



Sydenham
Summer 2020
Newsletter

Editorial

Hello everyone from a distance! How life has changed since what was it early March, when even then we had no idea what game changers were in front of us! What the heck is self-isolation? – What does it mean/how will we survive without food and drink & shopping and going to school!

Let's face it – five months down the line and we are still here and more than fortunate living in our beautiful village of Sydenham.

From the Newsletter viewpoint, I've been out of the frame due to health problems but delighted to have Fi Kermack on board keeping things going and Ulrika Kuoppa-Jones initially supporting with her skill from the design & print world. We have missed our right-hand Paul throughout since he decided to self-isolate alone in Gordon Ramsey Cornish territory but, keeps himself going (with no computer) and frequent postal supplies of milk powder and the occasional bar of chocolate! Come back soon! We need you. We apologise in advance for any mistakes - we miss Paul's eagle eyes and wordsmith skills!

Incidentally Paul spent his 85th birthday in mid-June. We send him belated birthday congratulations!

A brief thank you to many village friends who have popped in: Adèle has been the mainstay and the single glass of evening sustenance has kept her going. She has also been my hospital driver whenever required. Neighbours Lynn and Madeleine & Pauline & Ken have checked in regularly and have been great shoppers!

Our dear friend Rosemary has also been fantastic – cooking and delivering supper for us, until that is, falling off a ladder in her garden, fracturing her wrist, her collar bone and being hospitalised for a couple of nights! She is now thankfully fully mended and back in the frame as busy as ever!

Young Willow Blake was also in a similar accident, also breaking her wrist in two places whilst falling out of a tree in the garden – as you do! Both incidents within a couple of days of each other!



It's been a very sad time with the death of our wonderful village friend and neighbour of nearly 20 years, Kate Grafham on the 21st April. Thank you to Kate's many friends for sending copies of pictures, stories, words and love and memories and to special friends Sue Johns and Helen Richardson and Anna in California & Kate's father John for allowing us to use the Eulogy and Isabelle's thoughtful Poem 'In Loving Memory of My Beautiful Mother'.

It's been a sad time also with the death of Hazel Ridgley a relatively new resident just along the Thame Road who particularly enjoyed joining husband Paul at Aunt Sally evenings at The Inn at Emmington.

Sadly, born and bred Sydenham villager David Munday has passed away following a long illness; our condolences go to Val and boys Tom and Peter. David and his identical twin brother, Andrew (2018) were born in 1949 and lived at Crossways

Cottage. The Munday family are probably the oldest family in the village tracing back to 1528.



We commence this rather belated issue with great pictures and happy memories of May 8th 2020, the 75th Anniversary of VE Day 1945 celebrating the winning of the 2nd World War in Europe. Ulrika and Fi were particularly active taking snaps of families picnicking throughout the village creating some excellent memories for future generations!

We cover regular village items, Parish Council, Church News, WI activities, Pub News from the Crown and the Inn at Emmington, Cricket updates, Cheryl's Saturday evening quiz night's, the Old School Room draw winners, take away suppers and other village gossip, and a section on 'what did you do during Lockdown'

We finish with pictures, happy short stories and lovely memories about our friend Kate.

We hope you enjoy the issue; it's longer than usual but delightful to share a wonderful memory of the Anniversary Celebrations and Kate Grafham.

We hope the next issue will cover the months of August and September (but we all know regular changes will probably disrupt our schedule). Let's make a suggested deadline of 7th September (fingers crossed)! Please send copy to Roy via royharry@aol.com

Enjoy your reading and the remainder of the summer holiday. Best Wishes

Roy, Fi and Ulrika

The Weather!

(Well, we wouldn't be British if we didn't mention the weather!)

May was the sunniest Spring since records began in the late 1920's with over 260 hours of sunshine, the driest for over 124 years.

The weather made Lockdown so much easier and somehow enjoyable, families strolling around in summer clothes and generally making every-one feel happy! I've been particularly impressed with the Maisey family from the Inn at Emmington Sharon, Dave, Alice, Edward and Pickles walking (or running with the dogs) twice a day throughout the period-fantastic! The sunshine on VE Day will be remembered for many years - delightful to see families sharing afternoon tea or drinks all over the village. See our picture gallery

I don't want to spoil your appetites for sunshine but 64 years ago in 1956 it was the start of an atrocious summer with heavy downpours and the wettest July on record in London. With a big risk of minimal holidays for the foreseeable future we need sunshine to keep us happy - let's hope the wonderful weather of May this year swiftly returns!

The village VE Day street party to go down in history

On the seventh week of Covid-19 isolation, Sydenham celebrated VE day in a unique way. All over the village families carried their garden furniture to the end of their boundaries to sit with neighbours and celebrate safely. An unusual commemoration, but a celebration, nonetheless.

A smell of freshly baked cakes, tea (or something a little stronger) and optimism wafted through the village on Friday the 8th May. The sun was shining in an unpolluted blue sky, reminiscent of our childhoods.

“Today it may seem hard that we cannot mark this special anniversary as we would wish,” said the Queen in her speech to the nation. “Instead we remember from our homes and from our doorsteps.”

The whole village was dressed for the occasion with bunting and flags, many homemade after failed deliveries. The wartime motto “Mend and make do”, suddenly rings true again.

It was wonderful – after two months of spending time indoors in tracksuit bottoms – to find a reason to dress up. A lot of us used our daily outdoor exercise to walk down the streets and greet neighbours we have not seen since the outbreak of the virus. Most of us suntanned (or burned) and sporting outbursts of facial hair and overgrown hairstyles.

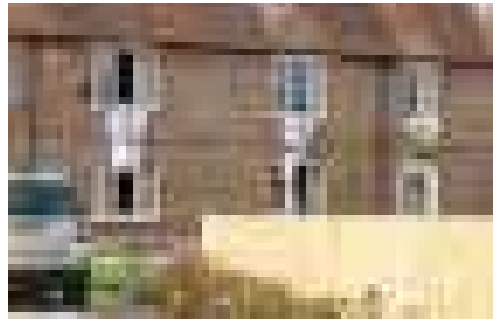
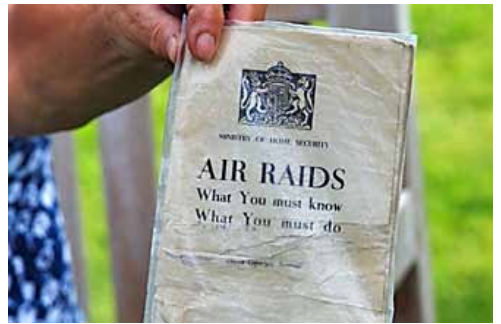
But none of that mattered as even the hardest introvert welcomed the opportunity to socialise with our neighbours. The Queen’s final words really captured the spirit of Sydenham:

“Our streets are not empty; they are filled with the love and the care that we have for each other”.

Ulrika Kuoppa-Jones











Memories of WW11 from the 1940's of my father Bert Harrison for the VE Day 75th Anniversary Celebrations.

William Herbert Harrison 1913 - 1994
Army Number 7649302 R.E.M.E. (Royal Electrical & Mechanical Engineers)

By Roy Harrison

The Beginnings

Yorkshire man Bert enlisted at Huddersfield on 17th October 1940, exactly two weeks after the birth of his first son, my brother Peter and on our mother's Alice's 26th birthday.

Bert's service and

pay book tell us that he was 5'6 tall and weighed 160 lbs with blue eyes and a fresh complexion. He was 26 and now liable to conscription.

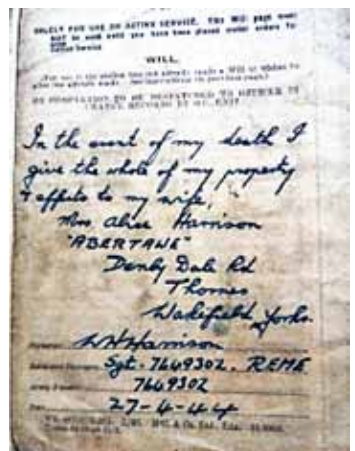
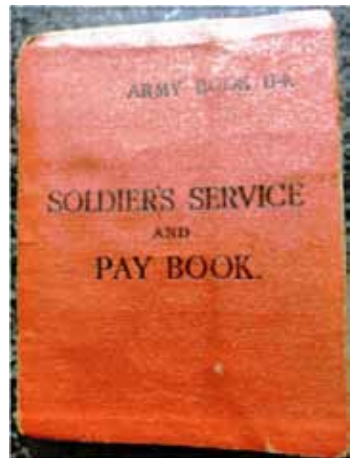
Bert had been a Cost Clerk with Sharpouses, a large Wakefield based wholesaler provision merchant, so it is no surprise that he was assigned to R.E.M.E. as a Storeman - a Private but by later in the war he had attained the rank of Quartermaster Staff Sergeant

His Service & Pay book shows that he was granted 10 days privilege leave from 7-16th July 1942 when his second son Roy was born on 7th July. Until April 1944 Bert was in the UK, spending some time in Scotland. No doubt wherever he was, always busy provisioning and despatching for R.E.M.E. overseas operations, but he came home for short periods on leave.

The Italian Campaign and a lifelong friendship is formed

In April 1944 Bert embarked for Italy. On embarkation all soldiers had to complete a will which was kept in their pay book. (see image).

Allied forces had invaded Sicily in July 1943, followed in September by the invasion of the Italian mainland with a campaign until the surrender of the German Armed Forces in Italy in May 1946. On the Western Front of World War 11, Italy was the



costliest campaign in terms of casualties suffered by infantry forces of both sides. There was bitter small-scale fighting around strongpoints defending Monte Casino in an attempt to drive north beyond Rome. Bert found himself in Casserta. Fighting was fierce for the Allies to take Monte Casino 30 miles away, but Bert's job was to provision troops not to fight and liaison with local Italians was essential - not that they had anything in the way of provisions to offer. The fascist government had fallen in 1943 but there was a civil war waging within the country and Italians were starving. The surrender eventually took place in the Palace of Casserta, 50 miles north of Naples and it was to Casserta that Bert had been sent. Bert needed a translator there - and Guillermo was found. Guillermo became 'Bill' to Bert. He also needed an errand-boy/runner and 12-year-old Antonio filled the role and apparently Bert filled their and their families' empty bellies. He managed somehow to send packs of oranges home occasionally - a real treat but never in good condition when they arrived! There were, apparently, postcards showing sights like Vesuvius.

Dad came back home in May 1946. Peter was six and I was four years old and he was more or less a stranger to us. He talked little of Italy and being two youngsters more interested in fighting each other and cricket, we never asked much either.

The strength of friendships

But the two Italians and their families never forgot him. Bill and Antonio wrote every Christmas to their 'dear' Bert. They worshipped him, as every letter showed and kept in touch up to and in Antonio's case even after Bert's death. Antonio, the little errand boy became a lecturer and came to stay with Mum and Dad in the early 60's, while Peter visited him and his family in the late 90s. Bert was still Antonio's hero and a visit to the Palace of Casserta was an essential sight to take Peter on his visit. Mum and Dad finally took a holiday to Italy in 1973 & travelled to see Bill, but sadly the trip was cut short after one short visit to see him when father aged only 59, suffered a heart attack. He was never fit enough to return but went on to live for a further 20 years.

Soon after demobilisation to our home in Wakefield in 1946, Bert met a German prisoner of war as they both waited for a bus to go and see Huddersfield town FC play. They were the Liverpool/Manchester United of their day! Bert invited Fred Jahn back for tea the following Sunday - and he came every Sunday until he was repatriated. Fred's letters and cards also arrived a couple of times a year from Düsseldorf where, as a successful engineer, Fred married and raised a family. He never forgot his Sunday teas or being invited to Alice's sister Mary's wedding. His letters and cards were always filled with praise and admiration for my parents!

Well done Dad (Bert) you were fantastic! And thank you sister-in law Julie for logging the story.

***If you have any wonderful stories of your family's past,
please share them with us.***

Church News

Over lockdown, The Ministry team have and still continue to organise care for vulnerable residents, a food bank as well as providing not only a weekly service but a series of readings via the website – see <https://www.chinnorunitedchurches.co.uk/>

St Mary's Church opened its doors on the 17th June for individual private prayer and continues to be open on Wednesday afternoon's between 3pm and 7pm and Sunday mornings between 9am and 12 noon. Strict guidelines should be followed so please observe normal distancing and use the sanitising station. Instructions will be available as you enter the Church.

We are also delighted that services are resuming across all 4 churches although it is a restricted timetable.

	8am	9.30am	11am	6pm
Sunday 2nd Aug	No service	Aston Rowant Service of the Word Brian	Chinnor Holy Communion Jacky	Crowell CW Evening Prayer Jacky
Sunday 9th August	No service	Aston Rowant Holy Communion Jacky	Chinnor All Age Service Margaret	Sydenham BCP Holy Communion Jacky
Sunday 16th August	No service	Aston Rowant Service of the Word	Chinnor Holy Communion	Crowell BCP Evening Prayer plus Holy Communion
		Des	Jacky	Jacky
Sunday 23rd August	No service	Aston Rowant Holy Communion	Chinnor Holy Communion	Sydenham BCP Evening Prayer
		Jacky	Jacky	Joan
Sunday 30th August	UNITEDPARISH@HOME service online and on paper			

The best news is that Jacky Barr is now our Rector. Let's hear from her:

A note from the new Rector of the United Parish of Chinnor, Sydenham, Aston Rowant and Crowell.



It's a bit hard to put into words how I feel now I've been licensed as Rector but this image gets close to it!

I am very very happy to be Rector and staying in the Parish. And what an amazing three days I had!



Thursday 9th July was the licensing day. A day I'd like to describe as being full of prayer and reflection, but actually it was a day of nerves. How wonderful to spend the last half hour as your assistant curate with the bells of St Andrew's being rung in my honour. Wow! Thank you so much to the Burdett family.

At last the moment arrived and the Area Dean finally let us into the Zoom meeting. I was worried that being "licensed by Zoom" was going to feel remote and virtual in all senses. But, my goodness, it didn't feel like that at all. With over a hundred screens and about 150 people all beaming away at me, I truly felt such a connection to you all. It was very real and very tangible. And utterly wonderful! I'm grateful to the Area Dean for coping with us and to Bishop Colin for licensing me and for MCing such a glorious service.

The next day was a day off for me and I spent the day grinning my head off and luxuriating in the feeling of being Rector!

And then came the Saturday, Rambling Rector day. We couldn't have had better weather, dry, sunny with a good breeze to keep us cool. Thank you to all of you who either walked with me or joined us at the churches. It was so lovely to see you all, there were so many of you!

It was wonderful and deeply meaningful for me to enter each church as Rector and to kneel at each altar to offer myself to serve God and the parish in each place. And, every time I stood back from the altar, I turned round to see you all there, praying alongside me, and my heart expanded a little bit more and I'm sure that it was just a touch of hay-fever causing my eyes to water....

And we raised so much money from the walk around the churches! The total is standing at £2250. That is such an amazing and generous effort on your part. Thank you to everyone who made a contribution.

I am calming down a little now and the reality of the enormity and seriousness of getting our churches re-opened is much on my mind.

My reflection is that this role as Rector is not always going to be easy one but I do know in every fibre of my being, that it is the one I am called to. And I remain very happy about it! With Love and Prayers

Jacky - The Rector



St Mary's Church Spire Roof repairs

Following the lifting of restrictions for certain construction work to proceed, we were granted permission to start the repair works a few weeks ago.

These are now essentially complete - the leadwork has all been replaced, the clock face refurbished, the shiplap boarding replaced with new cedar panels over new felt, and the large oak corner pieces replaced along with the replacement of some rotten timbers. The accessible small shingles to the apex will be replaced and any tiles damaged during the removal of the scaffold will also be replaced. There is also a replacement oak window (utilising the old leaded lights). This has been made and installed as a gift to the church by Maurice Horwood, (who is also the Moles Cricket club's President). Maurice was also involved in the major church refurbishment that took place in 1988.

These works are costing approximately £12,000. Fortunately, the scaffold is not on a hire but job price, so the impact of slow decision making, and the virus has not caused an increase in the cost.

We have so far been promised a generous grant from The Weston Foundation of £5,000, and the Fayre committee have given £1,500 as well as a further £3,000 from the Oxfordshire Historic Churches Trust so a good amount has been raised. There is a small church fabric fund that will also go towards the repair works.

A number of villagers have already generously donated towards the works and should anyone else be interested in donating towards this very important building at the centre of our village, you will find the details below.

As you can imagine funding has suffered considerably - so if you are able to donate, this will be very gratefully received. PLEASE NOTE - If you want to make a contribution, don't forget to confirm to the Church treasurer Michael DeVal michael_DeVal@hotmail.com that you have done so. Please also mention that you are happy to apply gift aid as it increases the value of your donation by 25%. This is important as it will ensure that the money goes towards St Mary's. Donations for St Mary's to go to (please advise Michael DeVal) United Parish of Chinnor Sort code 40-52-40 Account Number 00019680

Thankyou.

Mark Kermack



Sydenham Cricket Club branch out to form 'Grass Cutting Club'

The club, unable to play or practice cricket over lockdown turned our skills to grass cutting so getting together (albeit 2m apart) was very rewarding and being able to help the village and church look presentable was an added bonus, as was the pint of beer at the end!

We continue to cut the grass every 3rd week in the church. People also seem to be tending individual plots more regularly, which is nice to see.

On the cricket pitch we have played our first match of the season, a home match against Thame CC - and a real classic - having batted first Sydenham scored 147, a respectable score. Thame seemed to be heading for a lower score with just 5 overs remaining. Unfortunately for Sydenham the final overs saw a new batsman come to the crease who started hitting boundaries, including the very last ball of the match, giving Thame a win from the last ball!

The following week, we played Old Berkeley at home and the score was almost a repeat of the week before -only this time it resulted in a victory for the Moles with Will Shaw taking a wicket on the last ball giving us a win by two runs. We are looking forward to our annual cycle ride 'Tour De Sydenham' on August 8th. A busy few weeks ahead, making up for lost time!

Dan



Saving our Hedgehogs

Spot the box!

Gilly has positioned our hedgehog box in a secret location somewhere in the church yard. Hopefully the hedgehogs will find and enjoy it but it must not be disturbed by humans!



Each church in the Parish has been provided with a box kindly supplied by Chinnor Churches Go Wild and Arocha and organised by Lauretta. There is further information on our spiky friends via these links

<https://www.hedgehogstreet.org/> and <https://www.wildlifetrusts.org/what-do-if-you-find-wild-animal/help-hedgehog>

Parish Council News

It's certainly been a strange few months, but we'd like to take this opportunity to thank all villagers for their support to each other during this time as well as to our key workers each Thursday evening.

Like many organisations, the Parish Council has now gone digital! We've continued our monthly meetings albeit virtually and via Zoom (what we all do without Zoom?!). Despite our meetings being virtual, everyone is still invited to attend and details on how to attend our next meeting can be found below.

Corona Virus and Community Support

The village website has a Corona Virus hub within it and has lots of useful information. Including local updates and contact numbers for support that might be needed: <http://www.sydenhamvillage.co.uk/cv19-updates.html> A big thank you to Heather, our Parish Clerk, for creating and updating this page.

We are also able to provide printed versions of this information should you or a neighbour require it. Please call the Parish Clerk on 01844 873690 – please leave a message and the Parish Clerk will get back to you.

It has been great to see so many villagers supporting each other over the last few months but some may still need some additional support – or even just a friendly chat. If you or a neighbour are vulnerable and require additional help or support during this time, please get in touch with us as we are coordinating the village efforts to support the community during the Pandemic.

To get in touch with the Parish Council directly, please email parishcouncil@sydenhamvillage.co.uk. Alternatively, you can call 01844 873690 – again, please leave a message and the Parish Clerk will get back to you. Do just note, the Parish Clerk works part time, but the messages are checked regularly.

Sydenham Grove Update

Work has now restarted on the site and continues to make progress. We are aware that some delivery lorries for the site were speeding through the village and also incorrectly accessing the site from the Emmington end of the village too. Site Manager, Richard Foster has been fantastic at dealing with these issues and they have been resolved.

Do remember, if you have got any queries, Richard can be please contacted on 07516 030190 and he is also on the site every day.

Updates and timings on Sydenham Grove works will be added to the village website regularly (<http://www.sydenhamvillage.co.uk>) and also will be sent out via Sydenham Mails. Our most recent update for June:

SSE Project

Works on placing overhead power cables underground have now recommenced.

We are hopeful they will be (finally!) completed by the end of August.

Playing Fields

After taking guidance from Oxfordshire Association of Local Councils, we're delighted to say that the playing fields are open again for public use. Please do ensure:

That social distancing is maintained

As the equipment cannot be cleaned regularly, please ensure you sanitise your hands before, using and after using the play equipment.

If the play areas are busy, please wait or come back another time

We would like to say a big thank you to Lloyd for the donation of his mower which is now being used for the village grass cutting. We would also like to thank Sarah and Nick at Mary's Cottage for the use of their skip for grass cuttings.

Speeding and Proposed Chicane

The public consultation for the proposed chicane along Sydenham Road has now completed and we're awaiting the results of these. We'll provide an update on next steps in the next village newsletter.

We are aware speeding has seemingly increased along the B4445 stretch of road in the village during lockdown. We are continuing to investigate speed reduction options on the B4445 with Chinnor Parish Council and hope to have a positive update on this soon.

Village Greens

Vehicles driving or parking on village greens still seems to be an issue which is resulting in wearing of the bank and grass.

The Parish Council arrange for logs to be placed along the verges down Brookstones; however, these have now been removed at villager's request. We are now in the process of reviewing best way to reinstate and protect verges and greens within the village from erosion when the winter weather sets in.

Book Swap

We're sure that many of you have been enjoying reading during the lockdown period and may be looking for some new reading material. We have created a Book Swap box in the telephone box in the village for those to share any books they have finished with and get some new titles to read. Please do feel free to add or take books as you please!

Neighbourhood Plan Update

As you may be aware, the public referendum on the village plan was postponed in line with government recommendations.

Next meeting

The Parish Council will next meet on Thursday 3rd September at 7pm and we will be meeting virtually. Anyone is welcome to attend and if you wish to come along, please contact the Parish Clerk who will be able to send you the Zoom meeting instructions.

OSR 200 Club

Winners May, June and July

David Maisey, landlord at The Inn kindly Zoomed this event in early May with support other family members and neighbours, Cheryl and Mat, Heather and Paul and Alison and Geoff Isherwood and possibly more!

Unfortunately, I missed the occasion but both Gilly and I managed to have our numbers chosen! Thank you to the Vicki, Toby, Lucy and Philippa Roe for assisting with the July draw. Well done everyone and thank you for your continued support for the OSR Maintenance. Best wishes,

Roy

May			June	
£25	134	Eyore	222	The Kendall Family
£15	15	Derek Randall	43	Claire Ashfield
£10	7	Roy Harrison	84	John Wilson
£10	146	Gilly Harrison	181	Sharon Maisey
£10	25	Ken Hardiman	179	James Garlick
£10	145	Oliver Ashfield Smith	206	Alison Wilkins
£10	155	Pippa Williams	213	Sheldan
£10	45	Gilly Harrison	18	Mark King
£5	202	Jane Parry	112	Yvette Raisin

July		
£5	76	Cyndy Thomas
£10	230	Nick Oakley
£10	58	Pat Hardiman
£10	3	Chris Morgan
£10	29	David DeVal
£10	23	Gordan Mcleod
£10	223	Diane
£15	205	Judy Hunter
£25	11	Mark King

Greetings from Sydenham Women's institute your local group of friendly, active women from Sydenham and surrounding villages



Sadly, the WI has not been able to hold a meeting since February. However, we were able to conduct our AGM business via email, which worked very well and means that we were able to complete last year's business and get ready for this. Obviously, we don't know when we'll be able to resume, but we (did) have a good programme of speakers and events lined up. We do however plan to do our annual walk on Thursday 20th August, as that can safely be done with social distancing. Once we're able to safely restart, we'll publish the details. Meanwhile, stay safe and well everyone.

Siobhan

Virtual WI

WI. Denman Zoom courses during 'lockdown' proved very popular and continue to be so. They are on a variety of subjects, from cooking, visiting places and people, to name a few! If I can book my place, anyone can! And I have!

Avoiding the need to travel anywhere, I walked virtually around the City of London with Simon who was informative and interesting. We heard and saw various 'markets' that have been selling goods for centuries. Smithfield Meat Market, Covent Garden for flowers and plants and Borough Market for artisan foods. Some still operate to this day but have changed site! A lot of the trading happened in Jubilee Hall. There were strict rules for setting up and closing down stalls. A really pretty small clock tower with a bell used to keep and indicate timings to traders. It is still standing today! The area was very filthy after each days trade and had to be washed down ready for the next morning. Such a lot learnt from a virtual visit!

Gilly



Start pimping your pumpkins

Save the date - Cape Cottage Pumpkin Sunday – October 25th

This year's Pumpkin, Sunflower and Vegetables shaped like Bottoms competition will be held at Cape Cottage on Sunday October 25th starting at 11.30. Drinks and nibbles will be served.

This strange year when so much has been cancelled the management of the Extreme Vegetable World are keen that growers continue to drive for excellence. We have agreed to apply all rules especially around weighing and measuring. The Skipping Rope will be cleaned and kept in a sterile environment and Gordon McLeod will manage the weighing behind closed doors.

Then categories remain the same:

- | | |
|--|----------------------------------|
| * Largest Pumpkin by both weight and girth | * Tallest Sunflower |
| * Most interesting Squash | * Decorated Vegetable with Theme |
| * Novelty Vegetable | * Smallest Specimen |
| * Best Pair | |

Hall of Famers such as Julia Gossage and Paul Stancliffe are expected to enter and the competition will, as ever, be hotly contested.

We have been fortunate in getting both Head Judge Carole and Mark to be our officiating team. They have interrupted their busy schedules to yet again be with us. Head Judge Mark missed last year and is looking forward to the intensity of competition and the eclairs.

The late frost disrupted the schedules for particularly the Squash and Sun-flower however please buy your plant elsewhere if you wish to. The Pumpkins are ready as are a few Sunflower and can be purchased for £2 a plant. All proceeds go to the St Marys fabric fund to maintain our Church and its grounds.

This year will be our first year without Kate Grafham and we will all be sadder for it. Kate was a joy to be with and a sense of humour that caught the purpose of the competition and made us all smile. We will miss her but we were lucky to have known her.

It would be a pleasure to welcome new residents of Sydenham to Cape Cottage you can just come for a drink and a chat.

To order plants or any query call 01844 351906 or text 07831 533196 or email ann_ashfield@hotmail.co.uk.

Best Wishes,

Ann Ashfield



Lockdown Stories

Sydenham has been a wonderful place to be over the last few months with always someone to chat to over the gate or whilst out and about. Here we have a flavour of what villagers have been up to....

Bears spotted

If you go down to the village today, you're sure of a big surprise! Bears dressed for every occasion have been delighting passers-by. Celebrating Chelsea FC, VE Day (see the front cover) the glorious weather, a taste of Spain, afternoon tea and many more occasions, Madeleine's bears have cheered us all up including cyclists, families and walkers. Thank you!

Lockdown Fitness

Fi Kermack writes: Over lockdown I decided to try and get a bit fitter so investigated what was on offer via the internet. Care to join me?

There are literally hundreds of exercise routines via YouTube as I discovered but to help you get started straightaway with no more excuses, I've tried and tested quite a few during lockdown! So, get ready to begin your day in a more positive frame of mind, kick start your metabolism, improve your health and feel - good factor and lose a few pounds. The pace hots up as the weeks count down.

Read about her experience and get a lot of inside tips of great links to keep active here: www.silversurfers.com/video-hub/lockdown-fitness/

Composting

David Jones writes: The lockdown finally granted me the time to build a compost heap out of wooden pallets in the back garden. I've been filling it with garden waste and grass cuttings, but I need to get some earthworms in there to speed up the decomposition process. Please email: david@davidjonesphd.com if you have some I can pinch!

Learning how to ride a bike

Ulrika Kuoppa-Jones writes: The blissfully empty roads have been a godsend. Our 5-year-old daughter, Aava, has finally learnt how to ride a bike properly without being scared of traffic.



As seen on the BBC news - Gilly's NHS rainbow!

Every Thursday, without fail we cheered for the NHS at 8PM. On every street and in front of every house in Sydenham we gathered to whistle, clap and bang pots and pans. The children (and many adults) painted rainbows to show their support and to make us all see that we're in this together. Gilly's Old School Rooms' rainbow went viral when a snap was submitted to the BBC news. Well done Gilly!



News from our villagers - comings and goings and more

Annie and Nick Oakley

"Annie and I arrived in Sydenham and moved into Holliers Cottage on 4th October 2019. We consider ourselves very fortunate to have had a few months before 'Lockdown' to have met so many people in this very special village and to have felt so warmly welcomed before we all became prisoners in our own homes!

We are hugely grateful to all the lovely people who have helped us in so many ways during this strange and difficult time and hope that over the years to come we shall be able to repay at least some of their kindness."

Becca and Simon

After three years in Sydenham, Becca, Simon and their daughter Alex Fraser have now moved from Long Barn back to Wycombe, following the death of Becca's mum Ruth Smith in December. Becca writes: "Living together at Long Barn with my mum in such a lovely setting and with such kind people in the village, enabled us to look after her in a safe and calm environment as her dementia progressed. Having spent a month longer in Sydenham than intended due to the Lockdown, we finally moved on 29th April, without proper goodbyes to most people - which is perhaps a good thing, as we very much hope to be back in the village before too long for walks and drinks in The Crown and The Inn, and I will still be attending Book Club and WI"



Will and Pippa - Former Landlord Goes Freelance...

Will, formerly of The Crown Inn, has recently launched a new venture - "Will Shaw Chef" - offering Private Dining and Catering for all your fine dining requirements. From Private Dinner Parties and Personal Chef Services to Catered Celebrations and Events (following full social distancing compliancy where necessary), Will would love to be back cooking in the village. PLUS, keep an eye out for his 'fine dining takeaways' too, £25 for 3-Courses, including free delivery to Sydenham... lots of happy customers so far (including a few from the village).

Please check out the website: www.willshawchef.com and subscribe to the newsletter for the latest information. To get in touch, email us on hello@willshawchef.com. Thank you (and we miss you all x)

Saturday 'lockdown' quiz night in Sydenham

Cheryl Belson had the village in (Ka)hoots of laughter during her online quiz, bringing back that Saturday feeling to Sydenham. Ulrika quizzed her for some answers. (Interview conducted during lockdown)

Where did the idea of the quiz come from?

I did a quiz with some colleagues just before lockdown using the Kahoot app. We had such good fun, I just thought it would be a bit of fun for the village to look forward to each week. It's been a bit tough staying in and not being able to enjoy our wonderful village pubs so hoped the quiz might fill a bit of a time on a Saturday night.

What's it been like to run?

It's been great fun! I love seeing everyone's faces on video when they see the different topics and when they get things wrong. Everyone has really got into it, which has been great!

Who's been taking part?

We have had people from outside the village but are connected to it joining in as well, so it's been nice to include them too. My weekly treat of a G&T from The Inn at Emmington has also been a wonderful addition – thank you Dave, Sharon, Alice and Ed (who is the delivery man!)

Has it all been smooth sailing?

The first week was a bit ropey but after switching to Zoom it's been much easier. Everyone has found the Kahoot app easy to use – and it's a bit more fun than some of the usual Zoom quizzes I have been part of. You only have 20 seconds to answer so it means that you can't cheat!

What is it like to be stared at by a bunch of neighbours on Zoom?

I think they might be looking at the questions more than me (I hope!)

How come you're such a good MC?

Haha, I'm really not, but I don't mind being on camera and it's easy to just read the questions!

How easy has it been to come up with questions?

It's actually been quite hard. There are so many quizzes online and so many people are doing quizzes, the same questions seem to come up over and over again. I've switched to offline sources now (but won't share which ones!) and decided to include a few more random topics to keep it a bit different (motorways anyone?!).

How do you keep the quiz fresh?

Including pictures has been a bit of a game changer too and have had some good reactions to those. I think the villagers seemed to like the 'name that dog' and 'name that chin' rounds!

What kind of reactions have you received from the quizzers?

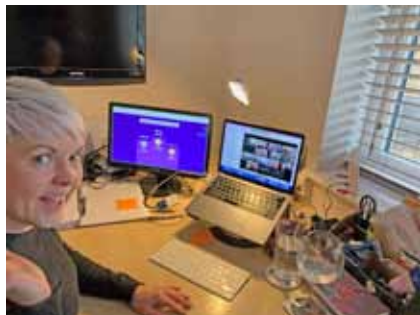
Mat and I (my quiet Quiz partner in crime) have been walking through the village during lockdown and it's been lovely that so many people have stopped to say how much they have been enjoying the quiz. We've had around 20-25 groups each week joining in, which has been fantastic.

Any specific teams that have impressed you?

I never knew how competitive the villagers were! We have had families divided and playing alone in their houses to try and beat the other household members (and succeeding!)

What has made you laugh the most? Seeing the reactions to answers or questions has been funny. Our little chats afterwards have also been good. Dave seems to enjoy these quite a lot – although, not sure his lovely wife does after his quip about her having a beard!

Cheryl's quiz continues once a month - the next one will be on the 22nd August at 7pm. Details to follow via Syd Mail and Facebook.



September & October at Waterperry

The Garden shop, Gift Barn and Gallery are now open again for business, the Ornamental Gardens are open to visit and outdoor and pre-booked indoor seating is available from the Tea Shop!

The magnificent herbaceous border at Waterperry Gardens bursts with late summer colour with the flowering of its Michaelmas Daisies (Asters). The plant centre, housed within the ancient walled garden offers plant connoisseurs and budding amateurs alike the chance to buy unusual varieties of shrubs and herbaceous plants whilst our friendly and knowledgeable staff are always available to provide advice, information and inspiration.

**Gardens open for the National Garden Scheme - Sunday 6th September
Apple Weekend - Saturday 10th & Sunday 11th October**

Opening times: 10am to 5.30pm April – October, 10am to 5pm November – March.

For more information please visit www.waterperrygardens.co.uk

Lockdown stories from the village pubs

THE INN AT EMMINGTON: “Close the curtains – it’s a lock Inn!”

That Friday evening in late March when pubs were asked to close down seems an age ago now. Back then people went to Specsavers for an eye test; Zoom was a hit by 1980’s pop group Fat Larry’s Band and furlough was a distance horses ran at The Kingston Blount point to point. How life has changed...

So, there we were on Saturday 21st March waking up at 9am – “bugger it” I shouted leaping from bed. “I’ve overslept for breakfast for the first time in 3 years”. “We’re shut!” Sharon shouted from under the duvet. Then I remembered what Boris had said the night before – pubs had to shut as soon as was practical.

“Well, what do we do now?” I thought. When you run a pub and work 18 hours a day, 7 days a week you don’t have time for anything else. Or to reflect on life.

“You know all those jobs and things that need doing!” shouted Sharon, raising me from my daydreaming. Apart from the misery surrounding the Corona virus – it has undoubtedly made many of us stop for the first time in many years, appreciating the people and things around more. For us, lockdown has meant:

1) Time for the family

We used to pass like the proverbial ships in the night. I always wanted to get one of those old factory clocking in and out machines installed by the front door as I could never remember who was in or out. One would want to be picked up from Fever at midnight (a nightclub in Aylesbury), whilst another one would be bouncing out of bed at 6am... Our fault for having three varying aged children, but lockdown has changed all that. We’ve had dinner together virtually every night. We’ve talked, played games, paddled in the paddling pool and played tennis with a net made up of a bamboo cane across two traffic cones (eh, it was good enough in my day lad!). We’ve even SAT DOWN to eat breakfast - I’d forgotten you were allowed to do that! We had a Star Wars fancy dress party on May 4th; watched Harry Potter, Line of Duty and all the Star Wars movies; baked cookies, painted pictures, read books and drunk all the beer before it went out of date! We’ve even squeezed in some schoolwork, but with Alice back from Uni the most important thing is we’ve all spent lovely quality time together.

2) Work stuff

We won’t bore you with details but the first month we were busy furloughing staff, cutting costs and direct debits, negotiating rent, etc – all the boring but essential things to enable us to come through the other side of this. The interior of the pub has been redecorated, the bedroom corridors repainted; the garden tended, and the outdoor furniture and fences treated. Next are the toilets to paint and some revamping of the website. All ready for a grand July reopening.

3) Outdoors

Give or take the odd day, it's been sunny and hot with meals alfresco. We've been out running most day, discovering new paths and routes we didn't know existed. Social distancing has been no problem, people seem to leap out of the way and cross the road when faced with a sweaty jogger lurching towards them... The dogs have been walked 2 or even 3 times a day. Sid has shrunk in size on a par with Tom Kerridge a combination of walks and lack of pork scratchings being discarded his way from the bar! And Sid's lost weight in a similar way!

4) Technology and news

The 5 pm press briefing was a must watch in the early days - heavyweights every night - Boris, Dishy Rishi, Dominic Raab - it was like Sky TV's Super Sunday with Robert Peston and Laura in the other corner, 'next slide please' akin to the presentation skills of an old chemistry teacher of mine. But whisper it, even that's got a bit boring now, what with that Oliver chap and the Environment Secretary, all a bit anticlimactic.

Like most people, we've got phones, laptops, etc but the lockdown has really made us use them to connect to people and the outside world. I wouldn't have described us as Luddites, but we didn't Zoom or Kahoot, but there's no stopping us now. Saturday's Sydenham quiz is guaranteed to start the weekend off with a family argument, Thursday boy's night BBQ on Zoom and our old athletics club has a lockdown leader board making us all extremely competitive and has actually brought people very much together. I don't think these online ways will make up for human to human contact but when you give it a try its surprising how well it works. Let's not even get started with online shopping - I'm worried the neighbours think one of us is having a fling with the DPD driver the amount of time he seems to spend here.

So, there we are - if we open at the beginning of July as has been predicted, we would have been shut for 15 weeks. Almost a third of a year. The kids would have missed a lot of schooling, the business a lot of money but we're still all still here, fit and healthy (which at the end of March was a genuine worry). And somehow, we're much closer together. In actual fact, I don't know how we're going to have time to run a pub again:

"Hang on Sharon - that's the oven timer ringing! Get the banana bread out! I've got Pickles' violin lesson to teach!"

See you all in July, just don't expect breakfast before 10am if you're staying!

Postscript - well here we are at the end of July and the pub is open.....everything is back to normal !! But don't worry, as part of the Government's drive to tackle obesity we will be offering half price food on Mondays, Tuesdays and Wednesdays from Monday 3rd August. I think the small print says you have to run or cycle to the pub to take part but other than that, fill your boots - I'll drink a Diet Coke to that - Cheers !! See you all soon.....

Love David, Sharon, Alice, Ed, Pickles, Dogs xxx

THE CROWN INN

So here we are now, at the end of July, the pub now being opened since the 4th July; it is almost feeling now that the shutdown on Friday March 20th at 5.30pm & the following lockdown was a very bad dream.

As we are writing this, it brings back those feelings of complete and utter devastation, of looking at our cellar fully stocked for a busy Mother's Day, and indeed week ahead, but at least feeling thankful that we buy and cook fresh here, so food wastage was an absolute minimal worry. The following two weeks were very difficult emotionally; the weather literally changed from continual rain to bright and warm sunshine on Saturday 21st March & whilst some folk were happily enjoying the sunshine, we found looking at our empty pub garden, with the new found peace and quiet absolutely soul destroying, so we shut ourselves away, doing those behind the scenes jobs that you never seem to find time to do.

Not used to spare time, and following discussions with our lovely fresh produce supplier, we decided to offer non - profit making deliveries to the village, as shopping was a big problem at this time & we really cannot thank the village enough for your support, through this we have met people we probably never would have, we have enjoyed the change by being outside, the village has helped so much in keeping our suppliers business afloat through these lockdown times too, so we thank you so much; we are going to continue to offer this service so please do contact us for further information.

After isolating ourselves for two weeks we decided it was safe to offer take away food for the village only; the kitchen was thoroughly cleaned, all takeaway containers purchased and in house for two weeks prior to commencing. We did wonder how we could do this with just the two of us, our kitchen size not allowing us to be able to employ our usual kitchen help in the forms of Harry Ball, Harry & Isabelle Grafham, Matty & Jonny Archer & of course Dom (not all at once), we can honestly say how much we have missed you all, as the first two weeks did resemble a worthy episode of Gordon Ramsey's Hell's Kitchen crossed with Fawlty Towers in so many ways, with the internet failing, the pub telephone breaking, trying to take orders and prep, so our sincere apologies for those who did have a wait in those first two weeks, and our utter heartfelt thanks to everyone who has supported us with this.....THANK YOU SYDENHAM VILLAGE.....

So with the gorgeous weather & the pub not open, as it was not possible to see family & friends, we found that we had time for long walks and be able to take in our beautiful surroundings, distance chat to villagers & find inner peace, so to speak, time being the most precious gift to us as a couple, as we had time for each other, a rarity since taking on the pub, Sparky our naughty black hound is also now due to have his legs measured as they must be at least two inches shorter.

The sad passing of lovely Kate Grafham in the midst of lockdown was utterly heart wrenching, as she was such a lovely, beautiful person; the funeral procession through the village indeed showed how much she was thought of, and what a very special place Sydenham is. We send our love & hugs to the Grafham family with memories of the happy family meals here.

Onwards & upwards, hooray, we are open again; although it has to be said it all feels rather odd as there are so many Government guidelines that we have to abide by. We have because of this changed our opening hours. Table booking for food is now essential, with takeaway another option from Thursday – Sunday. We are also going to continue with the vegetable deliveries, so should you need anything please do contact us, & once again, a big thankyou to the village for your lockdown support.

Monday - closed. Tuesday & Wednesday 5 – 9pm

Thursday & Friday 5 – 11pm drinks, food 6 – 8.45pm

Saturday midday – 11pm drinks, food midday -2.30pm then 6 – 8.45pm

Sunday midday – 4pm drinks, food midday – 2.30pm

Tel: 01844 351634

email: thecrown.sydenham@gmail.com

Pete, Tina & Sparky

Available for work/odd jobs/gardening

The three Archer teenagers (18-19) available for any work you need doing. In the last few weeks have been working on gardens and allotments. We get the job done fast as we are a hardworking team of three. We've got a brain between us, so are willing to try out any odd jobs you need doing.

References are available upon request from residents in Sydenham and the surrounding area.

Contact Lizzie for a serious conversation on her mob: 07902 902125

We look forward to working with you.

Lizzie, Jonny and Matty Archer



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Saying our final farewell to Kate

Hundreds of Kate Grafham's neighbours and friends joined together to stand in silence by the Sydenham Road on Thursday 14th May. All to create a warm and compassionate corridor of love, to keep Kate company on her last journey. Due to social distancing rules, only a few people were allowed to take part in the church service. This was our way to show our respect for a much loved and admired villager. A lot of you have been in touch to tell us how much Kate meant to you. Here

are some of your contributions. RIP dear Kate, we'll never forget you.

"I felt most privileged to be part of the massive group of friends, villagers, neighbours, clergy, publicans and colleagues of both Kate and Paul who stood to attention as the hearse and seven vehicles cortege superbly passed through the length of the village.

I know that Paul and family members were heartened to see the support and wanted to express their thanks. The funeral took place at Amersham Crematorium, where sadly due to Corona virus rules only 15 family members were able to attend."

Roy

"My beautiful friend Kate has left the biggest hole in so many people's lives and of course it goes without saying within her own lovely family. Her old school friend Sue Johns wrote some lovely words that made part of the eulogy at her funeral service that I was immensely privileged and honoured to be a part of. Here are some out-takes of Sue's and my memories.

Kate was born the 22th November in 1970, daughter to Pauline and John Barlow and sister to Graham.

Kate attended Widmer End Combined school before progressing on to Beaconsfield High School in September 1983 where she became Head Girl in 1988, her parents were immensely proud of her. A position that she held with great responsibility and passion. She even persuaded the Headmistress to support an AIDS Charity during her fundraising which was much against an all-girls school ethos - but she got her way!

Kate went on to take her A Levels and won a place at Bristol Polytechnic where she studied to become a teacher. Sue writes that Kate always wanted to become a teacher and proudly became one, influencing many students and colleagues along the way. Upon graduating Kate started working at Winchcombe School, Newbury, before moving on later to Claytons School, Bourne End.

Kate and Paul met when they were 14, at scouts I think! Dating for many years, Paul eventually proposed in Aug 1999 and the wedding date was set for July 2000 at Phyllis Court in Henley, with Kate famously saying that it would be an easy year for Paul to remember their wedding and subsequent anniversaries! Kate and Paul lived together in Piddington before moving to Sydenham just after the turn of the millennium where Kate fell pregnant with Harry who was born September 2003. Isabelle followed to complete their family in March 2006.

Whilst living in Sydenham Kate immersed herself into Village life. She became Chairperson of Ladybirds Pre-school which both Harry and Isabelle attended. That's also where I met Kate and our children and family friendships flourished. Kate became a member of the Sydenham Fayre Committee, she thoroughly enjoyed supporting the wonderful event and drew friends and family in to support it. She was also on the church cleaning committee and founded the book club with other wonderful friends in Sydenham. Every month she met up with local friends during "Ladies' Night" at the Crown village pub.



Kate went on to be Chair Governor at Aston Rowant Primary School which both Harry and Isabelle attended. Both at Ladybirds and Aston Rowant Kate and I worked closely together raising much needed funds for both settings and having much fun along the way!

Kate had a break from work whilst Harry and Isabelle were young and returned to work in Bucks Education, where she helped, advised and supported teachers and headteachers with their teaching plans before returning to teaching herself at Ickford Primary School, where she became Deputy Head Teacher. From here she went on to teach at

Haddenham before she won the role of Headteacher at Mary Towerton School, Studley Green, she was a huge impression on students, staff and parents, working tirelessly to improve the school, building the intake, developing the school site and building the school to a bigger and better place.

Throughout her life, Kate inspired people, people admired her and wanted to be friends with her, learn from her. She was many things: kind-hearted, loyal, trustful, supportive, and she knew how to have fun.

Amongst my many memories will be attending six or seven 'Take That' concerts with Kate Sue and Emma, a highlight of our friendship along the way. We partied together, holidayed together, celebrated our children's birthdays together, spent many New Years together and created many happy fond family memories which I will cherish forever. I know I am not alone when I remember Kate with love, laughter and happiness. A truly special lady who I was privileged to call a friend."

Helen Richardson, with the help of Sue Johns

"My memories of Kate would fill a book. And what a book it would be. A best seller for sure. Full of humour and love, fun and laughter, words of wisdom and drunken ramblings. With Kate, I was always myself. She supported me through bad times and celebrated the good times. On my birthday two years ago, I buried my brother. When I came back from Ireland, Kate held a low-key barbecue for me so that my birthday did not pass forgotten. That's the friend she was, a best friend, a dear friend, a friend I loved wholeheartedly.

I will miss her to the end of time but I'm so glad to have known her, to have been so close to her and to have been able to be with her this last year. My lovely friend Kate, beautiful lady."

Yvonne Dean

In Loving Memory of My Beautiful Mother By daughter Isabelle Grafham

“God saw you getting tired
And a cure was not to be
So He put His arms around you
And He whispered ‘Come to Me’.

With tearful eyes we watched you
We watched you fade away
Although we loved you dearly
We could not make you stay.

A golden heart stopped beating
Hard - working hands at rest
God broke our hearts to prove to us,
He chose to take the best.

It's lonesome here without you
We miss you more each day
Life doesn't seem the same
Since you have gone away.

When days are sad and lonely
And everything goes wrong,
We seem to hear you whisper
‘Cheer up and Carry on’.

Each time we see your picture
You seem to smile and say
‘Don't cry, I'm in God's hands,
We'll meet again someday!’

Kate founded The Sydenham Book Club and during the latest meeting most of the time was spent sharing fond memories of our witty, clever and super-organised founder and raising a glass in her honour. This is what organiser Anna Froker (a former village resident, now living in San Francisco) writes:

“Dave asked me afterwards about the Book club meeting, and I told him that there had been a series of memories shared about Kate. (Dave had much respect for her. “I like Kate,” he said. “She’s bright and observant. She listens, and asks good questions.”) I told him that everyone’s comments at Book Club echoed his (and my) high opinion of Kate. I told him that everyone emphasized her kindness, and how she always took a great interest in other people. And how full of life she was! And how well respected and accomplished Kate was as a teacher, and in all her roles in the educational sphere. I told him that everyone agreed that it didn’t seem right that she was taken. Kate gave so much to others, and had so much to live for. As poet Mary Oliver instructs us in ‘The leaf and the Cloud’, we scatter flowers over her grave and walk away. But she will be remembered.”



Anna and Dave Froker

I was so lucky to meet Kate when we first moved into the village. As part of the Fayre Committee we squashed around Chairman John Ashfield's table and had many hours of debate planning and much fun. I remember being so impressed with Kate's organisation and fantastic charts as well as her 'can do' attitude. She was one of those special people you were always pleased to see. *Fi Kermack*





THE INN AT EMMINGTON

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Large well kept beer garden with covered marquee
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Well spaced tables inside the pub. A safe environment



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12.30pm to 8.30pm
Sunday food served from 12.30pm to 5.00pm

CAMRA Good Beer Guide 2020
3 changing real ales and scrumpy ciders
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