Editorial

So here we are: the fourth digital issue of the Village News. Is your reaction ‘Already? Where did that week go?’ or ‘The fourth - surely we must be on the tenth at least?’

This period of lock down is a trial for some and a pleasure for others, as Jon Sims explored in his essay ‘A Month of Sundays’ in last week’s edition, depending whether or not you crave the company of others or relish being on your own. Whatever your view, it looks as if we are stuck with this situation for a few more weeks at least. What are you doing to pass the time? What are you looking forward to when lock down ends? What has been the best or the worst of the past month? Do you find consolation in the fact that, with no visitors, the hoover can stay in the cupboard? Do let us know your experiences and views.

Thank you to everyone who has contributed to this week’s edition whether in words or photographs. We would love some more children to follow Advik’s example and share their views and artwork. We are planning a Lego page in our next edition, so do send us pictures of your latest creations. Next week, too, we hope to hear from some parishioners who experienced lock down on holiday. Perhaps you, too, have an interesting Corona holiday story? Do share.

Spring has sprung and the village is full of flowers, butterflies and birds. Enjoy your walks and bike rides – perhaps you could give some suggestions of new routes for others or interesting things to look out for? Especially rhubarb which vanishes as soon as it appears in roadside boxes and is rapidly becoming a great incentive to improve one’s PB.


The opinions expressed in this publication are those of the writers and not necessarily those of the editors
Appreciation For Essential Workers

It is very revealing, in the current circumstances, how much we take for granted the people who provide such important services in our lives. It is wonderful to see the 'thank you' notices on bins and, the more recent, 'Thumbs up for Posties' campaign, involving the inevitable selfies, but who will remember our bin men and posties at Christmas? As a household, we have always been part of the Boxing Day tradition of giving them a Christmas tip to acknowledge the year-round service they all provide. Perhaps they deserve a tip this Christmas from more households than usual. Just a thought.

* A long-term Rownhams resident

Photo credit: Anchal Bisht

CORONA VIRUS
HELP NEEDED?
HELP OFFERED
CALL/TEXT SARAH ON 07887 420656
Local runner, Kirsty Macbeth came up with a novel way to add variety to her family’s daily exercise. She explains, ‘Until recently, every Saturday, religiously, I did Southampton Common Parkrun at 9 am, so I am missing it big time. I saw that someone on the Parkrun Facebook page had used the initial letter of road names in their area to spell out ‘Parkrun’ and thought it would be good fun to do the same.

We were already out on a bike ride with the kids so we got them involved with finding the letters we needed. We managed to find all the letters apart from K; that had to wait until the following day when I ran through Nursling to take a photograph of Knowles Close.

We didn’t do our ‘Parkrun’ in letter order, but we really enjoyed looking at the road signs to find the letters we wanted.

(Perhaps parents could adapt this idea: making words out of the initial letters you find or making an alphabetical list over time: you could start with A for Armada Close, B for Betteridge Drive and so on. Ed)

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**Defibrillators can be found outside**

The Village Hall in Nursling Street and Community Centre in Horns Drove

Someone not breathing or breathing erratically? Call 999. Do CPR Ask someone else to go and get the defibrillator. 999 will give them the code to access the equipment. Follow the spoken instructions given by the defibrillator.
Rownhams St John's Primary - PTA update

It's all change since we last updated you unfortunately. The school remains open only for a very limited number of students at the moment, so home schooling has become the norm! The teachers are working hard to provide the children with activities to do at home using Google Classroom and other online teaching. We are very grateful to them and all the staff for their support during this time. You can keep up to date with announcements and the headteacher's blog on the school's shiny new website here: https://www.rownhams.hants.sch.uk/our-blog/

The PTA would usually be there to welcome new parents joining the school at the open evening in the Summer term; however, that is on hold for the time being. Don't worry, we are a friendly bunch and will continue to engage with all parents going forward. The school will also be sending out further information soon.

There is a Facebook group for parents of children starting in Year R this September to share information and get to know each other, so if you are one of them and in particular are new to the school, please join here: https://www.facebook.com/groups/2796117547284238

In the meantime, we have unfortunately had to cancel the main fundraising event of the year - our Summer Fair which was so well attended last year. We have also had to cancel our school discos, cake sales etc so our fundraising target will no doubt take a massive hit. We were hoping to raise a considerable sum to purchase new laptops for the children to use in school. Not to be deterred, we have decided to run a remote quiz. Sadly, you will have to provide your own food, but please join us on Friday 8th May before you have your VE Day picnic! More details to follow but this will be one for the whole family, just a bit of fun. Donations gratefully received but not mandatory. We will be donning our red, white and blue for the occasion!

The link to the quiz and joining instructions will be shared on the village Facebook page nearer the time.

Stay safe everyone! Elena Harden
Rownhams Jigsaw Exchange

I recently put a box of jigsaws at the bottom of my drive – 33 Horns Drove - and they vanished almost as quickly as rhubarb. It was suggested that there might be a demand for more jigsaws, and so I am happy to leave my, now empty, box outside so that people can deposit their unwanted puzzles and swap them for another. It seems that our enforced period of isolation has reminded people of the pleasure to be found in this quiet pastime.
Thread hooped cereal onto string or pipe cleaners. Attach them together and hang in your garden or on your balcony. Use sticks tied with string or yarn to create different shapes.

This is great for a finger gym activity, strengthening the muscles used to write and create using fine motor skills.
Scout Cubs From 21st Romsey

My name is Advik and I’m a member of the 21st Romsey Taurus Cub Pack. When Cubs had to suspend the meetings, the leaders decided to conduct all the sessions online. Now we do all our activities on the Zoom app. It is phenomenal to see their commitment towards us. Normally, the sessions are 30 - 60 minutes long. The leaders are giving up their valuable time so the children do not miss out on their weekly session.

We do loads of activities and it would be hard to list them all, so here are a few. In the past, we have undertaken a night time walk, donutting, kayaking and trips to Winchester Science Museum, Golden Gecko and Pets at Home. Since these activities are no longer possible, the leaders have come up with exciting challenges every week. The first week was an introductory session and the second week, we did a quiz where our parents had to help us. We also got to participate in a live campfire. In the newspaper challenge, some children made newspapers up to their ceilings.

It is lucky for us that the leaders give up their time. They really do not need to but they do, which I appreciate. I cannot wait to see what challenges are in store for us in the coming weeks. It provides a massive opportunity for the other Cubs and I to chat with our friends and make new ones, too. Thank you to all the leaders.

Advik
Plea from horse owners

In the recent three weeks or so, many individuals and families have discovered on their daily walks and bike rides areas of local countryside that they did not know existed before: woodlands, country lanes and fields full of sheep, cows, donkeys, ponies and horses.

Whilst most people do not attempt to engage with sheep and cows because these animals are usually not that bothered with humans (unless they see them approaching with huge quantities of fodder), our equine friends are more used to human contact and may come over to the fence to say hello and cadge a treat. PLEASE do not feed them. By all means take a photo, remark how handsome they are, say silly things to them, but don’t feed them or even stroke them. The grass is growing and their owners will have ensured they have plenty to eat and will monitor their daily treats.

There are many reasons why you should not feed or touch horses you do not know. Firstly, they might bite you, or nibble your child painfully, or start to bite and kick each other because they are jostling for treats. A while ago, a horse locally was kicked to death by a field mate over a squabble over a pile of hay. So, admire from afar.

Secondly, you may be feeding them harmful things like bluebell leaves which are poisonous to horses and humans alike. Carrots cut in ‘pennies’ can choke a horse. Too many carrots and apples can affect insulin levels which may lead to laminitis. Sugar lumps and Polos are also not a good idea, much though they love them. There have been news reports recently about four horses which have died as a result of eating grass cuttings or, well meant but fatal, treats.

So, while we are very happy for you to admire our animals, please leave it to us owners to monitor their diet.

Thank you.
CREATIVE CORNER

The period of lock down has provided a period of calm and the chance to reflect on our lives and values. In some, it has awakened their creative side, which was perhaps previously hidden or had taken a back seat in the usual hustle and bustle of life. We are delighted to publish the work of some of our local writers. Firstly, here is a poem by Advik

IN THE GARDEN

As I spot a gigantic tree which is extremely tall, I also see a miniature which is really small. We have a lush green bush at the back, and the birds there have a knack. They gobble up the food I put out, which I say without a doubt. I design an obstacle course as I kneel, instead of melancholy, positive and joyful is how I feel. As one of the leaves falls off the trees, I begin to smile with glee. As I look into the pond at the frogspawn, I hope for a stunning dawn. In the garden, there are wondrous things, and I am longing to see what spring brings.

Name: Advik
Year: 4
Bluebells

Here, a writer reflects on the season of spring, her writing complemented by the beautiful photographs below, taken by Clair Whitaker on her daily walk, of bluebells in Nightingale Wood, Toothill.

Spring is a time for new birth. Time for budding plants, blooming of bulbs and other perennials. Animals know to birth their young ones in spring. It truly is a beautiful time of the year. The gloom of winter is lifted away as the power of the sun is made manifest. The strength of the sun is revealed and it gets stronger each passing day. The coming week is forecast to have highs of 23 degrees: very warm and beautiful days lie ahead.

Beautiful spring is here speaking to our hearts, lifting the gloom surrounding these times and saying this, too, will give birth to beauty. Windswept bluebells that shout spring from their veins shine in our local woods.

Anonymous

Photo credit: Clair Whitaker
Till The Bad Things Go Away

Come into my arms
Let me wrap you round
Safe and sound
Cleanse you from the dirt
Hide you from the hurt
Till the bad things go away

Stand behind me
Surround thee
Keep me between
You and the fool
The cruel
Till the bad things go away

I am your shield
Never yield
Cuddle closer
Into my arms
Safe from harm
Till the bad things go away

Duncan Richmond
Fish Pond

Some deep embedded memory
Tells me that somewhere
Rivers run
Somewhere the sea
Somewhere a lake
That would take days to swim

Would I be happier
In waters wider than
My tiny mind?
Should I be satisfied
With this mere pond
With weeds to hide inside
With food all found
Horizons safely set
In solid ground?

Should this be quite enough?
Should I give thanks
With heart and soul
For more than endless circuits
Of some boring bowl

Jon Sims
Huffin’ and Puffins

“G’day.”

I looked up from my bench in the stern of the Stromness to Hoy ferry, the MV Hoy, and saw a remarkable sight. There, at the top of the gangplank was a sight to stop any one in their tracks. A cheap brown plastic mac of the most tasteless kind, with a head of exploding red hair and beard broken only by a broad grin, blue eyes and topped off with a deeper red bobble hat. While we, my mate Andrew and I were equipped with all our overnight kit in suitable rucksacks, our new companion seemed to have only a black Gola sports bag.

“Room for one more?” asked our friend in an Australian accent that Dame Edna would have been proud of.

We shuffled along and invited him to join us. He dumped himself down and prodded his bag under the bench with the heel of his much used and abused desert boots, fashionable but not exactly suitable for cross island hiking.

“M'name's Rog, pleased to meet you,” he grinned. “Are you off to see the Old Man?”

We nodded and introduced ourselves. Have you noticed that you can know someone for many years but never feel completely comfortable with them? While others you feel instantly at home with. Rog was one of those blokes. The boat moved gently away from the pier and before long we were moving past the golf course and out into open water. Mercifully this notorious stretch of water was uncharacteristically millpond in its demeanour, so we chatted and got to know each other. The laughter started quickly, and our collective sense of humour bonded us; by the time we had rounded Graensay and docked at Maoness, we were firm friends.

He showed us his map of Britain that lived in the pocket of his mac. Totally unremarkable except that inside of the cover, on the plain blank page was a list of every beer that he had sampled since arriving a month ago. At a rough estimate, I thought there were probably about a hundred. Next to each ale, for there were no lagers, there was a positive or negative comment and a few stars.

“Plenty still to try,” he grinned.

Time to step out the five-ish miles and couple of hours to the youth hostel where we were spending the next two nights.

You will not be surprised to hear that there are no supermarkets on Hoy even though it is the second biggest island. The nearest pub, the Hoy Hotel, is a twelve and a half mile walk away. Everything we needed was in our rucksacks and being good Boy Scouts, we were
well prepared. But by the time we reached the Rackwick Youth Hostel, we decided a night in was more suitable in the light of what we were planning the next day. Unpacked, fed and watered we decided to join the other inmates in a sing song.

The Folk Scene was busy and blossoming so no matter where you went someone had a guitar and ears would be clutched as everyone became anyone from The Corries to Steeleye Span via Lindisfarne and a thousand bands and soloists in between. No budding “Folkie” was complete without a huge, polo neck sweater. The two guys who had lugged their guitars this far, uncased them and started the evening’s entertainment. We could have nipped down to the pub, but that was at Lyness, a 4 hours’ walk away. However, this was 1976, the Olympics were on in Toronto and there was no way of watching them, so you joined in. For the first couple of songs, Roger sat back and just listened, foot tapping occasionally singing along with the choruses. There were about a dozen of us perched around on bunk beds and a few chairs. Mostly young, mostly bearded, they were on Hoy to watch birds or, like us, to visit the famous Rock Stack, The Old Man of Hoy. On asking what we wanted to sing next, the assembly settled on the “Wild Rover”, an up-tempo ditty that was always sung with vigour. Roger leaned forward and asked if he might play along. In the conversation that followed it turned out that he was a professional musician and the Gola kit bag held his flute. So as the guitars counted in to the Wild Rover they were accompanied by the sweet notes of the flautist. The song was a jolly romp but better was to come. Rog started to play variations on a theme. My favourite bit was when he went full Jethro Tull and did his own version as Ian Anderson playing the Wild Rover including the bobbing and weaving and including standing on one leg, even throwing in an excellent Thijs van Leer of Focus fame. The rest of us were in fits of laughter and enjoyed every minute, whereas our “fundamentalist folkies”, as we christened them, found the whole thing unfunny as they had firmly had their thunder stolen. It was one of those evenings that you could not replicate and to which the phrase, “you had to be there” surely applies.

An alcohol-free evening meant that the next morning we were up bright eyed and bushy tailed for our day’s entertainment. We were going up to see the bird life at The Old Man of Hoy and, of course, The Old Man Itself. My interest in the Sandstone Rock Stack started as a wide eyed ten-year-old in 1967 when the BBC covered the climb live over three nights pulling in over 15 million viewers. It was only two miles from the Youth Hostel, but a stiff hour and a half walk and the land was still marked where the BBC Vehicles were towed over the island. It was worth the walk. At a little under 450 feet it looked as
though you could step over the gap, but the closer you got, the further away it seemed to move. The stack is fairly young in geological terms and eight hundred years ago it was part of the headland. It was a magnificent sight and everywhere you looked there were birds. Fulmars were the most prevalent, swiftly followed by guillemots, razorbills and gulls all, including us, being pestered by skuas, but the star of the show, though not in numbers was the cheeky little clown, ashore for the summer of breeding, the brightly billed puffin.

Camera in hand and down on my front, I moved in as close as I could to get the shots I wanted. Each time I drew my camera gently up to my eye, my subject would flutter and fly away. After the third time and about to question my technique, I glanced behind me and realised that while I was crawling in my best commando style, my chums were strolling, upright, just enjoying the view! A wee word and they backed off far enough for me to get my shots. They were of use when I wanted to photograph a fulmar and her chick on a ledge, holding my ankles as I hung over the cliff edge. I still love that picture.

Tired, cold and mucky we headed back, first to the Youth Hostel, then to Stromness and on to Kirkwall where Rog continued his exploration of British beer.

A couple of weeks passed and I returned to Aberdeen, and to the Opticians where I worked. I was greeted by a slightly stunned receptionist who said she had a message for me: “Some scruffy bloke with red hair and a plastic mac came in and said to tell you that Ned Kelly’s been in.”

The day was quiet so off I went to meet him at the pub, and there began another lost afternoon. But that, is another story.

Duncan Richmond

Have you got a story or poem to share? Would you like an audience for your writing? We would love to hear from you.

Please use the email address:
editors.villagenews@gmail.com
A-mazing

Why not print this page out and trace your way up to the centre from the bottom? Can you do it first time round?
Recipe Of The Week

Sticky Chicken Thighs with Lemon and Honey - serves 2-3

Ingredients

black pepper
2 lemons, juice only
2 tbsp runny honey
tbsp wholegrain mustard
2 garlic cloves, crushed
6 chicken thighs, skin on and bone in
salt
2 tbsp flatleaf parsley, chopped

Method

1. Preheat the oven to 200C fan

2. Add 3-4 turns of the peppermill, the lemon juice, honey, mustard and garlic to a large bowl and mix well.

3. Place the chicken thighs into a roasting tin and pour the lemon and honey mixture over the chicken. Leave to marinate for 2 hours. Season with salt, then cook in the oven for 45 minutes, turning after 25 minutes. The thighs will be soft and sticky.

4. Serve with your choice of vegetables or a salad and garnish with the chopped parsley.

Enjoy.

Rob
Tommy Cooper Hour

I tried to sue our builder but I came up against a brick wall.

His insubstantial breakfast didn’t fill him up. It was ethereal.

Arguments over the future of the arctic have become polarised.

TV contestants gun down Russian royalty: Shooting Tsars.

Spoilt ballot papers tick all the boxes.

They don’t make eiderdowns any more, duvet?

Cannibals would love to have you for Sunday lunch.

I joined the Locksmith’s Association. It opened so many doors.

Yoga takes you to another plane. So does the travelator at Heathrow.

I used to work as a taxi driver, but I didn’t like people talking behind my back.

She said, ‘I’m going to dig a hole in the ground and fill it with water.’ I thought, she means well.

He said, ‘What happened?’ I said, ‘A row of books fell off the wall and landed on my head.’ He said, ‘You’ve only got your shelf to blame.’

For more of the same, use your search engine to find ‘The Tommy Cooper Hour’. He was an accomplished magician, too, but was renowned for his tricks which always went wrong, his frantic delivery and his signature fez.