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**June 2020**

**News from  
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## FROM THE EDITOR

WELL, HAVING THOUGHT that we would not to be able to produce an edition this month for lack of news, we find that we now have quite a lot of content! Thank you for all the comments saying that the mag is a good thing to have in these troubling times. In spite of everyone staying at home there seems to be a great community spirit in all the villages. Lots of people supporting each other and lots of things happening online – some of which you can read about in these pages. We will try and keep the editions coming. The next one should be for July/August.

We need articles to fill the pages so do tell us what you've been up to. The ups and downs of home schooling (maybe ask the children to write their version!), the books you've been reading, the new skills you've been learning – anything at all would be great. Doesn't need to be long – just a couple of paragraphs is fine. Pete and I look forward to being snowed under with contributions. *Lin*

And many thanks to Richard Swann for our front cover photo this month.

*Peter*

## FROM THE RECTORY



### A MATTER OF LIFE AND DEATH

AT THIS TIME of global pandemic, we live with stark reality of death and life. Ezekiel's vision of the valley of dry bones (37:1-14) was given when God's people were in exile in Babylon.

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**Deadline** for July/August is June 19th (but do check)

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Mells with Vobster Jenny Waller 813852	John Earl 812450 Joy Book 300184
Whatley Mrs K Gay 836175	Mrs J Butcher 837259 Joy Book 300184

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**District Councillors** Buckland Dinham, Great Elm and Mells  
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[Cllr.Barkshire@mendip.gov.uk](mailto:Cllr.Barkshire@mendip.gov.uk)

Chantry and Whatley (Cranmore, Doultling and Nunney Ward)  
 Francis Hayden, 07970 839532, [Cllr.Hayden@mendip.gov.uk](mailto:Cllr.Hayden@mendip.gov.uk)

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They felt dead, being separated from home and God! The vision answers God's question: 'can these bones live?' We can also feel cut off from God, facing the loss of job, business, home or health, with churches unable to meet on Sundays. This vision assures us that God has power over death and can breathe new life into what is hopeless.

When Ezekiel is told to 'prophesy to the bones' (4), God brings them back to life: the bones come together and are covered with muscles and skin,



and then filled with God's breath to bring new life, by the life of His Spirit. We now live in the Spirit which was a gift to us at Pentecost. The Covid-19 virus robs people of their life by suffocation, so that they can't breathe. Our hope beyond the pandemic is that the gift of God's Spirit will bring new life to our lives,

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churches and world. Life will certainly look very different in the future, but we can be assured that God is with us and that we are safe in his hands.

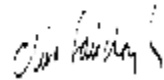
'I will put my Spirit in you, and you will live, and I will settle you in your own land. Then you will know that I the Lord have spoken, and I have done it, declares the Lord.' (14).

**Mells Group Website** [www.mellsgroup.church](http://www.mellsgroup.church)

Our website now has several new additional tabs offering facilities such as video, rector's reflections, a facebook page at the bottom, daily prayer feed, resources for prayer, news and articles. It is kept up to date every few days.

### Facebook

[facebook.com/MellsGroup/?modal=admin\\_todo\\_tour](https://facebook.com/MellsGroup/?modal=admin_todo_tour) or, if you already on facebook @ mells group of churches . It is also at the bottom of our home page on the website. Please post news, views and things of interest on it. We are also on Twitter @clivetherev.



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## **JOTTINGS FROM A COUNTRY CHURCHYARD**

WELL, HERE WE ARE in June and once again Lin and Peter have done a magnificent job in creating an edition of 5 Alive where there are none of the normal events to announce or report. But what amazing feats of enterprise people have achieved using modern technology creatively. As a techno dinosaur I can only dimly imagine Zoom and its variants but it seems incredibly effective in uniting people virtually.

However, I have found something which I find even more amazing. I have just gathered a bucketful of Queen Anne's Lace from the orchard before the ground is strimmed of that and the waist high ground elder which until now has rendered my dogs invisible when we walk there. I am writing this sitting on a bench beside the bucketful of blossom and for the first time I have really studied the flowers of the froth of white which currently flows over hedgerows and unmowed ground. Each single floret forming the flat umbels is like a tiny five-pointed snowflake, each precise five points bearing larger flowers surrounding five or seven smaller identical ones creating the delicate lace effect. And each umbel consists of exactly 10 of these florets. Such mathematical precision infinitely reproduced. And so each tiny seed in the many seed heads that mature is programmed to produce the same mathematical pattern. And we think computers are clever. Our Creator is always ahead of us by countless millions of years.


Amazingly V.E. Day did not go uncelebrated. Everyone seemed to find a way to mark the occasion in spite of the current restrictions. In Chantry churchyard, our enterprising Jan and Andrew announced a sing-along

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of wartime songs between 3.00 and 4.00pm so that anyone taking their exercise hour could then join in, keeping social distancing. A lovely idea and much appreciated.

The churchyard at this time has progressed from the yellow of celandines and daffodils (and dandelions) to a carpet of blue. As well as the obvious bluebells since some of the areas are now left unmowed a wonderful variety of previously far less seen wild flowers have appeared, most of which are blue. There is a lovely area of parma violets as well as masses of the tiny wild ones among the grass, also ground ivy, vipers bugloss, speedwell and forget-me-nots all creating a drift of various shades of blue and purple. Later it will merge into pink with campion, herb robert and vetch. Wonderful. What a year for spring blossom it has been, too. An effusion of ornamental cherries, a positive explosion of wisteria and in the hedgerows blackthorn followed by hawthorn. The hawthorn or may was even flowering at the end of April.

With the unusually warm weather this would certainly have encouraged those who believed the rhyme referred to the May blossom to “cast a clout”. In fact those who believe it to refer to the month of May would find it most uncomfortable not to “cast a clout” Sadly, the candles of blossom on the churchyard conker tree were fewer and smaller as the poor tree suffers from the predation of the nasty leaf eating moth larvae blighting so many of our horse chestnut



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trees nationally. But it is such a perfectly positioned and huge beautifully proportioned tree that it still presented a heart liftingly lovely sight.

I hear from several people locally that they often see Red Kites flying over their gardens but until recently I just listened with envy. Then, last week, gazing up at the unbroken blue sky I saw the unmistakable silhouette of the Red Kite with its huge forked tail sailing high over my rooftop. I felt as if I had at last been admitted to a rather select club.

I am still blessed with the presence nightly of our resident hedgehog, shuffling around at dusk until Frisky finds her/him and causes her/him to roll up into a spiky ball. I don't feed her/him as either the dogs would find any leftovers or, worse, local rats would be encouraged. It is a well known fact that in the country one is never more than six feet from a rat and in spite of the vigilant dogs I know this to be true. Not that either of my girls would kill a rat – more likely to run for cover if faced with one – but I hope their smell and busy presence keeps any rats at least away from the house.



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I am now finishing writing this as it grows dusk and I can hear Frisky's excited "I've found a hedgehog" bark (Ebbie shows no interest – probably seen many in her lifetime) so I had better call her in and give the poor thing peace to scrunch on my slugs.

See you again in July or whenever Peter and Lin manage to produce another edition of 5Alive.

Keep safe, keep well, keep smiling

*Hazell*

## ROUND AND ABOUT

### VIRTUAL CHURCH

While the churches remain closed, Father Clive is conducting a Zoom service every Sunday at 10.00am.

The service is followed by a virtual coffee morning, where we have a wonderful opportunity to keep in touch with each other.

On Tuesdays at 6.00pm there is a reflective service consisting of music, poetry and time for silent reflection.

If you would like to join either service, email Father Clive at [clivefairclough@gmail.com](mailto:clivefairclough@gmail.com) for details of how to log on.

We look forward to seeing your picture on our screens.

The advertisement features three children in black clothing standing against a dark background. One child is pointing upwards towards a large, stylized text graphic that says "DON'T WANT TO FIT IN... STAND OUT!". To the left, a speech bubble contains the text "I don't want to FIT IN...". In the top right corner, there is a circular logo that says "OFSTED REGISTERED". The main headline reads "Helping children believe they can do anything". Below this, there is contact information: "Stage Coach Theatre Company", "149, The Old Rectory, Churchfields, Buntingford, Cambs, CB11 3JH", "www.stagecoachtheatre.com", "01438 714222", and "Venue: Solway Academy, HAV 211". At the bottom right, there is a logo for "STAGE COACH" and the text "Leading Theatre for Life" and "www.stagecoach.com".



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We have quickly adapted our working practices and most consultations can be dealt with either by telephone or video link. If the doctor or nurse feels that a patient needs to attend the surgery, they will organise this and will see the patient whilst wearing the required PPE. The patient will also be asked to wear a face mask, which is provided when they attend the surgery.

On Monday mornings we are holding a 'Restricted Surgery', these are for people who have been shielded. This means that the door is closed and we only allow in those who have a pre-arranged appointment. The doors reopen to all other general enquiries again at 2.00pm. All morning however the Reception telephone line remains open as normal.

## **HAVE YOU ZOOMED?**

Back in the mists of time at the beginning of March if someone had said Zoom I would have in my head a picture of an ice lolly my children used to eat back in the 1970s. But not any more! Since the lockdown more and more of us have been trying to get to grips with Zoom software which enables people to meet and take part in their usual pre-pandemic activities online.

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Three of these activities take place on Zoom in my house, a Pilates class, my husband's camera club and Quaker meetings.

The first ten minutes of any session always seem to be dealing with the technology; there will be conversations such as, "Mary, move your camera we can only see your feet," "We can't hear you John, turn on the mike", "Is that a cat in front of the camera?" And "Can you put a light on, it looks as if you are in a cave!"

Eventually things settle. Using a laptop, tablet or phone we can see others taking part in the event. If there is a teacher or speaker the screen can be arranged just to show them.

It felt pretty strange lying on the floor at home getting instructions from my Pilates teacher via my iPad, watching her demonstrate and hear her commenting to other members of the class in their homes. But after just a few weeks it feels almost normal and it's a very short commute!

I couldn't work out how a Quaker meeting would work in this format, but it has been fine. Sitting in silence on your own at home is all very well but to be able to see others doing the same thing is encouraging and comforting. As long as Friends remember to turn on the mike when moved to speak, all is well. We also have a time after to catch up with news and give out notices. I can't speak for the camera club but judging from the laughter and banter that I overhear I would say it's working well. I realise that this way of doing things is not for everyone, I have friends who really don't want to go down this path. But for me in these difficult times when it has been so easy to lose touch, using Zoom has helped me to feel connected to the different communities that I am a part of and also you get a glimpse inside everyone's homes – so now need to go and tidy up before my session this evening! P.S. Did you know Zoom lollies were invented to take advantage of the children's TV programmes Thunderbirds and Fireball XL5! *Lin*

## **A COUPLE OF SHORT POEMS FROM ANON**

### **May Lockdown walk**

And the track was lined with kecksies,  
billowing and frothing like soft lace,  
Queen Anne's Lace some might say.  
Dotted between, the campion straight and pink,  
and below, the stitchwort,

white starry faces  
lighting up the green shadow.  
Arums pointing palely between the grasses  
where ferns uncurl towards the light.  
And over all, the oak spreads, flower and leaf,  
glowing in the early sun.

### **Arctic May**

Well, not quite  
But cold, very cold  
Aching ears and glove wearing cold.  
Wind, hard gusts that blast through the new growth  
And scour the face.  
Shaken from the hedge, white petals scattered.  
Cow parsley ducking and diving beside the path,  
A skylark bursting from the green corn to the fence  
And then away into the bright sky  
Her tune lost in the squally air.

### **SUPPORTING LOCAL BUSINESSES**

Everyone is finding life hard in different ways at the moment. For me it is having to get used to other people doing my shopping when I'm perfectly capable of doing it myself and being told by my children that I must stay at home for my own good!



But for others the concerns are much more serious. Some small businesses are having to close down and others are finding life really challenging. But there are those are turning the challenge into an opportunity.

In Mells, for example, **Little Jack Horner's** sausage roll business has now turned into a pop-up shop,

not only selling sausage rolls but all sorts of basic supplies, local meat and cheese, and large veg boxes as well as other assorted stuff. Yes, it is more expensive than popping to the supermarket - but there's hardly any travelling, no hassle parking, the environment is very safe and you can order in advance of visiting or get a delivery. For those of us who need to stay close to home or don't want to take the risk of a large shop, it's ideal.

**Also Mells Walled Garden** have just amended how things are happening with them – here is their post from the Mells Matters FaceBook page

***NOT BUSINESS AS USUAL BUT WE WILL BE OPEN WEDNESDAY – SUNDAY, 12.00AM – 4.00PM.***

*Adhering to strict hygiene and safety procedures, we are excited to be doing a partial reopen for perennial plants, herbs, and takeaway drinks, cake and ice cream to enjoy in the garden.*

*The maximum number of people permissible in the garden is 30 so we would recommend that you book a slot. If we get busy, preference will be given those that booked and we may have to turn you away.*

*As a small local business, we cannot wait to be able to serve our very supportive local community once again. It's all unfamiliar territory so we may have to adapt and change as we see how things go with the reopen so please bear with us.*

*We hope we can eventually resume a more normal service but our overriding priority at this time is to ensure we protect the welfare of our staff and customers.*

*For more information on some of the measures we are implementing please see our website*

*[thewalledgardenatmells.co.uk/bookings-checkout/book-to-visit/book](http://thewalledgardenatmells.co.uk/bookings-checkout/book-to-visit/book).*

Both these businesses are dealing with contactless payments so no risks from cash changing hands either. Back in the 'olden days' a lot of trade was carried on within the villages without the need to travel to town so let's take the opportunity to do that again while we can. *Lin*

## BUCKLAND DINHAM



### THANK YOU NHS

My friends and neighbours have been donating lots of chocolate bars and biscuits and shower products which I have collected and dropped off at Simon and Michelle's (both hospital staff ) house to be given out to the doctors and nurses at the RUH.

The amount of support has been amazing, so much chocolate!!, and I'd like to thank you all for sharing.

Lots of messages via social media have come back to us from Simon and Michelle so we know everything was very well received.

We will continue to clap all our key workers on Thursdays and hope they all know how much we really appreciate them and their hard work and sacrifices on our behalf.

**THANK YOU!**

*Debbie Cary*

### CHURCH NEWS

**Here we are again**, no news yet of the church opening for services but Clive is still sending messages and a service on Zoom on Sundays. In May I have managed to join in and I must say it is really uplifting to be able to see and hear friends from St. Michael's and the other churches in the Group.

I hope that you enjoyed the VE celebrations; it brought back very vivid memories of my mother taking my sister and I from our home in South London to join all the crowds in The Mall and seeing the Royal family on the balcony of Buckingham Palace. I also found a photo of our street party and surprised myself by remembering many names of the children in the picture. We were all very excited and happy and following the tea were entertained by a gentleman playing the bagpipes and all the children following him up and down the road like the Pied Piper of Hamelin!

Today that same feeling of "togetherness" is taking place across the country and I am very grateful for all the help and support of friends in the village. The sun continues to shine, the air quality has greatly improved, the birds are singing, flowers are blooming, people are cooking who have not tried before



and we can look forward to all meeting again, even if it is only one by one at present.

*Jill Wright*

## **CHANTRY**

### **“WE’RE SURVIVING IT WELL!”**

We are holding out pretty well in Chantry thanks to our band of volunteers, shopping is done any other help is willingly carried out and a pop up shop calls every Thursday which is a great help for the odd thing that we forget on the shopping list. Without Jan, Viv, Simon and the others we older residents would have found life very difficult during this lockdown but we are surviving it well.

We celebrated V.E. Day with a sing song (socially isolated) in the churchyard. Andrew and Robin managed to carry the electric organ from the church and with the aid of loud speakers and a mike we had a lovely sing a long led by Jan with everybody joining in. There are not many of us left who can actually remember the actual V.E.Day but it brought back happy memories for those of us who can.

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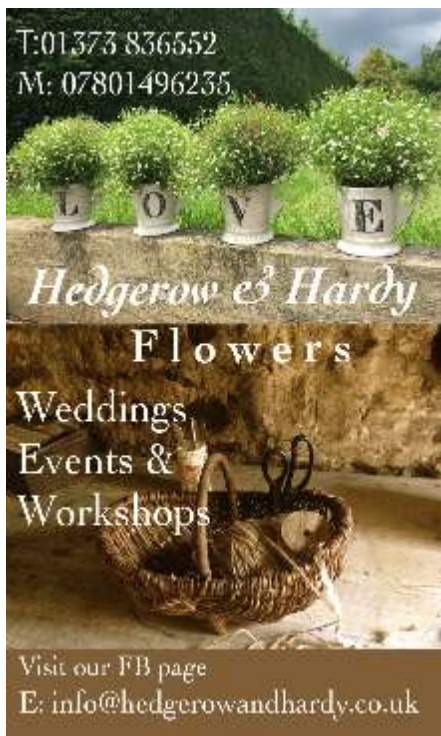
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Thanks to Andrew, Jan, Robin and Viv for all their hard work in organising this enjoyable afternoon. It really lifted our spirits during these dreary times.

As we were not able to celebrate Easter, Trinity or any other festival I am hoping that by the time we want to celebrate the Harvest Festivals things may have improved and life can go on normally.

In the meantime, please everyone STAY SAFE.

**For more about what's been happening in Chantry and Whatley, check out the Whatley pages of this issue of 5Alive.**

## **GREAT ELM**

### **ELM WHATSAPP GROUP A GREAT SUCCESS**

When lockdown was announced in March 2020, Jim Duffus (who is webmaster of [greatelm.org](http://greatelm.org)) contacted me about volunteering during the pandemic. I had heard about Community Groups springing up all over the country, and it seemed to me that a WhatsApp group would be a useful tool for people in the village to stay in touch and support each

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other - WhatsApp being altogether faster, leaner and less cumbersome than email, especially for large groups.

So with the help of Jim and a few others in the village, we started the Great Elm Mutual Aid group on March 19th with four people. As I write in late May the group has 47 participants of all ages, all living in Great Elm.



To the two: Pops for Flowers offering a  
Kewing, lovely  
I will put them in the garden since 07:30am. Enjoy

While there has been a fair number of people asking for help with the sort of important things I expected (shopping, getting prescriptions, Covid information etc), we have also had conversations about noisy motorcycles, punctured wheelbarrows, tadpoles, sourdough bread, kefir, fertiliser, horse manure, heating oil, gardening, pond plants, flowers, goldfish, herons, otters, geese, swallows, honey, broadband, Easter eggs, courgette seedlings, masks, paint rollers,

ducks, mains water, bonfires and cattle and offers like the one pictured left.

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I think the Group has made a contribution to bringing people in the village together, and I suspect it will continue to be useful long after the pandemic is over.

If you are interested in joining the group, and live in Great Elm, send me a WhatsApp message (or text) to 07977 121144, or email me on muirmackean@gmail.com.

*Muir MacKean*

## **MELLS WITH VOBSTER**

### **MELLS VILLAGE SHOP - LIFE IN LOCKDOWN**

Lockdown started badly for Mells Village Shop as the majority of the volunteers, without whom we would be unable to operate, are in their 70s and 80s and had to stand down immediately. A plea, however, on



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MellsMatters FaceBook page produced a large and immediate response from our younger residents who cheerfully took up the slack in the shop at a time of highly increased demand from locals who quickly cottoned on to the fact that village shops could supply necessities that supermarkets ran out of!

Jo in the cafe had to close to eat-in customers but did a good trade selling take-always until that too became unviable and the cafe morphed into a useful storeroom for extra supplies. Gradually it became apparent that more social distancing in the shop would be in order; Liz O'Sullivan kindly donated Perspex panels from her old greenhouse which were made up by Martin Moore into a serviceable screen for the counter. Eventually the counter had to be moved forward in front of the door so that one



person could be allowed into the shop at a time.

The post office has no such problem as it is sited in a glass 'fortress'; it also continues to deliver much needed weekly postal services to the villages of Coleford, Falkland, Nunney, Wanstrow and Witham Friary.

Meanwhile the problem of self-isolating residents of all ages from the five villages has been enthusiastically taken up by younger volunteers buddying up with a stay-at-home householder who rings them up whenever they need supplies from the Shop. Deliveries arrive the same day and are paid for via a temporary account with MVS.

Now we feel that volunteers behind the counter should be distanced from post office staff passing behind them so the shop counter has been moved yet again into the cafe (with intercom communication with the post office counter). Martin Moore has cunningly created a counter and a screen with yet more of Liz's old greenhouse and customers seem to be getting the hang of having to wait outside the Shop until the customer before leaves

the premises. During this crisis opening times can change, so please phone before visiting at the beginning or end of day.

The MVS Committee thanks Mike, Jerry and Helen for rallying round and working long and arduous hours under difficult conditions, all the volunteers who have magically stepped up to the plate just when they were really needed and our loyal customers who have been so understanding about unfamiliar working methods and shortages and so supportive in our attempts to keep our villages operational in this national emergency.

## **MELLS PARISH COUNCIL**

(mellsparishcouncil.org.uk)

Notes from meeting held remotely via Zoom on Tuesday May 12th 2020

**Old Telephone Exchange:** The building appears to be occupied overnight. MDC are actively following up the situation. The situation has been ongoing for approximately five years. Concerns were raised that there is only a 10 year period between works being carried out and a planning application not being submitted, before Change of Use can be applied for.

**Council Tax Support:** Anyone currently claiming the support can now claim an extra £150. Applicants going onto Universal Credit can also make a claim for Council Tax Support.

**Superfast broadband:** Truespeed is keen to install in Mells and Vobster. Take up has been low so far but the recent lockdown restrictions have led to far more people working from home which may have highlighted the need for a faster, more reliable system. The next step is for Truespeed to canvass door to door but this cannot be carried out until social distancing restrictions have been relaxed.

**Defibrillator:** The Parish Council has agreed to take on responsibility, insurance and maintenance of the defibrillator which is currently stored in The Talbot. The unit will be installed in a suitable secure cabinet on the shop wall for 24 hour accessibility.

**Condition of Vobster churchyard and Velux windows:** Clerk has written to the PCC regarding the building debris and will investigate whether permission has been given for the Velux windows.

## PLANNING

2020/0415/TCA: Reduce limbs of eight lime trees – Manor House, Selwood Street – No objections

2020/0441/OHL: To upgrade transformer and replace pole no. 16/1613. Reconductor the existing open wire overhead line to aerial bunched conductor (ABC) wiring – Upper Vobster Farm, Upper Vobster – No objection

## ACCOUNTS AND OTHER FINANCIAL MATTERS

Balance - HSBC £23,096.15. Balance as at 20 March 2020 - Barclays £5,315.33.

Receipts: Precept £11,500. Interest £1.86.

Year end accounts for 2019/2020: C/F balance of £16,911.48 is up £5,254 on last years.

## DATE OF NEXT MEETING:

Tuesday June 9th 2020 at 7.15pm in Mells Barn unless restrictions remain in place, alternatively the meeting will be held remotely via Zoom.

*Joy Book, Clerk. 07704 584953, parishcouncils.frome@gmail.com*

## WHATLEY

### WHATLEY, TOO, IS SURVIVING WELL!

like every other community, we have no actual events or news to report on from Chantry or Whatley this month! But in a strange side-effect of the current situation, many of us are seeing rather more of our neighbours than we would in normal times, as we take our designated exercise around the villages, and stop for a few minutes of carefully-distanced conversation over the garden gates.

Or perhaps we're dropping off a few tomato seedlings in exchange for a bag of flour or collecting old sheets for the local groups sewing scrubs for the NHS or delivering leaflets on behalf of Health Connections in Frome. Our local Helping Hands group is still going strong, with so many people helping out neighbours with shopping and other errands, and weekly emails to keep everyone up to date with the new rules for the tip, and other vital information.

We did have a mini-celebration of the 75th anniversary of VE Day on May

8th, when Jan and Andy Bramston performed a cracking medley of 1940s hits from the safe space of Chantry churchyard, to the delight of nearby residents and people passing by on their walks – some of us did stop to listen....Thank you so much, Jan and Andy, that was a real joy, especially for those village residents who actually remembered VE Day. Like Dolly Blacker, whose abiding memory is losing her seventh birthday blancmange and cakes to the victory party in Peasedown village hall - “I was not pleased”, she says. But she did enjoy the massive party the following day, with fireworks and a bonfire with an effigy of Hitler! Chantry churchyard and Whatley playing field have also played host to the pop-up shop from Cam Valley Foods which has been calling on us



every Thursday afternoon to help out those residents who can't get to the shops, or prefer not to at present. We can recommend their produce – milk, eggs, sausages, bacon, cooked meats, fresh fruit and vegetables and other goodies. Their website is [camvalleyfoods.co.uk](http://camvalleyfoods.co.uk), and its best to order in advance from [rachael@camvalleyfoods.co.uk](mailto:rachael@camvalleyfoods.co.uk).

uk. If you'd like further details, please contact one of the Helping Hands group – details below. The weekly shop visits are an event in themselves, as we catch up with our neighbours in the almost-inevitable sunshine! So life continues in the new normal and for many of us, parts of it are even quite pleasant. But we are all conscious of the toll that's being taken around the country, and we do know that there are still cases of the virus round this area. So we go on staying at home, staying safe and helping each other out. One day, we'll meet again, as Jan sang to us on VE Day.

#### **HELPING HANDS CONTACTS:**

**Chantry:** Jan Bramston – [janicebramston@hotmail.com](mailto:janicebramston@hotmail.com), 01373-836513,

07938983409.

Vivienne Pay – viviennepay@gmail.com, 01373-836571, 07443-517488

Whatley: Jane Butcher – jane.thorne@zen.co.uk, 01373-837259, 07939-077088

Peter Lugg – peter@peterlugg.co.uk, 01373-836613, 07970-212987

## ...AND FINALLY



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