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yB

Your Berkhamsted

April/May 2021

Observations by Dennis Furnell

**Boris Johnson buys local
Artist's painting**

**News from Rectory Lane
Cemetery**



Exploring the past, reflecting the present and looking to the future in Berkhamsted

In this issue...

WELCOME TO THE APRIL/MAY 2021 EDITION OF YOUR

BERKHAMSTED. Spring is here. There is a sense of hope and excitement. Of course, we still have to be careful but there is that feeling wanting to live life again. All being well we should start introducing the What's on pages again as more and more events open up. Mary Casserley has been featured twice in this edition. Not often one of our resident artists gets her painting bought by the Prime Minister. Also there is a review of her new book **"Steaming Through the Chilterns-and thereabouts"**. Sarah Dawson's jobs for the garden will get you motivated and shows some stunning pictures. There is a lot more to read and I hope you enjoy. Please look out for YB tweets on @Yourberkhamsted. Do get in touch if there are any ideas or stories you may have, either to publish or additions/changes to the magazine for consideration. And please give us your feedback on the features.



JACQUELINE - YBEDITOR@GREATBERKHAMSTED.ORG.UK

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Front cover: 'Chequers Court' by Berkhamsted artist Mary Casserley – the painting bought by Boris Johnson showing the Prime Minister and his young family last spring in the gardens of his official country home . www.marycasserley.com. Please see page 27 for more details

The Town and Parish Magazine of St Peter's Great Berkhamsted

Responsibility for opinions expressed in articles and letters published in this magazine and for the accuracy of any statements in them rests solely with the individual contributor.

Rambles from Berkhamsted by Julian Dawson



Did you know that effective monitoring of slow-speed rotating industrial applications, such as wind power generation and hydro-electric turbines, is critical? Sensonics Ltd of Northbridge Road certainly do. According to machinebuilding.net, Sensonics, produces the equipment which measures low-speed machinery helping to ensure machinery and plant are functioning at optimal levels. It is perhaps intriguing to know that right on our doorstep we have the leading UK manufacturer of sensors and systems for on-site vibration monitoring. Stop tittering at the back! The company was founded in 1972, so is approaching 50 years, and also produces seismic monitoring devices and equipment for the nuclear industry.

This month's guest en.wikipedia.org entry is for the village of Hellidon in Northamptonshire. This civil parish was linked to Berkhamsted in the twelfth century when it was recorded within its fee. The fees were often lands or revenue-producing real property held in feudal land tenure: these are typically known as fiefs

or fiefdoms. Fee originated from Middle English, and later became more commonly known as fief possibly due to the influence of the French verb *fievrer* – or to grant in fee. The Book of Fees, or *Liber Feodorum*, was a listing of feudal landholdings of fief.

dailymail.co.uk explains how a tracker app on a stolen i-Pad led to the successful prosecution of four Polish burglars who raided houses in the south east, including Little Gaddesden. They commuted from Poland to carry out the well organised heists at well-heeled homes communicating via walkie-talkies so as not to be compromised by mobile phone signals. Rather melodramatically the judge said that "It has been said an Englishman's home is his castle and the courts are here to protect those homes from people like you." It isn't known what a Polish person's home is known as, or indeed whether the homeowners were indeed English, or men.

planetradio.co.uk reports on what we have all been ordering via Deliveroo during the Pandemic – and thus keeping our local restaurants going whilst

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we can't visit in person. Deliveroo has been in the town for four years now and marked the occasion by revealing our favourites. Top of the list was Gig-gling Squid's Sticky Chicken, followed at number two by the St Peter's Cheeseburger from the Meating Room, and then the Margarita pizza from Pizza Express. Seventeen other Berkhamsted establishments are on the app. Best not place your order at 8.22 on a Friday evening – that's the busiest time apparently.

From food to drink. hemeltoday.co.uk reports on the top Dacorum pubs in

the 2021 Good Beer Guide, marking 50 years of the Campaign for Real Ale. Those in Berkhamsted are The Bull which we featured in an earlier issue of YB following its makeover, and the Rising Sun a regular haunt of many of our readers. Worth trying a little further afield are the Monk's Inn at Hemel, which is the town's first micropub. The White Lion in Apsley boasts frequently changing ales. The Bell Inn in Bovingdon has particularly good food to go with its beer. All we need now is for them to be open again!



Drawings of Berkhamsted by Jenni Cator

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A NEW AWAKENING - SPRING IS HERE



As I write, crocuses and daffodils are coming into bloom. Cherry blossom and the pure white of blackthorn

brighten our streets and hedgerows - all signs of a new awakening. At the end of March, we put our clocks forward an hour, signs of a more promising summer season and a new beginning. As more of the people of Berkhamsted and elsewhere receive the Covid vaccine there are hopes of the relaxation of restrictions and we begin to look forward and perhaps to plan.

In Berkhamsted, will the Graham Greene International Festival take place as it has now for many years, except for last year? Will Berkhamsted Town Hall and Berkhamsted School open their doors once more to visitors from all over the world? Will travel once more be possible for visitors from abroad without the restrictions of quarantine?

If foreign visitors cannot come, will the Heritage Open Days take place in September as they did in 2020, albeit in a different form, using methods of modern technology? As we are planning tours and visits for this year's

Heritage Open Days we try, as in every year, to introduce new tours to make variety for those who support HODs year after year. We try to bring the hidden history of Berkhamsted's rich heritage to those who yearn to find out more of Berkhamsted and especially to those who thought they had no interest in Berkhamsted's past. Remember - HODs are free. There is no charge. One does not need to be a member of the History Society. HODs are open to all. Learn of the flourishing industry of the Port of Berkhamsted. How very different was the canal of those days when timber was unloaded and even boats were built and launched from wharves. At the Boat or Crystal Palace pub, or the Rising Sun, sustenance was provided to a very different clientele from that of today. These canalside pubs met the needs of those seeking sustenance from their work on the canal and the social needs of the local community. Unfortunately, the Dacorum Borough Council sees the supply of yet more housing plus no doubt more cars as of greater benefit to the community and the chance of an additional base for the heritage of Berkhamsted is lost. No doubt the familiar façade of the Crystal Palace with its original glass panels reminiscent of the majestic building of its well-known prototype will also be altered beyond recognition and the

memories of the little cottage, Poets' Corner which once stood alongside will be lost for ever. The Crystal Palace is included on the tour of Berkhamsted's historic town centre not only for itself but also for its proximity to the first railway station opened in 1837, remains of which are still visible in the brickwork of the little bridge. This also explains why the name Station Road ends where it does, and Lower Kings Road starts so far back. Lower Kings Road was built for the new commuters of the western end of Berkhamsted who objected to having to access the new railway station by means of Castle Street. The cost was met by public subscription, two houses demolished, and a more direct access was provided to the new station. This road also provided an additional road on which shops could be developed. Meek's stables at the station end of the road were probably already established before the road to the station but the solid building of Stationmaster's house was there. If you are slowed down by the heavy traffic or walking by, cast your eyes upwards after passing Greene Lane and decipher the ghost writing on the wall, advertising Victorias for hire. Meek's was a flourishing business before the horses were needed for military use in WWI and it was overtaken by the age of the motor car.

Any guided tour of Berkhamsted's historic town centre must highlight

the treasures of Castle Street where once there were so many pubs, of which some traces still remain. The Castle Hotel met the needs of those arriving at the new railway station whilst others requiring a drink before taking the train to London or Birmingham would stop at the Railway Tavern, of which, on investigation, an unusual trace remains hidden close by. Twice a day, frequenters of Castle street would see Stupples Dairies driving their cattle to the dairy in Castle Street to be milked, an indication that Berkhamsted was until recently a country town. Let's hope an indication of those days will not be lost for ever in unsympathetic granting of planning applications.

In addition to the cattle grazed near the Castle, Stupples had a creamery in Lower Kings Road. Look for the coloured tiles to maintain coolness for the dairy products. Long term residents of Berkhamsted will remember the jeweller and watch repair shop close to the corner of Lower Kings Road, de Lisle's. We are constantly reminded of their presence by the little clock tower, of which the responsibility for its maintenance rests with the Town Council. How and why was this created, is yet another strange tradition of Berkhamsted's past.

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Opposite the clock tower is the flower shop, only a slight variation from the well-established greengrocer's which stood for many years run by generations of the same family so that it became known as Pike's Corner. On the corner opposite the clock tower is the building with its very distinctive brick work. Now Barclays, which like other banks in Berkhamsted, as elsewhere, is fighting for its existence. This part of the High Street is the area of banks where through the years they have repeatedly changed their names as they have merged. Midland Bank of fond memory is now HSBC but Lloyds has retained its name and stood its ground but where is the National Provincial and the Westminster Bank? The old Bourne School became the Britannia Building Society, only to be swallowed up by the Co-operative Building Society, but even that is no more. It has become a restaurant, but will it survive the Pandemic and open its doors again?

We should move on past Dickman's fine chemist's shop, casting our eyes over the road to the Sayer's Alms-houses which have stood the test of time where poor widows lived thanks to the grant from John Sayer, chief cook to Charles II. Although we cannot wine and dine as well as Samuel Pepys did with John Sayer in the 17th century we can, if regulations allow indulge ourselves in the fare of a vast selection of restaurants in the vicinity. Will the Highway Man and other restaurants open their doors just as the trees and shrubs open their buds with the new awakening of spring? We do not know and can only hope as we enjoy the historic treasures of our ancient town.

Jenny Sherwood



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Observations by Dennis Furnell (The Natureman)

What with the virus and lockdown, the countryside has provided a much needed escape for a great many people. Footpaths, formerly trodden by a few dozen pairs of feet have been inundated and taken on the aspect of major muddy trackways bearing the imprint of all manner of shoes and boots. In the long term, this has to be a good sign. Some town dwellers have often felt uneasy in the countryside, perhaps a bit out of their depth, but C-19 has dragged us, sometimes unwillingly, into a year-long period of country walks and the unbuilt environment has begun to feel more comfortable, a place where we are all welcome and feel less alien. Somewhere to be explored with curiosity and delight.

An English spring is a beautiful thing; and we are fortunate in having Berkhamsted Common and Ashridge right on our doorstep giving us the opportunity to enjoy this lovely season in all its glory. The swathes of bluebells that carpet the woodlands are a joy, indeed they are some of the finest in the whole country.

The British bluebell (and I'm being specific here as there are other varieties) is a unique species, a product of our geographic placement on the planet. The British Isles lie in the path of the Gulf Stream, a current of warm sea water, heated in the tropical Atlantic Ocean, that flows northwards where it loses its warmth and sinks down to return from whence it came and repeat the happy cycle. The result of this circulation is somewhat like a warm scarf enfolding itself around our Islands, gifting us with a climate out of place with our geographical position which, by all that is logical, should be on a par with the climate of Scandinavia. Fortunately, this benign current brings warm damp air to much of the UK, thus creating the perfect growing conditions for many of our native plants, especially bluebells.

Bluebells are woodland plants, as are most of our native flora. However, past and, to a certain extent, present land management would appear to be negatively inclined towards woodland. Of course, in the distant past we used trees to

make farm equipment, and warships and furniture - the beechwoods around High Wycombe were used for this. In more recent times we have felled woodland to make way for roads and railways and a burgeoning population. In consequence we have lost much of our ancient woodland and have less than other European Countries.

Perhaps, now we have been forced by virus and circumstance to venture out into the countryside more often we will better appreciate how beautiful it is; how wonderful are the bluebells and, hopefully, persuade our legislators to treasure and restore our environmental birth right.



Picture: Bluebells by Dennis Furnell

OUR CLERGY



During Lent a group of us from St Peter's, were reflecting on our experiences of the past twelve months, and

what we've learnt from this year of pandemic. In our final discussion, we turned our thoughts to the future, and what changes we've made to our lives that we might in fact want to hold on to.

Prior to the first lockdown of March last year, occasions when I sat to eat meals with my wife and two children were pretty much restricted to weekends. However, over the course of our various lockdowns, family mealtimes have become the norm rather than the exception, and it's been something that we've all enjoyed. I know it won't be possible to continue this pattern when Susie joins the ranks of commuters at Berkhamsted Station, but I hope our experience will make us give shared mealtimes a priority which it hasn't always had in the past.

It feels like there's a real sense of expectation in the air, and that many people are beginning to look to the future with a new confidence. We can begin to imagine what that future

might look like and make plans: certainly, I'm beginning to imagine my first pint by the canal, and I'd guess I'm not alone in that. On the Monday in April when restrictions began to be eased, it was lovely to see small groups of friends sitting on benches in the beautiful Rectory Lane Cemetery, enjoying coffee together, the sunshine, and most importantly of all, one another's company.

At this time of year, when Christians celebrate Easter, our thoughts turn to the future and the Gospel promise of new life. As we all begin to contemplate our 'new normals', it seems to me that there is a wisdom in the Easter story which it might benefit us to reflect on. Most of the accounts of the disciples encountering the Risen Jesus, mention that the wounds of his crucifixion were still visible on his body. This has sometimes struck me as a bit odd. Surely the power behind the Resurrection could also have managed to heal the wounds from those nails?

The Risen Christ, remains the wounded Christ; the marks of his suffering are not removed, they are transformed. This might be something which can help all of us make our journey back to normality. Most people I know have been wounded in some way over the past year; there

are those who continue to struggle physically with the effects of long Covid, those whose bereavements were made more painful by not being able to say goodbye in the ways they would have wanted to, people who are still to see new grandchildren who were born during this pandemic, so many different struggles, so many different wounds. Life in its fulness is beginning to return. I believe that our journeys into that new life will be all the richer, if we remain open-eyed to the reality that whilst we may have

been wounded in ways which can't be magicked away just by changes in the lockdown restrictions, the Easter story is that even when our wounds remain, they can be transformed by love and hope.



Father Stuart Owen

News from our church schools



The children have settled back into school brilliantly this week and we're looking forward to a long, uninterrupted summer term. We're especially looking forward to visiting the church again, in our year group bubbles, for collective worship and other special events this term.

Our focus value for this half term is Service and we started the week with a collective worship about Prince Philip, whose long life and marriage to the Queen exemplified this value. The children impressed Mrs Crozier with their knowledge of 'the king of Edinburgh' and all things royal!

On Wednesday Olivia's collective worship was about using our talents to serve others. She showed a lovely example of rock-hopper penguins to explain how we've all got special skills that enable us to help or serve others in a particular way, depending on what we're good at. We're expecting to see lots of children demonstrating the value over the course of the next few weeks.



This week, our whole school workshops have been led by Olivia, and Mrs Cutler and the Year 6 Reflective Leaders. Mrs Cutler introduced our value for this half term: service. We reflected on how we could make a difference by using our talents to serve others. Some suggestions were: cheering others up when they feel down or using our listening skills to become a peer mediator.

In 2022, St Peter's will be 800 years old!

From the occupation of the castle to the arrival of soldiers in WW1 and major life and civic events up to the present day, St Peter's has been a constant presence in Berkhamsted for 800 years!

We want to celebrate this momentous occasion with the whole town!



WHAT WE'RE PLANNING

It's early days but we have many ideas for events to mark the anniversary from picnics to time capsules, historical displays to commemorative services.

We are exploring the option of holding a St Peter's Festival in the summer of 2022 (when hopefully Covid-19 will be behind us) and coinciding with the Queen's Platinum Jubilee. We are looking for organisations and local businesses you represent to get in touch to tell us how you'd like to be involved.

Would you like to put on a music event, hold a yoga session in the churchyard, run a craft or creative session in church or organise a book talk, dog show or wine tasting? We'd love to hear your ideas so we can start to plan a schedule.

LOVE YOUR CHURCHYARD!

With all of us spending more times outside these days, we'd like to revitalise our churchyard as part of the 800th celebrations.

As many of you know, the churchyard is a green sacred space at the heart of the community, bounded on all four sides by listed buildings of beauty and significance to the town; the church of 1222, the School of 1544, the 16th century Court House and early Victorian private dwellings. It also contains several ancient trees which give it a unique character.

What are your ideas for enhancing the space? How can we encourage more community visits?

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Join Us! We'd love more people to get involved with the 800th activity. If you'd like to volunteer to help or are bursting with ideas, please get in touch!

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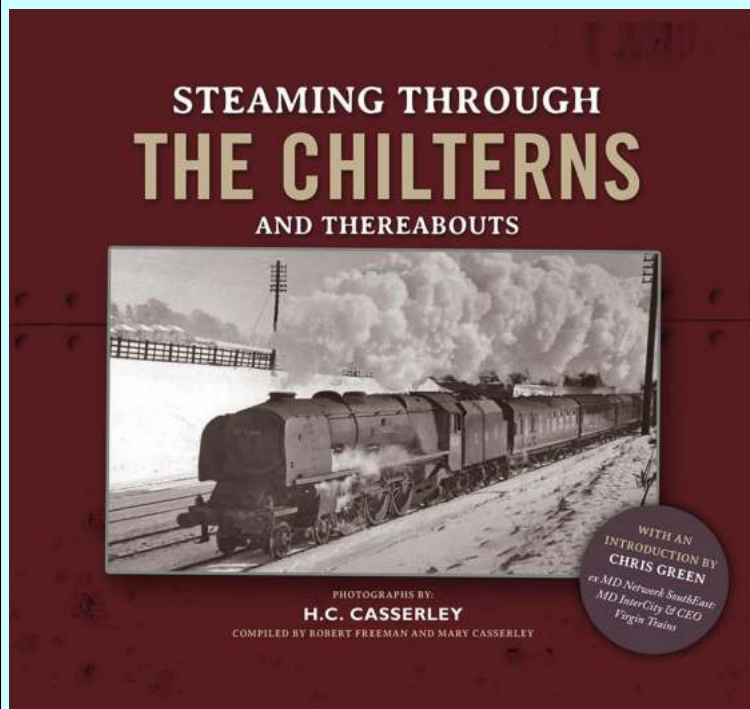
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“Steaming Through the Chilterns-and thereabouts”.
by Mary Casserley and Rob Freeman



If you are one of those people who loves to get lost in a book, then this is one of those books in which you can do just that. “**Steaming Through the Chilterns**” is the second book from the Casserley Stable, following on from “**Steaming Through Berkhamsted**”, published in 2017, which

Mary Casserley compiled with her late father, **Richard Casserley**. This time Mary teams up with Railway Enthusiast **Robert Freeman**, a fellow Berkhamsted, Hertfordshire, resident. The photographs were taken by Mary’s grandfather and famous railway photographer, **H.C. Casserley**.

Geographically, the photographs start in the Berkhamsted area, then, moving from west to east, range around Princes Risborough and the branches; Moor Park to Quanton Road, including the Chesham Branch; Watford Junction and St. Albans Abbey; returning to Berkhamsted for some dramatic snow scenes and then to St. Albans City, before moving to Welwyn and Potters Bar on the East Coast Main Line from Kings Cross. The final two chapters are entitled, “Unusual WCML Workings” and “The New Order”, in which are featured some of the first types of diesel and electric locomotives.

As well as using the detailed notes HCC made to go with his photographs, Rob has used his extensive railway knowledge to enhance the captions for our inter

rest and information. Throughout the book there are photographs of railway tickets for the respective areas featured. Also, there is a comprehensive map at the beginning and smaller ones at the start of each chapter, relevant to the area covered in the chapter.

For me, memories abound. To give three examples: on page 32 there are two photographs of former LNER J15 65390 working on the Watlington Branch on 14th October 1957. She and sister engine 65405, Rob notes, "*had been transferred from East Anglia to Neasden*". In a conversation one day with my late friend Jim Flint, then retired, who was Shed Master of Neasden during the 1950s, we talked about these engines. The footplate crews were not happy with them and they asked him to go to see them at the sub-shed at Aylesbury. After spending the day with the crew on one of these engines, Jim agreed that they should be replaced. As Rob says, "*The two locos did not last long in the area and were withdrawn in 1958*".

Also, on pages 46 and 47, the slick locomotive-change from electric to steam (and vice versa) at Rickmansworth for Metropolitan Line trains, from and to, London, is featured, which I remember seeing with my brother, Roland. Lastly, on page 110, "*In absolutely stonking good condition, with a finish rarely seen even in the preservation era*", as Rob describes it, is a photograph of BR Standard "Britannia" Pacific 70004 "William Shakespeare" passing H.C. C's house in Berkhamsted, being hauled on her way to London for the Festival of Britain, in 1951. I saw her there and visited her cab.

So, from deep winter snow to hot summer sunshine, Rob Freeman has selected some of H.C. Casserley's wonderful legacy of railway photographs for us to enjoy and to see What used to be.

Humphrey Gillott- Retired Railway Mission Chaplain.

Also a favourable review in Heritage Railway Magazine which ends with "No page disappoints"

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News from Rectory Lane Cemetery

Members of the Rectory Lane Cemetery Project were delighted to learn at the end of March that the Townscape Committee of the Berkhamsted Citizens Association had chosen the Friends of St Peter's Rectory Lane Cemetery Project as the winner of their 2021 Environment Award. The judges were very complimentary about the project: ***This year we were agreed unanimously that a candidate merited our highest award, the plaque. So, for its outstanding design, its sensitive remodelling and refurbishment, the quality of its materials, its environmental attributes, and simply the finest community pro-ject seen in Berkhamsted in recent years, we have decided to give our most prestigious award to the Friends of St. Peter's for the Transformation of the Rectory Lane Cemetery from 'Dead Space to Living Place'.***

We are very grateful to the Citizens Association for according us this accolade and look forward to a proper unveiling of the plaque which will be fixed at the entrance to the Cemetery on Rectory Lane at an appropriate time when it can be celebrated.

We were also pleased to see that members of the Berkhamsted Gardeners Society were recognised in the awards for their lovely restoration and planting of the flowerbed to the

rear of the station.

They are looking after the planting in our own Garden of Remembrance too. Here they are beginning to put in some early plants.

Kate Campbell



Why not book a place on one of the FREE tours we are conducting during April and see for yourself what has merited the Award and learn more about the project and the Cemetery's history?



Discover more about the
transformed Cemetery
Join a free guided tour in
April

2pm on Wednesday, Saturday and Sunday through April
Book in advance - places limited to 5 visitors
Tickets via [Eventbrite](https://www.eventbrite.com)

<https://www.rectorylanecemetery.org.uk/eventbrite>

If you enjoy gardening and would like to be involved in this community project, why not think about joining our 'Adopt a grave' programme? There are a number of graves, particularly in the Memorialisation area around the Garden of Remembrance which are untended and can be 'adopted'. Adoption involves weeding and keeping them neat, and in the case of ones which have kerb stones with soil in them, they can be planted up as miniature gardens - with a focus on local or native plants which are especially beneficial to our pollinators. In May we will be hosting some safe sessions in the Cemetery where you can find out more and meet others (safely) who are already involved in this really satisfying and pleasurable task.

Castle Street has some lovely old houses and some of them are revealing surprising hidden histories to Rectory Lane Cemetery Project's volunteer researchers. Number 8 has a slightly unusual front window. You might guess that it used to be a shop - in fact it was a sweet shop. When the house was being re-painted in 2016, the original shop sign was uncovered: "F. East, tobacconist and confectioner". If you look carefully at the window panes, the outline of lettering advertising Fry's Chocolate is still visible today.

The proprietor of the sweet shop was Frank East (1879-1956), a Berkhamsted-born upholsterer and furniture polisher who switched to selling confectionery in the 1910s. Frank served as a Special Constable, so he got to wear a smart uniform when he wasn't selling chocolates.

Frank died on 17th November 1956 at the age of 77 and he was buried in the Cemetery alongside his wife Emily, not far from the entrance on Three Close Lane.

Many older Berkhamsted people remember East's Confectionery shop and we have collected their memories on our website.



One brief reminiscence about Castle Street is especially notable, if slightly disparaging: "...rather inferior shops, not up to the High Street standard: a sweetshop (one had to climb steps to enter it) where we bought the mineral waters for our manoeuvres."

This comes from Graham Greene's autobiography, "A Sort of Life" (1971).

So the next time you pass this odd little shop on Castle Street, remember that this was where one of the leading English novelists of the 20th century bought his fizzy pop as a boy!

<https://www.rectorylanecemetery.org.uk/locations/8-castle-street/>



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Jackie Garwood

Mob: 07969044884

www.chamomiletherapies.com

I am a full member of the Association Of Reflexologists (AOR) and the International Federation Of professional Aromatherapists (IFPA).

JOBS FOR THE GARDEN

As I write this we are about to come out of another lockdown. In England six people or two households are now permitted to meet outside, including in a garden. With the clocks springing forward an hour we have more daylight hours to get out in our gardens or balconies. Hopefully if you planted bulbs in the Autumn there should now be a riot of colour from daffodils, hyacinths and tulips.

APRIL

Continue to dead head spring bulbs as they finish flowering so they don't set seed. Retain the leaves to feed the bulb for next year's flowers.

Refresh container grown plants by giving them a feed with slow-release fertiliser and a mulch with fresh compost.

Prune lavender, cutting above new shoots.

Plant summer flowering bulbs in borders; crocosmia, begonia, gladiolus, lilies.

Divide herbaceous perennials if they have become too big for their space. Ensure new clumps have a good root system and water in well.

Remove any tired-looking winter bedding and any plants that have not survived the winter. Then hoe borders to remove any weeds to prevent them from spreading and setting seed.

Keep a keen eye out for any pests on plants, removing them by hand. Protect new shoots of delphiniums, hostas and day lilies from slugs and snails.



MAY

Take part in Plantlife's 'No Mow May' campaign. Lock your lawn mower away and let the grass grow. This will encourage the wild flowers in your

lawn to bloom and provide much needed nectar for our pollinators.

You can also take part in Plantlife's 'Every Flower Counts' survey from 22nd-31st May <https://www.plantlife.org.uk/everyflowercounts/> You will receive your very own nectar score which will tell you how many bees your lawn can feed. Plantlife will learn how to monitor trends over time, what the most abundant flowers are and what we can do to encourage them.

At the end of the month the risk of frost should have passed so now is the time to harden off plants grown from seed or plug plants you have been growing on. Hanging baskets and patio pots can then be planted up with your summer bedding.



Tomato plants can be planted outside in pots or a vegetable plot. Earth up potatoes. Plant out tender vegetables such as runner beans. Sow pumpkins and squashes.

Prune spring flowering shrubs, such as Chaenomeles (Japanese quince), forsythia, Ribes (flowering currant) and choisya.

A local garden well worth a visit on Sunday 2nd May is 'Patchwork', 22 Hall Park Gate, Berkhamsted, HP4 2NJ. Open as part of the National Garden Scheme from 2-5pm. It is a quarter-acre garden on a sloping site with rockeries, two ponds, Spring flowering shrubs and a colourful abundance of daffodils and tulips. You will need to pre-book tickets at £4 for adults. Children are free. <https://ngs.org.uk/view-garden/16214>

Sarah Dawson

The First Mass Inoculation

“we bathe in the reflected glory of a lesser Berkhamsted...”

It is a very wintry December 1767, and a young Dutchman, Jan Ingen Housz has arrived in Hertford to follow up on an invitation from Thomas Dimsdale, a local physician to learn from him. Dimsdale was known for his recently published book in which he had described his technique for the inoculation against smallpox.

Inoculation should not be confused with vaccination. With vaccination the patient is given a disease that gives immunity from another. In the case of Jenner, Cowpox gave immunisation against Smallpox. The word vaccine is derived from vache, the French word for cow. By inoculation the patient was given, by a scraping to the arm, a small amount of matter from a sufferer of the disease. The patient then suffered symptoms, not unlike flu, but was very infectious indeed, and for at least two weeks had to be isolated.

One evening the two Doctors were interrupted by a messenger from Berkhamsted with news of a very sick child that Dimsdale suspected was a case of Smallpox. Dimsdale asked Ingen Housz if he would accompany him, which he did. That night they set off through the snow, and on their arrival, as Dimsdale had suspected, the child did have smallpox. Berkhamsted was an isolated community where an outbreak might be confined. Dimsdale had the notion that if everyone in a circumscribed community was inoculated simultaneously, and without exception no one need be isolated.

Having returned two days later with matter drawn from another victim of the disease, they were surprised by their reception. Far from having to persuade the villagers of both Berkhamsted and Bayford, they were implored to begin inoculating at once.

As Ingen Housz later reported:

‘There were many children of tender age and of imperfect health, there were twelve complete families inoculated at the same time and in which they nursed themselves, one and another through their consequent illnesses. I cannot express what pleasure I obtained in seeing how the inhabitants of these two villages, although all being attacked simultaneously by the smallpox, were able to go

about their work without interruption. Instead of finding patients in their beds, I would find them busily repairing their clothes, cutting down trees etc etc’.

By the end of January, the pair had inoculated almost 300 villagers. Incidentally the one man afraid of being inoculated, who had fled the village, did contract smallpox, but survived.

Taken from Echoes of Ingen Housz by Norman and Elaine Beale. Published by the Hobnob Press, 2011.

Tracts on Inoculation by Thomas Dimsdale. Published by James Phillips 1768.



Boris snaps up ‘terrific’ painting of him relaxing with young family at Chequers

Local artist secures the sale after sending print of her painting to the PM at Number 10 (see front page)

PRIME Minister Boris Johnson has snapped up a painting by local Berkhamsted artist Mary Casserley that shows him and his young family enjoying a few moments of calm in the gardens of his official country retreat at Chequers.

He couldn’t resist buying the picture after Mary had a card printed of it that she posted to him at No 10 Downing Street.

“Your painting is terrific,” he said in a hand-written reply, adding: “I don’t suppose it is by any chance for sale?”

The painting portrays Boris in his trademark dark suit walking beside flowerbeds with dog Dilyn while fiancée Carrie and their baby son Wilfred picnic nearby on the lawn at the 16th century mansion where the Prime Minister went to recuperate from Covid in April last year.

Artist Mary says she is “thrilled” that Boris Johnson has bought one of her pictures. Entitled ‘Chequers Court’, it is in her vibrant characteristic style reminiscent of 1930s railway posters and travel art and was created during lockdown.

Mary’s distinctive views of local scenes in and around Berkhamsted and the nearby Chilterns are popular and sell well.

Ian A Jones BAS Treasurer.

<https://berkhamstedartsociety.co.uk/>

Please see the picture at the following exhibition:-

<https://berkhamstedartsociety.co.uk/exhibition>



CRYSTAL PALACE PLANNING UPDATE



The Crystal Palace Pub stands by the Grand Junction Canal in Berkhamsted, Hertfordshire. It was built by John Edward Lane in the 1850s, a horticulturalist and brewer who exhibited award-winning plants at the Crystal Palace exhibition hall in London. He added a replica of the Crystal Palace as a frontage to his pub, based on the designs of his friend

and fellow gardener, Sir Joseph Paxton (1803–1865), the architect of the Crystal Palace exhibition hall.

Great news that Punch's recent application for planning permission to convert the property into residential premises was REFUSED at the Development Management Committee of Dacorum Borough Council on 11th March.

The weight of objections clearly helped the case, so thanks to all those who submitted these on the website. Punch will now almost certainly take the refusal to appeal and this will be the next hurdle to overcome!

In the meantime, Punch is being written to, to see if they would like to enter into a constructive dialogue, now that it has been shown conclusively that the local community does not wish to lose this pub, which has been an integral part of the community in Berkhamsted for over 160 years, and is an historic building in its own right. The Town council are considering ways they might support the project on Monday (15th) evening, and the Castle Trust will be refining the business model and fund-raising strategy to prove that there is a viable alternative, as we agree with Punch that the Pub is no longer economic in its current form, but that turning into 3 houses is not the solution we all want. The recent budget in particular now holds out a significant olive-branch in its intention to set up the £150m Community Ownership Fund so that communities can bid up to £250,000 to save pubs.

<https://crystalpalace.pub/>

Appledown Rescue and Rehoming Kennels



During lockdown there has been no rehoming taking place, but abandoned and unwanted dogs still continued to arrive. It's a very challenging time for a small charity that relies on donations and fund-raising, especially as we have been unable to hold our usual events. We need to ask generous dog lovers and supporters to help us get through this difficult time and to continue to provide the high level of care our dogs deserve. It's easy to make a one-off donation of £3 simply by texting APPLE to 70111, or donate via Paypal using the 'DONATE Support a Cause' option and search for Appledown Rescue. Donations by cheque are very welcome too. Thank you from Gypsy, Lola, Mark and all our dogs!

If you are interested in offering a dog a loving home when we reopen, all the relevant information and an application form can be found on our website. Viewings are now by appointment only.

**For adoption information and application form visit our website
www.appledownrescue.co.uk**

**Appledown Rescue & Rehoming Kennels, Harling Road, Eaton Bray,
Beds LU6 1QY**

01525 220383 (10-12 a.m. & 2-4 p.m.)
e-mail: appledown.kennels@btinternet.com

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The Specal Method – Contented Dementia

I have been studying The Specal Method throughout Lockdown, though my original involvement came much earlier when both my parents were living with dementia.

The Specal Method uses the analogy of the Photograph Album to represent our memory system with individual experiences represented by photographs.

Each of our experiences is recorded and stored in our album a split second after it has occurred. Each photograph has two features, facts and the associated feelings.

The taking and storing of photographs is an automatic and unconscious process going on in the background of our lives unobserved by us and unobservable by anyone else, at the time of storage.

Day after day, after day the photographs in our album build up. Our album falls open quite naturally on today's page, that is where the latest photographs are flying in.

It is these photographs that we must have if we are to make sense of what we are doing who with, where, when and why.

Every time we say, 'now let me think', we mean, 'let me look in my

album for the information' that we must have to make sense of what is going on in our life.

We can turn back to much older pages in our album, to find out what happened a long time ago, but we do this very rarely, most of the time we are on today's page.

I particularly like this explanation for its simplicity. Who hasn't looked at a photograph and recalled the detail of what, who, where, when and why and also how that occasion made the people in the photograph feel? So, what happens as we age? The actual process of the taking and storing of photographs does not change. Everything that we experience, continues to be recorded and stored in our albums in the normal way. However, we become much slower at accessing the photographs that we need. The photographs are there, but by the time that we have found the ones that we need, they may not be useful in that particular situation.

Those of us that are older may be familiar with that feeling that by the time you are ready to say something, the conversation has moved on. Or is that only me?

This slowing down is simply related to the normal ageing process and has

nothing whatsoever to do with dementia.

So, staying with the idea of the photograph album, what exactly is dementia? With the onset of dementia, a new type of photograph enters our album. We call this new type of photograph a blank.

A blank is very different from a normal photograph, it provides us with a record of the feelings of what we have just experienced, but it contains no facts.

At first the entry of the blank simply represents a blip of lost factual information. After the entry of the first blank, further blanks will follow, randomly, intermittently and with increasing frequency.

Gradually the blanks build up and appear so frequently that long ribbons of blanks occur.

This continues until the final stage of dementia which is represented by page after page of feelings only photographs interrupted by the occasional random, normal photograph that contains both feelings and the associated facts.

The person with dementia has not lost their reason, merely their recent facts and they will turn back the pages of their album to a time before dementia and try to match certain old photographs to give context to what

is happening in their life.

I found this explanation and the Special Method particularly helpful in understanding what it was like for my parents and of course the Special Method has three golden rules.

1) Don't ask direct questions because the facts may not have been stored.

2) Learn from the expert, the person with dementia and listen to their questions for they are highly significant.

3) Do not contradict, which simply means do not argue with them about the photograph they choose to use.

These rules, though simple, are not easy to follow, but I know from experience that it is possible, and the rewards are high.

I have only skimmed the very surface of the Special Method but if you would like more information please go to <http://www.contenteddementiastrust.org/>

Michael Rowan

Chair of the Trustees of The Heather Club

Advocate for the Special Method and Contented Dementia



Remap Hertfordshire South

Are you in need of equipment to help overcome the challenges of living with a disability, mobility or sensory impairment? Or perhaps you would like to use your engineering skills to give back to your community. **In either circumstance, Remap Hertfordshire South can help.**

We are always looking for computer, mechanical, electrical engineers and woodworkers to join us in creating innovative devices to help people with disabilities gain more independence .

Our equipment caters to all ages and disabilities for the home, school or workplace within South Hertfordshire - including Hemel Hempstead and the surrounding areas. Our unique devices are even provided completely free of charge!

The community we serve are at the heart of everything we do and we recognise everybody's needs are entirely different, so each piece of equipment is custom-made for every client.

We recently built a set of parallel bars and therapy steps for a young boy with cerebral palsy to help him learn how to walk and build up his core strength before undergoing specialist treatment. His family were extremely happy with their experience of work-

ing with our volunteers, stating "they are all amazing at what they do".

More than providing essential aids, we also help our clients engage with recreational activities. We have adapted multiple guitar tuners for keen players with visual impairment. The equipment converts the visual display into an audio signal to indicate if the note is too high or low.

Beyond this we have also made:

- Window openers
- Furniture raisers
- Speech communication devices
- Braille teaching aids
- Adapted board games/toys



In light of the uncertain times we are living through, our priority is keeping our clients and volunteers safe at all times. Whilst complying with

government guidelines we are still



able to complete certain projects during the pandemic, so please do not hesitate to get in touch with us.

If you would like to join our team or get free equipment for yourself or someone you care for, please call us on 01727 613177 or email

For more information about all our innovative projects and to donate to our services, please visit www.hertfordshire-south.remap.org.uk

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News from Open Door community and arts space

Berkhamsted Rotary awards Joan Fisher for her community work

Joan Fisher, Open Door's co-founder and general manager, has been presented with the Rotary Centenary Civic Award for 2021

Berkhamsted Rotary recognised Joan's "outstanding contributions which have benefited many people in our town." This includes the meal service Joan set up with Christine Delaney – delivering food to vulnerable and isolating people around Berkhamsted throughout the Covid-19 pandemic.

Joan says: "I'm extremely grateful to Berkhamsted Rotary and the Town Council for this award, but really it's for everyone involved with Open Door and The Way Inn – our supporters, volunteers and all the team! Without them, we wouldn't be able to do anything. I'm honoured and privileged to work alongside so many dedicated, talented and caring people. The community spirit in Berkhamsted takes my breath away."

Read more on the Open Door website.



Coming soon...

Home Comforts exhibition final day

There'll be one last chance to look around the fabulous Home Comforts exhibition **between 11am and 2pm on Saturday 17 April**.

Come along to see and buy art, gifts and cards by local artists and craftspeople.



Musical Journeys online group

Join musician and music therapist Max Ryz for Musical Journeys, a Zoom group for sharing and listening to music. All genres and styles welcome!

Wednesday evenings, 21 April to 12 May, 7.30pm to 8.30pm
Book via bit.ly/musicaljourneys

Refreshments and friendly chat from Monday 17 May

Open Door's café will be reopening on Monday 17 May, welcoming everyone for light refreshments. Run by volunteers, it's a safe and supportive space to spend time with friends – or come on your own for a quiet cuppa or some company. Visit opendoorberkhamsted.co.uk for the latest information about opening times.

Open Door, 360-364 High Street, Berkhamsted.
Visit opendoorberkhamsted.co.uk/whats-on



@opendoorberko





Non-members can sign up to our newsletters Free of Charge.

16th-18th July 2021: Big Art Fair. <https://www.hvaf.org.uk/our-events/big-art-fair>

September 2021: Herts Open Studios <https://www.hvaf.org.uk/our-events/herts-open-studios-2021>

The easiest way to join HVA is online: www.hvaf.org.uk

Twitter: @HVAF #HertsOpenStudios Instagram @HertsVisualArts

Facebook: @HertsVisualArts

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