

HORNINGSHAM

NEWS

ISSUE 231
April 2020





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EDITORIAL

In this unprecedented time of crisis, there is no print issue of Horningsham News. This is because of the Government’s restrictions on leaving one’s home except for certain essential purposes – and those don’t include going door-to-door delivering our village magazine.

So, like the Prime Minister, we will appear virtually. Most of our contributors had already filed their contributions before we had to suspend publication and those articles will appear on our Facebook page. We may also be found as a pdf file on the Parish Council website at: www.horningsham.org where, if time is hanging heavily and you’ve run out of reading material, you can read every issue of Horningsham News from February 2016 on!

If you haven’t yet discovered our Facebook page, now is the time. We have 772 followers and one of our recent stories had 4,578 hits which is amazing for a village with a population of only 327.

The most momentous cancellation among many is of the Horningsham Fayre. This is the greatest annual event in the village and the Committee have decided they have no choice but to cancel it. 2020 will be remembered as the year we had no Fayre.

Nearly everything is closed: Longleat, Center Parcs, even Heaven’s Gate and Shearwater. In spite of this, our cover picture from *Spotted in Warminster Town* Facebook page shows one car last Thursday that evaded the barriers and had the car park to itself.

Keith Widdow’s funeral was necessarily limited in the number who were allowed to attend but the family are planning a Memorial Service once the restrictions are lifted. Meanwhile, in tribute to Keith we reprint Gill Courtney’s Horningsham People article.

Tim Hill

Email: horningshamnews@hotmail.co.uk

Editorial Team

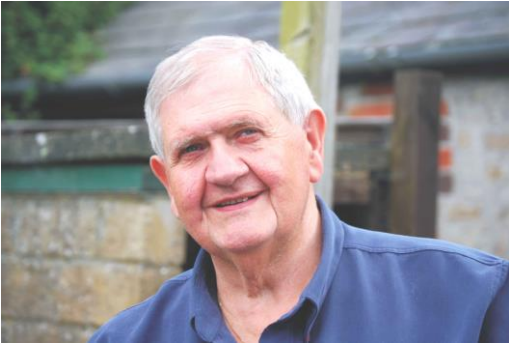
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	James Osborne (<i>Treasurer</i>)	844711	



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We now have 772 “Page Follows” – more than four times the number of printed copies!

HORNINGSHAM PEOPLE: KEITH WIDDOWS



Keith was born in a little village near Chipping Norton in Oxfordshire. His father had been in the army during the war and afterwards trained as a plasterer and became a Master of his trade. His mother was brought up in a Dr Barnardo's home and went on to work in a children's home before she joined the Land Army. Between the ages of 14 and 16 and prior to going into full time employment, Keith worked in the kitchen of a Jesuit training college. "I've

always been interested in catering. My father worked 6 days a week and my mother worked full time and from the age of 9 or 10 years old I had to get the tea on!"

Keith left home at 16. "Initially I was going to join the army with a friend of mine, but at the last minute decided to go for an interview at the Eastgate Hotel in Oxford. I had turned up at the Youth Careers Office, who had told me that they were doing interviews that day for commis chefs. I went to the hotel and the manager told me that they were starting interviews at 2.00 when the chef had finished luncheon. I told them that was no good for me - if I can't get a job today I'm joining the Army Catering Corps." The hotel chef agreed to see Keith that morning. "After the interview they said they'd be in contact and I told them that was hopeless and that I needed to know right away. They told me that there were another 29 people to interview! I told them of my intent to join the army that day and I was told 'start next week!'" His friend joined up and Keith stayed at the hotel.

"My parents had separated by then and it was a live-in job. It was a strange entrance into the world, living in Oxford with my broad country accent – they thought I was a foreigner! It was a hard life - a 5½ day week with 6.00 a.m. start and I had college on another day so I had half a day off a week! I got £4.50 a week. On the first day at the hotel I was told to go to the laundry room and get my whites and I went to the kitchen thinking I was going to be a chef, but for the first six weeks all I did was wash up, clean, scrub pans (they used to use copper pans) prepare vegetables by hand, clean fridges, clean the kitchen and very little catering at all. If you did something wrong you were told once but the second time you got a thump! After about 6 weeks the chef called me over and said 'What's your name?'" I answered 'Keith Widdows, chef'. He said "I've treated you like a so and so these past weeks." I said 'I'm not complaining chef'. He replied 'that is why I'm going to teach you how to be a professional chef - it shows you're dedicated. Have you ever eaten steak?' I told him I hadn't, I'd never seen a steak let alone eaten one! He cooked me a steak and I had steak and chips. He picked up the strawberry melba sauce and he squirted it all over my meal and said 'Never take me for granted!' I still ate it!"

From then on Keith was taught the proper way to carry out his trade. After a while the main chef went off with illness. From being a young commis chef at the bottom of the rank, at the age of 18 Keith became the chef for the hotel. He went to Oxford Polytechnic to do his City and Guilds "I was thrown in at the deep end!" he told me. When the original chef returned he told Keith that he was now too experienced to go back to being a commis

chef, and found him a much better job within the company (part of the Courage group). “I ended up in Bristol working as head chef in an 80 bedrooomed hotel. I was there for about 18 months and then left. I was then offered a position at the Royal Oak at Liphook in Hampshire. I was nearly 21 then. I was then accepted to a position as Catering Manager at the Cotswold Wildlife Park at Burford in Oxfordshire. The company I was with, amongst other ventures, took on Longleat - at our peak we had around 60 places in the south and south-west and we were the fourth biggest outside caterer in the country. There was a big job for a German car company experiencing serious operational problems. I was asked to “sort it out” at the Berkeley Suite at Longleat House! That’s how I ended up here. I was still living at the wildlife park but travelling down.” The Managing Director asked Keith to continue at Longleat on a long-term basis and at that point he was also getting involved with the club aspect. “So I moved into Church Street. Oscars, the nightclub, had originally started many years before and was run in the Berkeley Suite by Derek James and Fred Latcham. The company got involved and took over on a management basis. The premises had originally been a cafeteria but we dug a hole in the floor and changed it! Oscars was very, very popular as there weren’t many night clubs around.”

Keith used to run The Bell public house at Standerwick as well. “I met Karen when she came to Oscars for an interview - she thought that I was the most rude, arrogant individual that she’d ever met - that was 30 years ago!” Karen had already got two young children, Stephen and Stephanie. “She came to live with me in Church Street” (next door to Mary Ford). I led a typical bachelor life with a fridge full of sparkling wine and in the cupboard a tin of cat food and a jar of coffee powder! The day Karen moved in with the children. the cat had five kittens! So my life has never been the same since.” The family moved to Hitcombe Bottom 29 years ago, just before Karl was born.

“Over the years we used to do all the Longleat House catering - I was with Longleat for the best part of 22 years, although not directly employed by them. We did a lot in the house – Lenka’s 21st birthday, Ceawlin’s 21st birthday. In hindsight now the biggest mistake I made was working too hard and not spending enough time at home. Running the daytime catering at Longleat and then the night club too it was very time consuming.” Keith tells me that it was ‘an eye opener’ working at Longleat! “Originally Robert Charles was the Estate Manager and Land Agent and he was very kind to me when I first moved here, and then Tim Moore took over. Tim had a style of management which was second to none and I had a lot of admiration for him. The way he dealt with things was always clean cut - there was no in between with him – you knew where you stood!”

Apart from Stephen and Stephanie, Keith and Karen have six sons, Karl, Leon, Ryan, Callum, Hayden and Connor. Keith eventually got a concession on Weston Super Mare sea front where he now runs a café with indoor and outdoor seating and an ice-cream kiosk attached together with another local shop. He also owns the Star Fish Bar in Warminster. “I’ve always had the view that the guy who washes the pots and pans is as important as the guy who earns the highest salary.”

“Horningsham has been a lovely place to live and there have been some marvellous characters here over the years. I particularly remember Joe and Beryl who used to run the Bath Arms with Paul - it had an atmosphere that was second to none. Having been in the village for over 30 years at last I’m accepted as a resident!”

Originally published in 2014 Gill Courtney

Dear Friends,

This is not the kind of letter I was anticipating writing as Easter approaches.

Yesterday I was supposed to be flying to New York to meet my beautiful new baby grandson, needless to say I didn't make it and I will have to content myself with WhatsApp photos, videos and chats. By the time you read this my eldest daughter in Spain will have had her baby too; obviously Spain is a no no as well so I will be spending a good deal of time on my phone! However as the severity of this pandemic escalates part of me is grateful that the decision whether or not to travel has been taken out of my hands as this means that I will be here with my husband, our church family and the wider community to weather the storm together.



It's funny how extreme situations bring out the best and the worst of people's behaviour. Hoarding food and loo rolls (What is it about the loo roll thing!) being the worst, proactively reaching out to others to plan ways in which we can support the most vulnerable people in our communities being the best. There are many uplifting and life affirming new stories emerging about ways in which people are coming together with really imaginative ideas about how we might do this. I read yesterday about a young woman who had designed a small postcard to put through people's doors so that they could indicate what kind of help if any, they needed. It was the comment at the end that was so good; she said 'let's make kindness go viral'. What an amazing thought! As the virus deepens its grip on our daily lives let's see how much kindness we can generate. Let's respond to panic and fear with love, care and compassion.

I know there are already amazing things going on in our villages to try support those who are particularly vulnerable and thus self-isolating. I want to reassure you that even though public worship is now suspended for the time being the church hasn't shut up shop! Every Sunday two clergy will have a short communion service in each church that is listed to have one, or Morning Prayer, in which case we can do that on your own. We are hoping to be able to have this filmed and uploaded to YouTube very soon so that those who want to can access it. I am of course aware that not everybody can do this so I will also be emailing the Sunday readings, a copy of my talk and prayer resources to all our church family. If we do not have your contact details and you would like to be included in that email list do be in touch. All our churches will be open during the day so that people can come in and sit quietly or pray and I am working on the possibility of providing prayer resources in a way that is safe for everyone. I am always on the end of a phone as are our retired clergy.

I started this letter with a reference to Easter and the story of the resurrection from the darkness of death to the glory of new life. Whether you believe in the resurrection or not, the story communicates the possibility of hope of new life emerging from the darkness of confusion and fear. In these extraordinary times hope is emerging in the form of neighbours helping one another out and whole communities working together to support

one another. When all this is over I hope our individualistic and consumerist society will remember how good it is to reach out to others in love and care.

When I consider my poor daughters and their new-born babies cooped up in New York and Spain I feel very lucky to be able to walk out of my front door into the countryside and the glorious new life of spring. Do take care of yourselves, know that you are loved by a faithful God who will never leave us whatever happens.

With love and prayers,

Pauline

Dear Friends,

I never thought I would see the day that I told people not to come to church! As you all know public worship is suspended for the foreseeable future. But prayer in our churches will go on. I intend to follow the rota as set which means Gay, Marian, Robert our LLM and myself will follow the usual rota and be in the churches for Sunday prayers.

Horningsham will have prayers or Eucharist every 5th Sunday in those months that happen to have five Sundays. Whether or not the Eucharist happens depends on whether or not two people are available to celebrate it, we are not allowed to do this on our own.

I am not telling you all this because I want you to come to church: PLEASE DO NOT COME but it would be wonderful if you joined in by offering your prayers at the same time as prayer is going on in church. The Church of England website has all the services on its website plus some wonderful prayers with regard to the situation we are in. If you cannot access the internet please let me know.

Obviously the cessation of services in church will have a huge financial impact, it would be wonderful if we could put aside the money we were to put in the collection plate. Or maybe set up a direct debit every month if you haven't already done so. Please contact me if this is what you would like to do and I will direct you to the relevant treasurer.

This little missive focuses necessarily on the practical aspects of making sure that even though we cannot meet together to worship at the moment we can still be a community of faith, praying together, loving our neighbours, and serving our communities. Future communications will be shorter and focused much more on keeping our prayer and spiritual lives alight in these difficult times. So to end here is a prayer from the C of E website.

Keep us, good Lord,
under the shadow of your mercy.
Sustain and support the anxious,
be with those who care for the sick,
and lift up all who are brought low;
that we may find comfort
knowing that nothing can separate us from your love
in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Amen.

With love

Pauline Reid revpauline@btinternet.com

CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH



In view of the current coronavirus restrictions, there will be no services at the Chapel until further notice.

We wish everyone in the village well for the future

Carol Cox 07584 825421 honingshamchapel@aol.co.uk



WELCOME CLUB

The Welcome Club has been suspended until further notice because of COVID-19

Here is the list of planned trips but they can only run if the Government's advice on COVID-19 changes to permit them.

26 th May	Teignmouth	(Coffee at Ottery Garden Centre)
23 rd June	Cardiff	(Coffee at Chepstow Garden Centre)
28 th July	Weymouth	(Coffee at Dorchester)
25 th August	Sidmouth	(Coffee at Crewkerne)
29 th Sept	Swanage & Corfe Castle	(Coffee at Blandford)
20 th Oct	Poole	(Coffee at Lyndhurst)

Cost is £12 for members, £15 for non-members.

Everyone is welcome. Please book your seat with Pearl on 844779

Pick up points and times for all trips 8.45 at Bath Arms Horningsham, 9.00 at Maiden Bradley Hall.

If any of these planned trips run, the information will be on the Facebook page of your local magazine. You can also ring Pearl on 844779 or Lesley on 211355 for any update.



HORNINGSHAM VILLAGE FAYRE 2020: CANCELLED

It is with much regret that the Fayre Committee have taken the decision to cancel the Fayre this year.

We aim to be back next year and hope that you will all come and enjoy a fun-filled day as usual.

Steve Crossman
Village Fayre Chairman

LUNCHEON CLUB

The Luncheon Club has been suspended until further notice because of COVID-19

We have lost one of our oldest and long standing members with the death of John Gooding. John was brought up in Horningsham from the age of 8 living at Broadslade Cottage with his Mum and Dad who worked in the walled garden. He travelled with his partner Pat, who sadly died a few months ago from Trowbridge every week to the Luncheon Club where he had many friends. Every year John made our Christmas table decorations for our celebratory meal in December which were then sold to swell our funds. Pat and John also supported our Welcome Club and joined our monthly outings. The members send their condolences to all of John's family.

Lesley Trollope

PARSONAGE FARM RAINFALL

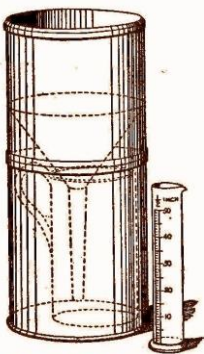


FIG. 151.—Standard rain-gauge.

February started dry with a few frosts, and on the 10th we had heavy rain and winds, this carried on for a few days with the occasional hail storms giving us over 2.5 inches. At the end of the second week we had another storm, very windy and wet so another 2.05 inches fell on our already wet land. We seemed to be getting a pattern of a few dull damp days then a burst of heavy rain. This carried on like this with the cold winds picking up. A hailstorm on the 26th and a flurry of snow on the 27th then fine in the afternoon. A lovely evening on the 29th with all the stars shining.

We ended up with a huge amount of water for this month: 7.43 inches. That's more than double the 3.09 last year and very nearly 5 times the 1.51 we got in February 2018. The water table must be high as we had water rising up in the fields instead of going down!

John Whatley



Horningsham Primary School

Email: FriendsofHPS@horningsham.wilts.sch.uk
 Email: admin@horningsham.wilts.sch.uk
 Website: www.horningsham.schnet.org

01985 844342



Together we learn

Closed in body, but not in spirit!

We hope everyone is well and safe during this challenging and unique time. We are currently closed, but all working from home. Our children are set up with lots of work and fun activities using our secure online learning platform. The staff and governors have been absolutely incredible, working well beyond their remit setting up remote learning, supporting families and continuing planning and school development behind the scenes –



whilst on standby if called in to open the school here or support in another school. What is crystal clear to us is that we truly are a community school – our family are split up geographically (like lots of other families), but we are still in touch, still supporting and still caring for one another. The staff are all very grateful to our parents for their kind words and support – it's times like these that makes us realise how lucky we are to be at such a wonderful school!

What can we do?

Please get in touch with us if there's anything we can do to support our Horningsham community. The school email and phone messages are being routinely manned and we will do all we can to help any of the villagers if possible. Some of us have already registered to be volunteers for the NHS and could be on hand to make calls to anyone on their own. Just let us know! admin@horningsham.wilts.sch.uk 01985 844342

What we've been up to last month:

As part of a national project to raise children's aspirations (called Primary Futures), we had a really fun afternoon with a group of volunteers doing a 'What's my Line?' game. Our four teams had considered a set of questions for each of our guests to try and work out what they do for a living. After round 1 they came back dressed in uniforms and with props, which made it a little easier to guess some of them! The children then asked them about their careers and how the work they did at school helped prepare them for the future. It was really inspiring.



World Book Day and Reading Rocks Week



From Reading Cafes to potato book characters – it was a really memorable week and a great opportunity to inspire a passion for books and reading. The children loved using ‘The Day the Crayons Quit’ as a stimulus for some fantastic writing and enjoyed having the story introduced to them in a group read by all the staff and governors!

Stone Age Fun!



After an exciting day exploring Stonehenge, Woodpeckers Class had a fascinating afternoon with three visitors from the Stone Age as part of their topic ‘The Rolling Stones’! They learned all about the tools they would use and everyday life and saw first-hand flint knapping, which was very exciting! It was a brilliant workshop and the Stone Age men really engaged the children; igniting not only flint but a passion for history! A huge thank you to Cara Wellstead and Cheddar for organising a memorable afternoon!

Creative Play



The Playtime Crew has organised a daily timetable of fun activities for the children that challenge their creativity. They have used FOHPS funds raised to provide a range of reading, music, art, writing, drama and science resources with each activity being led by one of the Play Crew. Everyone is really enthusiastic and it makes for great playtimes – we seemed to have lots of witches, animals and explorers in the Magic Wood!

Mill Farm Chronicles Feb-March 2020

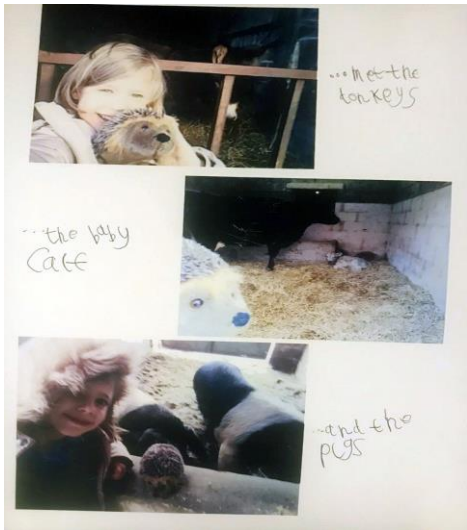
Who knew how much life was going to change for us all when I wrote last month's Chronicles? Like you all, I can't believe what I am hearing on the news about this awful pandemic or that we are all either socially isolating, self-isolating or in total lock down. Down on the farm we seem to be self-isolating but this is mainly due to the nature of the job and our location rather than us being ill (touch wood!)

Life goes on quietly, the animals are still being looked after, the cows have started to calve and the rain is still making the ground too soggy to let the donkeys out. Steve has been making good use of the time he's saved by not drinking coffee and gossiping with friends and fellow farmers by maintaining all the farm machinery. He's overhauled and serviced the tractor, the plough, the sprayer and has made the most amazing mobile pig shelter for Thelma and Louise. Our girls are being re located to a tiny over grown field at Butchery Farm which was once an orchard. Thelma and Louise are the perfect girls to clear it up and will have a lovely time doing it. Have a look over the hedge and check out how the clear up progresses over the summer.

My bed and breakfast business has ground to a complete halt, no bookings just cancellations as you would expect, so nothing more to say about that.

Socially everything has been cancelled and rightly so. Steve, Jack and I are having to talk to each other most evenings now or go to bed early, and in the light of the food shortages I am even having to ration the chocolate and biscuits!

A couple of rays of light in all the gloom are our grandchildren Ivy and Theo. Earlier this month Ivy was allowed to bring home her class hedgehog, Spike. Spike is a very well-travelled and experienced hedgehog but he hadn't been to a farm so he came for a visit. Ivy and Spike met all the animals and had a good look round and it was all recorded for posterity by Amy and Ivy in Spike's activity book.



Theo has had his 2nd birthday. He managed to have a very small soft-play party at the weekend with a couple of friends and we went to tea with him on his actual birthday. We gave him the most amazing wooden farm yard which was made by the very talented Ken Windess. Steve and I enjoyed a couple of days painting it and Theo enjoys playing with it. We still have Jack's old farm yard that was made by one of the past Longleat carpenters Don Maskell. Visiting children still love playing with our farmyard so we hope that Theo's will become a family heirloom for generations to enjoy.

We also gave Theo and Ivy John Deere farm overalls so when they "help" on the farm they can match Grandad and Uncle Jack.

So, although life seems a bit grim at the moment let me share some reasons why I'm being cheerful:

1. We might not have any toilet paper but we've got a field full of dock leaves
2. Food shortages are a very good way to lose the extra weight that we (me) are all carrying.
3. I'm learning how to be thrifty. My Mum, bless her, who is in lock down at her home, has been sharing her memories of war-time Britain, so I now know how to make a nourishing meal for 15 out of nothing more than dried egg, a bit of scragg end and mouldy plum jam.
4. Best of all, no guests means no sausages to cook or tons of bed clothes to keep washing and ironing. Result!

Hang in there everyone, this won't last forever, nothing ever does, we will get through it. Stay safe, stay well, wash your hands!

Margaret Crossman



Lion Cubs

This term has very sadly come to an abrupt end but we still managed to cram in plenty of fun with our Lion Cubs before we had to close.

The children loved making their own pancakes and had lots of laughs tossing them with mini frying pans! Those that didn't end up on the floor were covered in honey and gobbled up in no time.





We learnt to make our own colourful playdough with flour/water/salt & food colouring. Using an assortment of plastic animals, pine cones & shells they loved exploring the foot prints, shapes and patterns they made in the dough. For our last session, the children were invited to dress up to celebrate World Book Day . . . we had lots of princesses!

It is desperately sad that our children will not be able to get together again for the time being but hopefully it won't be too long before they return some hustle and bustle to the Village Hall and their ear-piercing playful screams will be a noise that we actually welcome . . . for a time! Meanwhile we are trying our best to keep them safely entertained at home, without resorting to the wine bottle too early in the day! Day 1 of homeschool in our household has begun with much hilarity joining in with Joe Wicks' online PE workout for kids. Now to enjoy the sunshine and make the most of this slower pace of life that has been forced upon us and treasure the extra time it means we get to spend with our little ones.

Charlotte Hilleary

What's Happening at the Bath Arms?



1916 Postcard

Dear Horningsham

We were thrilled when we were invited to discuss becoming the next custodian of the wonderful Bath Arms in this beautiful village of Horningsham on the edge of Longleat. Charlie, Matt and I have visited this pub for more years than we care to remember and through various incarnations it has always felt a very special place to be.

We are conscious that there are many, some rather fanciful, rumours flying around and I wanted to write something to reassure everyone. This is a strange time for us all and getting a hub of the community going again is all the more important, despite everything – we are pressing on.

This has been a pub for nearly 300 years (originally the New Inn) and that's how it will most definitely stay. It will always be a 'pub with rooms', an inn rather than a hotel. Our passion is creating great pubs that really do put traditional, British hospitality at the heart of everything. This is something we, and all of our staff, work incredibly hard to deliver each and every day.

We are very much in this for the long term (this is a 30 year lease) and so this is not just about doing the pub up with a 'lick of paint' and some nice antique furniture (which we are busying away with at the moment), but is about keeping going, sustainably, over many years in partnership with the local community. It is a cliché but true that great pubs are

hubs of their communities and that's what we very much want to be, not just as your village local but also as an employer and buyer of local produce.

Floyd Mason will be the Publican and General Manager. In the last year and half, Floyd has been running the Lord Poulett in South Somerset and has worked for us for nearly 8 years in all. The head chef will be Jack Chapman, who has worked for us for 6 years at The Beckford Arms near Tisbury. In addition many of the old staff will be returning (Brianna, Ags & Michelle have been working at the Beckford Arms and are looking forward to returning!

The food will be fundamentally 'pub food' but done well, and at affordable prices with local beers and a slightly revised wine list.

It is an economic necessity for country pubs to have guest bedrooms, but we are reducing the 18 bedrooms to 15, so that they are better, have less parking impact and also to free up more pub space for our locals. Rooms will be simple yet stylish and offer great value.

We are not a chain, though we do have other pubs, but each pub is inherently specific to its immediate surrounds – this is the way country pubs have been for hundreds of years. We also have two wine shops which might offer a useful amenity for the village particularly during the current corona nightmare.

When will we open? Well, it was going to be April 27th but this is now likely to be the end of May/ early June because of the current situation. We hope you like the small changes we are making to your pub and that we will have the village's continued support and we hope that together we will make the pub better than ever.

Our new website is batharmsinn.com and we will be updating our Facebook page @thebatharms page as the refurbishment progresses and how we can help the community with the current coronavirus situation. In the meantime, we hope everyone stays well.

Dan Brod (co-owner)

Notes From A Horningsham Garden

Despite life as we know it being temporarily suspended, Spring is here and everything has started growing.

Two cruel frosts damaged the beautiful pink and white *Soulangiana* magnolias. Their fleshy petals couldn't survive being frozen then thawed. That's the risk of being in a frost pocket of the valley bottom as we are. There are a few new buds developing though to push out the brown tatters of the glorious first flowering.



Luckily, the flowering cherry is unaffected and its double white flowers glisten in the sun. The camellias are flowering as well, and although there is a bit of scorching on some petals, they are protected by growing under the tree canopy, so their reds and pinks glow amongst their lovely dark evergreen leaves. It's so lucky here that they are able to grow well in the slightly acid greensand.





Of course, since the bad news of the Fayre cancellation, all my windowsill-grown annuals will have nowhere to go when they grow up. As for the perennials, they are being split up and potted on in the hope of better times ahead. Maybe a drive-by sale later if restrictions are relaxed!

In the meantime, there are lots of vegetables to start sowing. I planted my First Early potatoes, Red Duke of York and Lady Christl on March 15th in a compost enriched bed with a handful of poultry pellets for each tuber as they need a rich soil, and earthed them up as protection against frosty weather. They should be sprouting in a month.

The broad beans are 20 cms high, and now it's warm enough to release them from the netting cloches and support the rows with string and stakes. One time, I lazily didn't bother and they all drooped around on the ground with the weight of the pods and when I looked inside, every bean had been eaten by mice.

The purple sprouting broccoli was a failure this year. Too many things like mice and pigeons and dry weather last summer, prevented the plants from growing well and they remained miserable little specimens. Hope springs eternal though, and I have just sown a packet of fresh seed in modules in the greenhouse, along with lettuce, rocket and beetroot. I have given up growing in seedbeds as there are so many enemies of the poor little things and the plugs usually grow away well when planted out.

Now the weather is warming up, I'm looking at the asparagus bed and hoping those tender spears will soon come up to be sautéed in butter and eaten with scrambled eggs. The first fruits of summer!

Carole Hill

Notable Trees

The top of my garden shopping list this year is going to be the Maidenhair Tree or *Ginkgo biloba*. I have nurtured this dream for many years and not had the right circumstances to grow it as it can potentially reach 30 metres and also because selfishly I believed it to be such a slow grower that I wouldn't get the benefit of it. That's all changed now a) because I think differently and b) because it is only slow to begin with. Once it is established it puts on a steady growth. Over the last few years I have satisfied myself with looking at the lovely specimen outside Frome Library.



Interestingly, *Ginkgo biloba* is neither a broadleaf or a conifer and has its own division, Ginkgophyta. Because it has no close living relatives, it is also the only tree in this

division. Bright green, fan shaped leaves emerge in Spring and later they turn brilliant yellow giving a beautiful Autumn show.

It has a resistance to pests, diseases, pollution and many soil conditions making it an excellent specimen for many purposes.

Often known as the 'living fossil tree', fossil records show that species closely related to today's Ginkgo have existed for over 200 million years across Europe, Greenland and the USA. Scientists believe that it was the glaciers covering most of the northern hemisphere which reduced its population and distribution to a small area of China. Ginkgo biloba is the national tree of China and some specimens planted in temples are claimed to be over 2,500 years old.



A few facts about Ginkgo

1. Ginkgo - when Engelbert Kaempfer discovered the tree in 1690 in a Japanese temple they pronounced the name ginkyō. He recorded the name with the spelling it has today. Biloba - from Latin bis 'two' and loba 'lobed'. Common misspellings are ginko and gingko,
2. Maidenhair Tree - named because the leaves resemble those of the Maidenhair fern - *Adiantum capillus-veneris*
3. Duck Foot Tree - Old Chinese records show that Ginkgo once had the name ya-chio-tu, translating to "leaves like a duck's foot".
4. Stink Bomb tree - The female plants produce round fleshy fruits which smell like vomit or rancid butter when they fall. For this reason, male plants are always used in planting schemes. Silver Apricot or White Fruit - the more modern Chinese common names also alluding to the fruit produced.
5. The seeds / nuts produced by the Ginkgo tree are a traditional Chinese food. They are used in congee and often served at special occasions such as weddings and Chinese New Year.
6. Ginkgo leaves are dried, powdered and sold as tablets. They are used mostly to enhance the memory and concentration and have been said to be effective in some cases for treating dementia.
7. 50lbs of dried ginkgo leaves produce 1lb of powder for medicinal purposes.
8. The Ginkgo tree located in the eastern Croatian town of Daruvar, was named this year's winner of the prestigious European Tree of the Year awards which were announced in Brussels. It was planted over 240 years ago.

Thanks to Deepdale, Woodland Trust and CroatiaWeek for info

永远

Jayne Glover

Letter from Lombardy

With comedy, they say, timing is everything; right now, you could say the same about buying a guesthouse in Italy. This was meant to be a piece fizzing about our latest adventure and encouraging you to come and see it for yourselves. In mid-January we bought a charming hillside B&B, overlooking Lake Como with spectacular views of the mountains opposite AND George & Amal Clooney's place! We immediately set about renovating its dated bathrooms which quickly turned into "just a few more things"; new kitchen, plumbing and electrics all round. Despite the dust and extra work, the plan was to open on the 6th April in time for the Easter rush.



On January 30th I flew out of Milan airport just as it was being reported that 2 tourists had taken ill in Rome with Coronavirus. By the time I flew back 3 weeks later, there was a small lockdown on 11 towns south-east of Milan, 80miles from us in Como. At the last minute, I picked up some hand sanitiser in Bristol airport, we'd be fine.

At the time of writing this on 13th March, we are entering day 5 of our regional lockdown of Lombardy and day 3, I think, of the entire country's lockdown. It's been a strange 5 days. Gyms, museums and schools were already closed so the roads had been a bit quieter and the lack of tourists in Como town centre was noticeable but it was February and despite the fantastic weather (there's been 3 days of rain since November here) tourism is usually light until the end of March. I confess, we enjoyed being able to get a parking space easily and choose the best seat in our favourite restaurant. There were plenty of Italians out going about their lives, the lockdown 80miles away was on people's minds, but they were more concerned about the potential impact on business than the virus. The bars had been told to shut at 6pm by then and only serve customers who had a seat; no standing at the bar. It all seemed a little unnecessary and over the top.

Fast forward to 9th March and the regional lockdown. Initially, the "lockdown" was anything but and as I batted away texts from anxious parents I mainly felt annoyed by their catastrophizing. Day 1 of the lockdown I visited Bricoman, the paint store, 2 supermarkets (both incredibly well stocked without any hint of panic or drama) and the printers. There were no police checks or road blocks and apart from the paint store owner suddenly donning an ineffectual mask, all seemed normal. I felt inexplicably angry about the whole thing; as if we'd been caught up in someone else's drama and had no way out. By day 2, anger had turned to mild depression and resignation. Flights were cancelled in and out of Italy.

On day 3 the sun shone so brightly it felt like summer! I went for a gorgeous big hike in the hills above Como, I had a coffee in the next village before heading into the hills, stripped off to a tee-shirt and returned feeling refreshed, uplifted and a little pink faced. I had encountered a few other hikers and families out playing on the lower meadows, the mood had been friendly and happy. Neil went out for a long bike ride and enjoyed a ferry crossing with the whole boat to himself! We felt like we could weather this storm. That night, the Italian Government announced the closure of all cafes, shops and restaurants with immediate effect. Clearly, we were not getting the message.

Does this pattern sound familiar? It's now 30th March and the Editor has asked me to update this piece, I wrote 17 days ago, from Italy.

It was a confusing and emotional time back then; the mood became more sombre as the Italian death toll passed 1,000. 17 days later it now stands at almost 11,000 and doctors have arrived from Albania, Cuba and China to help their beleaguered Italian colleagues. Make no mistake this is a global pandemic and we all have a role to play.

We tried to tough it out in Italy. We weren't in a big city and lived and worked between two small villages, seeing the same three people every day. Psychologically it was harder to manage this situation and constant questioning about if we were in the right place, than the threat of the virus itself. We had printed off our permit to leave our home should we get stopped by police but when the movement restrictions tightened and work on building sites was outlawed, we decided it was time to come back to Horningsham. We didn't have any trouble crossing the 3 land borders, everyone is very interested in that. The Italians waved us through with a cheery "ciao", the Swiss debated which way we should go, definitely not through Germany apparently, the French swore and hurriedly stepped back when I said we'd come from Italy, the British only wanted to see what was in the back of the vehicle.

We've been washing our hands thoroughly for weeks now, practising socially distancing since 23rd Feb and lockdown since 8th March. It feels a huge relief to be back here and despite having a few more days of social isolation to get through, we feel very lucky to be here and to have choices. When I originally wrote this piece, I had finished by saying I really hoped that the UK wouldn't go into lockdown and suggesting that you all start socially distancing now. I wish I had asked Tim to print my piece straight away and that you'd all started socially distancing earlier but even then, it didn't seem that urgent! I didn't want to seem like I was lecturing. This virus moves silently for weeks and then explodes into communities; I think we all realise we haven't seen the worst of it yet. That we are looking at months not weeks before normal service resumes.

In the meantime, I hope you are all staying at home as much as possible; it really does help. I experienced the tighter measures the Italian Government took when people didn't listen and the deaths soared; please don't give our Government any reason to restrict our limited freedoms even more. Hope you are all staying healthy, and many thanks to the Rowe's Hill Gang who've helped feed us since we returned. The neighbourly love shown throughout the village has been really lovely.

Next month, look out for the slightly delayed ad, promoting a heavily discounted, lovely little B&B in Italy!

Caroline Dykes

MONTHLY RECIPE

Butternut Squash Soup

Lunch today:- an anti-inflammatory recipe that is warming, comforting and nurturing, packed full of nutrients and antioxidants. What we eat matters more than ever and soup is literally a life saver. I shall be getting my seed packets out in the hope that this year I can keep calm and Dig for Victory!

Ingredients

1 tablespoon olive oil
1 butternut squash, peeled, de-seeded and cut into 1 inch cubes
4 carrots peeled and sliced
1 onion, chopped
4 cloves of garlic, crushed
2 tsps of turmeric or 1 thumb-sized piece of fresh
1 thumb-sized piece of ginger, finely chopped
1 litre of vegetable stock
salt and **black pepper** as required



Method

Heat the olive oil in a large pot.
Add all the chopped vegetables. Stir-fry them until they start to brown.
Add the vegetable stock.
Simmer until all the vegetables are cooked and soft.
Blend and serve with a squeeze of fresh lemon
Season as required. (Black pepper enhances the anti-inflammatory effect of turmeric)
Serve with your favourite bread and maybe some cheese.

I always keep a fairly big piece of ginger root in case of a cold - I grate it and strain it. Then I add the juice of a warmed lemon and a sharp knife point of cayenne pepper. Sweeten to taste. Honey if you have some. Use as and when necessary or just for enjoyment and a dose of vitamin C and healing ginger.

Good Health and Best wishes to Everyone ☺

Jayne Glover



BUSES FROM BUS STOP AT THE COMMON

Salisbury every Tuesday **83**

Leaves Horningsham 09.35 *Holly Bush 09.37* Arrives Salisbury 10.30
Departs Salisbury 13.45 Arrives Horningsham 14.45

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Leaves Horningsham 10.03 *Holly Bush 10.01* Arrives Trowbridge 10.55
Departs Manvers St Trowbridge 13.10 Arrives Horningsham 14.04

Warminster every Friday **82**

Friday leaves Horningsham 09.45 *Holly Bush 09.48* Arrives Warminster 10.10
Departs Warminster Coach Station 12.20

Frome every Wednesday & Thursday

Wednesday **80** leaves Horningsham 10.06 *Holly Bush 10.01*

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Thursday **81** leaves Horningsham 10.03 *Holly Bush 10.01*

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