Nursling & Rownhams

Village News

Orchids and Bluebells by Xenia Bennett

Week 5 01 May 2020
A Newsletter for all in the Parish of Nursling and Rownhams
Editorial
Welcome to our fifth digital edition of the Village News!
The beautiful cover picture was taken in Home Covert and features an early purple orchid. There always used to be some there, but now there seem to be hundreds. An Isle of Wight and Hampshire Wildlife Trust worker told me that the intention of the tree felling was create more favourable growing conditions for wild flowers and plants: it seems to be working! Have you ever wondered what those black boxes were on the trees? They are nesting boxes for dormice, though the worker said they had never seen evidence of their use. Mr Rambler gives us an insight into some of the historical features of this ancient woodland in the first of his planned series about local walks.

Continuing the historical theme, we are indebted to Southampton Heritage (Facebook) who gave permission for us to publish some old photographs of Nursling and Rownhams. Julie Facey recently took photographs of the locations and sent us a fascinating collection of ‘Then and Now’ photographs which we will feature over the next two weeks.

Many of us may be missing our annual holiday. Two couples from the village have written about their ‘Holidays of a Lifetime’ which did not go quite as planned because of Covid-19. Do you have a similar story to share?

Many thanks to all who sent in photographs and articles for this edition. I’m afraid the ‘jokes’ don’t get any better!

Next week we would love to hear from anyone with knowledge of the history of Nursling and Rownhams – I’ve heard rumours of Prisoner of War camps and gun emplacements. Does anyone know what purpose those brick towers served in the woodland by the triangle at Toothill? Local historians, do let us into some secrets.


The opinions expressed in this publication are those of the writers and not necessarily those of the editors.
Scouting and St George

Besides being patron saint of England, St George is also that of Scouting. Consequently, on a Sunday afternoon towards the end of April, members of Scouting and Guiding in our district would normally congregate in Romsey Abbey to celebrate, reflect and to renew our Scout and Guide Promises.

Obviously, this year such an event wasn’t possible; instead the District Scouting team ran a short, on-line session, streamed through Facebook – it has now had over 1000 views! Together we renewed our Promise and reflected on some words of our founder, Baden-Powell, that seem as relevant in today’s situation as when he first wrote them, over 100 years ago:

“All Scouts should know the story of St George. He was typical of what a Scout should be. When he was faced by a difficulty or danger, however great it appeared, even in the shape of a dragon - he did not avoid it or fear it but went at it with all the power he could.

“That is exactly the way a Scout should face a difficulty or danger no matter how great or how terrifying it may appear. He should go at it boldly and confidently, using every power that he can to try and overcome it, and the probability is that he will succeed.”

By suggesting activities to do at home and running Zoom meetings the leaders of 21st Romsey are doing their best to support our members through the current difficulties. As you will have seen from other articles many of the young people are rising to the challenge.

Randell McKay
Group Scout Leader
Letter to the Editors
From Brian Richardson

Nigel Anderdon
I was very sad to hear the news of Nigel’s death when we were on our cruise. I was wondering whether or not the Parish Council have thought of any fitting tribute to Nigel? In the past the PC have named roads and committee rooms to remember former councillors. As Nigel was so instrumental in setting up the Skate Park and play area in the recreation ground, I wondered if naming the skate park after Nigel would be a fitting tribute.

Twin Spires News
The May edition of Twin Spires News, the parish magazine of the churches of Nursling and Rownhams is available on line at https://twinspires.org.uk/docs/magazine.pdf
It has news of what the churches are up to, articles to make you think, activities for children and puzzles to keep your mind active.

Thanks
Marion, Mary, Caroline and Dorothy aka Freds

Horns Drove Pre-school and Rascals
We have had to take the very difficult decision, as of the 25th of March 2020, to close our Pre-School and After School Club till further notice.

E-mails will be checked regularly so please communicate with us this way.

This will be until further notice and we look forward to seeing you all again when we open again.

Regards
Karen Terzer
Business Manager
Get Walking

Now that walking has become the Number 1 pastime in the UK, I am amazed at how many people have lived in N&R for some time and yet seem unaware of the wealth of good walking around our lovely locality. Over the next few Village News issues, I hope to enlighten you.

Let’s start right in the heart of the village with Home Covert. This delightful area of woodland has, over the years, been gradually surrounded by development, most recently in the form of the new houses at Fen Meadow and the massive new buildings at Adanac Park (Adanac is Canada backwards and was the name given to the farm which used to occupy this site). Where the OS building stands once stood an Iron Age settlement, exposed when the new foundations were dug. The houses off Cranmer Drive in Nursling are late 90s vintage. Nursling Rec, where the football fields and skate park edge the woods, provides the most open access. From here, a gate onto a well made path runs southwest through the woods to a two way split. Just before you reach this junction, a hump in the path crosses a pipeline from the estates in Nursling. This acts as a dam for a seasonal lake, transforming the area in wet weather.

The path to the right heads back, eventually, to Nursling Street via, at this time of year, bluebells and other woodland flowers, including some lovely orchids. Look but please don’t touch! The path to the left leads across to Hillyfields. As you cross a stream, a smaller path to the left heads up to Jubilee Park at the back of the Scout HQ and to the footpath across to Redbridge Lane. The main path splits, left to the new houses, right to follow the stream, emerging in Hillyfields by the Walnut Tree Inn.

Home Covert contains a considerable amount of history. Iron Age pottery has been found on the long defunct track from Adanac Farm to Nursling Street, possibly dug up among gravel used as the track surface. From the back of the Scout HQ to the site of the new buildings at Adanac ran a section of the Roman Road from the River Test to Winchester. Maps of more recent times show that the woods were heavily managed and regular plantings in the trees can still be seen today. Explore some of the minor paths in the woods. Take the time to look up as you walk; there are some magnificent trees and you may spot nuthatches among the abundant birdlife. And don’t just walk for the sake of it. Look, listen and enjoy. These woods are one of our finest local assets. Treasure them.

Mr Rambler
Creative corner

We have had some Lego creations come in from some of our contributors. It shows our children have been busy and very creative in these times.

These two designs are by Advik Bhandari

The Lewis brothers, Aaron and Sam, decided to create their own holiday resort and transport, as a holiday abroad this year seems unlikely.

Photo credit: Anchal Bisht

Photo credit: Clare Lewis
Our Trip of a Lifetime

On Monday, 9th March we set off to visit our dear friend in Melbourne, Australia. Carol and her husband ran the YMCA youth club where Paul and I met back in 1969! She has been in Australia for 47 years so we thought it was about time we visited and we had lots of exciting things planned. What a time to choose!

We were a bit anxious beforehand because many international flights were being cancelled leading up to our departure date – but luckily ours wasn’t! We had a taxi to take us to Terminal 5 at Heathrow Airport and the roads were very quiet, which was a sign of things to come. We arrived at the drop-off – virtually the only car – and went into departures to the check in desk which was almost deserted. It was all very surreal as we went through security with no queue and none of the hustle and bustle that you would expect from one of the busiest airports in the world. It was the same on the plane an A380 – the biggest passenger plane in the world which was probably only about a third full – so service was good!

First stop: Singapore for three nights. Singapore was open for business but with a distinct lack of tourists. By this time, they were not accepting visitors from countries which were suffering most from the virus (China, Italy, Spain and Iran) and people generally were choosing not to travel so visitor numbers were very low. Our hotel was lovely but not full and we usually had the pool to ourselves. Attractions were open but nobody to visit them!

It was indeed very quiet! There were hardly any people on the streets. We managed to do the four different hop-on hop-off bus tours around Singapore in one day – not hopping off! We were usually the only two people on board! We visited Sentosa Island and were the only people on the cable cars. The lack of people was quite surreal but also somewhat unnerving. We managed to get a taxi to the zoo as my one wish was to see the Giant Pandas. We were so lucky: the zoo was open with, hardly any people there and the Giant Pandas came out to see us. Such an amazing experience.
We did keep away from areas that might have been crowded just to be on the safe side. We did not go shopping in the wonderful malls along Orchard Road and we did not eat at the Hawkers Centres where the locals go to eat, although we had originally planned to. But we did manage to get to the Long Bar at Raffles for our Singapore Slings – bit of an underwhelming and overpriced experience, but a must do nonetheless. We left Singapore on Friday, 13th March (what were we thinking!) to fly to Melbourne. Singapore airport was empty. They combined four different flights to fill our plane.

We arrived in Melbourne Friday evening, narrowly escaping having to isolate for 14 days! Again, so lucky. It was the weekend of the Grand Prix and the streets were heaving. There were so many restaurants alongside the Yarra River that we wondered how we were ever going to choose which ones to eat in during our stay. Little did we know how that would change! Unfortunately, Paul and everybody else did not get to see the Grand Prix as it was cancelled at the last minute.

On Sunday 15th March (two days after our arrival in Australia) we received the following message from our son: “So, Australia are now asking all new arrivals to self isolate for 14 days on arrival – you just missed that! American Airlines is suspending nearly all long-haul transatlantic flights from Monday. It follows that other airlines will follow suit. Several countries are closing borders too, again others will follow suit. It might be worth contacting the British Consulate to see what the current advice is for British Nationals in Australia. If flights are cancelled at short notice and there are no plans for repatriation you may need to find somewhere to live for a few months out there!!”

At the time this seemed to us to be a bit of an extreme reaction so, for the first week we took a four hour train ride to Lakes Entrance to the East of Melbourne, heading towards the National Park area where the bush fires had been earlier this year. We stayed with a friend in a small town on the coast and we felt very safe and isolated from the effects of the virus and were fully able to enjoy our time there. We visited the areas where the fires had been and were able to experience first hand the total devastation: charred trees and melted signposts stretched to the horizon with no wildlife to be seen. However, nature is now regenerating the area with some clear green shoots of recovery already appearing.

Devastation of the forests – miles and miles into the distance.
We spent a lot of the week searching for kangaroos which apparently are all over this area usually but there were none to be found. We spent the last day at Wilson’s Prom, a National Park, glamping for one night! We were due to leave at 10 a.m. the following morning but news quickly spread that the whole park was shutting down at 2 p.m. due to Coronavirus issues: again, we were lucky. So lucky, in fact, that we got to see kangaroos in their natural habitat, along with emus, and at night time the wombats came out. We were also fortunate to see koala bears sleeping up gum trees on Raymond Island.

We returned to Melbourne, a very different Melbourne to the one we had left a week ago. A progressive lock down was being introduced. All pubs and restaurants had closed, although some were offering a take-away service. Shops started to close with eventually only food shops and pharmacies staying open. Attractions, National Parks and even beaches were closed. Social distancing was announced. ‘Stay at home’ was the message. Carol’s apartment building has two swimming pools with steam and sauna rooms, fitness rooms and other facilities for tenants to use so we thought we would still be able to use these. But no, everything was closed. (Carol lived on the 39th floor of the apartment block (60 floors in total) with excellent views of the Yarra River and the now empty streets of Melbourne below).
All our planned trips were now gradually becoming unattainable. Our flight to Sydney was cancelled and we had to cancel our hotel booking. Our trip to Philip Island to see the Fairy Penguins, the nature reserve where we were to get to hold a Koala, the visit to the chocolate factory and the winery – all cancelled! Our friend had organised a visit to the Aboriginal Centre where an Elder was going to give us a talk – cancelled! Our Easter trip to Barwon Heads was also cancelled. We also received notification that our return flights home had been cancelled. The various transit routes through Singapore, Kuala Lumpur and Dubai etc were closed and the options for getting back were disappearing quickly.

To begin with we felt safe but as the days progressed, we became increasingly limited as to where we could go and what we could do. The advice came through from the Foreign and Commonwealth Office that UK visitors should return home immediately on the next available commercial flight and we decided enough was enough and we would have to leave.

We tried to contact our travel agent in Southampton but because of the time difference this was not an easy task. The Monday morning was his Sunday evening and he didn't work on Mondays, so it was a few days before he responded. Tina joined a Facebook group, ‘Get us home from Australia’, and there were many horror stories of people booking and paying for flights only for them to be cancelled, the next day in some cases, with no cash refund, just a voucher for future travel. Some people had booked two or three flights this way in desperation costing thousands of pounds. We discovered a local branch of our travel agent in Melbourne but they were unable to access our booking details and advised us to go to the British Consulate. So we walked to the British Consulate only to find that it was closed, due to the current situation! There was a cardboard box on the front desk covered with a Union Jack flag with some A4 sheets of paper on top. We took one of these and the advice they gave: consult your travel agent!

We signed up online to receive information from the British Consulate in Melbourne and also the British High Commission in Canberra. The advice was to get the next available commercial flight home! Eventually it became clear that the only route home was Melbourne to Heathrow via Doha with Quatar Airlines who were still making two flights a day from Melbourne – at a cost!

Luckily, we heard back from our travel agent and he booked us one of these flights, although I am not sure we got a very good deal out of it! Anyway, we eventually left Melbourne on Monday, 6th April – we were originally due back on 15th. It was a long uncomfortable flight with about 48 hours with little or no sleep as our flight left at 9.30 p.m. that day. Melbourne airport was deserted, except for the people returning home. There was social distancing in the airport: two out of three seats were taped off. But, of course, once on the very crowded full plane there was no
social distancing possible. The first leg of the return journey was to Doha and took about 15 hours. We landed at Doha and had a 3.5 hour wait for our next flight - and 7.5 hours later we arrived at Heathrow. We were given no advice on isolating and there was no temperature checking equipment operating. The airport was empty and all staff were wearing masks and gloves,

Fortunately, our original taxi driver was able to collect us and we arrived home exhausted but somewhat relieved.

Now begins the battle with the travel insurance company along with thousands of others!

All in all, this was a unique experience and one that will be remembered. One of the lasting memories will be walking into deserted international airports - something we will never experience again, I am sure. It was a holiday of a lifetime of sorts, but for quite exceptional reasons. It just means we have to go back again to have the holiday we originally promised ourselves – whenever that may be!

_Tina and Paul Stuart_
Nursling and Rownhams Then and Now

Julie Facey saw some old photographs on the Village Facebook page and made it her mission to track down the locations and take some ‘Now’ photographs. Can you recognise all the places on these two pages? See how many you can find on your daily walk. We will publish some more of her collection next week.

Thank you to Southampton Heritage for giving permission to use the old photographs.
Photo credit: Julie Facey
The Cruise of a Lifetime

Little did we know on the 3rd January that, by the time we returned on 12 April from our Round the World Cruise on the P&O Arcadia, the world would be a completely different and more dangerous place. We departed with a firework display and returned to a ghost port complete with fog and an eerie silence.

It was not quite what we had planned, we left on plan A, moved to plan B, through plan C and ended up on plan D by the time we returned. The first part of our cruise was great and, although we missed out American Samoa and Tonga due to a measles epidemic (maybe a warning of what was to come), we were able to visit Tahiti which was spectacular and interesting.

By the time we arrived in Sydney on 19 February, the first serious reports of Coronavirus were coming through. It was obvious something big was happening and we would be caught up in it, P&O refused entry to about 140 people as their planes had stopped over in Hong Kong, a few others who had been in Australia were told to stay away from the Arcadia and come back a week later, a sort of P&O imposed quarantine holiday.

We then had a radically altered cruise. All of the Asian leg was cancelled - Philippines, China and Malaysia - to be replaced with a cruise round Australia and down to Tasmania. This was great for us as we had never visited either Australia or Tasmania. Some of the Australians who joined in Sydney were a bit cheesed off as they knew most of Australia. Some decided to visit family and friends in other parts of Australia; we know one who went home to do the washing and cut the grass. Overall, however, they were very understanding of the whole thing.

We kept hearing various rumours about what was happening to the cruise, mainly emanating from the laundrettes and various Facebook and WhatsApp groups: social media is a wonderful new source of gossip and rumours! We kept our head down and thought what will be will be. On board there was no change to the entertainment, facilities or food (always plentiful and excellent).

We arrived in Fremantle on 10 March and by then we were all getting a bit worried. It felt like Coronavirus was hunting us down. The news reports on SKY and BBC World News were getting increasingly alarming and depressing. Other cruise ships were obviously having massive difficulties and some were infected. At this time, we were still expecting to go to Sri Lanka, Dubai and the Mediterranean ports.

On the 11th March there was a new influx of passengers although some were sent home on arrival at the Airport by P&O, including at least one entertainer. One entertainer who got on board had a cough the next day which resulted in all the entertainers being quarantined (locked) in their cabins for a fortnight.
At this point the cruise, although much altered, still felt like a normal cruise. This only changed after we left Fremantle on the 11th March. We were headed to Sri Lanka and then through the Persian Gulf, Suez Canal and the Mediterranean. On the 13th March, overnight, the course changed to go via South Africa. So, on 14th March Captain Vojovda advised us of the revised itinerary going via Durban and Cape Town the plan being to stop in Durban for provisions and fuel with trips to the neighbouring areas and then an overnight stop in Cape Town. Finally, on 16th March, the cruise was cancelled as the South African authorities were closing their borders but allowed us to refuel and take on provisions, only after sitting offshore for about 3 days. Land was so near yet so far!

So here we were stuck in the middle of the ocean and looking at a long voyage home. Well, it could have been a lot worse: everything was still normal on board, until the 21st March when “Social Distancing” was introduced on the Arcadia. This meant that there were hand sanitisers everywhere: theatre, cinema, shops, bars, every meeting place, previously they were only at the restaurants. Queuing was a bit awkward as there is so little room on a ship, and so was passing people in the narrow corridors. Although it was easy on the decks. Only 4 people were allowed at a time in the lifts and in the restaurants tables of six and eight were made into tables of four. All quizzes were cancelled apart from a new one in the theatre. In the theatre seating was limited to pairs of seats (for spouses and or partners) and then a vacant seat then another pair. This worked out quite well as it became easy to reserve a place for your spouse or partner. The shops had limited opening hours and numbers of people in the shop were restricted.

Whenever there was a possibility of infection, however remote, the event was either cancelled or modified. So, no ballroom dancing, although line dancing continued. Knit and Natter was cancelled, formal sports (deck quoits, football, cricket etc.) were cancelled although passengers continued to organise them themselves. The passenger ukulele band played every morning which cheered everyone up!

Generally, passengers accepted the restrictions with good grace. Obviously, there were a few exceptions and these people were told what to do in no uncertain terms!

On the 25th March the entertainers were released from their cabins and let loose on the passengers. The singers sang, the musicians played, Wayne Sleep (he really is tiny and even asked Janet to pat him on his head) talked to anybody and everybody and gave the odd impromptu dancing lesson, the comedians David Copperfield and Geoff Stevenson both worked on new shows which were delivered towards the end of the cruise.

The 25th March was a very significant day as this was the day we knew we were safe from Coronavirus. This meant we were now in the safest place
on the planet and, provided we could avoid contact in South Africa and later in Tenerife, we were all safe and well until we disembarked in Southampton.

There were major problems for the Australians and other foreign nationals on the ship as they were all having problems with their flights home even though P&O were doing their absolute best to help everyone. As far as I know they were all repatriated on 14th April and put into quarantine as soon as they got into Australia.

In the background, UK Border Force were insisting on face to face interviews with all passengers on disembarkation. As passengers we were worried about being infected as we left the Arcadia and asked what protection we would get from UK Border Force staff. In the end P&O persuaded them not to interview the passengers. In fact, they and Customs were noticeable by their absence when we docked.

We were very impressed by the precautions taken in Southampton to protect us from the possibility of infection with the porters and all other staff wearing masks and as far as possible keeping their distance. We did the same.

In our experience of a less than ideal trip of a lifetime, we have to agree that the safety and wellbeing of the passengers were, as our cruise company claim, their top priority. We were kept informed all the time, even though there were always rumours running round the ship. The company helped everyone, even some who had made their own flight arrangements and have given everyone a 33 night future cruise credit to compensate for the cancellation at Durban in addition to a generous sum of on board spending money.

The entertainments staff maintained their good humour, as did the entertainers and guest speakers. The crew were absolutely fantastic in providing service and maintaining their humour. Above all, Captain Luko Vojvoda was always around the ship talking to crew and passengers. If ever there was the right man for the job it was him!

We were very lucky Coronavirus snapped at our heels all the way round Australia but never caught up. Let’s face it, how many people have been lucky enough to be isolated from the World in a totally safe and luxurious environment?

Yes, it was the cruise of a lifetime even though not quite as planned!

We have met some lovely people and made some great friends and are planning to meet some of them next year.
We did enjoy ourselves in spite of the restrictions.
Would we do it again? Well, currently we have 3 cruises booked, so a resounding **YES!**
Stay safe, Stay Well

*Brian & Janet Richards*

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*Photos: Fireworks 3rd Jan  Southampton April 12th, *

*Janet and Brian in Sindhu*
Activity of the Week: The 2.6 Challenge

The 2.6 challenge is happening all over the UK and started on Sunday 26th on what would have been the 40th London Marathon. The aim is to help charities which are struggling to raise funds with so many of their money raising events cancelled because of the coronavirus epidemic. The idea is for participants choose a challenge related to the numbers 2.6 or 26 – the number of miles in a marathon. The only rule is that you must follow social distancing.

Over the weekend, Aaron and Sam participated in the 2.6 challenge. Aaron decided to shoot 26 basketball hoops in aid of Juvenile Diabetes Research and Sam made 26 jellies in rainbow colours to ‘sell’ virtually to raise money for the British Dyslexia Association. They both had fun participating and are eating their way through the jellies. Perhaps you could join in. You could do 26 star jumps, dance or read for 26 mins, build a 2.6m tower of Lego. Let your imagination decide!

Photo credit: Clare Lewis
Quiz Of The Month - May

1. On 3rd May 1937, Margaret Mitchell won the Pulitzer Prize for which novel?
2. Born in Kiev on 3rd May 1898, this person went on to become Prime Minister of Israel.
3. On 5th May 1494, Christopher Columbus discovered which Caribbean island?
4. The Channel Tunnel was opened on 6th May in which year?
5. In Oxford on 6th May 1954, who was the first person to run a mile in under 4 minutes?
6. On 18th May 1980, Mount St Helens erupted for the first time since 1857. Where is this volcano?
7. Which aviator completed the first solo non-stop flight across the Atlantic on 21st May 1927?
8. The first Star Wars film had its premiere in America on 25th May in which year?
9. Born on 26th May 1948, Stevie Nicks found fame with which British/American group?
10. Who were the first 2 people to reach the summit of Mount Everest on 29th May 1953?

Answers will be posted next week

Quiz credit: Sherry Ryan
Recipe of the Week

A nice easy one this week that the children can do. The recipe uses the American cup measurement, but you can weigh the ingredients: 1 cup = 128 grams.

Malt Loaf

*Ingredients*

1 cup mixed fruit
1 cup Demerara sugar
1 cup All Bran cereal
1 cup milk

*Method*

Mix ingredients together and leave to soak for a minimum of 30 mins. Meanwhile grease a small loaf tin and heat oven to 180c (Gas Mark 4) Add 1 cup of self raising flour to your mixture, mix well and pour into the greased tin.

Bake for approximately one hour.

Allow to cool, then serve sliced spread with butter. Enjoy!

Pruberry

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Jigsaw Puzzle Exchange

In these days of lock down, it seems that people are rediscovering the quiet pleasure to be found in completing a jigsaw puzzle. An exchange has been set up at the bottom of the driveway of 33 Horns Drove – on porch if wet. Simply swap a puzzle you no longer wish to keep with one in the box. There are now a mixture of puzzles for adults and older children. Enjoy!
Tommy Cooper Hour

People with guns who say, ‘Give me your money.’ You’ve got to hand it to them.

This bloke said to me, ‘I once got my dog to retrieve a stick from a hundred miles away.’ I thought that was a bit far-fetched.

This reporter once asked me, ‘How do you explain the absence of Haley’s flaming meteorite?’ I said, ‘No comet.’

I went to the Royal Albert Hall and it was full of pushchairs. It was last night of the Prams.

I never thought I was the type to get up early in the morning to exercise. I was right.

I hate street performers. Then, again, I’m a mime artist, so I can’t really talk.

Various