



Ombersley & Doverdale Parish Magazine



June 2020

allaboutombersley.com

This on-line edition replaces the hard copy, which we have reluctantly had to cancel due to the current coronavirus crisis.

We shall inform you when it is possible to return to hard copy, but for the next few months, we intend to post a magazine on-line.

Please retain your March issue for advertisements!

The editors would be happy to consider publishing articles of local interest in forthcoming on-line magazines. See last page for editors' contact details.

The Parishes of Ombersley and Doverdale are two of The Worcestershire Severn Parishes comprising Elmley Lovett, Hampton Lovett, Elmbridge, Rushock, Hartlebury, Ombersley and Doverdale, a family of Church of England parishes in the Diocese of Worcester working together to share the love of God in each of their local communities.

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**The Parish of St. Andrew Ombersley
with St. Mary Doverdale**

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Opening hours: Tuesday 10.00am – 12 noon

Thursday 10.00am – 12 noon

**If you would like to receive the Parish Magazine please contact one of
the Editorial Team. (Details at the back!)**

THE PARISH OF ST ANDREW'S OMBERSLEY
Parish News

PRAYING THE PARISH

If you have a particular need or things to be grateful for, please let us know

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Angie Randle 01905 620753 angierandle@hotmail.com

or James Homer 01299 851637 ajfhomer@btinternet.com [lay reader with pastoral responsibility for the Worcestershire Severn Parishes]



These had been forgotten for which we apologise – praying around the parish has still continue and will continue to do so

Areas for April:

Sunday 5th April – Lincomb, The Winnalls, Acton, Mount Pleasant

Sunday 12th April – Sandys Road, Wellington Road, Chestnut Walk,
The Hamptons

Sunday 19th April – Main Road north, Oakfield Road, Woodhall
Lane/Close

Areas for May:

Sunday 3rd May – Haye Lane, Oldfield Lane,

Sunday 10th May - Main Road south, Church Lane, Hill Top,
Ombersley Court

Sunday 17th May - Chatley, Woodfield, Hadley and Hunt Green

Areas for June:

Sunday 7th June – Apple Tree Walk, Holt Fleet Road, Parsonage
Lane

Sunday 14th June – Sinton, School Bank, Ombersley School,
Hawford, Hawford School

Sunday 23rd June – Boreley, Mutton Hall, Comhampton, Dunhampton

Ombersley and Doverdale Parish Council

Good neighbour Network – People make Place

**Helpline for anyone in need of help during the pandemic
01905 621123**

The line will be open 9.00am – 5.00pm every day
and will be manned by volunteers
Please also visit the websites:

allaboutombersley.com
or the parish council site: <https://www.odpc.co.uk>

GENERAL VILLAGE NEWS

Coronavirus - Protect Yourself and Others

OMBERSLEY & DOVERDALE DANCETHON

We would like to thank everyone who donated to our Just Giving page in aid of Worcester Acute NHS Hospitals Trust staff and patients. The Trust is under extreme pressure during the pandemic so the £700 raised will help save lives across Worcestershire.

By way of a bit of fun we asked people to submit a video of them and their families dancing during lockdown.

Thank you to those who sent in videos. These will appear on the 'All About Ombersley' web site within the next few days.

KEEP SAFE AND STAY HEALTHY

Lesley Welch and Marie Jones



Ombersley Church and School Fete

Sadly, as you will probably not be surprised to hear, this year's Fete will *not* be happening on Saturday 20th June. It is a great shame that we are not going to be able to gather together for our traditional afternoon of community 'fun and games' but, obviously, people's safety must be everyone's main concern.

Alongside the very important aspect of creating a joyful community event, the Fete provides a substantial contribution to St Andrew's running and renovation costs and, while the running costs will have been marginally reduced during the lockdown period, income from services has disappeared and renovation needs still persist. Every year we are so grateful for the generosity of village people giving their time and ingenuity to make the Fete happen and to those who come and spend freely on the day. This year, if you feel you could help to mitigate the loss that this represents to St Andrew's by offering a financial donation, it would be so much appreciated. This can be done on the new St Andrew's website www.st-andrews.church/donate

Ombersley School, too, our partners in the Fete for the last two years, will miss the boost to the Friends of Ombersley School's income which helps to provide the extra facilities and equipment to enhance the pupils learning that cannot be afforded from the normal school budget. If you would like to offer a donation to the School please look on their website for details

www.ombersley.worcs.sch.uk

Or go to their crowdfunding website which goes live on 7th June, this is the link:

<https://communityfund.calor.co.uk/ombersley-school-playing-field>

School are in the process of looking for funding and votes to develop the land given to them by the Ombersley Conservation Trust for a playground.

Thank you if you feel you can help in any way and we hope to be able to meet again on the Fete field before too long.

Ombersley Endowed First School



Our wonderful, dedicated staff have worked tirelessly to provide childcare for children of Key Workers and home learning for all families.

We are missing our Ombersley pupils and families and are reaching out to them in a variety of ways including a whole staff message on social media.

Pupils of Key Workers have had lots of fun at school including creating a Rainbow balloon arch and baking rainbow biscuits. We have dug up all the garden beds and have started planting flower seeds to brighten up the environment.

How strange it has been – our school feels very lonely without all of our Ombersley family attending. We really miss the children and are

enjoying seeing the examples of work they send us.

We can't wait to welcome all of the children back.

A Churchyard Sanctuary?

The responses I've had to my desire for a place of Sanctuary in St Andrew's Churchyard for folk to use, have been positive. A suggestion has been made that we have somewhere near the old Town Cross, while I would like to suggest inside the Lychgate, so that we have a Sanctuary Place near each gate to the Churchyard.

In each case we would simply need a Board put up, together with some drawing pins, so that folk could pin Prayer Suggestions there. It would also be good to have some small jam jars handy, together with some BATTERY t-lights, which folk could light and put inside a jar as they stop to think and pray.

Has anyone any other ideas or suggestions about this.... positive or negative?

Claire Gathercole

Sytchampton Endowed Primary School

The Summer Term has seen many changes at our school in addition to the challenges presented by Covid-19! At the end of the Spring Term, Mrs Sharon Williams retired as the headteacher after seven years of dedicated service. The school community was not able to give her the send off that we would have liked, but we wish her the very best and will hopefully find a way to celebrate with her when this is all over. Her successor, Mrs Amanda Richards, took up her post as Headteacher on the 20th April. Mrs Richards was previously the Deputy Headteacher at Westlands First School, just down the road, and is very excited to be taking on her first Headship.

Since the start of the Summer Term, the school has worked together with Kings Hawford School to provide ongoing childcare for key workers' children and vulnerable pupils. The staff working in school have been incredible and the schools are very much hoping to continue building on this partnership as we move forward. The remaining staff have been providing daily home learning for all of the other pupils using a learning platform called Seesaw. This enables staff to set activities and record videos of explanations and lessons. The children have responded incredibly well and have been busily uploading their work so that their teachers can then provide them with help and feedback. The entire school community have risen to the challenges that Covid 19 has brought and staff have been overwhelmed with how supportive families and carers have been.

New Typist/Magazine Layout person sought

I have been putting the magazine together for just about 10 years now and feel that it's time to move on..... Is anyone interested in taking over from me – the job is not too onerous now that we are mainly online – please consider doing it and contact me for more information.

Jane Hill hill4family@icloud.com

Ombersley Book Exchange in St Andrews Church

This has had to move! We now have a box with a selection of books on the bench in the Lychgate please do use it as a 'bookshelf' we will bring more out from the church as needed, but we are happy for exchanges or donations of books. There is a jar for donations of money as well. Enjoy this time for extra reading.

Ombersley and Doverdale Parish Council

Details of future meetings, together with agendas and minutes from Parish Council meetings and a series of other useful information can be found on the Parish Council's website – www.odpc.co.uk
The Clerk's contact details are also provided should you need to contact him.



Ombersley & Doverdale Tennis Club

has re-opened for play!

We are following strict Government & LTA Guidelines
Play is only permitted on the following basis:

- Pre-book your court
- Members of the same family
- Singles where Members are not from the same family
 - 1-1 Coaching
 - Clubhouse closed

For more information on how to book your Court, book a Public Court or take advantage of a special 'Half Yearly Membership' visit our website

<https://clubspark.lta.org.uk/ombersleydoverdaletennisclub>

Keep active, stay healthy, play tennis at Ombersley & Doverdale Tennis Club!

Those Pandemic Words

Now is the time to plan and pray and dream
We've got to reinvent ourselves again
Why should this **COVID** make our lives so lean?

A walk for exercise is what they mean
But **STAY ALERT**, have we made that quite plain?
Now is the time to plan and pray and dream.

And **TARGET, TEST & TRACE** Is their new theme
With the **R RATE** they aim to break the chain
Why should this **COVID** make our lives so lean?

SOCIAL DISTANCE with a good yard between
as you pass by, a **FACE MASK** is no strain.
Now is the time to plan and pray and dream.

Giving a hug is much more than it seems
It speaks of love, a life that's not in vain.
Why should this **COVID** make our lives so lean?

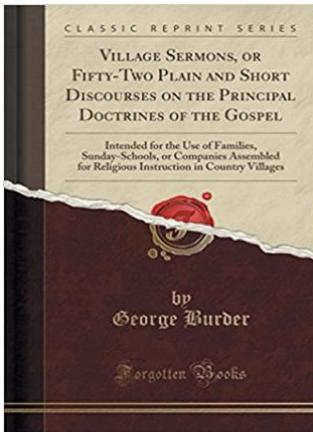
A cautious **ROAD MAP** is now in the stream
of daily news, our care is not in vain.
Now is the time to plan and pray and dream.
COVID beaten, we can our lives redeem.

© Claire Gathercole
May 10th 2020

Congregational Chapel - Ombersley

In 1672 a royal license was granted for a congregational teacher, to a dissenter, William Randall in his own house in Ombersley for the general promotion of morality and good order.

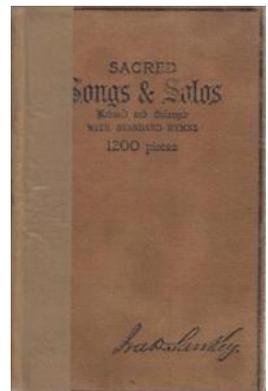
Many years later Mr Bartlett continued this “tradition” as a home missionary in Ombersley and in 1823 a room was opened for independent congregational meetings. It was the ‘daughter’ to Chapel of Angel Street, Worcester. By 1832 there was a schoolroom with 80 [Sunday] scholars.



The book of Burber’s Village Sermons formed the basis of the services which were based on plain and short discourse on the doctrines of the Gospels of Christ for village communities.

The Sankey-Moody hymnbook of evangelistic songs formed

the basis of the singing, often accompanied by harmonium (pump-organ). A form of doxology was used too, especially for the children - these were short hymns of praises to God.

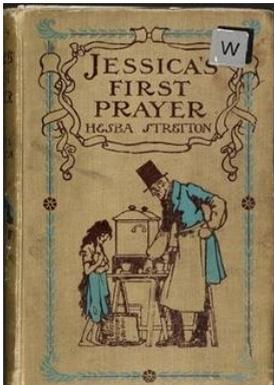


On 8th March 1854 two cottages, school-room and library, covered by one thatched roof across the whole premises, belonging to the

Congregational Dissenters were burnt to the ground – (Mr and Mrs Malpas north end cottage were saved from their beds by being pulled clear).

Later in 1854 the brick chapel, with stone window frames and caretaker's residence were constructed close-by "a short distance from the turnpike at the 6-mile milestone", paid for mainly by Thomas Rowley Hill, who held a number of public offices including Mayor of Worcester in 1859, on land given (according to village lore), by John Leek, the owner of the nearby cottages.

At Sunday school there were on occasions magic lantern displays of "Jessica's First Prayer", a very popular book of the day.



Like many children's tales of the time, the story has a strong moral message, based on Christian principles, and given authenticity by the author's own experiences working with children from Manchester slums. The girl of the title is homeless, abandoned in London by her alcoholic mother, but finds refuge in her regular visits to a coffee stall. Thanks to its

Methodist owner, Jessica discovers religion; in turn the coffee stall owner gains repentance through Jessica from his money-grabbing lifestyle.

In December 1858 a Mr Beasley of Worcester enthralled a gathering at the chapel with a phantasmagorian – showing "the wonders of the heavens and some of the earth".



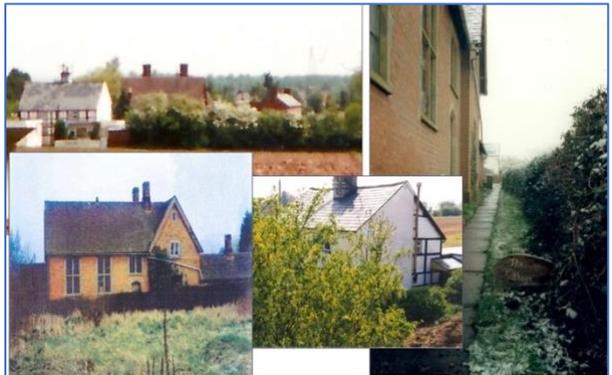
Phantasmagorian: -

A form of horror theatre that (among other techniques) used one or more magic lanterns to project frightening images such as skeletons, demons, and ghosts onto walls,

smoke, or semi-transparent screens, typically using rear projection to keep the lantern out of sight!

In 1859 there was the largest annual festival to that date on Whit Monday; 225 children in attendance! Prizes, cakes and entertainment abounded. In January 1901, a prize giving to 151 children with a celebration tea and entertainment was reported.

The superintendent, and it seems the driving force from 1831 to at least 1886, was Joseph Grainger who also helped set up the independent congregational chapel at Pole Elm,



Callow End, also a daughter church of Angel Street. It is reported that on some occasions he played the violin along with the hymns and songs. He was an overseer at Ombersley and a prominent Liberal.

The Sunday school remained well supported through the early 1900s. By 1990 when we moved into the northern Leek cottage the chapel was closed and finally demolished a few years later to make way for new houses in Long Headlands (along Chapel Lane).

In conversation with Basil Lamb

I chatted the other day with Basil Lamb, who once lived close-by at Spring Gardens, as had his grandmother. Basil's brother Brian and his wife (and some years later Basil's mother, Daisy) lived in the house attached to the back of the chapel. Brian was the chapel caretaker for 40 years. Records show that Brian did rather more than caretake; he dealt with insurance, building works, utilities and indeed all the practical running of the chapel. His paid work was elsewhere and for his services to the chapel he got accommodation, lighting and heating. He also kept an allotment to the south of the building, from which he sold produce.

When the preacher came for a service, he would prepare in their sitting room and take a cup of tea. A sort of family tradition . . . as Basil and Brian's great, great grandmother (a lady's-maid from Ombersley Court who had married a groundsman, family name Bourne), used to greet the preacher as he came into the village having walked from Worcester, often with his beard frozen in the winter weather – this was to the original chapel in the rooms opposite the Cross Keys.

Interestingly, there were two lamps and rows of white stones to mark the way along Chapel Lane.

Basil has a great recall of activities at the chapel when he was a boy: -

A Wednesday Guild known as The Sisterhood, where ladies met. In November there was a "Sale of Work" of knitting, paintings, embroidery et cetera, for chapel funds.

Mrs. Williams was a sort of superintendent, who also on Wednesdays walked around the village and its outskirts, visiting the sick and elderly and later in the day offered prayers in the chapel.

The Guild put together the Harvest Festival, the produce later being sold towards chapel funds. Basil recalls that as a youth of 17, he drove a tractor and trailer collecting produce for the harvest festival from local farms.

At Sunday School the children would take along "Sunday Club" money, which would be paid back to them in early December. Basil used his money to buy a new outfit and shoes for the new school term.

Rob Shipley

THE BARNSELY CHARITY

The Charities Committee Report sent to the Parish Council in 1895 listed just four categories, Church or Ecclesiastical, Lloyds or Educational, Pool or Dole and the private Amphlett Charity. There used to be other charities, including Barnsley's, and legacies dating back to the C17th. Our Parish now has only two charities. The Lloyd's Educational Foundation and the Sandys and Amphlett Charity, which is the result of the merger of Lord Sandys' Charity and the family run Amphlett Charity in 1959. This charity has been in abeyance for nearly forty years. There used to be other charities and legacies dating from the C17th century that were the responsibility of the parish and were usually managed by the churchwardens. By 1873 they totalled £1,479. That sum was then appropriated and used towards building the present Ombersley School by 1876. Lloyd's were supposed to pay interest at the prevailing Consul Rate. I have found no evidence that this was ever done. The Barnsley Charity may have disappeared in 1873 but it is possible that it was 'lost' before then.

By his Will dated 18th April 1730, Mr William Barnsley Esq., a citizen and clothier of London, left £250 to found his charity. The interest received was to be used to clothe poor boys of the parish and set them up as apprentices in London. After expenses, £236.70 (£236-14s-0p) was invested as Consuls, which yielded £7.08 per annum. The boys were to be selected by the Lord of the Manor of Ombersley and the vestry meeting. It is reasonable to suppose that Mr Barnsley

had made the transition from poor boy of Ombersley to prosperous citizen of London and wished to give others the same chance.

Nothing is known of the early years of the charity until 1765 when £85, the interest from 12th November 1753 to 31st January the following year, was received from solicitors Wilson and Peel. Of course, they had a bill, £7.70 of which was paid and £43.33 was paid to apprentice John Mitton. He was the first boy on record to have been helped by the charity. That left a balance of £33.97, which at some point was left with Lord Sandys (Edwin Sandys 1726-1797). He eventually repaid it to Revd. James Nash, the vicar of Ombersley 1771-1791, in 1788.

£53.12 was received for the period 1765 to 22nd December 1772 and £49.37 was used to apprentice Spencer Holliday. The balance remaining was £3.75.

£109.79 was received for 15 and a half years dividends to 31st March 1788 making a total of £113.54 and £44.77 was used to apprentice Thomas Field Burraston. The only Bussastons were the schoolmaster's family and he was certainly not 'on the Parish'.

£68.77 remained and from that money Thomas Sanders (a good Ombersley name) was apprenticed for £41.05, leaving a balance of £27.72. Also, that year Lord Sandys returned the money he had held since 1772 but most of it was used to settle unrecorded items, leaving just £9.22 to add to the balance.

The balance was put into the hands of Mr Wilson, a solicitor in Chancery Lane, London. He paid £10.39, of which £1.17 was loaned by Lord Sandys, to buy clothes for Samuel Higley. Samuel was then apprenticed.

Apprentice fee	£40
Indenture	1.57
Mr Wilson's troubles	1.05
ditto	0.33

There is no record of where the extra money needed to pay these bills came from.

Mr Wilson was replaced by Mr Grooms, who received the following:

Received of Mr Wilson	£6.01
Dividends to 1799	60.21
Dividends to 1803	28.33
Dividends to 1806	21.25

With this money Richard Palmer and George Knight were apprenticed.

Apprentice fees	£80
Postage	0.33
Mr Grooms bill	17.32
Clothes for Knight	1.25

It has long been said that the streets of London are paved with gold and the lure of the Capital to the young and ambitious is still very much with us. The accounts for those seven boys show a staggeringly high apprentice fee of £40. The children of those receiving relief had been a parish responsibility since 1601 and they could be made apprentices, both boys and girls. In the same era as the Barnsley cases, the fee was £1.50 if they stayed in the Parish and £2.20 if they went elsewhere. Even in the late C19th and early C20th Lloyds were only paying a £10 fee. Most poor boys were sons of farm labourers, who would be lucky to get 45p for a six-day working week. It was an opportunity for a better life not to be missed.

Little else is ever heard of the charity. At some date, the Consuls were sold at a loss and in 1827, £200 was invested in bonds issued by the Parish to pay for the new church. The bonds paid a dividend and could be redeemed. There is no evidence that either happened to the bonds the charity bought and there is no mention of it after 1827.

John Silvester

THE LONGHEADLAND ALLOTMENTS

If in recent weeks you have been maintaining your daily exercise regime by walking the footpaths around Ombersley you will have noticed a transformation of the Longheadland allotments. You will have seen very many people working them, in a Government approved manner of course, preparing the land for the beginning of the growing season.

It's not been like this for some time. Lloyds Educational Foundation, the allotments' owner, has struggled in recent years to find people to work these large plots. But the parish website **All About Ombersley** has changed all that. At the end of January several people came forward after two postings on its Facebook page and decided that working a plot was the thing for them. It was only later that they found they had a lot of time to spend on their plot, in an approved lockdown activity.



It feels that the allotments have been here for ever, and they have certainly existed for well over a century. A local historian tells us that the Charities Committee reported on the Ombersley Charities to the Parish Council in 1895. At that time the Longheadland allotments were operated by the Poors or Dole charity and is recorded as 6.5 acres (we have about 8 acres

now). After the present Ombersley School was built in 1873 the income was diverted to what became the Lloyds Educational Foundation, a longstanding local charity, which had built the school. It is believed that the land itself was passed on to Lloyds in the 1920s, and the charity still endows our two village schools, partly from the allotment rents.

Another longstanding resident has said that around the time of the second World War most of the allotments were tended by the many farm labourers in the village. They could feed their families and supplement their incomes with what they grew on their plots. This may be why our allotments are so much larger than their counterparts in towns. This resident also said that a condition of having an allotment was that the holder was expected to attend Church on a Sunday! Not much chance of getting an allotment should the same condition prevail these days, from what is known of the present allotmentees.

The current headcount of plot holders is 24, all of whom work hard to "grow their own", and try not to share too much with the local crows (who love newly germinated beans), pigeons (brassica leaves), rabbits (onion tops), blackbirds (redcurrants) and badgers (who adore sweetcorn). Muntjac appear from time to time to browse the purple

sprouting broccoli and our latest villain is a pair of marauding pheasants, who appear to rival the pigeons in their love of cabbage. Despite all this, we plot holders usually manage to grow enough to feed ourselves and share with others. If this appeals to you, then for the first time in years there is a waiting list! If any plots become available, the wonderful **All About Ombersley** website (allaboutomersley.com) will be the first to let you know.

Rob Brett

A Covid Chronicle

As we entered lock-down and exercise was limited to an hour's walk per day, I began to photograph the details of our lovely local countryside on our daily walk along the lanes and footpaths surrounding Ombersley. It was reassuring to see how the seasons and the associated farming activities were continuing their normal rhythm, even as our own daily routines had been so radically altered. This small selection of pictures shows some of the wonderful scenery around our village plus the work that our local farmers are doing to help feed us all in these new and challenging times. Although 8 weeks may seem a long time to be "Confined to Barracks", a lot has happened around us already; bare trees are now fully in leaf, bluebells have come and gone, so has the May blossom. Bare earth is yielding crops – some already harvested. I have walked paths and seen places in the last few weeks I haven't visited before in all the time I've lived here; the weather has been a bonus too, so my chronicle will continue for a while yet.



St Andrews and Ombersley Court from Turnmill



Boreley Lane in early April



Early Spring Onions, Boreley



Ready for market



all prepared and planted



symmetrical potatoes



St Andrews from Parsonage Lane



Turnmill in the late afternoon

Barrie Fischer

THE JOY OF READING

I have just finished reading the last book in the “Anne of Green Gables” series. As no doubt many of you know, the children’s book “Anne of Green Gables” was written by L.M.Montgomery. Lucy Maud Montgomery was a Canadian author best known for a series of novels beginning in 1908 with “Anne of Green Gables”. The book was an immediate success. Anne Shirley, an orphaned girl made



L.M.Montgomery famous in her life-time and gave her an international following. The stories are set on Prince Edward Island, Canada’s smallest maritime province, situated off New Brunswick and Nova Scotia in the Gulf of St. Lawrence. Charlottetown, the capital, features throughout the books as do the lighthouses, fertile land and spectacular scenery.

Michael Portillo visited Prince Edward Island in his great Canadian journeys with his 1899 Appleton’s Guide Book. He followed the “Anne” trail and saw the brilliantly preserved house with the green shutters and gables, immortalized by the story of the red-haired orphan. Incidentally, the book has sold over 50 million copies and has been made into a television series and a film. Michael Portillo then travelled to the Confederation Theatre in Charlottetown where the stage version has been performed for 55 consecutive years. It is the world’s longest-running annual theatre production.

Michael Portillo attended some of the rehearsals and met some of the many women who had starred in the lead role. My Mother would have so enjoyed this episode on the television. It was she who bequeathed to me the “Anne” novels which she had kept and cherished all her life. Some she had bought herself while others had been given to her as birthday and Christmas presents as a child. Each book she had carefully covered in hessian and had embroidered the title on the front. Over the years, the books have been read and re-read by both of us.

“Rilla of Ingleside”, the 8th book and the last in the series has prompted me to write this article. The book covered the period of the 1914-1918 war when Anne’s boys were of the age to enlist in the Canadian Army and join forces with the British. The fears, loneliness and uncertainty during that time struck a chord with our current situation. One observation in the book stood out which seemed very apt indeed:

You can face anything you know.

But a beleaguerment of fear and doubt and surprise.
Is a hard thing for the morale.

However, a true spirit of fortitude, determination and hope was the prevailing message throughout and left you feeling inspired to doggedly carry on.

I intend to start next on "My Complete Short Stories of Sherlock Holmes".

What would we do without our books!

Valerie Harris

Book Review

'Erebus' - The Story of a Ship by Michael Palin

The author will probably need no introduction having appeared in numerous films and TV programmes such as Monty Python, A Fish called Wanda and his popular travel documentaries. It is possibly less well known that he was President of the Royal Geographical Society 2009-2012.

In 2013, whilst researching a lecture on Joseph Hooker who ran the Royal Botanic Gardens in Kew for much of the 19th Century, the author discovered that Hooker had in 1839, aged just 22, travelled as assistant surgeon on a four-year expedition to Antarctica on a ship called HMS Erebus. Delving further, he realised what a remarkable history lay with this ship. The Antarctic trip had been a triumph, but in 1846 the same vessel along with her sister ship, HMS Terror, and 129 men vanished whilst trying to find the elusive Northwest Passage in the Arctic region.

Many books have been written about Antarctic and Arctic explorations, but this book is somewhat different in that it is written about the exploration vessel and her history rather than an individual explorer or expedition. It covers the building of the ship in Pembroke, her launch in 1826 and her epic voyages: to glory in Antarctica for Captain James Clark Ross, 'the handsomest man in the navy', charting the Great Southern Barrier, and then her later voyage with the troubled John Franklin. He, aged 59, commanded the ship on its final disastrous expedition when all on board the Erebus and the Terror died whilst rescue missions desperately tried to reach them.

The mystery remains regarding the final voyage of the Erebus, and so it is no surprise that the bulk of this book deals with her successful trip to Antarctica, as for this, more records exist. Nevertheless tantalising clues have been discovered in the Arctic over the years, both from Inuit contacts and scattered artefacts. Then in 2014, somewhat unexpectedly, off King William Island, the wreck of the Erebus was found, followed by that of the Terror in 2016.

Exploration of the wrecks continue when conditions allow during the brief Arctic summer. Conditions do not always allow access as, with climate warming, the Victoria Strait is not uncommonly blocked by ice floes. Indeed, the author was disappointed to be unable to reach the wreck sites due to ice blocking his route, whilst researching this book.

Why did I read this book?

Partly because it was a gift, but one given because we have been fortunate in our lives to be given the opportunity to travel to both Antarctica and the Northwest Passage. As it happens we were on the Russian sister ship to the one Michael Palin travelled to the Arctic in, both rather basic but thankfully reinforced and stable ships. Both trips were amazing experiences which nurtured a fascination with the history of polar exploration and profound admiration for those who undertook such perilous journeys into the then unknown. It has always intrigued me as to what kind of person would undertake such a journey and why. I was pleased this book delves in some depth into the various personalities on board the Erebus and the complex interpersonal relationships that must exist on such voyages. It also highlights the strong and persuasive personality of Lady Franklin, who never tired of searching for her husband and his crew. Imagine being in 'lockdown' for several years with the same men on a small boat, and enduring months of darkness in freezing temperatures with limited resources and little chance of rescue when things go wrong. Even double pay for the crew does not seem ample recompense! Overall, this is a meticulously researched book. I particularly liked the fact that the author had visited, or attempted to, the various sites and destinations. The book is also an eminently readable one, in a relaxed style interspersed with the author's personal comments and

occasional witticisms. Perhaps, my only slightly negative comments are that pull-out or fly leaf maps would have been helpful, as I found myself frequently flicking back and forth to locate the appropriate maps within the text. I was also left desirous of more information regarding the discoveries on the wrecks and what they tell us, but perhaps it is only fair that this story is left for those modern-day divers risking their lives in exploration to tell us.

Footnotes:

‘Erebus’ in classical mythology means ‘Son of Chaos’ and refers to the dark heart of the underworld, which considering her fate and that of her last crew may seem apt.

If you happen to read this and enjoy it then may I also recommend the following books:

‘Endurance’ by Alfred Lansing, which tells the true story of Shackleton’s incredible journey and rescue in 1914 in Antarctica. Although factual, this reads like an adventure novel, and although history means we know the outcome, one nevertheless feels part of the struggle for survival.

‘This Thing of Darkness’ by Harry Thompson, a novel but true to historical facts, which relates the story of Robert Fitzroy, who whilst captain of HMS Beagle in 1828 befriended his passenger Charles Darwin. Sadly, whilst one went on to triumph and fame, the other’s life ended in disaster. A hefty novel but well worth the effort.

Finally, I will share the attribution from ‘Endurance’ with you:

‘In appreciation for whatever it is that makes men accomplish the impossible’.

Sue Collier

Life in the Time of Corona

I used to love visiting my gran when I was a young boy. Why? Because she gave me Corona. Corona, the pop that is. Fizzy carbonated water filled with artificial flavours. It was delivered to your door by the Corona Man. My absolute favourite was Dandelion and Burdock. Black with a hint of licorice. Tasty and went well with the Sunday roast!

Another fizzy liquid delivered to your door was beer. If you are a certain age you might remember the slogan "Beer at home means Davenport's". I remember the smell of malted hops as you drove past the old Birmingham Accident Hospital situated in Bath Row, Birmingham, close by the brewery. Of course, there *is* a Corona beer, not Davenports nor delivered to your home. Originally brewed in Mexico and served with a wedge of lime or lemon in the neck of the bottle it is reputed to be the world's best selling beer- at least before the current problem. Sales in America are down by 30% and I wonder if the company applied pressure to change the name of the virus. See that scalloped metal closure on the top of your glass beer bottle? The one the tough guy in the movies used to bite off? It's called a crown cap.

Why is that relevant? It's the word corona. Derived from the Latin *corone* it means crown and entered the English language sometime in the 16th century. *Corona* actually translates as "The Crown". It has many variations in different languages. I could even use the typeface called corona to write this on my Smith Corona typewriter.

In the days when smoking was acceptable there was a cigar called a corona. It is a straight cigar with a rounded top (in your mouth), about 14cm long. Shorter versions are available.

In architecture, a corona is the rounded part of a cornice. The Corona at the East end of Canterbury Cathedral contains the shrine of Thomas Becket, Archbishop of Canterbury, who was murdered by followers of Henry II in 1170. Many other churches have a different form of corona. It is said that a corona is the circle of clergy or singers who surround the altar and is possibly the origin of the word choir. You could drive to church to hear the corona in Corona City, California in your Toyota Corona, a car produced in the early 1960s.

Corona is an island kingdom and the birthplace of Rapunzel in the cartoon film *Tangled* made in 2010 by Disney. Definitely something to share with small children whilst in lock-down.

Another island corona is the eighth and highest level in the computer game *Super Mario Sunshine* for those looking for another way out of self-isolation. Why not go on a virtual quest with the becaped and moustachioed plumber to Corona Mountain and score maximum points?

In astronomy a corona is the aura of very hot plasma surrounding the sun, most easily seen during a solar eclipse. There are other uses of the word to describe similar phenomena in the physical world.

I think we all now know how the coronavirus virus got its name, pictures are everywhere, although you can only see its crown shape at extreme magnification. The common cold is another coronavirus. Hence the change of name to Covid-19 to allow more specific identification and hopefully treatment and prevention by some means.

So, in this time of self or mutual isolation why not settle down with a glass of fizz, a good cigar (other forms of less harmful substances are available), boot up Netflix and watch an episode of "The Crown"?

A. Non

Were you at Ombersley school in 1951?

Were you in Mrs Watkins' Class or Mrs Styles Class or have a sibling there? Arthur Turner would like to name all the class before handing the photos on to the school for their archive. Please get in touch with either Arthur or one of the editors to let us know who the gaps in the names are.... We have the rest of the school photos for that year as well and when space allows, we will put them in as well.



Row (1) L to R **Mr T Styles**, Margaret Sykes, Dave Marshall, Richard Bush, Mary Wilton, Joyce Nicholls, Valerie Baker, Bill Arnold, C Plant, Pamela Haugh, **Mrs Watkins**

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Please note that from now on, content should be sent by email to BOTH Lynne and Maureen. Items that cannot be sent by email should be delivered to either Lynne or Maureen. Judy Baer will still be part of the editorial team.

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