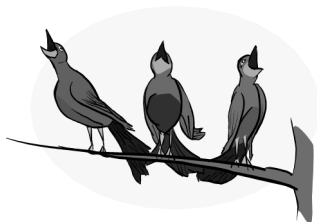
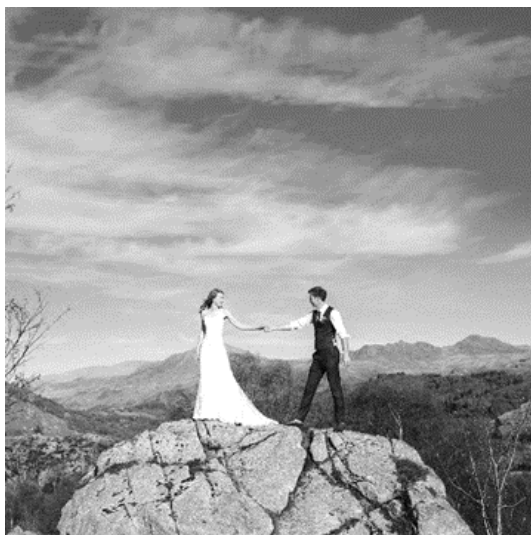


# **BIRDSONG**

**June  
and  
July 2021**



**BIRDINGBURY  
NEWS  
No 104**



## **Dream Day Delights**

Ceara and Chris on top of the world

# **Birdingbury Parish Council Report**

The last two months have been very busy for the Parish Council and, as for all of us, a period of transition back to something approaching normality. We held three meetings, all unique in their way: an extraordinary meeting to discuss the proposals from Landstrom regarding the Glebe Field; a meeting on a Thursday (due to the formal Tuesday meeting notice not being allowed during the period of mourning for the Duke of Edinburgh); and May's meeting back in the Birbury after a year on Zoom. May's meeting was also our Parish Council AGM, where I was confirmed for another year as Chair with Sara Kendell as our new Vice Chair. I would like to thank David Preston for his support during his term as Vice Chair.

Regarding the Landstrom / Glebe Field proposal, we received an updated plan that has been put on the noticeboard (back of the bus shelter), the village website, and links provided via the WhatsApp group. We have received many comments from villagers, some as questions but many raising concerns. Given the interest, we have decided to hold a Zoom call to share what information we have and to answer questions: watch out for details shortly. I should emphasise, however, that this is still not a formal planning application so nothing about the development is definite ... yet.

We have arranged for some running repairs to be done on the log play equipment on the Recreation Field, and we are also exploring a pedestrian access gate to that area from the pavement. Warwickshire County Council have confirmed that it is safe from a highway perspective and the gate design will conform with relevant safety regulations. Hopefully, this will provide easier access than the grass track for pushchair and wheelchair users.

We had a long discussion at our April meeting regarding concerns about noise from some of the business park units. Our District Councillor, Emma Crane, attended that meeting and heard first-hand some of the concerns raised by neighbours. She is speaking with the Planning and the Environmental Services teams to confirm next steps and chase proposals to install noise monitoring equipment. In the meantime, the application to confirm Light Industrial use progresses, but we have yet to hear an outcome. Councillor Crane's advice in all circumstances when concerned about issues such as persistent noise, is to take a note of the time and nature of the disturbance, and to share the details with Environmental Services in Rugby.

Some good news on fibre broadband as Openreach have confirmed that we still qualify for the voucher funding scheme. We are trying to get them to confirm next steps but are hopeful that we will be able to invite residents to express formal interest in the coming months.

Also some good news about dog mess in that Rugby BC have agreed to our request for more frequent collections from the bin by the bus stop and the one at the start of the cycle track – hopefully you'll have noticed less 'overflow'.

Some quick updates on items that have been raised by villagers:

- It is great to see children out on bikes around the village, but please take care around vehicles and pedestrians. If you have a bell, please use it, but don't rely on people being able to jump out of the way.
- You might have seen that there is a tree-planting theme for the Queen's Jubilee next year. If you have ideas, please let us know. We will be replacing the dead tree by the bus shelter in the Autumn.
- At the June meeting, we will discuss the state of roads into the village and the verges within the village itself. Frost, flood and traffic have made their mark, so we want to assess what actions are needed.

Finally, can I pass on my and the Council's sympathies and best wishes to Bill Cowley's family following his passing. He was the ever-cheerful centre of attention, and affection, at village events in recent years and will be sorely missed.

*Guy French, Chair Birdingbury Parish Council*

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## **What a load of old rubbish....**

and that's not all of it...! Just the first instalment of the bags of rubbish collected during the great Birdingbury litter pick back in March. We had a fantastic turn-out of people of varying ages – so much so that, at one point, we actually ran out of litter picking sticks (really sorry about that, the Parish Council will look at potentially investing in a few more). I wouldn't like to guess at the age (or indeed identity!) of the oldest, but the youngest participant cannot have been more than about three. However, what everyone had in common was a wish to see a better, cleaner Birdingbury and that was definitely achieved.

We collected bottles, cans, wrappers, fast-food packaging (naming no names this time but you all know who I mean), shotgun cartridges, the odd tyre and road sign, and even the dreaded dog poo bags. All COVID rules were observed and social distancing respected.

Thank you so much to everyone that turned out to make a difference to our local environment, and to the Club for supporting with hand sanitiser and disinfectant spray (as well as coffee for me, thanks Mark) – a really worthwhile morning!

*Sara Kendall*



# Memories of Bill

**16.08.1923 – 09.04.2021**

Bill was born on 16 August 1923 at Marton. He lived with his Grandparents until he was called up for military service in 1942, just a few days after his 19<sup>th</sup> birthday. He met Dink, who was a telephonist in the ATS based at the Nothe Fort, Weymouth, during his time spent there on a signallers' course. They had a whirlwind romance and married six months later before Bill left our shores for the D-Day operations in France.

During the war, Bill was lucky enough to meet and play football with Alf Ramsey, long before he was knighted due to his football achievements. After the war ended, whilst on peace-keeping duties in Palestine, Bill finally received his demob in 1946.

Bill settled down to married life with Dink and returned to Rugby Portland Cement Works at Southam where he had worked before the war.

In 1961, Bill suffered horrific injuries from an industrial accident whilst at work. He was not expected to survive the night. However, after many major operations, including 9 months in Middlesex Hospital, London and specialist care over three and a half years, he did return to work on lighter duties.

Bill and Dink had two sons: Brian, who drowned in a tragic accident at only 9 years of age, and Graham who lost his life due to a car accident on St Valentine's Day 1970, aged 22. Their only daughter, Carol is married to Paul King.

Graham's daughter, Terry Jane, was born after his death. Terry Jane gave Bill and Dink six great grandchildren, and years afterwards they also had six great, great grandchildren. They were both extremely proud of them all and loved the time spent with them.

Bill and Dink spent most of their married life of 71- and three-quarter years living in Birdingbury. Over the years they enjoyed ballroom dancing, whist drives and bingo and often met up with their many friends at these events. They had a passion for gardening. They also kept an allotment and liked to exhibit their produce every year. Very often they would be rewarded for their efforts by winning prizes. Occasionally they even won the Allotment Cup.



Bill loved watching most sport on TV. He especially enjoyed watching snooker, football, cricket and grand prix. Quite often on summer weekends, he would load the car up with flasks and a picnic, and together with Dink and Carol, would head off to a Grass Tracking event, or support Rugby Portland Cricket team wherever they were playing. It was great fun. Occasionally during winter weekends, he would take Carol with him to support Rugby Town football on home games. They even wore scarves and matching bobble hats in the team's colours. However, Carol recalls, it was freezing cold mostly, standing on the sidelines, but it was worth it spending time with her Dad.

Bill was a regular worshipper at St Leonard's Church. His faith was steadfast and it carried him through the sad times. He was also a Parochial Church counsellor and Church Warden for many years. He was very proud and honoured to read out the names of the fallen at the war memorial on Remembrance Sundays for quite a few years.

Bill was happy to step into the role of Father Christmas when asked to do so for the village children's annual Christmas present giving. He loved Birdingbury and all village related activities. He particularly enjoyed meeting the villagers every Saturday at Swap Shop for coffee and chat. In his later years especially, Bill was spoilt by many villagers. He willingly sampled lots of their home-made treats when offered to him, usually accompanied with his grateful thanks and a huge grin on his face afterwards.

No matter who he met, Bill always had a laugh or a joke with them. He kept cheerful and looked on the bright side of life despite it being extremely tough at times. When Dink passed away in 2015, he was heartbroken but still managed to 'soldier on' until the time came when they could be together again.



Bill was so proud to attend a ceremony in Birdingbury when he was presented with the Legion d'Honneur medal by the French Brigadier General, Yann Poincignon. The French Consul, Monsieur Robert Mille and Mr Tim Cox, Lord Lieutenant of Warwickshire were also in attendance. The honour was in recognition of his participation in the D-day operation, which eventually led towards the liberation of France. Most of the villagers turned out to witness the event together with his family and friends. It was a truly memorable, warm summer's day too, with tea and cake to follow for everyone. Just perfect.

*Carol King, as read by Matt Markham at Bill's funeral service on 30 April*

## 60 Years On, Plus Another 17

Back in June 2004, many of us were surprised to learn that two of our villagers were veterans of the Normandy Landings and took part in the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebrations. At the time, on behalf of Birdsong, I asked Bill Cowley for an interview. It seems fitting for us to read it again and remember the service he gave in our country's hour of need.

**RB What unit were you with?**

**BC** A field unit of the Royal Artillery – on 5.5-inch calibre guns.

**RB How long was your training?**

**BC** I was called up in 1942, just after my 19<sup>th</sup> birthday and I went to Markeaton Park, Derby for 6 weeks infantry training. I was transferred to Plymouth for a further 6 weeks gunnery training and a range finder course. I then got a permanent posting (Coastal Artillery) at Abbotsbury, Dorset, and went on a signalling course in Weymouth. When Coastal Artillery was disbanded, I was transferred to Field Artillery to a unit in Tonbridge, Kent.



**RB What did you know about Operation Overlord beforehand?**

**BC** We knew something was afoot. There was more training, more gunnery practice. Also, there were so many troops in the area – Canadians and Americans as well as British. All leave was cancelled for some months. Dink, who was a telephonist with Anti-Aircraft, was also posted nearby. (We had been married on 29 January 1944, when I was only 20 and I had to get my mother's permission).

**RB When did you get your orders?**

**BC** We finally received our order to move a couple of days after the first assault. We had heard about it - and the casualties, particularly amongst the Americans. We drove to London docks and loaded all our heavy equipment, large guns and lorries onto big freighters and sailed out under cover of darkness. We were joined by other ships to form a large convoy.

**RB What did you do during the crossing? What did you think about?**

**BC** My main thought was 'Am I going to get back home?'. I had only been married four months. I was on deck, manning an anti-aircraft machine gun with one mate. We were not attacked.

**RB What did you expect to find on the beaches and beyond?**

BC I didn't know what to expect. We were transferred to a landing craft. It was daylight and I think it was Gold Beach where we landed. We were in full kit. I was on a lorry, so I didn't get wet. We could hear small arms fire all around but the first night we didn't know what was in front. Until we landed, all artillery support for the infantry had been from the Navy.

**RB How long were you in France?**

BC Many months, I'm not sure how long. I had my 21<sup>st</sup> birthday on foreign soil. One day I remember - I had been made a temporary driver at this stage and we had advanced on the Falaise Gap where the German lines had been strafed by the RAF a little while before. Bodies of humans and horses were strewn everywhere. The stench was awful, and we had to make temporary masks out of handkerchiefs to get through. Another night, we were taking ammunition under convoy up to the guns. The only light we had to guide us was on the back of the axle of the truck in front. After we had unloaded, my lorry refused to start. The others went on. Finally, I got it to start and my comrade and I had to find our way back to the wagon lines by observing different landmarks - a certain tree here, a steeple there. On our return, the RSM breathed a sigh of relief and I got a double ration of rum! When we were a few miles from the Rhine, and it looked like finishing, I was regrettably transferred back to England for jungle warfare training in Yorkshire, for possible service in the Far East. I was then sent to Palestine! And then demobbed in 1946.

**RB 60 years on, how were the celebrations?**

BC They were wonderful. My daughter, Carol, had made the arrangements. We joined a coach (one of a convoy!) in Leamington at 1am on the Friday. We were shown all the sights in and around Paris on the Friday evening and Saturday. On Sunday, the actual anniversary, we were driven to Normandy, to Pegasus Bridge (the first site taken by paratroopers), and other museums and memorials. I received a medallion from the Mayor of Ranville and met the woman who had been Field Marshall Montgomery's secretary. There were lots of other tourists in the museums, all wanting our autographs. We were really treated like VIPs!

Which you were, Bill.

*Rhondda Barney*

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# Thank You

To all you amazing villagers, a huge thank you for the wonderful turnout you gave my Dad, Bill, to pay your last respects as he was driven around Birdingbury one last time. You really did him proud. It was a huge shock for us to lose him. We had started looking forward to safer times ahead and even planning about where we would go when the restrictions were lifted, which makes it even more sad that these plans will remain unfulfilled. We want to thank everyone who touched my Dad's life and helped make it that much better for him, especially whilst on lockdown, when it became very lonely for him.

Thank you for your presence during the Legion d'Honneur medal ceremony when Dad was presented with his medal, given to him by the French in thanks for his contribution towards the liberation of France during World War II. What a stunning day that was, held at the front of Birdingbury Club with beautiful sunshine. You will probably remember the look on my Dad's face that day, like the 'cat that got the cream'. He was truly elated. Perfect.



Thank you for being there (albeit at a distance) to show your support on VE day 75th anniversary last year, and again on Dad's 97th birthday last August. The last time Dad had an outing was on Easter Sunday. He was safe in Matt's hands as he carefully steered Dad in his wheelchair towards the Church. A last photograph was also taken of Dad at the Lychgate. Fabulous.

There are far too many people to name individually here but you all know who you are and hopefully you will have some lovely memories to keep of the times spent with Bill. We know how much my Dad meant to you in so many ways, as this was shown in the extraordinary number of cards we received, together with your words of comfort and support, which we very much appreciate. Thank you.

Because of the current restrictions attached as we come out of lockdown, we would like to plan a 'get together' later this year (hopefully when it is safe to do so) and perhaps give my Dad a 'bit of a do' in Birdingbury, in remembrance of him.

*Thanks and much love from Carol and Paul King and all Bill's family*

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## George Edgar 1930-2021

Thank you to all who sent kind messages and cards following the passing of my dad, George, on March 14<sup>th</sup>.

He did not have any known connections to Birdingbury prior to us moving here but we did live in Flecknoe Railway Cottages from before my birth in 1953 until 1956, when we moved to Bilton. So not many miles away: we know the Feldon lands well.

*Steve Edgar*



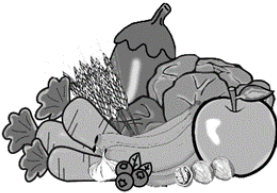
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## Birdingbury Produce, Art & Craft Show 2021

Hopefully, pandemic permitting, we'll once again be able to hold this annual event this year. The time to start planning your entry is now! For those who haven't been before this is a lighthearted and at the same time a serious event, demonstrating the skills, humour and one-offness of our wonderful village.

The show is followed in the evening by a raucous auction in aid of a worthy deserving cause.

We are working towards a date of 25<sup>th</sup> September, but that may yet change.



The provisional schedule is enclosed, and there's something for all ages. Have a look through the schedule and think what you might enter. If you would like any other classes included, let me know at [john@jkstarley.com](mailto:john@jkstarley.com) (If we can put it in and you are the only entry you could win first prize!).

Also please let me know your suggestions for a local worthy cause, and the Club committee will decide.

You'd be amazed how many things can fit in a matchbox!

*John Starley*

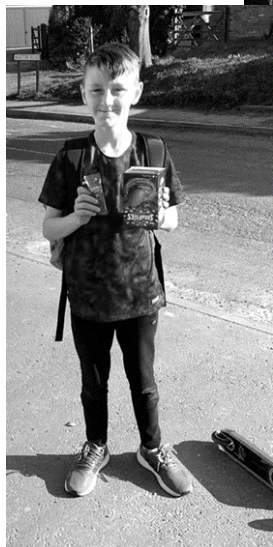
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## Easter Bunny Hunt

There were 25 entries to the Easter Bunny Hunt, which was fabulous. We think the children (and some of the adults!) really enjoyed it. The Easter bunny was feeling very generous this year and was soon out delivering Easter eggs to all the children who took part. The winners were Sophie Dent, Eleanor and Barney who all counted 39. Well done to everyone who took part and thanks to all the bunnies who came to Birdingbury especially for the weekend!

*Jo Cutts*







# LH Academy Update

The children have been very busy at Leamington Hastings Academy, exploring new topics and becoming engrossed in their new learning. In Key Stage 1 the children have been making the most of the nature garden whilst learning about plants, and they are currently conducting a study on the local area.

In Early Years Foundation Stage the children are learning about traditional tales. They



made some delicious gingerbread but were very concerned one morning when some of the gingerbread people disappeared! The children were really inspired by this and it led to fantastic learning opportunities throughout the curriculum.



There is a video to show what happened on our Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/LeamingtonHastingsCofEAcademyRugby/>

We are also very lucky that local author Gig Sixsmith ran a competition for the children in school. The children designed their own characters, and several of these have been chosen to feature in Gig's new book. Thank you to Gig for providing this experience for the children.

*Suzanne Marson, Head of School, Leamington Hastings Church of England Academy*

BIRDSONGBIRDSONGBIRDSONG

## Back Bowling

Leamington Hastings Bowls Club are pleased to let you know that, since we will be allowed to meet outside in groups of up to 30 after 17 May, our Wednesday evening club nights will be starting again from Wednesday 19 May at 6pm.

If you've been thinking you would like to take some gentle exercise to shift any lockdown weight, or you would like to breathe in some fresh air; if you feel you've been inside for too long or perhaps would like to learn a new skill or brush off your old set of bowls: or even if you'd like to regain a little confidence as we emerge from the pandemic, please do come along and join us. You'll be made very welcome. To keep everyone safe, the mats, jacks and score boards are sanitised after use and there are sanitiser spray and paper towels available.

If you would like to have a try but don't have any bowls, please call me on 07535 278470. You don't need anything else, but loose clothing and flat shoes should be worn.

We look forward to seeing you.

*Susan Turner*

# Children's Poetry Competition



Don't forget to send in your entry for the Poetry Competition!

Poems on any topic will be welcomed but if you need some inspiration here are some ideas:

My friends, family, pets, village

My favourite things, experiences, activities

Magical Creatures, imaginary places

Lockdown dreams

Outside my window

Unheard voices

Get some help from Mum, Dad or the Dog!

Send your entries to [Birdsong1@btinternet.com](mailto:Birdsong1@btinternet.com) or pop to either Steve (Rose Cottage, Main Street) or Lesley (Moonrakers, Back Lane) by 30 June.

Prizes will be awarded in the following age groups:

7 and under

8 to 11

12 to 14

15 to 18

Our panel of judges (Steve, Venice, Lesley & John) will be declaring the winners in early July, ready for a special prize giving and publication in the August / September edition of Birdsong.

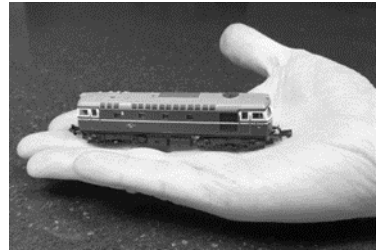
Don't be shy - write a line, show us why your poems shine!

## Even More Railway Mania!

Continuing the theme set by Andrew and Matt, here is my experience of railway modelling. I am fortunate to remember the final days of steam trains in the late 50s and early 60s. My memories are of giant machines that were alive; noisy, smelly, dirty, wonderful! Memories of sitting at St John's railway station (in Worcester) with about 30 other lads, collecting the numbers of these beasts that shot past us, and being excited if it was one I hadn't seen before. I was also fortunate that my dad had a friend who was an engine driver and on one cold Sunday morning we visited the shunting yards at Shrub Hill station, and I got to ride on the footplate (those glorious days before Health and Safety took over).

As a child I had a Hornby train set which I used to lay out across my bedroom floor – it was the old 3 rail design. Then came girls and pubs, and the set was put away into a trunk never to see the light of day again. However, I always retained my love of railways, both full size and model.

Move on a few decades and along came semi-retirement and Covid. It was the perfect time to re-institute my latent hobby, so I took the plunge and decided to build a model railway. However, I was restricted in space, so I decided to build an N gauge railway (which is half the scale of those built by Andrew and Matt). It is small and fiddly but it allows me to fit a lot into a confined space (my layout area being 200cm x 75cm).



The layout I am creating is of a branch line from the early 1960s era: the last days of steam and early days of diesel engines.

Like Matt, most of my time has been spent on building the layout rather than running the trains, but I guess this will change as the layout nears completion. Currently I am about halfway through electrifying the points which has been the biggest challenge for me so far. Once this is completed, I will lay down the 'permanent way' and finish the scenery. This is a mix of scratch built and kits from Metcalf, the latter giving excellent detail.



I have found building the model to be frustrating, annoying, relaxing, and hugely enjoyable, all at the same time. The greatest revelation lies in the knowledge that you cannot solder N gauge parts with only two hands!



Thank you for taking the time to read this. If you have also read the articles from Andrew and Matt, then you definitely need to consider building a layout yourself!

*John Owen*

BIRDSONGBIRDSONGBIRDSONG

## **Congratulations at Last!**

Congratulations to Ceara Hayden of Oak House, Back Lane and her fiancé, Chris Fisher, who were forced to rearrange their wedding eight times due to Covid restrictions before finally saying 'I do' in April as the first phase of the current Covid roadmap permitted small weddings again.

Ceara and her new husband both live and work in the Lake District National Park and had planned their first wedding for 30 May 2020 at nearby Muncaster Castle, with more than 100 family and friends joining them.

However, it was cancelled after the first nationwide lockdown came into place in March last year.

The date was then postponed until September, then again to December, then six more times before the couple settled on an intimate wedding with only immediate family members in their local village Church on Thursday 22nd April.

The now Mrs Fisher said that it was a 'sense of relief' when they finally said 'I do' in the glorious sunshine at St Catherine's Church in Eskdale after so much uncertainty and changes to plans in the past 12 months.

Ceara said afterwards 'In hindsight, we wouldn't swap having a smaller wedding with just six guests for our original plan. Everyone got along so well, and it was just such a wonderful day, with a beautiful service in our local church and a day we could spend outdoors in such a wonderful setting, in glorious weather in the valley that we are so lucky to live in and call our home too. It was beyond perfect in every way and well worth the wait!'

*Declan Hayden*

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## Our Shutdown Garden Project

Early last summer a project was started in the form of a garden conversion; to slightly enlarge and give a more open aspect to our patio, as well as pre-empt the collapse of a thirty-five-foot-wide soil-retaining wall and, in the process, converting the garden from a green / environmentalist's 'oxygen replacement shrubbery' to a low maintenance 'stone and rock garden'.

It all started by shredding various plants, some having grown up to five or six feet tall in past summers, and filling seven green waste bins in the process. This was followed by removing the dangerously leaning retaining wall along with the excess soil behind it, during which about a couple of skips' worth of bricks and soil were taken away to be replaced by a much lower sleeper barrier. None of this heavy work could have been achieved without Dave Neal and team who worked tirelessly during two days of pouring rain! (Thanks, guys!)

The reconstruction of the area included refurbishing the slate chipping 'river' by washing the chippings to remove the accumulated weed-supporting soil between the slate and the membrane underneath it, and redefining its banks with concrete edging on one side and branches from John and Lesley's fallen tree on the other. Then, to retain the remaining soil now held back by the much lower sleeper arrangement along its lower edge, over a ton of stones, rocks and gravel were distributed to contain the resulting steepish slope - on the limit of its angle of repose!



All that now remains is to continue planting alpine and similar low-level greenery /flowers amongst the rock, stones and gravel, along with a few tidying up/completion tasks as the weather gets warmer and less wet. Included in this whole exercise was some repotting, including broom seedlings as well as an acer which came here with us when we moved from Suffolk over 25 years ago, and some gifts from Birdingbury residents.

An additional benefit of all this gardening exercise is that my now slimmer self has been rebuilt. This is after losing about ten kilos to Covid-19 last spring, whilst mainly asleep in bed for most of two weeks and being tirelessly looked after by Carmel. 'Long Covid' is a continuing reality, though thankfully diminishing, in the form of drifting patches of brain fog and weak concentration.

*Chris de Nahlik*



## Nelson's Siding (Marton Road)

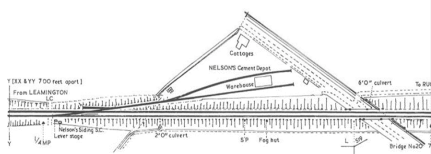
Nelson's lime and cement works, one of many in this area, was located alongside the Grand Union canal, approximately half a mile from the Boat Inn towards Napton, at Stockton. A history of Nelson's would be a very long story in its own right. Suffice to say, the works opened around the late 1850s with a branch of the canal directly into the works, and was closed in 1946.

The works suffered from a lack of rail access for incoming raw materials and finished goods, so around 1877 Nelson's entered an agreement with the LNWR (London and North Western Railway) to build a new siding and crane at Weedon military dock to transship goods from the canal to the railway system. This was not very efficient as the trip to Weedon was 16 miles long and involved 16 locks, so the company started to look for a better alternative.

The Rugby and Leamington railway through Birdingbury and Marton had opened in 1851, and in 1881 Nelson's began negotiations for a railway siding at Marton, by the Birdingbury to Marton road bridge. This was  $3\frac{1}{2}$  miles by road from Nelson's works at Stockton but must have been seen as a better option than the long journey by canal to Weedon. The first step was to acquire the land for the siding from our old friend, Sir Theophilus Biddulph. This they achieved at a cost of £310 which was half the actual value.



Two sidings were built, with a transshipment shed between the rails. Given the dates we are talking about, the finished products must have been transported on mule trains and by horse and cart, although I can find very little proof of this. I would guess the route may well have passed through the top part of Birdingbury.



Technologically, things were moving fast in the late Victorian period, and in 1895 a new railway from Marton Junction to Weedon was opened, passing directly by Nelson's cement works and, indeed, with sidings directly into the works. This of course rendered Nelson's siding on the Marton Road redundant and in 1895, after a life of only about 14 years, the siding was closed and the rails lifted.

Not the end of the story though, as 126 years on the site is still used for light industry.

*Steve Edgar*

## Back Lane Breakbeat

Hi folks, I'm a full-time Drum & Bass / Electronic Music Producer and DJ signed to independent record label Hospital Records, based in Birdingbury.



When I'm not writing in my home studio, I'll be on tour performing most weekends at nightclubs/festivals up and down the UK, Europe or as far as Australia/New Zealand. While the pandemic has hit me and the events and hospitality industries pretty heavily over the past 14 months, luckily day-to-day writing and recording hasn't changed a huge amount. Plus, following the recent pilot events in Liverpool, there's hope that the industry can be back in full swing soon.

As the lockdowns meant performing to crowds was no longer an option and the social-distanced events I was booked for kept getting cancelled, streaming became the way to engage fans directly. Having not had a 'real-life' gig since March 2020 I was lucky enough to play at a number of 'VR' (Virtual Reality) events such as Glastonbury and UWE's Tobacco Dock weekender. While the crowd was filled with virtual characters on the dancefloors as opposed to real people, it felt great to be performing again and seeing people enjoy themselves listening to music.

Performing a set on top of Stanage Edge in the Peak District in front of unsuspecting hikers was also a highlight. I have also been taking over various rooms of the French's house to record video-mixes for Ministry of Sound and Hospital Records (special thanks to Guy & Lisa).



This all meant that the feeling of gigging hasn't completely gone away and has given me opportunities to diversify my audience (thanks Benson and Monty).

As for releases, it felt like a strange time to be releasing dance music particularly with clubs closed and events few and far between, but with more people at home looking for things to do and music streaming up by 20%, it felt like a risk worth taking. I released three EPs, 'Bubblers Parts 1, 2 & 3' each written between my home studio in Birdingbury and Hospital's studio in Brixton, London. These featured guest vocals from Ben Verse (Pendulum), London MC Subten and Doncaster based dancehall singer Parly B. Each was well received with support from BBC Radio 1, 1xtra and even a few of my idols Chase & Status & Shy FX. A massive relief and added bonus given the situation.



Lockdown has also given me the time to work on and finish projects for others, something I've always wanted to do since I started producing full-time. This summer sees the release of a 14-track album written by me for friend and MC, 'Inja'. It's been three years in the making and features Manchester based brass group Riot Jazz, and jazz legend Cleveland Watkiss MBE amongst others. We're looking forward to touring the album with a full-release party in London once things open up!

If you'd like to hear some of my music or see more of what I do, check out the following link: <https://linktr.ee/whineymusic>

Happy raving!

*Whiney, aka Will Hine*

BIRDSONGBIRDSONGBIRDSONG

## Update from the Club

It's been great to see so many people visit the Club since we've been able to reopen – I think everybody has missed the opportunity to meet in person, even if it's still on a socially distanced basis, and we really hope you've enjoyed it. As before, a lot of people have worked hard to make sure everything is done properly and safely and, so far, things have been going extremely well.

The Friday night street food still proves to be popular and even the weather has been reasonable, meaning that sitting outside has been mostly enjoyable too! Now that we can reopen inside, we've gone back to opening every day and are experimenting with opening much earlier during the week to see if all you homeworkers, evening dog walkers and indeed, non-dog walkers fancy dropping in for a quick drink on the way past. We'll see how it goes.

I think it's also fair to say that the club has adapted and been keen to keep some form of social life going in the village during lockdown, and in doing so we've actually learnt a great deal that will help us map out the future of the Club. More on that in due course, but for now, I'd just like to end by thanking everyone that has helped keep things going behind the scenes (and you know who you are) or by coming down for a drink or three since we re-opened (and we certainly know who you are!!).



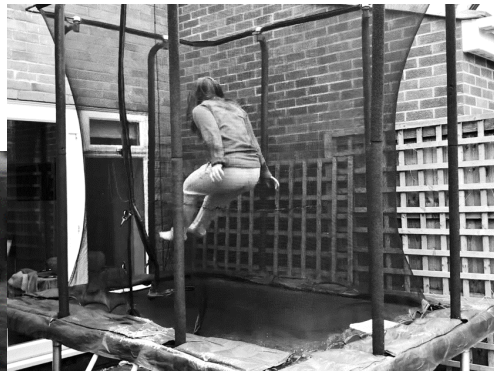
Keep on keeping on.

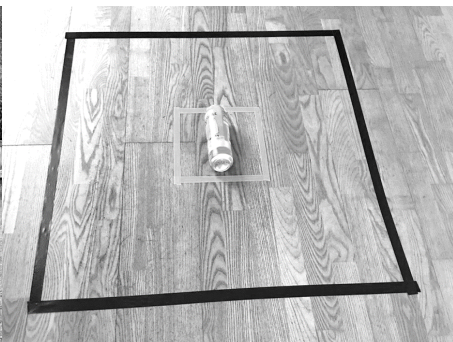
*Tony Flint, President*

# Laughing Through Lockdown

As lockdown restrictions started to lift in April, the village Saturday night Zoomers dialled in for the lockdown entertainment finale: 'Birdingbury Olympics'. Thought up, managed and co-ordinated by our village creative director, Tony Flint, this ambitious finale was set to test both us and the technology as the events were brought to the group live, with both inside and outside broadcasting. To coin Tony's phrase 'what could possibly go wrong'! The assembled crowd was invited to predict the outcomes, with points being awarded accordingly, to the following 'events':

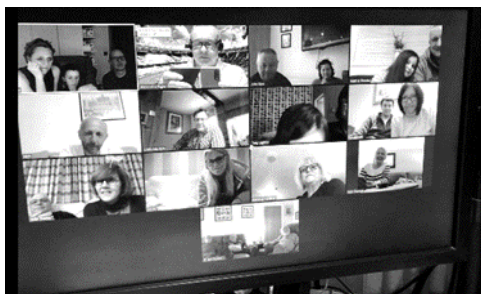
1. The repeated retrieve featuring Bertie-the-Ball Armbrister
2. The mini mini mini marathon completed by Raring-to-Race Rich Cutts
3. Black bin bagging performed by Andrew-the-Accurate Armbrister
4. The plastic-cup-walk-of-doom braved by Tottering Team Thomlinson
5. The trampoline of torture tackled by Erin my-bum-hurts-now Flint
6. Penalty shoot-out from the Young but-old-by-the-end-of-it Family
7. Carling Curling cracked by Emma and Nick with Jake-Clean-Sweep Thomas





The final totting up demonstrated that no-one had taken this at all seriously and the adjudicator was forced to award everyone 35 points, resulting in a resounding draw.

The event was a chaotic success and ended a long run of weekly zoom get togethers where different families took turns to come up with ideas to entertain, from the Tiptons' quizzes and Edgars' Bingo, to John Barr's fine impression of Roy Walker from Catchphrase. Each week brought laughter and tears (from more laughing), and we all looked forward to seeing the faces each Saturday night throughout a difficult time.



Everyone came together and played their part, but special thanks must go to Tony, Alex and Richard for co-ordinating each week, thinking up different themes, leading many of them and managing the tech.

You made lockdown just that little more fun on a Saturday night.

*Jo Young*

IRDSONGBIRDSONGBIRDSONG

Birdingbury knows

The apostrophe still lives:

What's up's on WhatsApp

*Thin Jethro Laskey*



IRDSONGBIRDSONGBIRDSONG

## LHCC Relief in Need Fund

The Leamington Hastings Consolidated Charity (LHCC) not only manages the Almshouses in Leamington Hastings but also administers a 'Relief in Need' fund.

The fund is available to local residents who could benefit from a grant to help towards the cost of items, services or facilities to support them during a time of need.

We welcome applications from individuals but equally please do let us know of other residents who may not be in a position to apply for themselves – we may be able to help.

The application process is easy and informal. Questions and interest should be forwarded to me at [alexrigler@aol.com](mailto:alexrigler@aol.com) or call me on 07962 169199.

*Alex Rigler, Clerk to the Trustees*



BIRDSONGBIRDSONGBIRDSONG

## Postscript to a parcel

Readers may remember that a parcel for our granddaughter in France had sailed back and forth over several months and at the time of the last *Birdsong* it was on its way again, with the third set of carriers.

Well, it did arrive in Lyon although not without several phone and text messages about where to deliver and when, but there was one further little matter.



Alongside the various items of Jaela's stored in our attic and the spare room there was a pair of snow boots which I thought would be just the sort of thing needed in the winter in central France, so into the box they went - with a squeeze.

Imagine the surprise when Jaela got in touch to say the parcel had made it but what were these boots: they weren't hers.

Apparently, I had packed a pair of Rhondda's boots, dating back to when we last had snow. We are not sure whether they will have fitted Jaela but with the climate changing perhaps Rhondda won't need them here so no loss - we will see!

*Chris Barney*

BIRDSONGBIRDSONGBIRDSONG



# The Golden Town

It was raining  
And like the rain,  
The road ahead  
In short horizon,  
Dropped  
Into a golden town.

A town by time and colour got,  
Of candled pane and gabled top.

While all about me  
Something hid.  
Beneath me then  
The wide street slid

And old reflections came to meet  
The shadowed rivers at my feet.

There blue grey ghosts  
Were walking  
Amidst the blue grey light  
And the blue grey gloss  
Of their gleaming,  
Shone with the colours of night.

I saw in them  
The patient wear,  
Of industry  
And endless care,  
All writ in their demeanour there.  
And rights long sought for  
And as long denied.

So much,  
So quickly,  
Senses run.  
I thought in leaving,  
Somewhere bells were rung –  
Or an echo's silent grieving.

*Pilgrim – for Bill*

## Birdingbury Calendar

Pop-up events are being organised on a week by week basis, so do keep checking the Facebook pages for Birdingbury Village and Birdingbury Club. The village website and notice board will continue to capture community information.

### Tasty Takeaway Timetable

Taste Events will be at the Club car park from 17.00 to 20.30 as follows:

Friday 4 June	Gourmet Burgers
Friday 11 June	Pizza
Saturday 19 June	Mexican
Friday 25 June	Indian
Friday 2 July	Gourmet Burgers
Friday 9 July	Pie and Mash
Friday 16 July	Pizza
Friday 23 July	Mexican
Friday 30 July	Indian

### Jammers

Jammers are back pro tem on Tuesday nights from 19.30 at the Club. Village musicians old and new are welcome to join the sing/play-a-long.



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