

BROOKWOOD NEWS

February 2021

EDITORIAL

We are all finding it hard during lockdown so this edition of the newsletter mainly focuses on some ideas of things to do, see and hear in the area. Of course, some people might need some additional support through these tough times so I've also included some details of organisations that are always available to help.

Please stay safe

John Power – Editor

BROOKWOOD CLUB

In accordance with government restrictions the club remains closed. The committee would, however, like to reassure all members that their membership status is safe even though the usual renewal period has passed. All renewals are suspended until government advice permits us to reopen. Our current intention is that once the club reopens we will expect renewals to be made within a six-week period from that date and your membership will then run for one year from the club reopening. As and when we receive further government advice, or there is any change in our approach, we will keep you updated using social media, posters in the club window and of course this newsletter.

We hope you all stay safe and look forward to seeing you all in the near future.

WELLIE WALKING

Yvonne and Mark Craven have been making the best of lockdown by going walking, and Yvonne has kindly sent this article to us.

Over the past few months, many of us have appreciated, if we didn't before, how lucky we are to live within walking distance of heathland, woods, fields and the canal towpath. Judging by the numbers of people out and about, many more have discovered the joy of wandering paths and exercising in the great outdoors, where no two days are the same in terms of weather, what you see and who you meet. My elderly mother was living with us during the first and second lockdowns, and we regularly strolled to Sheets Heath Bridge and the towpath for her slower form of exercise. She would laugh because we always stopped to talk to someone I knew, which is one of the reasons I love living here.

Since those dusty summer walks, the narrow paths on the heath have turned into motorways of mud, and Mark and I don't leave the house without our 20-year-old wellingtons. In fact, we've almost worn them out now, discovering that they are surprisingly comfortable with thick socks. Up until now, they were mainly used in the garden in the winter. We've covered several miles at a time, walking out to West Heath and Mill Lane, or down to Fox Corner across Brookwood and Pirbright Heath.



Oh, the thrill and confidence of wading through puddles or squelching across quagmires. It takes me back to toddler days, where there were no worries about filling your boots or muddying your trousers, because someone else was doing the washing. We've discovered new paths that we didn't know existed, sometimes venturing off the beaten track to find hidden streams or different routes, even getting lost on the ranges on one occasion. Google maps doesn't tell all!

When life returns to near normal, I wonder whether we will keep up our regular communion with nature, or become too busy again. Only time will tell. Meanwhile the Christmas voucher is going towards a new pair of wellies.

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COBLANDS SITE

Councillor Kevin Davis has kindly provided an update on the situation with the old Coblands site on Brookwood Lye Road.

He says: "This is still bogged down in the planning process and I'm still wary of giving any dates as to when things may change. The site is in the Green Belt. To us in Brookwood it's brown field, but to the Local Planning Authority (LPA) the land cannot be built on without special circumstances, and the owner of the site, Thameswey (a WBC housing company), has not been able to convince the LPA to let it develop the site.

"The LPA has doggedly resisted developing here; their view is that if they were to grant building there then it would potentially open the flood gates to other land owners who are itching to develop in the Green Belt. That means the correct process needs to be followed. The most recent consultation by a Government appointed inspector ended just before Christmas and I don't see any reason why the inspector won't recommend the site comes out of the Green Belt. The land is due to come out of the Green Belt in 2022, so I am confident that by attrition, the LPA will get its way and delay any development until then at the earliest.

"Personally, having seen my children forced to leave the borough due to a lack of housing, it's a failure that the young adults in Brookwood who wish to stay in Brookwood have been denied that opportunity over the past decade due to planning rules created in the 1950s that need reform. On the plus side, over half the dwellings will be affordable, and there will be a policy on those dwellings that at least gives people with a clear connection to Brookwood a shot at living there when a dwelling becomes available.

"The Traveller site also needs regularising and a planning application was submitted in 2017 to do just that. That application is still pending as it has been an impossible task to try and get the senior officers (non-elected) of the Council to focus on this site. We had an elected leadership change last October and the new leader Councillor Azad is as keen to see this site developed as I am, and as soon as possible. In November her words to me were 'Watch this space'. Councillor Azad is also one of the Councillors for Brookwood so there is a good chance something will happen over the course of the next 18 months. She and I visited the site immediately after the first lockdown over the summer, and I gave her chapter and verse on the situation and history.

"This leads me to the rubbish being dumped there. Simply put, there is no point in clearing the fly-tipped waste until development starts as it will just attract new fly-tipped waste and the costs to dispose of it will be racked up again. It's an eyesore certainly, but Environmental Health do keep an eye on it and, if there were concerns, they would force Thameswey to clear it.

"Basically, we need to be patient, the Traveller site will be regularised, the waste will be disposed of, the housing will be built, and the road and crossroads will be modified to ease network pressure. We might get some progress later this year, we certainly will over the next two."

THE ARTS SOCIETY WOKING

f you love documentaries and lectures on 'arts' subjects then you might want to think about joining The Arts Society Woking. They usually organise various trips home and abroad to places of cultural interest but during lockdown are instead holding live lectures on Zoom each month. The lectures are made by accredited experts in their field who often appear on television or radio. You can see and speak personally to each lecturer during questions afterwards.

On Wednesday 10 February the lecture is on pleasure, sin and men with fish heads: the fantastical works of Hieronymus Bosch, and will be given by Stella Grace Lyons, a freelance Art History lecturer. On Wednesday 10 March the lecture is on Restoration theatre – rakes, fops and wenches, and will be given by Malcolm Jones, who has worked as an actor, director and teacher.

These lectures are for members but if you would like a free lecture 'taster' or would like to enquire about joining, please contact the Membership Secretary, Joanna Pay, on 01276 685 293 or email memdfas@gmail.com.

ELLACOMBE CHIMES

When St Michael and All Angels church in Pirbright closed in March 2020, so did the bells, with no ringers allowed in the tower. By the end of July, when the first post-lockdown wedding was allowed to take place, it had been the bells' longest silence since World War 2. But what is a wedding without bells? And you can't have bells without ringers.

Then someone remembered the old Ellacombe chimes, which fell out of use in the 1950s or 60s, but which allow one person to chime all six bells. The chimes were in a mess, the ropes were missing or broken, the hammers had seized up and one was missing completely. But perhaps they could be rescued? A small team set to work, freeing and securing the hammers; locating and replacing the missing one; replacing around 78 metres of rope; and cleaning and repairing the 'business end' in the ringing chamber. But would they work?

The sound doesn't carry like the full bells, so you will have to listen hard for them, but the chimes sounded lovely for two weddings in the summer, for Christmas and New Year. At least they are keeping the sound of the church bells alive until the ringers are allowed back into the ringing chamber. Then, what a glorious sound there will be!



1st Brookwood Scouts want to thank everyone who generously supported the annual Christmas tree collection. Over 100 trees were recycled raising a fantastic £832.50, half of which is going to Woking Sam Beare Hospice.

????????? WALKING QUIZ ?????????

In keeping with the theme of enjoying Brookwood and its environment, here are some questions for you to answer just for fun while keeping your eyes open on a short walk. Several questions relate to the businesses in the village so this is a good way to remind yourselves of how lucky we are to have such great businesses in our village – please continue to support them!

The questions follow a two-mile loop starting at Brookwood Club, going along Connaught Road to Pirbright Bridge, along the canal to Bagshot Road and then back along Connaught Road. While walking along this section of Connaught Road, take time to notice the new saplings recently planted by Woking Council. You can of course start the walk anywhere convenient to you or do it in sections if you wish.

We'll include the answers in next month's newsletter.

Q1. Here is the original stone being laid for Brookwood Club. In which year?



Q2. Which business has a telephone number ending 495?

Q3. In which year was Fulk Bros established?

Q4. Which business has this sign?



Q5. In which year was Bentleys established?

Q6. In which year was Pirbright Bridge erected?

Q7. Who ordered the plans for this and other defences along the canal?



Q8. There are three locks between Pirbright Bridge and Bagshot Road; what are their numbers?

Q9. When was the bridge over the canal on Bagshot Road erected?

Q10. Brookwood in Bloom started brightening up the village in 2019 and many of the plants and containers are still in place. What colour are the ones at the entrance to Heath Drive?

SUPPORT SERVICES

Many people are finding it hard to cope with the effects of the lockdown and covid-19 on them or their family and friends. Here is some information Liz Swain has kindly compiled if you'd like some support.

Name	Details	Contact
Mental Health Crisis Helpline	Helpline for people in emotional distress	0800 9154644
Safe Haven Woking	An outside working hours service for people experiencing a mental health crisis	0300 5555222 www.sabp.nhs.uk
MIND	Help with all aspects of mental health	0300 12333393 Text - 86463 www.mind.org.uk
CALM	Help with all aspects of mental health	0800 585858 www.thecalmzone.net
Shout 85258	A free, confidential, 24/7 text messaging support service for anyonestruggling to cope	Text the word 'SHOUT' to 85258 to start a conversation www.giveusashout.org
SANE	Help with all aspects of mental health	SANEline 0300 3047000 www.sane.org.uk
YoungMinds	Children and adolescent mental health support	Parents' Helpline 0808 8025544 Text 'YM' to 85258 www.youngminds.org.uk
CRUSE	Loss and bereavement service providing support for coping with grief	0808 8081677 www.cruse.org.uk
Samaritans	Emotional support to anyone struggling to cope	Helpline 116 123 www.samaritans.org

PHOTOGRAPHY COMPETITION



This is your final reminder about our photo competition as the closing date is midday on Saturday 20 February. The theme of 'Brookwood' allows you to show what Brookwood means to you, whether it is nature, family and friends, something historical or simply home. There are three age categories: 0–11, 11–16 and 16 plus. Thinesh from Brookwood Food and Wine has kindly agreed to be our judge.

We haven't had many entries so far in the over 16 category and none in the 16 and under categories, so please think about taking part and sending your fabulous photos to community@brookwood.org.uk along with your name, age and contact details.

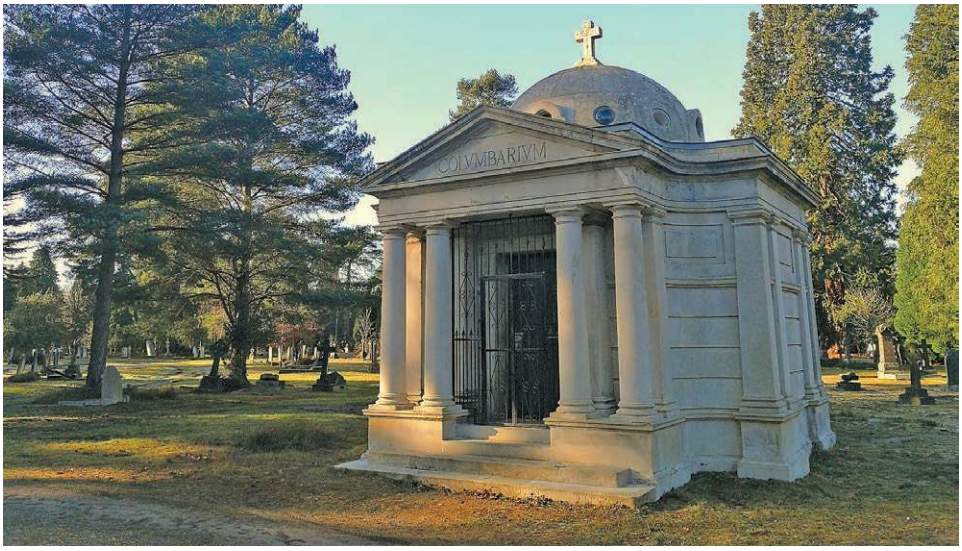
If you're looking for inspiration then you could look at Woking Photographic Society's photo competition winners. Some of them were printed recently in the Woking News and Mail and more are available online. Inspiration can also be found by looking at Thinesh's photos like the one above, those on social media or in his 2021 calendar; I understand there are still a few calendars available!

BROOKWOOD SCHOOL

Brookwood Primary School is having a whole school challenge. It's time to dig out our trainers, get moving and see how far we can go! We'll provide more details in next month's newsletter.



BROOKWOOD CEMETERY



Brookwood Cemetery has received £30,000 towards the ongoing restoration of the Columbarium, which, until acquired by the council, had been blocked up and closed off to the public due to its condition. The funding comes from the government's Culture Recovery Fund to help meet the cost of repairs during the coronavirus pandemic.

The Columbarium is the largest and most notable of its kind within the cemetery and is a listed monument in its own right. The cruciform, stone-built structure is defined by its central dome and elegant classical features. Inside the Columbarium there is a gallery at entrance level and, towards the back, an internal staircase leading to an underground vault.

Councillor Graham Cundy, Woking Borough Council's Lead Member for Brookwood Cemetery, said: "This grant from the government's recovery fund will help us to get our repair programme back on schedule, which has been severely hampered by the virus. With the winter months now upon us, we need to make urgent repairs to the roof of the Columbarium to prevent any further water damage.

"Prior to the pandemic, the council approved an ambitious and exciting set of plans to safeguard the future of the cemetery and encourage greater use of this diverse site. The Columbarium is one of the larger public monuments in the cemetery with an interesting history, which should be more accessible to our residents."

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NB: DEADLINE FOR MARCH NEWSLETTER IS MIDDAY 20 FEBRUARY preferably by e-mail to community@brookwood.org.uk or telephone 01483 480273 or a note through the door of 78 Connaught Road.

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