



Brickleton News

May 2020

Issue 229



Mark the date for next year's Fete — **Sunday 2 May 2021.**

Amid the upheaval around us, we have to announce the death of John Hall Craggs. His wife Olivia has written a few words elsewhere, but John contributed an enormous amount to our village and we are presently thinking how to best remember him.

TV News channels are saturated with 'virus' news every day. Understandable—we all want to know when we can get back to normal. We have had beautiful spring weather and enjoyed magnificent wild flowers and blossom on our daily exercise walks.

The 75 year old event has inspired some of our seniors to write their own memories which are included in this edition. VE Day was marked with some lovely displays and (a)parties.



One of our villagers remembers -

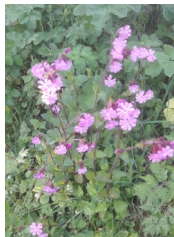
On VE Day I remember at age 4 being taken on somebody's shoulders to Piccadilly Circus to join in. We lived just behind Piccadilly so the walk did not take long. So many people still in uniform - so many people drunk. I remember being very frightened and wanted to go home. The noise was incredible and I didn't understand all the funny dancing.

My aunt, who is still with us today at 98, was a very pretty actress, dancer and singer who went on to play in many black and white movies, and the original Moulin Rouge with Jose Ferrer. She also appeared with James Cagney. It is amazing, but through the Internet I have been able to obtain many of these old films to play on discs. She was sent as a young woman in her early twenties to join ENSA which, for those of you too young to know, was the organisation which supplied entertainment for the troops. She was in Italy for the surrender and where she found herself, I can't remember where, the British Army gave a formal dinner on the evening of the signing of the formalities. The table plan put her between the two commanding officers from each side, as the Italian Officers were being honoured. She had no Italian and knew she should talk to both chaps. Somehow she managed to get through the evening feeling a little like a boat fender. This story only emerged about four years ago when she told my husband. She was of the generation which did not talk about the war. However, she did say that it was felt the Italians did not have their heart in it and were very nice chaps who were mightily relieved it was all over.

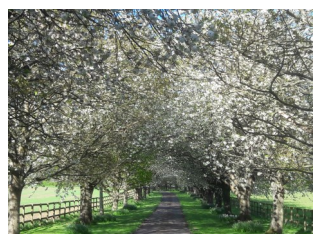
SPRING !



Bluebells and Red Campion at Spray Woods



Lambs and Blossom Avenue at Oak Ash



POSTPONED TO 5 SEPTEMBER

Brickleton Summer Ball

On ~~Saturday 10th June 2020~~

At Green Farm, The Green, Brightwalton

Champagne Reception
BYO Picnic
Auction
Dancing to 'The Fake Tan Band'
Cocktail Bar

Tickets: £45
Contact : 07905 805647
Miranda Cooper: 07855 449539

ASPIRE

All proceeds are being match funded by The Greenham Trust

Life in Brightwallton - by Mike Hatcher

In March this year my wife and I completed 40 years not only in the village but also in 2 Limetree Cottages. When we first came here in the days before SATNAVS we were the first house in the village and often had our door knocked for directions. It did help us to get to know where everyone lived. We arrived here on an agreement with Mr Jim Pilkington who owned Limetree Farm where I was employed one day a week in his garden in exchange for our cottage and eventually an acre and a quarter of land which I proceeded to fill up with large chickens, bantams, ducks and geese which Mr Jim and his guests also enjoyed. I must say his two Labrador dogs also enjoyed it as they would hop over the fence, catch a duck and present it to him. Luckily they had soft mouths and never hurt them. On my first morning up at Limetree I found Mr Pilkington talking to a lady over the front gates which were at that time between the house and the barn. I was called and introduced to Ivy Bracey (Aunt of Robert from Woolley) with the words that she knew everything about people in Brightwalton and if she didn't it was not worth knowing.

Mr Pilkington a confirmed bachelor was very popular and soon introduced me to various other ladies of the senior generation who I could help in their garden. Just down Pudding Lane, round the corner from us was Da Wright, living where the Mathesons live now. She had lived in Ireland early on and had a herd of Jersey cattle. She was very interested when Alan & Hope Ackrill set up their Jersey herd on Mr Pilkington's land. She was a great storyteller and being the Grandmother of Sarah Ferguson, Duchess of York, told many stories which remain secret. I was introduced to Sir Philip Wroughton's Mother who lived at Upper Lodge, Woolley and worked for her for many years as I also did for Mr. & Mrs Wroughton (Sir Philip said he wouldn't recognise me if I addressed him as Sir Philip). I also worked for Kirsten his daughter. Mrs Wroughton senior always referred to our village as Brickleton. She and I worked in the Churchyard at North Fawley where her husband was buried. On asking why he was the first Wroughton buried there she pointed out the view from his grave which he said was the best on the Estate. He also introduced me to Mrs Mary Pearce at Middle Lodge on the Wantage Road just before you turn off for Farnborough. I worked for her for over 36 years and she had many interesting stories to tell. Her late husband had been a top man in the financial world and her family and friends had been in the Resistance and Secret Service in the Second World War. One of her brothers had been involved in the Nuremberg Trials and had a copy of Hitler's book *Mein Kampf*. She would challenge me on my visits to use a now rarely used word from the English language in our conversations.

On getting to know the Whidbourne family I soon was involved in work on their gardens. Granny Whidbourne was Daniel's Great Grandmother and lived in the bungalow, now demolished, opposite Don and Pat. I then worked in the gardens at Manor Farm for Dan's Grandparents before they moved to Folly Farm and then for Richard and Diana where I held Clare in my arms at a few days old. A lady who I did not work for but had many interesting conversations with was the author Monica Dickens who lived in Pudding Lane. On one of our poultry-related visits to USA and Maryland in particular she said we must visit the Inner Harbour at Baltimore. Her Husband had been a ship's captain and had sailed from there. We were not disappointed. On the education front I worked for Lyn Harrison who started the Brightwalton Pre-school Nursery. Then there was the Hon Christopher Portman who lived at Malthouse Farm. He and Reg Mills who lives at The Holt got together to arrange finance for the School when it was in danger of closing. Chris had a wonderful collection of classic cars but didn't have any to match Alistair and Marion Walker.

Talking of transport and Barry Hedges and Reliance buses I know him through his publicity firm 'Muddy Boots'. Much nearer the current time I have always been proud to say I know Sayers Transport who had the smartest fleet of tankers on the road with Gabby Sayers in charge of the firm. Winters when we arrived here were pretty severe and we often got snowed in and when we heard Gabby's Matador truck pushing it's snowplough we knew rescue was at hand. One of the major employers was the firm of HG Wells on the Green. We got to know them all with Marjorie, Cyril, Basil and Geoff, Clive's Dad, who all had different roles in the firm. Then there was Jonny Bloor the Brother-in-Law who was the painter in the firm. Members of the Ford family worked for them and latterly Jason Delahunty who worked with Basil. Basil would often stop wherever I was working and relate stories of the village including the fact that for a while he had lived at our house and that there had been a deep well for water on the triangle outside their yard. Until water was laid on the village could have water shortages. That was why in the past in agriculture the village only had grain and sheep.

I end these notes where I started. Mr Jim became ill and I was often invited to sit with him in his conservatory. One of his final wishes of which he did not have control was regarding Limetree. It would be good if the house would remain the same and the garden also as it was for dogs and children. Unbeknown to them Ursula and Stephen Codrington made his wishes come true. I have many more happy memories including how we were able to buy our home and continue enjoying Brickleton.

A book which revives memories of the Reliance era - Barrie Hedges

Those who have lived in Brightwalton for more than 35 years will have fond memories of Reliance as the local bus operator that grew to become a substantial coach business running trips all over the UK and abroad. Memories of that era are now being revived with the publication on 30 April of the book *'Reliance Motor Services – The Story of a Family-Owned Independent Bus Company'* by Barrie Hedges (who grew up here) and his friend David Wilder from Chaddleworth. It was Barrie's great grandfather, James Hedges, who created the basis for Reliance when in 1917 he bought a horse-drawn carrier's round from the Thomas family of Leckhampstead. James' son, George, picked up the round when he came home from war in 1919, and soon invested in the newly available bus versions of the Model T Ford. In the early 1920s, George moved the business from a barn at Brightwalton Common to land which he bought from the Wroughton family in the heart of the village. The name 'Reliance' was registered in the early 1930s and a rapid era of growth followed through the Second World War and beyond as the cream and brown buses became a big part of daily life.

Meanwhile, the origins of the Sayers haulage business at that time can also be traced back to James whose elder daughter, Ida, married Wilf Sayers. From them and their family came another major employer for what was then a busy village. In the late 1940s, the next generation of the Hedges family took over the Reliance reins from George, with Alan as managing director, Colin doing the logistical planning and Gordon running the engineering. By the early 60s, the Brightwalton site had become too small and the company moved to new premises in Newbury. It did, however, maintain a small depot at Brightwalton until the company itself closed in 1985. Today, the site is occupied by Saxons Acre.

The book tells the story not just of the company but of the Brightwalton community in the era before the motor car became widely available. They were days when Reliance made it possible to get to work and to school – but also to expand horizons in leisure hours. Barrie also relates his own personal recollections of Brightwalton in the 1950s and 1960s and returns today to assess the changes.

Published by Pen & Sword, the Reliance book is available from its website and also from the Archway Bookshop at Axminster in Devon, which is owned by Barrie's stepson. The cost there is currently reduced from the recommended retail price of £30 to £24. More details from www.archwaybookshop.co.uk or please call Barrie on 07899 923756.

I thought Brickletonians would appreciate this picture of a Reliance stalwart that would have been busy on that momentous day back in 1945. The little Bedford OWB (fleet no 12) with its spartan wooden slatted seats ferried local people from all the local villages for the Newbury celebrations. By that time the bus had been serving the community for some three years. The driver in this pic is Arthur Cox and the clippie (back to camera) is Audrey Goldsmith (nee Hedges). Reliance had a fleet of just six active vehicles populating its smart new workshops at Brightwalton. They worked relentlessly through the war delivering women to vital local factories. With its main job done, no 12 (pic courtesy Paul Lacey collection) became a mobile shop in Faringdon. We have posted another of the Reliance wartime heroes on our page:

<https://www.facebook.com/reliancemotorservicesmemories/>

From Barrie Hedges



JOHN HALL CRAGGS

John died at home on March 30th, leaving behind filing cabinets of papers about the village. We were married in 1963, and 5 years later we moved to Brighwalton from North Heath. We bought The Lawn from Doctor Abraham. He assured us the house had been re-wired in 1945, explaining the stair carpet was but 9" wide thanks to War-time austerity. Visiting the house in February, I noticed there was ice on the inside of the bedroom windows. Early papers show John joined the Berkshire Downs Villages Association (membership cost 2/6d) which aimed to "resist the passage of the M4 through the finest scenery and best agricultural land in southern England". There were 5 proposed routes and the Newbury Weekly News trumpeted "Chieveley wins 3-month battle over the M4 route" which would have severed Bardown from the original village. John was chairman of the PCC for many years. He wrote over 70 letters to relevant trusts and banks in pursuit of funds for the Village Hall; and ran a campaign to keep the school open - this was an enormous exercise and it felt a long fought campaign involving various MPs. Following the community surveys which called for new affordable accommodation for local people, which in turn informed the Village Plan, new houses were built on the old Reliance bus yard (Saxons Acre), followed by two low cost housing developments. The latter were amongst the first such developments in the county.



John brought his miniature railway to the village hall in latter years. This was 2013

John followed an extraordinary succession of people who cared passionately for Brightwalton. Sir Henry Howard was Rector from 1872 - 1933, his diary is held in Reading Archives; Dr. Richard Abraham practised as a GP in the village and surroundings from 1921 - 1961; Canon Naunton Bates cared for Brightwalton and Catmore churches, Mrs Bates looked after their six children, the Mothers Union, received war-time evacuees to the Rectory and ran the Post Office; Miss Ivy Bracey farmed Green Farm (1927 - 1964) and chaired the PCC. She was determined to replace the First World War nissen hut which served as the Village Hall, and spear-headed many enjoyable village fund-raisers; with Ted Higgins as clerk, the new Hall was built in 1976. John became chairman of the PCC in 1985.

Ever a sportsman John took up West Berkshire's various schemes for "Rural Rec": a bus furnished with an array of necessary games equipment, and enthusiastic staff, which toured the villages, offering a variety of classes to young and old. It was a great resource for the individual youth clubs. It was sad to hear of first the village football team being disbanded, and much later the cricket team. No more cricket teas, on that lovely field. But a Six a-side football competition amongst local schools brought in more people to the annual Fetes, and do you remember the Tug of War teams?

Apart from John's files I have been reading "Brightwalton, a Berkshire Village", a wonderful compendium of History and stories written by June Osment, Sue Sayers and Jean Stephens. In the nineteenth century many cottages belonged to the Wroughtons of Woolley Park, nearby. Sir Philip Wroughton continued the family's discreet benefaction by making over Dunmore Pond to the community to mark the Millennium. John was thrilled at this generosity. John came to Berkshire in 1956, when he joined Plenty & Son at their Eagle Iron Works. The site was in the middle of Newbury, opposite the town Post Office, until the company moved to Hambridge Road.

To raise funds for the Village Hall, for many years he ran his 9 1/2" gauge steam railway which he had installed in the paddock below the house. The sun always seemed to shine on our May Day Fetes and a lot of people enjoyed themselves, travelling from the playing fields to the railway on the Whidborne or Wroughton trailers. When Ted Higgins retired from being Parish Clerk he told us "I really enjoyed doing the work". Over the years John also enjoyed his involvement with Brightwalton. He strove to unite the Church, the Hall, the School and the Parish Council to work cohesively for the community. **Olivia Hall-Craggs**

BRIGHTWALTON PARISH COUNCIL

Meeting Held on Monday 11th May 2020 at 8.00pm via Video Conference

See the Brightwalton website for a full copy of the minutes, plus other news and events – www.brightwalton.org.uk

Minutes: The March meeting minutes were agreed and signed as an accurate record. There were no declarations of interest.

Continued

Village Hall Update: Anna Britnor Guest reported that although income would be dramatically reduced with no fete and no bookings the hall did at least have £11,000 of reserves. They would be holding off any major maintenance and were obviously saving some money on oil and cleaning. Clerk advised that there were Covid-19 grants available and had details should the committee decide to pursue. A volunteer had come forward, just before lockdown for the Bookings Clerk role, committee agreed that they would discuss once conditions allow.

PCC Update: Church continues to be closed, with services being taken weekly via Zoom. **ASPIRE Update:** Following further difficulties obtaining planning, the committee have decided apply for Phase 1 Faculty first and get work under way. Meanwhile further work is required to answer questions relating to future phases. Tenders for Phase 1 are being sent out. The committee have also agreed to introducing a community worker role and supporting it financially for 2 years. The role is still to be defined but essentially it is to provide local events and forums for different groups in the community. Example ideas include holiday time community lunches for children that qualify for free school meals, community drop in mornings, Jigsaw club and community information mornings. The Charity Ball has potentially been re-scheduled for 5th September 2020; however this is still to be confirmed.

Matters Arising:

Memorial Ideas for John Hall-Craggs: The huge contribution that the Late John Hall-Craggs has made to the village was recognised by the PC and VHC. Over the years John had been instrumental in saving the school, the building of the new Village Hall, creation of the Dunmore Pond Trust, the creation of social housing at Butts Furlong, and been part of the original Parish Plan. All agreed this needed to be recognised with a suitable memorial. Many ideas were put forward and it was agreed S Orpen would put together list of initial ideas and circulate for further views - VHC, PCC, and PC to agree together.

COVID-19: PC thanked the volunteers that had come forward to help. Clerk reported that a prescription delivery has been set up and is in its 7th week of operation, with 3 volunteers operating on a rota basis. A rota has been set up for Newbury foodbank delivery, this is in its 3rd week and a team of 4 volunteers are assisting. Volunteers are also assisting with the adhoc requests, all have been fulfilled to date. The West Berkshire Support Hub is also passing on referrals and providing useful support and guidance. It was agreed that moving forward it would be great to restore the prescription service to the village, to be discussed further at a later date.

Memorial Benches & Goal Posts: Both the memorial benches and goal post have been received and are ready for installation as and when conditions allow. Clerk is storing in the meantime, insurance has been updated.

Annual ROSPA Playground Report: Playground remains closed. Following equipment updates last year, fewer matters were raised for action on the ROSPA report. Two posts need replacement on the surround to the large climbing frame, Scott Youldon has agreed to replace. Depth of surface under small climber rope was noted as too low, suggestion of placing rubber mat under rope anchor, Clerk to look at options and update. It was noted that since the closure the weeds were thriving in the rubber chippings. Clerk agreed to deal with.

VE Day Celebrations: Fantastic job by S Sayers galvanising the village into action for VE Day with decorating the houses. Many photos have been posted on Facebook and will be in the Brickleton News. J Swann has kindly donated a voucher for The Red House for the winner. S Orpen was tasked with walking the village over the weekend and picking the best display, he chose the extensive display at Marapana, created by the Stiles family.

Annual Parish Meeting & General Meeting: Under new Covid-19 regulations both meetings had to be cancelled. Clerk explained that only ordinary PC meetings could take place over video conference, and therefore the Chair stays in place until a normal AGM can be held. Agreed that no plans can be made at this time, review at the July meeting.

Brickleton News Articles: Plenty of content has been submitted for the May issue, some of which will roll forward to the July issue. S Orpen to send over the VE display photos.

Planning: **20/00477/HOUSE The Paddock - 20/00477/HOUSE The Paddock** – 1 ½ storey extension and external alterations to existing dwelling including partial raising of the roof. It was noted that the application had been withdrawn with the owner challenging the Conservation Officers report. S Orpen had passed on Clive Hookers details so he could be copied in on the letter.

Finance: 2019/20 Accounts: D Weller had completed the internal audit and supplied a full report and audit plan. He raised no concerns and noted that the "administration and procedures of the Council are carefully planned, controlled and well documented with reports being presented to the Council as appropriate". Councillors reviewed the completed Exemption Certificate along with the bank reconciliation, and the accounts were signed off. Due to Covid-19 the formal public inspection rights have been delayed until September however, the accounts will be published online within the next two weeks. Clerk to submit signed documents to the external auditors.

Balance, Invoices and Receipts: Current Account balance as of the 11/05 £7,270.59, Saving Account balance as of the 11/05 £7,861.72. Cheques / receipts since March meeting: Chq 200059 Imprint – March Brickleton News £65.00; Chq 200060 TP Jones – Payroll Admin full year £78.00 (inc £13 VAT); Received 28/04 £3,447.50 first precept payment; Received 14/04 £250 VHC contribution for 2019 playing field mowing; The following cheques were signed at the meeting: Chq 200061 ROSPA Inspection £82.20 (inc £13.70 VAT); Chq 200062 WBC Non-Contested 2019 Election Contribution £75.00; Chq 200063 Scofell April Mowing £247.10 (inc £41.18 VAT); Chq 200064 D Weller – Audit £45; Chq 200065 Zurich Insurance £359.14 – second year of three year agreement.

AOB:

Highway Verges: It was noted that the verges on the village junctions onto the B4494 need cutting back soon. Clerk to report

WBC Update: Cllr C Hooker had provided an April update, Clerk to distribute and upload to website.

WBC Highways Speed Management Consultation: Clerk reported that a new consultation had been launched by Highways to improve the Speed Management Framework. It was noted that this could be completed either as a Parish Council or by individuals as Parish Councillors. Clerk to forward details to Councillors, with guidance on best approach, deadline for response is 9th July.

Phonebox Library: PC thanked Brian Buchanan for improving the shelving and flooring in the phone box. A lot of clearance work has had to be carried out due to books being left inside in bags. Notice to be placed to remind all that if there is no room please do not leave donations, with the idea being 'take one leave one' rather than leaving lots at one time. Anna Britnor Guest reported that there is a good turnover of books, it was also noted that it will need a new coat of paint soon.

Dog Bin: Request from parishioner for dog bin up near The Green. PC had already discussed additional bins extensively at the September meeting and agreed that further bins increase street furniture in the rural setting along with the high costs of maintenance, it was agreed no further action.

Playing Field: It had been noted that a vehicle had gained access to the playing field by driving through the immature hedging. M Cooper to look at and place a log to prevent if possible.

Village Distribution List: Request was raised to create a village email list. This had GDPR implications and it was agreed that it would be considered further at the July meeting, with further research.

The remaining 2020 Meetings will be held 13th July, 14th September and the 9th November

Please e-mail contributions to me (Word format preferred) at bricnews@gmail.com

Next Edition Deadline— Wednesday 15 July 2020

Enquiries : Mike A 638700

Find Brickleton News and other Village affairs on the Village website www.brightwalton.org.uk

Brickleton News is delivered to your door every two months