

LILLINGTON LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY

LILLINGTON IN LOCKDOWN

“It hasn’t all been doom and gloom.”

Reflections and memories of the pandemic by local Warwickshire people.

Spring 2021



LILLINGTON IN LOCKDOWN - WHAT IS IT?

Lillington in Lockdown is an archive of personal memories and thoughts. It was written by Lillington residents during February 2021, almost a year after the first measures to combat Covid 19 came into force.

Lillington is on the north eastern side of Leamington Spa, in Warwickshire. Much of the parish consists of private and Council properties developed after the Second World War. The ancient heart of the village is still there: the parish church and Manor House, but the village school is now a row of houses, the pub is a small supermarket and the former police station a dental practice.

The original request for contributions suggested an article of 50-100 words, but it soon became clear that many people wanted to say much more, and the 'ceiling' was dropped. Everything they wrote has been included.

The themes range from descriptions of individual coping strategies, to general reflections on the pandemic, and to highly personal and emotional accounts.

If there is a common thread, it is one of loneliness.

The Lillington Local History Society is most grateful to all those who contributed, and shared their thoughts and images with us.

Chris Rhodes Editor



Image Richard Taulbut

ON REFLECTING OVER THE LAST YEAR, I CONSIDER MYSELF VERY LUCKY

I have tried to get one over the Covid Virus by keeping busy.

I am lucky that I have Family History and Local History to keep my mind active. I don't bother about holidays anyway so I'm not missing out on them. I like where I live. I have been amazed by the amount of people walking past our house this year, and the amount of people going for their Covid tests at the centre just down from our house.

At the start of the first lockdown, I got on with growing my seeds that I had collected from the year before, and that was strange I had never bothered to harvest seeds in previous years, but was really glad that I had. The garden was a joy.



The sun was well and truly on our side, and I was really happy in the garden and I didn't let my old back problems get in the way.

When the weather changed and the Covid virus was still challenging the human race, I turned back to my history. Lots of filing needed doing as I collect everything to do with our home town and surroundings.

I haven't quite finished all the filing yet, (there is always tomorrow).

The one thing I can say is, I haven't been bored, and I feel very lucky.

I do feel a lot of sadness for other people's loss.

At 74 I have had my Vaccine. I am grateful for that.

Mary Kelly



Top image Peter Coulls. Lower images Mary Kelly

THIS WAS THE YEAR

This was the year the bells fell silent,
the year the doors closed,
and the communion rail gathered dust.
It was the year that singing stopped
and the organ no longer played
The year that no one said: "I do".
But it was also the year when
worship went online,
when people joined us from around the UK,
Europe and even Australia.
It was the year when we sang a new song,
reminded ourselves about neighbours,
about going more slowly and writing a letter.
We put our Christmas trees in the churchyard
hung our prayers in the Lych Gate,
phoned each other,
enjoyed table fellowship from afar
and were reminded that a church
is so much more than just a building.

William Smith (Vicar of St Mary Magdalene)



Image: St Mary Magdalene Lillington

LILLINGTON IN LOCKDOWN 2020-2021: MEMORIES

Foot fractures sustained before the start of Lockdown no. 1 whilst I was searching for the last toilet rolls in town.

The Spring silence interrupted only by birdsong, children's laughter and the footsteps of people taking their one hour of exercise per day.

The absence of the sound of St Mary Magdalene Church bells.



The gratitude for the government emergency food package delivered after my first three weeks of shielding at home.

The pleasure of conversations with friends at an appropriate social distance over my garden gate.

The night-time glow of the outdoor Christmas Tree Festival 2020 lights at St Mary Magdalene Church.

The relief of receiving my first Pfizer/BioNTech Covid-19 vaccination on 29th January 2021.

IMAGE :GOVERNMENT EMERGENCY FOOD PACKAGE DURING LOCKDOWN NO. 1 - IZABELLA TOPOLINSKA

LOCKDOWN LESSONS

I've learned to do the weekly shop on the Internet, but not quite ... This week I got two kilos of courgettes instead of just two items.

I've learned to talk to the family in New Zealand via WhatsApp but not quite... They seem to be always in the middle of breakfast when I call.

I've learned to remember my mask when going for hospital appointments, but not quite... I am always too early and have to go back to the car and wait.

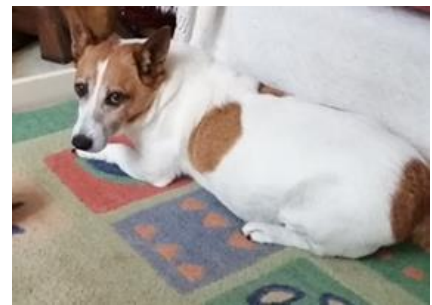
I've learned to wear my mask in Leamington, but not quite.... Because it always steams up and I can't see a thing.

I'll never learn – not to miss coffee with friends, browsing in a bookshop, or being with the family for high days and holidays.



OH, WE ARE IN LOCKDOWN

Oh, we are in Lockdown I'm really feeling glum
Cannot get together and meet with an old chum,
Two can sit in the park, if it's warm enough
And chat about this and that and lots of other stuff.
It isn't quite the same though as sitting in a café
With warm fingers and toes, having quite a laugh.
The coffee from the takeaway goes cold so quickly too,
At least it warms our fingers up while sipping at our brew.
Then after an hour of socialising we can no longer remain
Chilled to the bone we head for home to isolate once again,
My sole companions are my dog, rabbit and cat,
At least I have their company and am grateful for that,
So I'll carry on walking the dog and eating far too much It's true
Until this madness is over what else is there to do.
There are books to read, letters to write I know
Somehow they're not inspiring me because I'm feeling low,
I need some motivation something to lift this mood,
I'll head into the kitchen, it's where I keep the FOOD.



Snoopy

RECOLLECTIONS OF THE COVID PANDEMIC: February 2021

We are shielding my Mum who is extremely clinically vulnerable, so we've been very cautious and take extreme measures to prevent the virus coming into the home.

Almost all our shopping is delivered.

Anything that is non-perishable goes into the boot of the car for several days.

Everything perishable is sprayed with antibacterial spray or emptied out of its outer wrapping or box before even coming into the house.

I set up a quarantine system for post and we didn't touch it for 2 days. My Mum even has to read out of date newspapers!



Quarantine system for the post

I didn't want to wear disposable masks or visors because there was such a shortage within the NHS and also because of the environmental impact –



So we made homemade masks out of scraps of fabric and elastic. I did buy a ridiculous hat on ebay with a waterproof plastic veil because I was so paranoid about not being exposed to the virus. I wore it a few times to go into town and felt very silly.



Home made masks



The biggest change was that I had to work from home, and had to very quickly learn how to host Zoom meetings and then teach others. It is hard to imagine that less than a year ago I'd never heard of Zoom.

I've really enjoyed working from home – the flexibility to get a cuppa, put the washing on, play some music and not have to commute has been liberating. My employer was well set up for flexible home working right from the beginning and in the last 11 months I have only been into the office a handful of times.

The biggest issue is separating home and work life and it's really hard to be disciplined and just stop when your work day finishes.....and yes I have done a zoom call with a smart shirt top and my pyjama bottoms!

The pandemic has been extremely tough at times – not being able to see family face to face, not being able to do my normal hobbies and socialise with other people.

However, there have been some amazing benefits:

- I have got to know all my neighbours and we have become a real community helping each other out with shopping, gardening tips and real friendship which has been wonderful. The children painted and shared some lovely rainbows with everyone.
- I have reconnected with family in USA who we used to telephone maybe a few times a year – but now we zoom regularly.
- I'm also zooming with a group of friends who live all across the country and we are taking it in turns to teach each other how to cook our favourite dishes which has added real variety to our meals. I taught them all how to make a cheese soufflé.
- Nationally there is a renewed appreciation of the work of Carers, Nurses and Doctors, and many more who serve our communities.

Images CM



The 20/21 LOCK-DOWN

Thinking especially of the many lives lost, the NHS people working so very hard, the key workers keeping us fed etc. Capt. Tom Moore . My gratitude to everyone.

MARCH 14th 2020 I travelled to my youngest daughter's grave, which is in Wolvercote cemetery Oxford. I had ordered from the internet a couple of good quality masks, which I picked up from the post office in Leamington on my way to Oxford. I wore my mask on the train and on the bus to the cemetery. I decided to go to the Primark shop in Oxford. The shop had moved to a huge new shopping mall. There were thousands of people there. Amazingly not one person took any notice of me or laughed, bearing in mind, the wearing of masks was extremely unusual at the time. I only saw four young Japanese people wearing masks in the thousands of people that were there.

MARCH 23rd 2020 If I remember correctly, this is the date of the official start of the lock-down. As with many others I couldn't get a Tesco delivery slot at first. Luckily, I had a well-stocked freezer and store cupboard, and very kindly a friend and my neighbour brought me some milk for my many cups of tea. ☕

The weather for April and May was amazingly perfect. Every day, warm, sunny and airy. I have always taken every meal and tea break in the garden, so I decided to set a routine of taking a coffee at 11am every morning.



As I wouldn't be seeing anyone, I decided that my large collection of old clothes would be very useful. 😊 Luckily, as I have my sewing machine here, I was able to convert Laura Ashley floral cotton curtains and X2 good quality single duvets (that I had been given) into X2 double duvets. Other single sheets were converted. As I buy most of my dresses from eBay (and these sometimes need altering) the sewing machine was put into good use.

I loved being in the garden. No planes overhead, flying hither and thither all over the world I am delighted to say. In the future I decided that I wouldn't go out every day (by bus) as I had in the past but I would spend more time at home in the garden. Being in the garden was lovely, it was the first time that I had really looked at it, and so I decided to do a bit of a redesign. I had extra trellis put across the bottom of the garden, creating a 'room' at the bottom through the archway. I also had a Leylandi tree cut down.

In Summer I had lots of groups of friends round in the garden, social distancing. Every day my eldest daughter and my 'man friend, I can't say boyfriend as he is nearly 80, ring me up for a chat.

In general, the lock-down has been fine for me as it has given me time to completely sort out the house and to throw away and sort a lot of paperwork. I live alone, but I seem to be busy every day. I like cooking, gardening etc. And I am SO looking forward to Spring 🌷🌷

I consider myself very lucky to have a house and garden in these unusual times. I feel content at home and I have made patience my watch-word. This also applies to an (out of reach), beeping smoke alarm that has been going for the past three months! Yes, those Duracell batteries do last twice as long. 😊 😊

I feel very much for people in some of their awful circumstances over the past year.

Sharon (McCarten) *Image Sharon*

LOCKDOWN MEMORIES

I stood in the garden in glorious warm sunshine on the morning of Sunday 5 April. There were several early butterflies and a Song Thrush was singing, but something was missing. No church bells.

14 April 2020, as I was walking down Lime Avenue, I heard a little voice calling to me. I looked to my left to see a little boy, perhaps four years old, standing inside his house by an open window. He called out, "It's my birthday today." He obviously couldn't share it with friends or grandparents so I was the next best thing. He told me his name and I wished him a very happy birthday. I hoped that others would do so too.

At the far end of our garden we have a small colony of Speckled Wood butterflies. They are there by succession from April to October. One of my daily lockdown tasks was to keep a record of sightings and numbers. The first emerged on 16 April and the last was recorded on 19 October 2020.



One of the small delights during lockdown was to spend some time looking at the wild flowers in St. Mary Magdalene's Churchyard. There was an abundance of Meadow Saxifrage, (*Saxifraga Granulata*) which grows particularly well along the top edge of the wall along Church Lane.

Richard Dinsdale

TIME STOPPED : LOCKDOWN CONVERSATIONS

Excerpts from conversations in the family in the week before lockdown.

... I've put the deposit on the new car, it'll be ready to collect Tuesday 17th March.

The car was finally collected on 16th June.

.... We've Just heard, we are nearing completion on the sale of our house. They think it will be end of next week the 20th or maybe the following week. Our vendors are dragging their feet. (In fact, they withdrew from the sale with lockdown.)

The completed house sale took place 20th June and they finally moved in their permanent home two weeks before Lockdown 2.

....We've got that concert next month. We should think about booking train tickets to London soon. The concert was at first postponed for 13 months and later cancelled completely.

THE POLISH CHAPEL IN LEAMINGTON IN LOCKDOWN 2020-2021



As the Polish parish treasurer, I never expected to ever have to prepare Coronavirus risk assessments for the Leamington Spa Polish Chapel and to purchase personal protective equipment (PPE) for our stewards. It was quite a challenge to find rolls of black and yellow adhesive hazard tape to mark out a one way system and 'no access' areas, hundreds of disposable 3-ply face masks and litres of 70% alcohol hand gel at vastly inflated prices in June 2020. Once the end of the first Covid-19 lockdown was announced this had to be done online, at great speed from my desk at home in Lillington, to allow the parishioners to return to the Chapel at the end of June - firstly for private prayer and later to attend Mass.

After months of watching live-streamed Masses online from the end of March 2020, it was wonderful to be able to attend Mass in person and receive Communion from the beginning of August when my shielding process ended. Covid-19 restrictions were eased for a few months. The second lockdown started at the beginning of November and congregational worship was banned once more. Despite a campaign by faith leaders to keep places of worship open during lockdown, there was no attendance at Mass until the Feast of St. Nicholas on 6th December 2020. The Christmas celebrations were joyous but felt subdued. The Polish parish was not able to host its traditional Christmas Eve supper. Congregational singing was not allowed and was replaced by recordings of Polish Christmas carols during Mass.

New Year 2021 brought a third Covid-19 lockdown along with another Department of Health e-mail regarding my shielding instructions which will continue until 31st March 2021. Fortunately, congregational worship was permitted to continue during lockdown conditions this time. All being well, I hope to be able to return to the Polish Chapel again in time for Easter... *Izabella Topolińska*



Chapel Interior: IT

WHAT I DID'T LIKE ABOUT COVID LOCKDOWN

I had to sit in a chair at least an hour and not be able to move while I was at school. I was bored at home and I like going to school. BUT I had lots of free time to play. I can eat lots of treats. *Elsie aged 8*

I don't like it when I don't go to places that are fun and I don't go to nice places called Soft Play. BUT I get to see my new teacher Mrs S***** because I was allowed to go to school during the 3rd lockdown. I get to stay with Mummy at home and I love her. *Daisy aged 6*

YOUTH WORK IN LOCKDOWN

I work at Lillington youth centre for Targeted Youth Support. We had our final open access youth club meeting in mid-March 2020. A sad time, as we had two very busy evenings each week which the young people relied on. We have not been open since. We became Saturday morning TV hosts for one evening as the junior club staff provided a live Facebook & Instagram on-line youth group. We tried to educate the young people as best as we could in this new world, but the main advice was “Wash your hands.”



All staff were then informed we could not be in the centre itself so we had to stop our ‘live’ broadcasts. We then moved to zoom youth clubs for a couple of months, where the uptake was OK, but nowhere near the numbers we engaged with in normal times.

The staff were doing this from their homes. It was hard having to work from home and it impacted on mental health and wellbeing. Youth workers are ‘people’s people’, not having that in person engagement was a struggle.

Our staff teams were instructed to re-start detached youth work, engaging with young people in parks, on the street and any other areas. The consensus view from other agencies, reflected a worry that teenagers would be gathering in large numbers. We covered Lillington, South Leamington, Sydenham, Whitnash and Warwick. During these times of lockdown, we found the teenage population to be very respectful of the rules. It was mostly those in their 20s who we found to be flouting the rules with large gatherings, drinking alcohol and smoking cannabis.

The summer was very busy. We engaged with many individuals and built on the relationships we had made with young people from April onwards. A concern in the beautiful weather was the gathering of up to fifty young people at a bridge in St. Nicholas Park, Warwick. Some of the young people were under the influence, most were not. Lots of the young people would be climbing along the bridge rails and then jumping into the river Avon once they reached the middle. We shared our concerns with partner agencies.

We experienced some very worrying times for vulnerable young people who we managed to safeguard from adult male predators. It seemed the virus had presented an opportunity for such people to prey on young people as they were not having the same level of positive adult intervention and safeguards in school, youth clubs, sports clubs, gyms, cadets, youth theatre and the other such places young people would attend. Some young people are also vulnerable to being exploited by drug gangs coming from bigger cities, known as ‘county lines’.

The young had had all their social structures and coping strategies removed. This would lead to a rise in poor mental health locally and nationally in our youth but we have maintained our one hundred and one face to face contact either in school outside, in the garden, going for a walk or virtually.

Gary Timlin

LOCKDOWN 1 (and 2 and 3 and...)

Having lived in Coventry during the 1970s with constant power cuts and various food shortages, I've always made it a policy of keeping my pantry, freezer and food cupboards topped up before winter sets in.

As we were on holiday in Vietnam at the end of December 2019, we found out immediately about the new virus that was causing havoc in China! We all agreed, as we arrived back home in mid-January, that it would not be long before we, too, would be living under restrictions and with Brexit probably soon to create even more hassle I exhorted my family to be prepared!

We 'locked down' early as my husband has 'dodgy' lungs. I listed my food stocks determined not to enter supermarkets or other shops for many weeks. People told us to go online but we couldn't get a slot. I decided that neither of our sons nor their spouses should do our shopping for us. If I wasn't prepared to risk infection then nor should they and besides, one set of Grandchildren also had lung problems and the other spouse was about to give birth!

William has always had an allotment, so we had lots of produce in store and fresh greens were still growing. The first lockdown involved replanning the plot as he'd lost a third to road-widening in February 2020. By April it was the 'hungry gap' and as fresh produce would not be ready until late May we tried 'substitutes'! Chives for spring onions, Jack-by-the-hedge for lettuce but Fat Hen in large quantities caused interesting digestive problems as, although it is very like spinach, it contains a lot of oxalic acid! There are always plenty of nettles and the soup it made was a lovely colour but a bit tasteless.

I make chutneys, sauces, jellies and preserves. So once tomatoes and fruits appeared, I made batches for 'next time' and gave some away as presents, along with surplus produce. The ornamental red street apples that grow all over Lillington make superb jelly!

The freezer held fish, meat, William's vegetables and hard- and soft-fruit. Fish or meat was eaten three times a week and the other four we were vegetarian anyway. Eggs came from a neighbour, bread and milk from our local newsagent, the only shop I entered once a week for a newspaper and naughty cake treats!

Being the world's worst bread-maker, my old Bero baking book gave us milk bread and another really helpful book was the Victory Cookbook based on Marguerite Patten's wartime recipes, full of hints, using every possible substitute to make meals more interesting. I also learnt to make yoghurt and, as my Italian cookbook used polenta, I decided to learn how to make it successfully and, together with our onions, olive oil, tinned tomatoes and cheese we took to the Italian diet!

After 15½ weeks I decided, 'masked up' and hands gelled, to brave the supermarket's one-way system and plastic checkout safety screens for the first time! Unlike many people we actually lost weight! At least my re-emergence did not mean shopping in the dark, with a candle night-light attached to the holder on the trolley handle which I remember from 1970s Coventry!

Dearne Jackson

SPRINGTIME WALKS

As difficult as the first lockdown of 2020 was for everyone, many people found solace in being able to get outside and enjoy the glorious spring weather.

Last April I started walking regularly across the fields at the back of my house between Lillington/Cubbington and Offchurch and this became one of my favourite lockdown walks. Some days I would walk to Redhouse Farm and back over Campion Hills, other days I would walk to Redhouse Farm and across to Newbold Comyn, or continue on across the river towards Offchurch. Whichever route I took, I would always come to The Runghills, a small square of ancient woodland, and observed how it changed over time.



One of my first visits to The Runghills was in early April when the woodland floor was carpeted with spring flowers – yellow celandines, white wood anemones and a hint of blue from the emerging bluebells.



Along the edge of the wood, the blackthorn was flowering, and the hedges and trees were clothed in fresh, green leaves. As April progressed the woodland floor was a haze of blue, and by May cow parsley and hawthorn blossomed along the hedgerows, and buttercups appeared in the fields.

My walks usually took place during the afternoon or, as the days lengthened, during the evening, but in early May I got up very early a couple of times and headed out just as the sun was coming up to enjoy the dawn chorus – the very best time of day. By June, the first lockdown had been lifted and we were all able to venture further afield for our daily exercise and finally meet up with family and friends, but I'm so looking forward to being able to retrace my steps to The Runghills when spring arrives once more.

Text and images Denise Watson

RED LIGHT 'TRAFFIC' SYSTEM AT TESCO

Shoppers queuing, and waiting until the light over the door changes to green and it's safe to enter the store.



MENTAL HEALTH AND LOCKDOWN

Almost 20 years ago I had a career-ending breakdown followed by two years of depression, medication, and very gradual recovery.



In 2019, having learnt that South Cubbington Ancient Woodland (Cubby Wood) was to be very badly affected by HS2 works, I joined the Tree Protection camp which entailed me spending far longer within the wood and, gradually, during Autumn 2019, I began to change. My anxiety disappeared, I began writing songs and poems about Ancient Woodland and, at the same time, found out as much history of the wood as I could.

In March 2020, when the camps were finally evicted, anxiety returned so I kept campaigning through social media. Then came lockdown and I gradually became aware of an overwhelming feeling of dread. By July I realised that the warning signs of another serious depression had begun. My doctors (via telephone consultation) agreed to my participation in a local Ecotherapy group. This wonderful group met outside and, as well as talking things through, we took part in all sorts of creative activities and wildlife themed projects.

We can't meet outside now until the rules change but, since last year, we've been using Zoom meetings and Facebook live streams to support each other. Another major element of our joint support has been our WhatsApp group of about 45. We know that the strength of the group lies in trust and openness. If a person is troubled, they say so by messaging, others will respond, keep in contact, suggest strategies, and ensure that no one feels alone. The group is now part of my life, I've made some good friends and I have a greater understanding now of what I must do to keep on an even keel!

For too long I kept my mental health issues to myself. Sharing them has been liberating. Remember, many of us have found lockdown difficult. Never ever think you are alone. Find someone to confide in and you'll find, as the saying goes, 'A problem shared is a problem halved!'

Will Jackson

Image Bing

ZOOM

The Society has benefited from being 'forced' into virtual meetings via Zoom. Thanks to Richard Taulbut's technical expertise, we have still been able to meet through a shared screen. We have also doubled the number of newsletters and ran a successful Christmas Challenge of collected memories, poems and stories. Our members have written an increasing number of articles summarizing their research. The Society is in good heart.

LILLINGTON IN LOCKDOWN

In March 2020 we travelled back from the railway station on a bus and were somewhat amused by an elderly lady seated near us who had covered her face with her scarf. Little did we realise that face coverings would become the new norm. Did you find yourself questioning why isn't that person wearing a mask when most of us were? We had all been told that Coronavirus would be like a bout of flu.

The serious aspect of the spread of the virus became apparent when I went into Leamington and Lillington to find the shops closed and queues outside the banks and building societies. Janet and I would take our permitted walk around Lillington late at night. In the first lockdown there was hardly any traffic, so much so just out of devilment, we walked up the centre of Cubbington Road and survived. We spooked a fox and watched a hedgehog scuttling along in search of food.



In self-imposed isolation we wondered how we would manage for shopping. To our surprise neighbours who we had only spoken to in passing were now offering to do our shopping. We had never used on-line shopping so here was our first foray into this experience, providing you could book a slot. Thankfully, we started to support local shops who were doing home deliveries, our loyalty to them endures.

Some of you may recall that we look after a closed chapel in Hockley Heath, offering on the last Sunday of the month a chance for visitors to look around and, if they were lucky, a cup of tea and a slice of homemade cake. All this had to stop. During early autumn we held a produce sale in the Chapel grounds, in the open air with all the sanitising arrangements in place. No access to the inside of the building. This was a golden opportunity to meet with our daughter, husband and granddaughter who masterminded the impromptu barbecue. We have not been back since, even when there was a break into the associated schoolroom. We had to alert someone who was local to check it out and notify the police. When we return, we will have the major task of trying bring the graveyard and

surrounds back under control of a weed invasion.

Along with so many others, direct face to face contact with family and friends was taken away. I recall hearing someone on the radio suggesting for the sake of a phone call do not let someone become a 'used to be' friend. Our survival in what is often called 'challenging times' can in no small measure be put down to having hobbies and wide ranging interests. The list of 'must do items' compiled at the beginning of lockdown remains with some notable tasks to be carried out, oh well there is always tomorrow!

Peter & Janet Coulls

BAKING IN LOCKDOWN

At the beginning of the first lockdown I began to wonder how we would manage for bread.

I started to use up the ingredients in my stock cupboard; things that had got pushed to the back were brought out. There were a couple of bread mixes, as with quite a lot at the back of the cupboard the dates were a little dubious but the results were enough to encourage me.

I had some bread flour so decided that too needed using. I did find some packets of yeast but on closer inspection the dates on these ranged from pre 2000 to 2018. The bread rolls made with the 2013 yeast could only be described as cannon shot.

By this time there was no possibility of buying yeast and a real shortage of flour. I needed to try the sourdough route. YouTube has the information; all you need is flour and non-chlorinated water. There was a slight stumble as I tried to work out how I could make tap water fit the bill when I remembered we still had some bottles of water from our daughter's wedding in 2017. Yes, we were well beyond the use by date but I thought that was probably true of all water. (One bottled water company even boasted that their water had spent thousands of years percolating through rocks and then proceeded to put a lifespan of a month or so!)

A tablespoon of strong flour mixed with two tablespoons of water, leave and stir again two or three times a day. Add more flour and water and leave in a warm place. There was more adding of flour and water and although I knew it would take about a week, at day six and no visible reaction I tried adding some sugar as extra feed! Eventually the yeast was captured and after 8 days the mixture began to grow.

More YouTube videos to find out a possible recipe and method, and great excitement as the first sourdough loaf was baked. My home recipe book has several attempts and changes listed until the need for extra dental insurance waned. None the less two slices are ample!

As we all know the flour situation became dire, none in the shops at all. Went to the sack option of both white and granary flour! Fortunately, our daughter had emptied a wardrobe so we now have an upstairs flour store but none of the ropes and pulleys one finds in a flour mill. (Perhaps a project if lockdown returns!)



The bread making continues. Every other day I start the process at lunch time with the bread ready to bake first thing the following morning. There are still tweaks with the recipe but never any long-term bread shortage.

PS

WE DID JIGSAWS! Julia Davis



AT SCHOOL IN LOCKDOWN

I'm at NLS doing A levels.

The pandemic has meant that I've been attending school from home in both lockdowns. This time the school is using Teams, but last time we just had PowerPoints and questions to answer. It's challenging because we can't actually see the teacher or our classmates and we are muted and can only ask questions by typing them in the chat. Even though it's now the middle of February we still don't know how we are going to be assessed in the Summer. It was going to be exams, then the exams were cancelled, and now they are talking about mini exams – it's so frustrating not knowing. But I am keeping positive and hope to get the grades to go to University in September. There is a plan for us to go back to school on 8th March but it's not definite that that will happen. If we do go back, we are going to have Covid tests twice a week to try to keep the school as safe as possible.

I spend a lot of time chatting with friends online and playing games and going for walks. I kept up my hobbies even online music lessons during lockdown which was a bit strange. I've also been designing things and sharing my ideas and designs online. S.C.C.

THIS LOCKDOWN HAS NOT BEEN TOO BAD

This lockdown has not been too bad for me. My daughter Sarah was visiting when it began and has been unable to travel home. Fortunately, she can work from home and has provided company and help with shopping etc., so I do consider myself more fortunate than a lot of my peers who live alone, time can hang very slowly. Enough gloom, we are on the way out now vaccinating has started, and I look forward to our group being able to meet once again. *Veronica Collins*

GETTING TO KNOW THE NEIGHBOURS

One of the real positives of the pandemic has been getting to know the neighbours – we have continued the weekly clap long after this ceased in other parts of the country and we also had a VE day party where the children (and adults) decorated stones to make a lovely long caterpillar. We also painted stones to celebrate Halloween, Easter and gave our caterpillar a Santa face at Christmas.



FAR FROM HOME

When our daughter and her family moved to America in 2006 we were understandably sad at the distance between us but were consoled by the fact that we could visit a couple of times a year. How things changed last March! We've now not seen them for 20 months which is very hard. Although we are able to communicate via Zoom, FaceTime etc it's not the same! The situation will improve, hopefully before too long, and we look forward to flying across the Atlantic once again. VL

THANK GOODNESS FOR THE GARDEN

March 2020. The start of the coronavirus pandemic. I didn't realise how much our lives would change with the lockdown. My French and yoga classes finished, as did my swimming sessions. My frequent visits to France came to an end and I could no longer do voluntary work in a Primary School. I was suddenly left with a large gap to fill.



The good weather last spring prompted me to tackle many gardening jobs – starting with painting the garden fence and clearing out the shed. Of course, the greenhouse needed a good clean before I could begin to plant the huge packet of mixed seeds I had received for Mothering Sunday.

By June the garden looked really beautiful. Not only did I discover the benefits of gardening as a form of exercise, I also realised the calm I felt when walking round it, taking more interest in the different birds visiting the feeders.

In autumn I realised just how much the vegetable garden had benefited from the extra time I had spent on it. The runner beans fed us and the neighbours for many months!

Kathy Hobbs

2017, 2018, 2019, [interregnum], 2021,

Imagine an undulating land with people or families living on each of the high spots. Then the turgid waters of infection flood in, making islands of the high points, isolating one from another. While welcoming visiting friends and neighbours previously, the islanders tell others to steer their craft away from their islands unless it is necessary to accept urgent disembarkations for the benefit of the dwellings or their occupants. As much as they might see neighbouring islands and islanders in the distance, they will not draw near to them any more than is necessary. As the contaminated waters recede will the islanders be willing to tread the muddy valleys until those areas are dry and the likelihood of picking up any plague-ridden sludge becomes unlikely?

I suppose that it is not unusual for a person to experience at least one national major emergency and at the beginning of 2020 we were met with a sharp blow, not in the form of a war or threat of one, but with the coronavirus lockdown. All was progressing as normal and suddenly the Prime Minister announced the coronavirus emergency restrictions and many people were so taken by surprise that some were even reluctant to answer their door bells. We were told to keep at least two metres apart, not to come into contact with others and to keep in our homes secure without visitors and without visiting others. In town, it was not at all unusual to see long queues outside establishments such as banks where the maximum number of the public was stipulated, made all the longer by the necessary distancing and on the ground there were markers indicating the stipulated two-metre distance; within shops taped out floor areas into which no more than one person at a time should enter. I think we might have understood the distancing better had we been asked to maintain a two yards margin! To anyone reading this in years to come when the pandemic will hopefully be regarded as distant history, can you image being confined to the house and not being able to go out except for limited justifiable reasons? How fortunate were those who had gardens to

enjoy, and at the beginning the weather was so gorgeous that it was enjoyable to sit on the lawn and read to one's heart's content. How much more unfortunate were those who did not have a garden to which to resort and had to confine themselves to their flat, perhaps small and without a balcony.

Education was affected and parents were encouraged to teach their children at home, which was not easy for untrained people. As the weeks went on, it was hoped that the situation would terminate in the summer, but restrictions continued to be more draconian before easing off and then being reimposed. It was acceptable to join friends at restaurants for meals and ultimately, that enjoyment, too, was suspended and non-food shops were closed. It became mandatory to wear masks when going into shops and to shop alone, except when accompanied by young children. The word circulated that there was a way of keeping in touch and holding meetings on computer by way of "Zoom" which few of us knew anything about. This innovation became almost mundane and it will be interesting to see whether when times are back to normal, Zoom meetings will continue. In spite of this innovation the building of the HS2 high-speed railway continued apace to enable meeting participants to meet in person, saving themselves no more than 20 minutes on each journey.

Those who had never bothered with home deliveries before started to arrange them. They were much in demand and those with special needs were given priority. During part of the lockdown, it was possible to visit shops while taking the necessary precautions, and the Parade in Leamington was closed to traffic to enable shoppers to keep the mandatory distance from each other, by spilling out across the carriageway and thereby maintaining the new requirement of social distancing.

The main consideration now is whether matters will ever be the same again. Can we go back to our former ways of everyday living or shall we feel we have to wear masks for a long time afterwards? Shall we want to sit near to others to attend theatre and cinema, or meetings of local societies? We shall either be so relieved that we shall want to socialise with others by visiting or perhaps we shall avoid doing so.

Graham Cooper

LOCKDOWN DENTED ME

Lockdown dented me. It put a block between people and took away hope and people died. I couldn't see my friends, couldn't go out, see my family, even go to the shops.

I was a bit glad when I didn't have to go to school but now I feel the opposite. I haven't started at my new school and I haven't made any friends yet.

I can still go on bike rides and I go running with Dad. We are doing Couch to 5K and I can run for 20 minutes without stopping for a rest.

We have a big garden at our new house and we watch the birds and count them. There are robins, crows, chaffinches, goldfinches and a woodpecker comes to our birdfeeders. On Sunday a buzzard came. Mum took a photo. We have a bird book and a telescope and binoculars. There are lots of squirrels and we saw a deer before it snowed.



I am looking forward to starting at my new school soon.

Alex, aged 8 ½. Image Rushton

STEVE QUIGLEY IN LOCKDOWN

Unlike most people and most businesses, despite lockdown and all the restrictions, we are upbeat, and working hard. We have never been busier than during this last year. Our business is up by around 20% on normal.



My staff deserve the greatest praise. They have come up trumps at every turn. They are working hard all the time under a lot of pressure. I am particularly pleased with the way the three youngest members of staff have come on. One from NLS and

one from Trinity School started here three or four years ago, and they have done us proud. The latest is a fifth former from NLS and he too has lived up to expectations. None of us had a day off in the three months of the first lockdown, and staff have not taken their holiday quota either.

We are always busy at Christmas, but this year, our busiest ever, it was especially hard-going. I still don't know how we got to 4pm on Christmas Eve, but we managed it somehow. We have had a lot of new customers, and they probably won't come back once things return to normal, whatever that turns out to be. This last lockdown has been calmer all round. More people have been going out, and there is much more traffic on the main road.

Obviously, we had to introduce Covid protection measures - not allowing customers inside the shop, for example, and all the staff wearing masks. Since the test centre opened, I have been going for a test every week. We extended our delivery service at the start of lockdown, so that vulnerable customers need not leave home. We have lovely customers and take pride in looking after them. All they have to do is phone in an order, and either arrange to come and collect it at the door, or we will deliver it. Lots of customers who were self-isolating took advantage of this, but many still come and queue outside in all weathers.



We have not had any problems sourcing our products, as our sources are reasonably local, - South Staffordshire and Cheltenham are probably the furthest away. We are confident that we won't run out because we have a good working relationship with them, and we carry a good stock. It will be a relief to get back to normal, but I have warned the staff that they can't all take their holidays at once. I couldn't cope with that! *Steve Quigley*

THE CORNER SHOP

The assistant at the corner shop confirmed that despite all odds, they were busier than ever in the first lockdown, when impatient shoppers unused to queuing to get into supermarkets went to them instead. Often people asked for items they would normally have bought at the supermarket, which had to be ordered in. We could get it by the next day, but sometimes, they didn't come back, which was a lesson to be learned. The change in trade at the start of the lockdown in March was quite a shock, but it has settled down now to about the average number of shoppers. More people are going to town. There is much more traffic on Cubbington Road. Last March, the streets outside were empty. Everywhere was quiet. Children were not at school, and people were not going to work and buying a newspaper on the way there, and our sales dropped. We started to open later in the morning, and trade gradually picked up during the day. From being a newsagents and general store, we have moved on to selling more wines and spirits and prepacked sandwiches from the refrigerator cabinet - and face masks. *As told to MR*

LIFE IN GENERAL HAD ITS CHALLENGES



Our son gained 10 GCSEs although not sitting an exam. His course work and mock results saw him through. He has enjoyed his start to his first year of plumbing at Warwickshire College, however this has been stop and start.

Our daughter has also done the best she can in these times. Her school days should have totalled 190 to date, but with having to isolate or lockdowns she has had only 25 full days in school.

Like many, we used the time to do jobs at home. My wife painted most of the house whilst I caught up with many outstanding jobs in the garden. We played badminton in the street, kept fit with Joe Wicks and went on 100 walks.



At the end of March, I contracted COVID-19, although it was months later before this was confirmed with an anti-bodies blood test. I was laid up for a week at home with fever, aches and weakness.

Before click and collect and delivery services got up and running for the older people, we had to shop for three families in one go, experiencing very long queues. Empty shelves, no loo roll, yeast, flour, pasta, rice, bleach and hand gel came to be the norm for a short while.

In April a group of neighbours got together to chalk our road with positive messages and lift spirits. We had Victory in Europe Day in May, where we sat out distanced from our neighbours. 15th August was the less well advertised 75th anniversary of VJ Day. In between those months in July saw Lillington gain brand new signs for the first time in the area, which was very exciting.

The end of the calendar year brought the most devastating time during Covid we had experienced. My father-in-law Pete, who was battling leukaemia, succumbed to Covid 19 which he caught in hospital. Seeing him with his mask on, trying to say goodbye via zoom was heart breaking. I read out messages of love from my children to him before he left us.

Gary Timlin

AN EXERCISE IN LAW

Even before the Coronavirus became a national issue I knew that I was “vulnerable”. Then the Prime Minister wrote to me to confirm it. It meant that the State thought I should do my best to take care of myself so that the State would not have to do it. That seemed fair enough. “Strong Advice” was issued to the vulnerable: self isolate. This was no inconvenience since I was doing that anyway. Also, my wife, a trained nurse who had always been the family medical arbiter, agreed with the “advice”.

I am a lawyer, now retired, and so I try to comply with Rules, even when they are camouflaged as “Strong Advice”. My wife and I live in a ground floor flat so the idea of self isolation in “the premises” called for a bit of judicious interpretation. So I interpreted “the premises” to include the communal driveway giving access to our garage and all the other garages for the flats. Satisfied with this interpretation I began a regular almost daily routine of walking up and down the driveway. I was very lucky that the weather was generally fine.

I rather enjoyed myself. Some time ago I had printed off a book of my favourite old songs and I took this with me and sang to myself as I walked. I soon began to wonder how far I was walking. I counted the number of paces I took to cover the length of the driveway, varying



between 72-75, and then tried to multiply it by the length of my stride. However, since mental arithmetic and I are very distant cousins, I gave that up. Instead, I borrowed my wife’s mobile phone which has an “app” for measuring distances walked. On some days I felt like walking for a longer time and on one of these days the “app” told me that I had walked about 3.2 miles. I rarely stayed out walking for more than an hour, often for less.

Other residents in the flats who drove in to park their cars or came out to get their cars saw me and at first took no notice. [I stopped singing when anyone else came within sight!] When they saw me a few times they became intrigued and asked what I was doing. Some understood that I was just out to get some exercise, some thought that I was batty. I was pleased to get to know some of the other residents a little better. Local friends who were out walking, legitimately, I imagine, would stop at the end of the driveway, and we would have a natter briefly and swap tales, while socially distanced, of course.

I heard tell of Captain Tom [RIP], 99 years old and doing a similar thing but with a walking frame. I casually wondered who had thought of the idea first. He went on to raise over £30 million for the NHS, which was, of course, a magnificent and creditable effort, but all I wanted was the exercise.

Then the lockdown was relaxed allowing me to go walking the streets and roads. So I did. But when the second lockdown came along, I interpreted the terms as being slightly different from the first time and so I have carried on walking the streets and have not returned to the garages.

It was fun while it lasted and a good memory. *Larry Connor*

EACH NEW DAY IS A BONUS

My oldest friend died during lockdown, so I couldn't go to his funeral. He and I had met as students in 1957 and had been friends ever since. For many years he was the headteacher of a Special School for terminally ill children. He taught them to treasure each day as a bonus, to use it creatively, to strive and to enjoy.

He has helped me too in these challenging times.

CDMR

LOCKDOWN MEMORIES

Lockdown last summer was bearable, - the weather was good and we could garden to our hearts' content. No traffic noise, lots of birds. Cubbington Road quite free of traffic, - so no taking one's life in one's hands at each attempt to cross it! That was a treat. Two builders were working, masked and socially distanced, on adaptations to the house next door, so we had plenty of entertainment and someone to talk to. I asked them to look for any Lillington Brickyard bricks, - and as a result, they made me a present of a Thomas Mills brick! It set me off on weeks of research about Mills, - slightly difficult, without access to the Library and the street Directories, but very worthwhile.

On Christmas Eve, before a children's Christingle service across the road, our neighbours next door at no 13 organised a short, socially distanced mulled wine and mince pies get together in their front garden. There were four children aged between 18 months and six, all jumping around in excitement. It was as near normal as we have been for a long time, and so enjoyable.

On Christmas Day, our family, now in Kenilworth, came over and waved at us through the windows. We had planned a family get-together, with the family from London staying here, but by then, they were in Tier 4 and had to stay put. I still have their presents, all wrapped up, waiting for things to improve.

Zoom has been a great blessing, once we got a grip of the technology. I have been doing my weekly Pilates class via Zoom since last March, and we have had regular family conferences at weekends. I have also done some online school support with my younger grandchildren.



Christmas tree festival at St. Mary Magdalene's parish church, Lillington. *Image Gary Timlin*

MEMORIES OF LOCKDOWN

- Missing family members and not being able to hug my grandchildren.
- Going for long walks, meeting up with friends socially distanced. Sitting on a park bench in the freezing cold in the Jephson Gardens.
- Keeping in touch with family and friends on the telephone and video calls.
- Becoming an avid reader which I had never been before lockdown.
- Knitting endless scarves and hats for the shoe boxes.
- Shopping for friends and neighbours and passing round jigsaws.
- Appreciating the garden and nature and the community we live in.
- Church services on line. Opening church each week for people to pray. Clapping each Thursday night to show appreciation for the NHS.
- Going to church on Christmas morning and not being able to sing carols or shake hands but being able to sing 'We Wish You A Merry Christmas' in the car park.
- Spending Christmas with just my husband and no other family members which turned out better than expected thanks to Zoom calls.
- Wearing face masks and constantly washing hands. Long queues outside shops.
- Being so appreciative when I got my Covid Vaccine.

Linda Reidy



Crown Way shops in lockdown
Peter Coulls



IT HASN'T ALL BEEN GLOOM AND DOOM

Murmurs of a “new” virus spreading throughout the world started in early 2020, its speed so fast that by 24th March 2020 the UK was put into lockdown, a word along with Covid 19, pandemic, social distancing, masks or face coverings, hand washing/gelling, were to become so familiar to both young and old alike all over the World.

I was classed as extremely vulnerable, being over 80 and with a transplant, and put into shielding. Medical appointments were allowed but no shopping, no visitors or visiting. Only essential shops were allowed to open, and gradually, as other shops closed, shopping areas became devoid of people and more and more stores were delivering food and goods bought on line. Shopping via the internet boomed as did contacting families and friends the world over and even hospital appointments were held using such things as ZOOM. More and more people were encouraged to work from home and meetings held again using things like ZOOM.

It hasn't all been doom and gloom. I laughed when I learnt that I had to go to Warwick Racecourse to have a blood test. Newspapers, post and parcels were all put into quarantine using a set of drawers with days of week on. I am always reading yesterday's news. When I came home from a hospital or GP app. I had to strip in the porch and put on clean dressing gown then I could go in and wash and gel my hands. Clothes in washer. My daughter worked out how we could play games like Catan and Ingenious via Zoom, meet up with relatives in America, S. Wales and Balsall Common.

Finally, as I write (14/2/2021) lockdown in England may be coming to an end. Approximately 15 million people have been vaccinated in the UK and approximately 188 million in the World. My hope for us all is that the scientists will prevail and a yearly Covid jab, akin to the annual flu jab, will lead us to leading as normal a life as possible so that we can once again

HUG, SHAKE HANDS, TRAVEL, VISIT OUR FAMILIES AND FRIENDS, GO SHOPPING AND TO CONCERTS AND PARTIES.....

SHOPPING



I wonder if I'll ever go shopping again?

I don't miss the carrying, but I do miss the choosing.

I spend less but I miss the “That looks interesting! I'll try some!” impulse buying.

(WARWICK) CRICKET SEASON 2020 – “Don’t stand so close to me”

Glorious lockdown weather in May and June. A cricket net booking system: 1 to 1 then groups of 6. Then July. The flag goes up, the lights go green! The season starts. Glorious sunshine gives way to traditional summer weather of rain and heavy showers.



Saturday 18th July. Oh, the excitement! The first fixture. The sound of ball on willow. It's cricket yes, but not as we know it. No changing rooms open. Change at home or in the car. Fine if you're a contortionist, or like most, hop around the car park in your underwear trying to get a leg into your whites. Sanitise with hand gel every six overs. No saliva on the ball. Perspiration and elbow grease if you want that cherry to shine. No wicket taking congratulatory huddles. Just play the game.

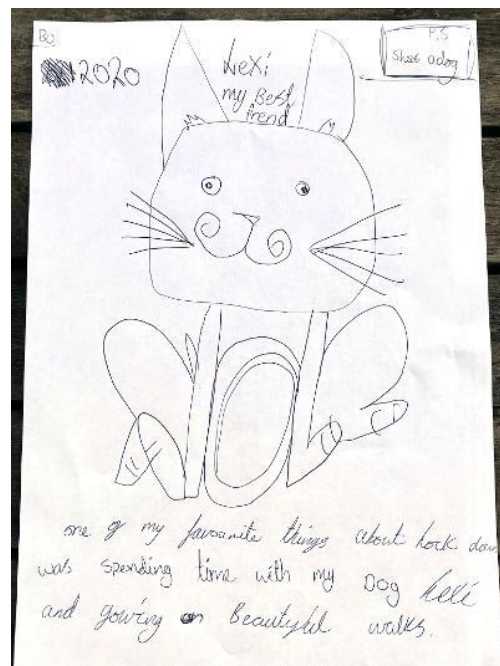
No cricket tea! What? No steaming urn? No pate or cream cheese on French bread? Sorry - Bring your own. Takeaways delivered for some. Really? That's just not cricket!

Socially distanced spectating allowed but observe social distancing and no more than 6 in a group please. The end of the game. Foot taps and elbow bumps. A bottle of beer from the clubhouse window to celebrate or commiserate. See you next week and don't forget to bring your own tea. Did I mention that?

No cricket tea!

Bill Evans

LOCKDOWN SCHOOL ROOM



“One of my favourite things about lock down was spending time with my dog and going on beautiful walks.”

A COUNTRY WALK

At the end of Jan 2021, during the cold spell but before the snow, Bob and I ventured out to Wappenbury for a walk away from crowded pavements. We stopped in a lay-by near the village and started walking towards Eathorpe. It was a still, bright day, full of sunshine, cloudless blue sky and very, very cold. A few dogs and their people...a cyclist, weaving his way from side to side, there was no traffic to stop his fun.....a cow mooed somewhere in the distance...I heard a lark, so early in the year, probably surprised from its hiding place...The tension fell off my back like a heavy rucksack falling to the ground, and I began to walk straighter...



We stopped to look at Wappenbury Hall, a massive Victorian pile on the edge of the village. In 1937 it became the home of Sir William Lyons, the founder of Jaguar cars. In the distance Wappenbury church rose up as if fully-formed from its bed of red Warwickshire sandstone...Sir William and his wife, Greta, are buried there.



So on we walked, stopping at a gate to look towards Princethorpe and its college tower against the backdrop of Wappenbury Wood...past two isolated houses on top of the hill before the gentle descent into Eathorpe, where the Leam was in full voice, roaring under the little bridge, swollen by days of heavy rain to almost flood level.

We all know nothing stays the same, everything changes...we are living in the strangest, most distressing times since World War 2...and yet here, for a few precious minutes, in the quiet fields and little woods ... late sunlight telling us the days are getting longer, and Spring is coming... the lark will be looking for a mate....the unchanging path of the seasons gives hope and heart that one day, we will be through all this. *Judy Cooke Images Judy Cooke, Wappenbury Hall*

LILLINGTON FREE CHURCH

At our service on the 19th January 2020, we prayed for a Chinese doctor called Li Wenliang who had alerted people to a dangerous new respiratory virus impacting the city of Wuhan. Little did we realise at the time how greatly this event would impact our own lives or how tragically it would end for Dr Li who passed away on 7th February having contracted the disease himself.

I think, like much of the UK, we were distracted by the more immediate threat of Brexit and fears for what this would mean for jobs and livelihoods. Though our attention soon began to shift as we watched the deadly impact of this virus become clear. It wasn't long before we were watching with horror as Italian hospitals filled up, as borders were closed, and the scale of the crisis became evident.

In early March I started to realise that the church would have to prepare a contingency plan. Additional cleaning was organised, plastic gloves were purchased, pre-wrapped biscuits replaced the usual fig rolls and rich tea biscuits. We warned people not to visit the vulnerable and assured people that services would continue as long as they were allowed.

On Sunday the 15th March 2020 we shared Communion with one another for the last time before Lockdown. Even then we hoped we may continue to worship in-person, but there was



an odd feeling in Church that morning. We had encouraged heart shakes rather than handshakes on the door and assured people that Communion had been prepared to the highest of hygiene standards. Still, as we were singing 'Let there be love shared among us', there was a sense of friends saying 'farewell'.

The day the news broke, I wrote instructions to close the Church both for midweek activities and Sunday services. I also

exchanged emails with those leading the Night Shelter at Radford Road Church. We set up a triage, offering food to those who needed it outside the Church, and limiting space for overnight sleeping. Though it soon became clear that we couldn't continue this knowing the vulnerability of many of our volunteers.

In the weeks and months that followed we would involve more and more of our community in preparing pre-recorded services released on YouTube, creating 2000 hours of viewing and reaching 6,400 views.

Services involved families recording hymns and songs in their own homes, prayers and readings, colourful posters for Pentecost, even dramas and sketches. Our Easter service involved over 40 people and our Christmas Nativity play was viewed by over seven hundred people.

Friday Night Bible Studies went onto Zoom and the Wednesday Zoom Quiz was started. We all got better at learning to record ourselves and I even learnt how to use a green screen to set parts of the service to different backgrounds.

At the end of March, we started WhatsApp groups for both Lillington Free Church and Radford Road Church as a way of combating isolation. I started writing a daily evening prayer to help people who were looking for a way to pray amidst all this upheaval.

Sadly, in April and May members of the congregation faced a number of bereavements and with restrictions on the number of mourners.

In October we restarted in-person services on a monthly basis. This has enabled us to live-stream the services to where they can be accessed by those continuing to self-isolate. Other services continue to be available each week online.

One more personal note: I am still so grateful for every card, gift and kindness shown to us when Joseph was born and since then.

It has been hard for so many but it has not been unremittingly bleak – we have tried where we might to hold on to the light. *James Church, Minister Lillington Free Church*

The above is an extract from the full record of James' experiences during Lockdown. This can be read in its entirety on the Lillington Local History Society's website.

Lockdown

Before lockdown we ran free in a world of our own,
We danced among the dewy shades of green grass,
And on those wet days when drops of water fell from the sky
We would stay inside all safe and dry.

During Lockdown the skies were all grey and we had to keep ourselves to ourselves.

We sat at home with Zoom calls and homework with days of nothing else,
When our grandparents were at home, alone.
We felt guilty for calling them only on the phone.

When restrictions were lifted the grey clouds disappeared,
But the virus kept spreading,
So the rain returned, - with gusto,
And when families should've met, they had to go.

We hope that when Lockdown comes to an end,
We will be free to roll in emerald green meadows like before,
Yet when the hibernation ends, we do not know.
But *after* Lockdown we should be free!

However, we will still have to restrict ourselves,
Even when this story is put up on the shelves.

Oliver, aged 11 years and 1 day.

RELIEF IN SIGHT

After the beginning of the lockdown, word started to circulate that the development of a vaccine against the epidemic was a possibility. This was likely to take many months, or even years, to produce because of the necessity to test and re-test to ensure its safe use. In due course, our wonderful and innovative scientists achieved its development in a matter of weeks, hereby breaking many records for scientific advancement.

It was soon announced that the resulting vaccines would help to prevent the extreme effects of the virus and a programme was announced to offer it to all adults, starting with the most vulnerable and advancing in stages until all were covered. We followed with interest the arrangements for this to be done and there was some dismay at the prospect of having to travel all the way into the City of Birmingham to receive it.



However, details started to come about concerning local venues for the application. So it was that one late Friday afternoon I received a telephone call from an official telling me that arrangements could be made for my vaccine: I imagined that it would be some weeks hence, but, no, I was asked to attend at 5.30 pm on the following day. I was also given the date for the necessary follow-up injection twelve weeks later.



I was asked to attend the Heathcote Hospital in Leamington, and remembering seeing on television the long queue outside Lichfield Cathedral where vaccines were being given, I thought I should arrive early in case of lack of car parking space and the likelihood of seething masses awaiting

their turns. However, it was not like that at all: there was adequate free car parking and the volunteer guides directed us calmly and politely to the treatment room where a painless injection was given. A confirmation card issued before we were asked to remain for a quarter of an hour to ensure there would be no after effects. It was all very reassuring.



The newspapers started to refer to the vaccination as the "jab" which sounds savage and unscientific, whereas vaccination or inoculation sounds more calculated and better thought out. I suppose the three-letter description is better for the papers since it takes up less room and there always seems to be a wish to give procedures a familiarity. This does not detract from the gratitude we owe to the scientists for all they did, and are continuing to do, to protect us against the extreme effects of the virus.

G.E.C.

Vaccinations at Litchfield cathedral; BBC ; images Bing

A LOCKDOWN BONUS

Sitting on my sofa during lockdown I was suddenly introduced to a friend of my father - even though Dad died nearly 45 years ago.

It was a wonderful surprise and we have had very good conversations since. I am happy to say it was all thanks to Lillington Local History Society.

I had been thinking a good deal about Dad, and wishing I could give him a hug and thank him for all he did to introduce my brothers and I to the natural world when we were growing up in Lillington. Dad died far too young back in 1976, when he was 61 and I was 23. Mum had died the year before and by then my home and work were in Somerset. My older brother, Michael, lived in Hampshire and after Dad died my younger brother Tony joined me in Somerset so our connection with Lillington seemed at an end.

Eighteen months ago, feeling nostalgic about childhood and my very happy time at the infants and junior schools, I looked online to see whether Lillington had a local history society. I found its website, enjoyed its articles, and thought: "Some time in the future I will join and go to a meeting when I stay with friends in Warwick."

A few months went by, and then came lockdowns one, two and three. Those carefree days in Lillington kept coming into mind, compensation perhaps for the sad times we are in. Then earlier this year I decided it was not fair to enjoy the website without joining the Society, and contacted Chris Rhodes. He sent me a link for the next zoom meeting at which Margaret Rushton gave her excellent talk on 'The Lights of Leamington'.

Also at that zoom meeting was Les Markham, and he reckoned he recognised my face. He was a member of the choir at St Mary Magdalene at the same time as my father, and was a good friend, sharing a pint at the Walnut Tree with him after choir practice. He asked Chris to pass his email address to me in case I would like to get in contact. Les' name rang a bell and I was delighted to get in touch. I had not thought to talk about Dad with his friends after his death and of course there are very few people left now who would have known him. Here was someone who did, and shared his love of music. We have emailed, and had a telephone chat, sharing many memories of school as well as reminiscing about dad. Lockdown has not been easy, but this has been a real tonic. You never know where local history will lead you. Thank you LLHS. *Tina Rowe*



This archive of personal memories and thoughts is published by the Lillington Local History Society, c/o Lillington Free Church, Cubbington Road, Leamington Spa, CV32 7AL. The views expressed in the collection are personal to the contributors and are not necessarily the views of the Society.