euphemistic term for enforced leave, sometimes without pay, as with business failure or misdemeanour, or with pay, as with the pandemic legislation. In the UK, compulsory paid leave before termination of employment is often referred to as 'gardening leave', an informal euphemism traditionally used in the Civil Service, and popularized in 1986 in the BBC sitcom *Yes, Prime Minister*. Recently the current coronavirus furlough was extended from July 31st to October 31st. Like the virus, the word 'furlough' will be with us for quite a while yet. **(Steve Osborn)**

WI MEMORIES - I joined the Alkham WI in February 2003 when my friend Mandy Summers invited me along to one of the meetings which took place on the second Tuesday of every month. Everyone made you feel so welcome and I remember our president then was Rosemary Crothall, secretary Betty Neely and treasurer Christine Tapsell with Grace Stacey and 6 other members on the committee. Doreen Wilks used to have a table selling fresh produce grown from her garden and Barbara Palmer used to make all the jams and marmalade plus she would always make me a plum jam for my mum. Mandy and Debbie Saunders went with their mums to Bruges to see the Christmas market but couldn't find it so ended up seeing the ice sculptures instead followed by a vodka in ice cups. I'll never forget the evening when Pam Sayers came to the meeting and said that someone kept whistling at her, but it turned out to be her hearing aid. I remember the village fete when all the WI ladies would make the cakes along with other villager which always sold out. Whatever the job was the WI ladies have always done us proud. Stay safe everyone. **Debbie Griggs**

THE NEW KENT & MEDWAY Medical School is asking residents to complete a survey to help them make sure they train their students to be the doctors we want to treat us in the future. They wish to become a first-class medical education and research centre in collaboration with Canterbury Christ Church University and the University of Kent and will welcome its first 100 students this year. For the survey please go to <https://t.co/nz6AKAMKYk>.

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CHURCH SERVICES

There are no church services but the vicar, Brian Williams, has put something on-line at
<https://www.facebook.com/BeneficeofACH/>

BUS TIMES To Dover 8.01, 9.11,10.11, 11.11, 12.11, 13.11, 14.11, 15.11, 17.11, 18.41

Sat: 9.11, 10.11,11.11, 12.11, 13.11, 14.11, 15.11, 17.11, 18.41

To Folkestone 7.32 9.32 10.32 11.32 12.32 13.32 14.32 17.32 18.32

Sat. 7.32 9.32 10.32 11.32 12.32 13.32 14.32 17.32,18.32

OUR CHURCHYARD - I'm sure that everyone will have admired the photograph of Ben Spicer's bench made in memory of his mother in the last edition of the Newsletter – but did you know that rather in the same way that you need planning permission to extend your home, there are some things in churchyards that need special permission? These can include not just benches, but even things like some flower containers. The good news is that with Ben's help we have now been able to prepare and submit the paperwork that will hopefully lead to his bench being made official, and we're hoping for a decision before too long. In the meantime, if anyone is thinking of putting something on a plot or introducing anything else into the churchyard I'm happy to help – just have a word with me for free before you spend any money. **Brian Williams**

FROM THE VICARAGE - The past few weeks have been full of surprises. In the first few weeks of the year, before the lockdown, church services were going on much as they always had, Sunday by Sunday. Across three village churches our regulars, visitors and others were turning up – usually somewhere between twenty-five and thirty-five people on average - and it was always a joy to see them. Then came coronavirus. The point in the service where we exchanged The Peace – greeting each other warmly with a handshake – was the first casualty, and for a few short weeks we made do with smiling and waving at each other instead. Hand sanitizer appeared alongside the collection plate. Then came the lockdown, services were called off, and us priests were told to stay out of our churches. The thing about the Church of England is that we are always there - not just for those who want us but also for those who don't at the moment but might do one day. So, how to keep things going? My tiny office became a studio, and I gave myself a crash course in filming, editing, and posting video services online – something I had never done before. So, at the moment, I'm writing scripts instead of sermons (you can see what I've managed to produce on our Facebook page – BeneficeofACH). One surprise has been the emails from those who, having lost loved ones, have asked me to pray and light

candles at the time of the funeral they couldn't attend – people I wouldn't have heard from otherwise. The other surprise is that if the number of online views is anything to go by, the numbers of those coming to church by video have almost quadrupled our congregation...The new normal? We'll see... **Brian Williams**

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Newsletter

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