

# PITCOMBE

## *news*

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## June 2020

In this issue  
Footpaths in the Parish  
More War Memories  
Parish Council Report

MONTHLY MAGAZINE FOR THE PARISH OF PITCOMBE

# What's on...

June

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Sunday 7th

Tuesday 9th

7.30pm Pitcombe Parish Council Meeting

Friday 12th

Black bin collection

Sunday 14th

Sunday 21st

Friday 26th

Black bin collection

Sunday 28th

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...weekly

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...later

# welcome

## PITCOMBE NEWS

With such an enduring stream of sunny weather, coupled with isolators turning out to tend their gardens, we should be treated to a cornucopia of summer flowers, fruit and vegetables. Roses are likely to feature strongly in vases, strawberries will head the fruit rush and asparagus will be in sufficient supply to grace our tables daily.

Our series of war stories, contributed by local residents, continues with a range of moving as well as amusing anecdotes. Kathleen Apperly's piece is singled out, as there cannot be many people around that can describe both their school days and their war service between the years of 1939 and 1945.

Faithful contributors this month include the ever-reliable Parish Council, with notes on their May meeting. We will all be pleased to hear that the Council has passed the annual inspection of its accounts with flying colours. St Leonard's highlights the use of a three-phase approach to lifting restrictions on attendance and, from Charles Brook, a most informative list of local footpaths and accompanying map. The heightened interest in walking these past few weeks will be well served by this material.

A light-hearted bon mot to end with:

'Before you criticize someone, you should walk a mile in their shoes. That way, when you criticize them, you're a mile away and you have their shoes.'

Stay well everyone and more war memories would be most welcome.

*contribute*

Editors: Jane and Anthony Hodges

# S JUNE

In these challenging times it is very sad that we are unable to hold services at St Leonard's and to see the church locked. However, things do not appear quite so bleak as a month ago, and I am sure that the situation will improve.

In line with government advice the church is implementing a three-phase approach to lifting the restrictions. The first phase, which we are in now, allows a nominated person to enter the church for activities such as recording or streaming of services, or private prayer by an Incumbent or an authorised person. The second phase allows access for some rites and ceremonies, but it's not until the third phase that services of worship with limited congregations will be allowed. The timing of the phases will be guided by national advice and will take account of any national Public Health Statements. However, whichever phase we are in, we will need to observe the appropriate physical distancing and hygiene precautions.

It is particularly difficult for us at the current time as we do not have an incumbent, however we are moving forward in the process of appointing a new rector. We have completed the Bruton Benefice profile and it has been authorised by the PCCs of Bruton, Wyke Champflower, Brewham, Shepton Montague and Redlynch. The advertisement of the post is now on hold awaiting the easing of the Coronavirus restrictions.

Although the recent Parochial Church Council meeting was held on Zoom, it was decided that to hold the Annual Parochial Church Meeting on Zoom was perhaps too ambitious a goal. We have been given permission to delay the APCM until October, so we have postponed it until the early autumn at a date to be decided.

It has been quite an extraordinary spring and the day after day of sunshine has helped us keep positive in these difficult times. Let us look forward to a return to some sort of normality when we can meet with our families and friends once again.

*Philip Pidsley Churchwarden*

# Parson's Pulpit

My Dear Friends

I know many of us share the same sense of frustration and disappointment at this moment as we are unable to join with our fellow worshippers in Church. St Leonard's Church has certainly lived through many interesting times in the life of our nation, but it has never before suffered the indignity of being locked and bolted to keep people out. How we miss it!

Whenever I have had the pleasure of coming to St Leonard's I have always felt impressed by the atmosphere of tranquillity and holiness. Perhaps that is due to the fact that many generations have prayed and worshipped in that sacred place.

I must say I was very troubled when we were ordered to lock all our churches in line with the instructions from the Government and Church authorities. However, it has become obvious as the pandemic grew to alarming proportions that we are facing a very unpleasant virus which can be spread rather easily so every part of our society needs to play a part in reducing it.

There are no easy answers but be assured that the Church leaders are now in the process of consulting experts to provide advice to the local churches on dealing with social distancing, personal hygiene measures and the deep cleaning of church buildings. All this takes time, so even if the Government's Pandemic recovery strategy proves a success it is impossible to know how long it might be before things get back to anything like "normal" in church.

Please be patient and go on praying. You can rest assured that we will do all we can to get the church up and running as soon as possible. Meanwhile I say Morning and Evening Prayer quietly at home. Please do not hesitate to send me names for intercession. And let us all look forward to the time when we can get together once more to worship in St Leonard's.

With my prayers,

**Mark Ellis—Prebendary**

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# School Days and Call Up

I was at school at Bognor in Sussex and in June 1940 it was expected that Hitler's invasion forces would land on the south coast at any minute. So, like most schools from Kent and Sussex, we were evacuated to Cornwall. We occupied the Royal Hotel overlooking the station in Penzance, where we stayed for several years.

We had lessons in the reception rooms and were taught chemistry by the art mistress. My parents had a flat in London near Paddington Station where, during the holidays, I

went to visit and was woken with the bombs and anti-aircraft gunfire. It was extremely frightening.

Later in the war when I was called up, I nursed at a London hospital for a short time and then joined the VAD's and nursed sailors at a Naval training establishment, HMS Ganges. I spent a very merry VE night on a ship in Harwich Harbour.

**Kathleen Apperly**

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## CASTLE CARY GARDENING ASSOCIATION

### Gardening 'tips' for lockdown.

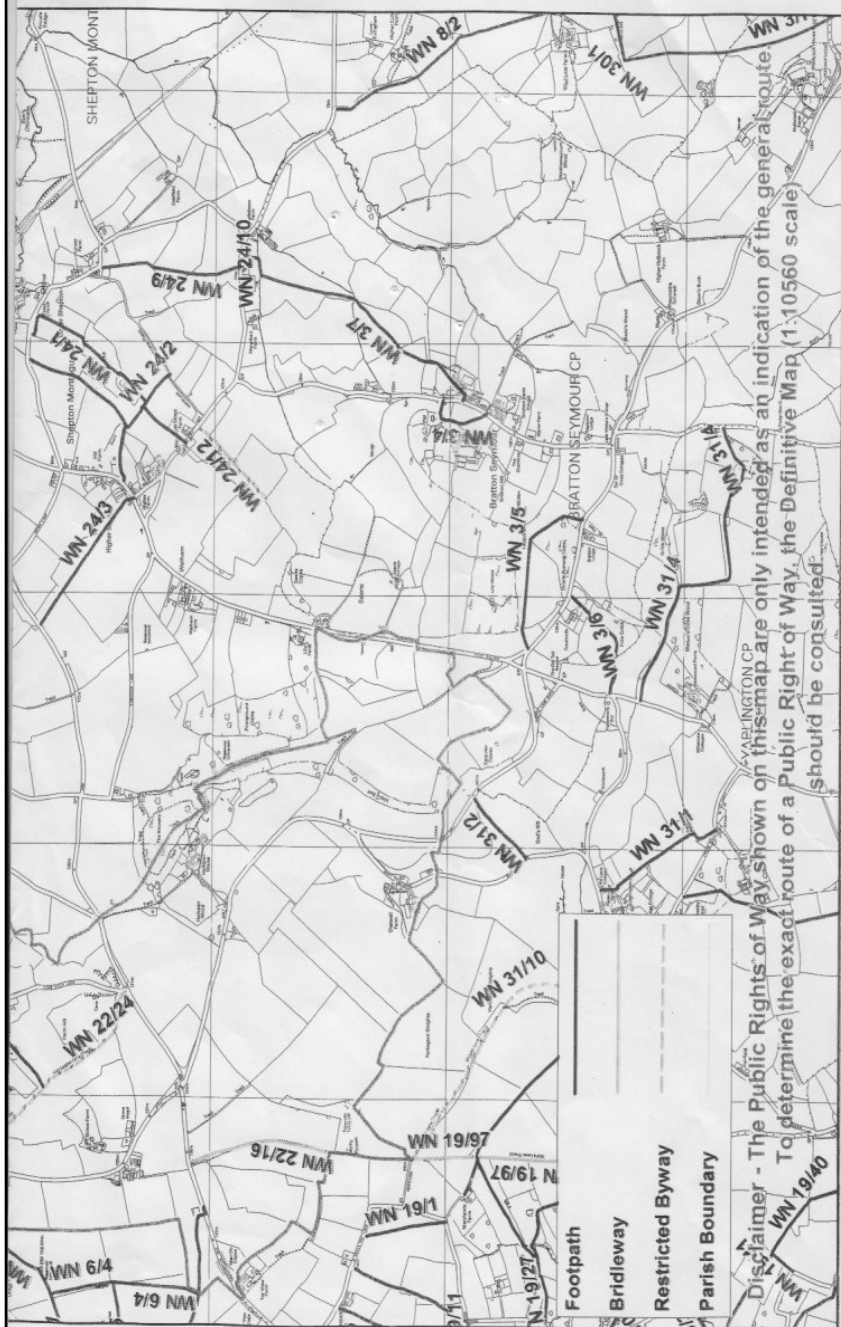
When mulling over what to write about for this month whilst watering today, and fighting recalcitrant hosepipes, I decided I would have a go at the topic itself. The wet winter with every weekend apparently having Storm Someone to spoil any gardening plans, it is odd to see water butts getting down to the soupy goop at the bottom already.

I decided that the first problem is in the phrase itself – **watering plants**. You don't water the plant but the soil around it. How often and how much depends on what the plant is, when it was last watered, whether it's in a pot or the ground, what time of day ... so as you see there really is no one size waters all. Then there is the hosepipe conundrum. A strong flow will apparently get the job done faster but damages delicate new plants, washes the soil away from the roots and in some cases out of the pots! Too feeble a flow and it's easy to under water as its too slow and folk want to get on with something else. If when watering a pot the water runs through almost immediately, it's not because the compost is full it's because the compost is so dry it cannot hold the water. If it's a liftable pot, put it into a tray and fill that with water. Its better soaked up from the base. With too large to lift pots you have to apply little and often, until the poor thing is actually wet. I usually water it enough, to sit on the surface without it flowing over the edge, let it seep in and repeat. Check it isn't running along the walls of the pot by poking into the (usually dust-like) compost and form a hole away from the edge, for water to trickle into.

In the ground sink a generous sized flowerpot into the soil near the plant as you plant it. You can then fill this as you water knowing that you aren't just watering the surface. If you own a showerhead type fitment for your hose select the gentle spray and this seems the least destructive option. A watering can has the same problems with over and under watering, usually the latter as its harder work, but it doesn't tie itself in knots or kink spitefully to stop the flow and it's a low grade weight lifting exercise. However mine does sometimes have a blocked up spout with snails and water butt grot! And then rain! You may think its been raining enough to have watered your pots but in high summer if you check you will find that most of it was shed off the leaves and the top centimetre is the only wet part. The rain will slow down the plants transpiration rate so it won't dry itself out so fast but don't rely on the rain to have saved you a job necessarily. This doesn't usually apply to plants in the ground as there is enough soil to gather a bit more but it also needs checking.

So as you see it's another Goldilocks system – not too much, not too little but just the right amount!! The plants will let you know which you choose.....

Happy watering – **Erica Holt (Chair CCGA)**



SOMERSET COUNTY COUNCIL  
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Footpaths in Pitcombe Parish

- 22/1 Wyke Lane to Bruton via Gants Mill  
Land belongs to Clothier; Colestile Farm; Shingler (Gants Mill) and Mill on the Brue.
- 22/2 Cole to 22/1 (Colestile Farm)
- 22/3 There isn't a 22/3!
- 22/4 A359 at Lisbury to Sunny Lane (Sexeys School)
- 22/5 A359 to Godminster Lane\* (Hollingbury)
- 22/6 Cole to Pitcombe Church (Martin Jennings)
- 22/7 Lancombe Lane to Cole Manor Farm (Martin Jennings)
- 22/8 Lancombe Lane (Byway/Martin Jennings)
- 22/9 St Leonard's Church to Pitcombe Hill and  
Nettlecombe Hill (Paul Jennings then Rob Garrett)
- 22/10 Cole Farm Barn to Ridge Hill (Mark Groom then Mark Tilly)\*
- 22/11 Knap Hollow and Ridge Lane (Mark Tilly)
- 22/12 Ridge Lane to join 22/10 at orchard (Mark Tilly)
- 22/13 Ring House over Priddles Hill to A 371  
(Biddy Coghill-Smith then Peter Wyatt then Andrew Hopkins)
- 22/14 A371 to Lodge Hill (Peter Wyatt)
- 22/15 Hadspen Farm to Hell Ladder Lane (Charles Brook then Peter Wyatt)
- 22/16 A 359 towards Yarlinton ( Hadspen Estate)\*
- 22/17 St Leonard's Church to Godminster Farm  
(Paul Jennings on west of A 359, then Hollingbury)
- 22/18 Godminster Lane to Dodd's Corner (Redlynch)  
(Hollingbury)
- 22/19 Bruton (Durslade Farm) to Redlynch Home  
Farm\* (Hollingbury)
- 22/20 Godminster Wood (from Lusty, Bruton)  
To RedlynchHome Farm\* (?Hollingbury) continued on Pg 13

# Sacrifice

'Neath yon grey mound of dirt  
A soldier's body lies  
Desolate winds have whipped the sand  
Now his wan hand  
Cries against the silence  
Of the desert, sombre, absolute.  
He died, fearing not the pain for him  
He hoped that if it must be he  
Then let it happen instantly  
To spare the agony  
Of those beneath the distant skies  
That maimed spectres haunt them never  
Tears there will be for a season  
Then only tender memories  
And later fond forgetfulness'

One of a number of poems written by my father, Brian Batchelor, aged 20, in the Western Desert after the Battle of Sidi Rezegh and possibly before El Alamein. It is undated but we found it and others in a little leather diary he'd bought in Alexandria, the price and newsagent sticker perfectly legible.

**Jane Hodges**

**Footpaths in Pitcombe Parish continued from page 11**

**22/21 A 359 (Galhampton Hill) to Broadway Lane (Lodge Hill)**

**(? Churchouse)**

**22/22 A 359 to Godminster Farm (Hollingbury)**

**22/23 can't see a 22/23**

**22/24 Hell Ladder Lane (byway/Peter Wyatt)**

**\*Only small parts in Pitcombe Parish**

**Kindly compiled by Charles Brook**



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## Queuing for Fish

It seems appropriate that I spent the first hour of VE day queuing in Bruton for fish, for I was told that I spent most of my two war years in my pram in the fish queue. Fish was not rationed and made a valuable contribution to an otherwise restricted diet.

My father was just 20 when war was declared. he had learnt to fly at Bristol Aero club, joining the Civil Air Guard, with whom he made his last solo flight on September 3<sup>rd</sup> 1939. He was promptly called up, but keen to do his bit was greatly frustrated that the RAF found his eyesight not good enough to fly, it was considered borderline. One day he pinched an aeroplane, leaving a note on his Flight Commander's desk flew 100 miles home to Freshford, in shocking weather, did a few turns and dropped some oranges over his mother's garden returning to the air station where he was quickly arrested.

Refuelling at Bristol and Hendon, where his landing was so good it excited comment. He had specially chosen a day of dreadful weather when all solo flights had been cancelled, just to show he could navigate as well as pilot a plane. His second offence was to sign the name of a non-existent Flight-Lieutenant on a form to obtain fuel. Pleading guilty to the Soffences he was court martialled but luckily the Sunday Pictorial took up his cause and on Page 6, August 3<sup>rd</sup> 1941 Bernard Gray wrote half a page under the headline, *"The RAF wouldn't give him "wings". So, he grabbed a plane flew on a madcap journey just to show. Of course – he'll be punished – but we need more men with that adventurous spirit"*.

I understand that he didn't spend many days in the clink, and probably wouldn't have lived had he become a fighter pilot.

Incidentally Bernard Gray was a well-respected war correspondent. He was on HMS Urge, a submarine that was ordered to sail from Malta to Egypt which disappeared in April 1942. The circumstances of the disappearance remained a mystery for almost eight decades until the vessel was discovered between Malta and Libya by a diving team. Gray was going to cover the Egyptian desert campaign.

**Camilla Carter**



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**Or email [avril@somersetsight.org.uk](mailto:avril@somersetsight.org.uk)**

### Parish Council

Chairman	Richard Waller	01749 812754 <a href="mailto:ritwaller@hotmail.com">ritwaller@hotmail.com</a>
Parish Clerk	Holly Callow	07742 930521 <a href="mailto:clerk@pitcombecpc.org.uk">clerk@pitcombecpc.org.uk</a>

### St Leonard's Church

The Rector		
Benefice Office Secretary	Jane Bennett	<a href="mailto:benefice@stmarysbruton.org">benefice@stmarysbruton.org</a>
Bell-ringing	Tina Harley	01749 813262 <a href="mailto:tina.harley@btinternet.com">tina.harley@btinternet.com</a>
Church Flowers roster	Tina Harley	01749 813262 <a href="mailto:tina.harley@btinternet.com">tina.harley@btinternet.com</a>
Church Wardens	Philip Pidsley	01749 813842 <a href="mailto:philip.pidsley@btinternet.co.uk">philip.pidsley@btinternet.co.uk</a>
	Wendy Crane	01749 9813005 <a href="mailto:wendy-crane@btinternet.com">wendy-crane@btinternet.com</a>
PPC Secretary	Carole Wyatt	01963 350222 <a href="mailto:carolewyatt@btinternet.com">carolewyatt@btinternet.com</a>

### Friends of St Leonards

Secretary	Cathie Brook	01963 351492 <a href="mailto:catherinebrook@aol.com">catherinebrook@aol.com</a>
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### Hadspen Village Hall

Chairman	Robin Currie	01749 814899 <a href="mailto:arctheduke@gmail.com">arctheduke@gmail.com</a>
Bookings Secretaries	Penny Mounsey	01963 359488 <a href="mailto:penny.mounsey345@btinternet.com">penny.mounsey345@btinternet.com</a>
	Jan James	01963 350464 <a href="mailto:janet.james945@btinternet.com">janet.james945@btinternet.com</a>
Secretary	Sheelagh Douglas	07733 102819. <a href="mailto:sdmdouglas7@gmail.com">sdmdouglas7@gmail.com</a>

### Neighbourhood Watch

Co-ordinating Officer	Sue Chamberlain	01963 350616 <a href="mailto:sechamberlain@btinternet.com">sechamberlain@btinternet.com</a>
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## S H D I R E C T O R Y

**Pitcombe News**

Co-editors	Jane Hodges	01963 351429 <a href="mailto:janepamelahodges@hotmail.com">janepamelahodges@hotmail.com</a>
	Anthony Hodges	<a href="mailto:anthony.hodges@hodesassociates.org">anthony.hodges@hodesassociates.org</a>

**Short Mat Bowls Club**

Secretary	Carole Wyatt	01963 350222 <a href="mailto:carolewyatt@btinternet.com">carolewyatt@btinternet.com</a>
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<b><u>Bruton Art Class</u></b>	Alexandra Drysdale	07787 827793 <a href="mailto:alex@alexandradrysdale.com">alex@alexandradrysdale.com</a>
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**U3A**

Bridge	Kate Mair	01963 351544 <a href="mailto:kateandbillmair@hotmail.com">kateandbillmair@hotmail.com</a>
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Patchwork	Jan Wilcox	01747 840335 <a href="mailto:mail@janwilcox.plus.com">mail@janwilcox.plus.com</a>
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History	Bruce Bower	01747 840335 <a href="mailto:bowersxb@btinternet.com">bowersxb@btinternet.com</a>
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<b><u>Pilates</u></b>	Shirley Rutter	07733 085 077
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**Avon and Somerset Police**

Emergencies	999
Non Emergencies	101

**Healthcare**

Bruton Surgery	01749 812 310
Wincanton Health Centre	01963 435700
Shepton Mallet Treatment Centre	01749 333600

**Local Government**

District Councillor,	Robin Bastable	01749 812335 <a href="mailto:robin.bastable@southsomerset.gov.uk">robin.bastable@southsomerset.gov.uk</a>
County Councillor	Anna Groskop.	01749 812520 <a href="mailto:anna.groskop@southsomerset.gov.uk">anna.groskop@southsomerset.gov.uk</a>
Roads and Transport		0845 345 9155 <a href="mailto:roadsandtransportSD@somerset.gov.uk">roadsandtransportSD@somerset.gov.uk</a>



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# Neighbourhood Watch



## **Somerset: Stop-check of car in Romania results in burglary conviction.**

To read the story, look online , on the link given below . The document tells how a stop-check in Romania led to a man being convicted of burglaries in Somerset and South Gloucestershire.

[stopcheck-in-romania-leads-to-conviction.pdf](#)

## **Somerset Police**

A car parked in Sunny Hill, Bruton has been the subject of Criminal damage overnight on the 17th. All 4 tyres of the vehicle have been slashed and will cost several hundred pounds to replace.

If you contact the Police about this incident, please call 101 & quote Reference number: 5220107287 or Call Crimestoppers on 0800 555111, thank you.

**SEC**

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# Village Hall update

A recent letter to all users of the Village Hall

'We thought we would contact you to let you know that we are keeping a close eye on the current situation and, in particular, the gradual easing of restrictions by the Government and how this might affect use of the hall going forward.

Obviously, our priority is to ensure that use of the hall is safe for everybody, including our Management Committee members and cleaner, so any decision to open our doors again would need to be within Government policy and guidelines. We also take a lead from the Community Council for Somerset which continues to support current closures.

You will appreciate that it would be difficult to maintain a sanitised environment and for most of you the rules on gatherings would not allow you to meet. We also suspect that most of you would be reluctant, in any event, to meet until such time as the risk of contamination is at a minimum.

For these reasons, we will continue to be closed to our users but please rest assured that we will endeavour to open-up again as soon as the situation eases significantly and there is a reasonable demand for our facilities.

We will keep you informed but, in the meantime, we hope all our users are remaining safe and coping well in these challenging times.

With best wishes,

**Penny Mounsey, Booking Secretary**

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# PARISH COUNCIL



A Zoom meeting on Tuesday 12<sup>th</sup> May

Our meeting of the PPC was again conducted by Zoom and full minutes are available for inspection on the Council's website. There was not a great deal of business to conduct, although we did formalise the protocols for the conduct of meetings by Zoom, for the time being, until the lockdown eases to the extent that normal meetings can resume.

The Council is more than happy for the community to raise any concerns by email or telephone etc. with individual councillors. And also to attend the Zoom meetings, where an opportunity exists to air concerns or raise questions, in the same way as happens at face to face meetings. Details for attending the meetings are available via the clerk and on the website.

The Council has been subject to the annual inspection of accounts as required by law and I am happy to say all was found to be in order. Our clerk is to be congratulated on the accuracy of our financial controls and, as this was her first inspection, it was great news that she presented our accounts with no queries, concerns or findings of any sort being raised.

In recognition of the importance of the Pitcombe News, especially in these times of limited communication, the Council had previously agreed to assist with production costs which have risen due to the closure of Sunny Hill school, which usually provides printing facilities. The good news is that for future editions the PN team has found a cheaper printing option and does not anticipate any further financial challenges.

There have been concerns raised by members of the community about the felling of trees at the top of Pitcombe Hill. The Council is investigating the status of the trees and we are aware that the issue has been brought to the attention of the Forestry Commission. This matter will be kept under review and is on the agenda for the meeting in June.

On the subject of trees, in the recent high winds a glorious sycamore standing by Wyke Lane in Cole, where the bridge crosses the Brue, lost a very large limb which remained suspended over the road. Alerted by a member of the public, the Highways team removed the dangerous branch and all is well. Thanks to all concerned. It is reassuring that amidst the Covid crisis, some basic services continue. Similarly, the return of garden rubbish collections and the promised reopening of the Dimmer recycling centre offers the prospect of a gradual return to "normality"!

Stay well everybody.

**Richard Waller, Chair**

# The Battle of Britain

When Hitler announced Operation Sealion, his aim was to see whether by mounting military pressure, he could break British spirit and make further fighting unnecessary as he had done with the countries he had taken on his way to Britain.

We all knew the Germans were coming but what we did not know was when. The whole atmosphere was incredibly tense. Everyone knew that their radio would come alive for a short report from the man at a lookout position on the South coast describing how things looked. Every day at a fixed time, the whole family got together next to the radio to hear what he had to say. We were also told that when the lookout saw the first German forces a loud siren would sound. The tension grew and grew. Then, as some friends and I were kicking a ball around in a field, when the siren sounded, we all rushed home fearing the worst — only to learn it was just a trial.

We all relaxed until one afternoon when out in the garden, I turned around and in front of me, fortunately quite a long way off, I saw a battle in the sky. Three or four of our planes against three or four of theirs. I could not take my eyes off it until it seemed to be coming nearer. Then the siren went and I ran back to the house. After the All Clear sounded I went out to collect German and British bullet shells and other debris to swap with my friends. The Battle of Britain had begun.

Hitler knew that Operation Sealion had not worked and he knew he had to win the battle in the air. Churchill knew it too. This would be one of the greatest battles in our history. The remarkable thing is that it was really over in quite a short time, thanks to two aeroplanes, the Hurricane and the Spitfire, and the people who designed and flew them.

Which was the better, the Supermarine Spitfire or the Hawker Hurricane? That question has been asked by pilots, historians and air enthusiasts since 1940 and no clear answer has emerged. Each had its strong points and its disadvantages. Spitfires flew faster, climbed faster and exuded glamour and modernity. Wing Commander Robert Stanford Tuck said, 'The Spitfire was like a fine thoroughbred racehorse while the dear old Hurricane was rather like a heavy workhorse'.

Not everyone agreed. Legendary fighter Douglas Bader who lost both legs in a flying accident thought the Hurricane had a marvellous gun platform and intrinsic



strength. The gun platform Bader mentioned was created by the plane having a little more room in the cockpit, a slightly higher seat and a sloping nose which gave the pilot a better view. His feeling of strength came from the plane's wood and fabric structure which could absorb an incredible amount of punishment that would have gone right through Spitfire's metal. And, when a Spitfire shoots, there is a recoil but when a Hurricane does, its gun platform remains rock steady.

Eric "Twinkle" Brown the renowned test pilot said, 'The Hurricane was the right aircraft for the right season. It came at a time when it literally saved the country and it performed magnificently'. Ben Bowring of 111 Squadron believed that a Hurricane would keep on flying when it was virtually destroyed. On one occasion he was able to land his plane after its wings had been all but wrecked in combat. "That aircraft is a bloody miracle".

Battle of Britain ace, Group Captain Peter Townsend said, 'We were at one with ourselves and our machines. It was the Hurricane which really gave us such immense confidence, with its mighty engine, the powerful battery of eight guns and the feel of swift robust strength'.

When Hurricanes were shot down over Britain, almost 60% were repaired and quickly back in service. When the more complex Spitfires were shot down, they were usually written off. The Hurricane was easier to build, fly, and repair which was very important in wartime. And for every two planes a Spitfire shot down, a Hurricane shot down three.

They were two very different planes but, it is agreed, neither could have won the fight without the other. Yet after the Battle had been won, one of them got all the glory and the other was not mentioned. The Government needed to make the most of the success and the Spitfire, glamour and modernity was the right image. A plane built of wood and fabric would not do.

**Ken Chamberlain**

# Happy Cooker

## **Lamb and Rhubarb Casserole** Serves 4

This is delicious, easily assembled and can be prepared ahead of time, except for the last 10 mins when the rhubarb is added.

Rhubarb is often used in Middle eastern cooker and particularly in Iran, where it is added at the end of the cooking time to add flavour to a stew. In this recipe its distinctive sour taste balances the rich sweetness of the lamb beautifully.

## INGREDIENTS

2tbsp sunflower oil  
1kg lamb shoulder, cut into bite size chunks  
2 medium onions, sliced  
2 garlic cloves, crushed  
1 tbsp plain flour  
2 tsps ground coriander  
1 tsp ground cumin  
1 litre hot lamb stock (I used veg. or chicken)  
300g rhubarb, trimmed into 5cm lengths  
1 tbsp each chopped coriander and mint  
saffron rice to serve

## METHOD

1. Heat oven to 170\*(gas mark 3) . Brown the lamb in 1 tbsp of oil, in batches and transfer to a casserole dish
2. Using the remaining oil gently sauté the onion for 10 minutes until softened. Turn up the heat slightly and continue cooking and stirring until golden. Add the garlic and cook for 1 minute.

3. Stir in the flour and spices, then cook over a medium heat for 1 minute. Gradually stir in the stock, and bring to the boil, then pour over the lamb in the casserole. Cover and cook in the oven for 2 hours until tender.

4. Transfer the casserole to the hob. Add the rhubarb and simmer for 10 minutes until the rhubarb is tender but still holds its shape. Stir in the chopped herbs and serve straight away with the saffron rice.

*With thanks to: Cooking through the Seasons - Country Living*



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Sarah Crossman CRM5 M  
T: 07531 831 553  
E: [sarah@lifereflexology.co.uk](mailto:sarah@lifereflexology.co.uk)  
www. [lifereflexology.co.uk](http://lifereflexology.co.uk)  
Instagram: @life\_reflexology

