

# Totley Independent

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*Looking up Hillfoot Road, with Butts Hill further up the hill and on the left. It's believed this photo was taken in the 1940s, and the gentleman with the horse and cart is thought to be Arthur Kirby, who used to sweep all the roads in Totley along with two others. He had the farm next to the Fleur De Lys pub.*

## Life under lockdown

Out on Totley's streets, it's the mornings which are the quietest. Very little traffic, and very few walkers out yet. Just a few cars, the occasional jogger and of course virtually empty 97 and 218 buses trundling up and down Baslow Road. Behind front doors, it's bound to be a different story – breakfast for the family, some home-schooling for the children and hopefully something to keep them from climbing the walls; caring for sick and vulnerable family members; and for most of us, comparing the relative safety of lockdown in Totley with the dangers confronting health and other key workers every day. For many, it's an opportunity to discover, or rediscover, arts, crafts, making, sewing, playing – very often in support of others such as charities and food banks who are more in need.

As the day opens up, the lines form outside the Co-op, the pharmacies, the greengrocer's, and Tesco. With one or two exceptions, people have quickly adapted to the regime of standing 6 feet away from each other, and generally things move along pretty quickly and efficiently, largely thanks to the store staff do so much to keep things as near-normal as possible.

The afternoon, as long as the rain keeps off, is the time

when most people get some sunshine, fresh air and exercise. Family groups circle past each other around Crown, Cricket, Totley Bents, Strawberry Lee Lane and Gillfield Wood, with strangers often exchanging distanced greetings – which they might not have done before. And, faced with less-than-clear official guidance as to what they can and can't do to avoid Covid 19, most people use their common sense.

And behind those front doors, dozens, if not hundreds, of local people think and plot, and discuss through Zoom, Facebook and Whatsapp, what plans they have to restore the facilities and services which our community needs and misses so much – schools, churches, library, community associations – whilst keeping our distance and staying safe.

This is one of the most interesting aspects of the Corona-virus crisis. Just when we are forced into the confinement of our homes, avoiding unnecessary contact with others, having to go without our taken-for-granted comfort-zone excursions to meetings, pubs, restaurants and theatres – that's when our sense of community, of social contact and support for others, is at its keenest.

In fact, it seems that the more we are alone, the more we are together.

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## Totley History Group

It's now 6 weeks since we had to cancel some of our forthcoming meetings and, as we all know, a lot has happened in that time. We are all having to cope with whatever form of self-

isolating, shielding or social-distancing that we're practising and we hope that all our members and visitors are keeping well and finding the situation bearable. A potential positive aspect that seems to be emerging is a resurgence of community spirit and we can only hope that this will carry on after the current pandemic has passed.

It seems unlikely that the Library will reopen in the near future so, reluctantly, the Committee has decided to cancel the June meeting. It seems likely that movement restrictions and some form of social distancing will be with us for a few more weeks at least so, unfortunately, the planned visit to the well dressing at Stoney Middleton in July has also been cancelled. At this stage we would hope that the September meeting can go ahead but the Committee will keep the situation under review.

The AGM which should have been held in April will now, with luck, take place at our October open meeting at which we are also planning to discuss the future of the Group.

*Norman Rolfe, Chair*

## Councillors' News

At the time of writing we are still in lockdown but city Councillors continue to support their local communities. Regrettably we have had to cancel our regular surgeries but do please let us know if you have any problems with accessing Council services. Our contact details are at the end of this article.

We want to thank the many local volunteers who are helping their friends and neighbours in these difficult times. You have been amazing. It's impossible to list everyone here but we are particularly grateful to the S17 Covid-19 Community Support Group who have done a magnificent job in ensuring that everyone in Totley has someone they can call upon if in need. The People Keeping Well network is also doing sterling work in ensuring that vulnerable people are contacted and helped where necessary.



We have also been able to support the Grace Food Bank in Low Edges by raising over £1,000 in provisions and donations. Although Totley is a relatively affluent part of the city, it's worth noting that around 5% of the people accessing this foodbank live in S17. There has been a huge increase in demand for their services in these terrible times, so by helping the foodbank we help our local community.

Hopefully over the coming months life will start to return to something like normal but in the meantime if you or someone you know does need assistance one of the quickest ways to get help is to ring the Council Community Helpline 273 4567.

Stay safe,

*Colin Ross, Martin Smith and Joe Otten*

*colin.ross@councillor.sheffield.gov.uk*

*martin.smith@councillor.sheffield.gov.uk*

*joe.otten@councillor.sheffield.gov.uk*

## Coronavirus- A view from the Pharmacy

Coronavirus has had an unprecedented peace-time effect on our lives impacting on work, shopping, leisure and even social interactions - I'm sure you all desperately await the days when we again greet family members with an embrace. Even the Olympics and Wimbledon have been cancelled - and we're not sure when football will return (it won't surprise Sheffield football fans who have been repeatedly disappointed that some Blades see this as a complex conspiracy to deny us European football). As well as pubs, restaurants and non-essential shops closing, even healthcare has been affected. In order to maintain distance, doctors' surgeries, dentists and opticians have had to close their doors, so you are now interacting with your doctors in a different way.

Many pharmacies have also been overwhelmed by the extraordinary volume of work and have to close their doors for parts of the day. At Totley Pharmacy, we have recognised the increased need for access to healthcare by our patients and have actually lengthened our working hours to increase our services to the local community. I would like to say a huge thank-you to my team who have gone above and beyond working tirelessly to serve all our patients.

I would also like to say a huge thank-you to local volunteers who have helped us with delivering prescriptions. If you do need a delivery, please get in touch (0114 2361070) and we can arrange this for you - we have capacity to do extra deliveries.

I would like to congratulate the local community for the fantastic way they have responded to this crisis. We have seen and heard many examples of incredible community spirit with people helping friends and neighbours, especially the vulnerable. I am proud to be part of such a great community. We have also been beneficiaries of this spirit and generosity, receiving lots of presents and messages of appreciation - heartfelt thanks for these and the support. I know many of you are very proud of and grateful to all the local independent businesses who have not only stayed open throughout the crisis but have gone far beyond all expectations risking their own health to serve everyone. Speaking for all these local business owners, we really hope you keep supporting us over the next few years even when things return to normal. I understand supermarkets, big chains and the internet can be convenient but will any of them care for you and our community like we have done in these testing times?

Over the past 24 years I have owned Totley Pharmacy, we have lost so many local butchers, greengrocers, post-offices, newsagents, hardware shops etc. Without your continued support we probably will not be around the next time you need us. Every time you use a supermarket pharmacy or one of the multinational chains, you harm our chances of survival. As for internet pharmacies, I cannot understand why anyone would use their inferior and incomplete services. Please, please do not fall for their hard sell - talk to us; we offer so much more than they ever can. I do not wish to sound alarmist but without your support for independent businesses, our local shopping centres will become soulless ghost towns. Would we rather not have thriving social centres?

As I write this, we are still in lockdown. I'm not sure what the situation will be when you read this - hopefully things are looking better. However, it is likely that (*continued page 5*)

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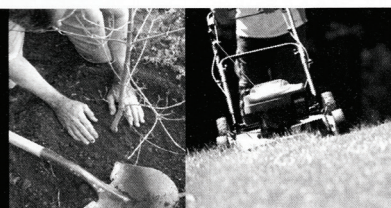
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### Coronavirus: A view from the Pharmacy (from p.3)

we will need to adjust for quite a while yet. The main thing of course is to maintain social distancing, especially if you are medically vulnerable. Keep practising regular hand cleansing too and avoid touching your face. The balance of advice says it is useful to use barriers such as gloves and masks. It is very important to remain healthy to give yourself the best chance of fighting the virus if you catch it, so keep exercising responsibly and try to maintain a healthy diet. Call in to see us for advice on supplements that will help. We are working extremely hard to maintain supplies of masks, gloves, cleansers, painkillers etc.

Feel free to call or visit us for any questions you have. Ask the experts: do not follow unsolicited advice from the internet or even "the leader of the free world" - put away that disinfectant and syringe.

As we are likely to need some adjustments for quite a while, please be patient with us - we are working as hard as we can. Over many years, we have fine-tuned our procedures to achieve the best care and maximum efficiency for ALL our patients. When someone tells us to change our procedures for their convenience, it may suit them, but it diminishes our efficiency and care for other patients. We ask politely that you show understanding, and work with us through these testing times.

We are humbled by the support we have received and are immensely proud to serve you all. Keep safe, we will get through this together.

Taj Singh

## Totley Show

How things have changed in a year. This time last year we were in full swing preparing for that year's Show. At a Zoom meeting we held on 11 May, following the government's latest update, it is with great regret that we have decided to cancel Totley Show 2020 due to be held in September. We are concerned that we will not be able to guarantee social distancing in the halls that we use at the local school. We expect that there will still be some form of social distancing in force, even in September. We also do not know at this stage if we would have been able to have the use of the school, since as current proposals stand, schools will only just have returned for all pupils.

We will aim to be back in 2021 with an even bigger and hopefully better Show. At this stage we have not yet set the date but it should be around the middle of September 2021.

In the meantime, here are some photos from last year's Show to remind you what a fantastic range of talent, we



Winner, Best in Show, 2019

I will write again in the next issue of *Totley Independent* (August/September 2020). We propose to ask you to upload photos of items you would have entered in this year's Show e.g. flower displays, vegetables, children's section - animal

vegetables etc. If you have made items for the handicrafts, art, open medium etc., that are not perishable, these can be retained to enter in next year's Show. We may well encourage children to upload pictures they have drawn for the Show or a certain subject, but more of that in the next issue.



Totley Show, 2019: Flower arrangements

Sorry again that we have had to cancel this year's Show but we hope you agree that it is the only safe decision to make, at this stage.

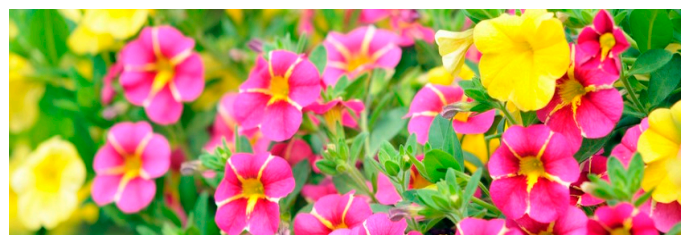
Looking forward to seeing you next year.

Keep Safe

Mick Warwick, Totley Show Chair  
totleyshowchair@hotmail.com

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## Gardening Tips for June and July

I hope you are coping well with the lockdown. Fortunately, the fine weather has made the transition from normal living to isolation a bit easier, in that we can get outside and keep busy in the garden. I feel sorry for those people who have nowhere to go outside for any length of time. We are very thankful for the young carers helping us with the shopping, and the local shops (Martin Scrivens, Totley Deli, the Co-op etc.) for keeping us OK for food etc, which has enabled us to keep isolated as much as possible.

We gardeners are never happy with the weather. I was complaining about the persistent rain in the last issue of Totley Independent, and now we have had wall-to-wall sunshine. As I write, it's raining, not heavily, but still raining, thank goodness. The water butts were empty, and the plots were drying out - our water bill will be quite high. The first batch of runner beans are in, and needed regular watering along with the various perennials: we were kept very busy.

Christine has been very busy pricking out the seedlings of plants which will be used in the hanging-baskets and troughs, and any left over will be used to fill in spaces around the flower borders. Both greenhouses are quite full of plants needing a bit more protection before they are planted out. I have put in a couple of strange tomato plants bought from Jennie. They are a bit unusual! They are growing well but don't look a bit like normal tomato plants! They have what I describe as crunched-up leaves and very sturdy stalks. I am looking forward to seeing how they develop. I like to have a change now and again! Rosie, my neighbour, has given me another variety to try. I look forward to seeing and tasting the resulting fruits.

I am trying sweetcorn again this year. It did quite well last year, very tasty with a nice knob of butter. The small plants are looking healthy in the cold frame, lettuce two varieties, broccoli, cabbage, they are nearly ready to go into the veg beds - just waiting for a nice warm day. I have put some nematodes in the plots to reduce the slug and snail populations. This is much better than slug pellets as they do not affect the wild life.

The fish are being very elusive, I have not seen them since the weather turned cooler though they are taking the food I have put in the pond. They are quite small and timid, not used to me moving the net over them. I have not seen any babies yet but I'm not surprised really - they are very tiny black things, and very difficult to spot, and also the water is not too clear yet. I have just disturbed the bottom of the pond so the water is a bit murky. The tadpoles are very lively and growing fast, though their numbers will be reduced quite considerably, as the newts and possibly the fish will gobble some of them. I hope some of them survive to help the hedgehogs eat the slug and snail population.

The hedgehog is still visiting us, I heard him (or her) grunting his (or her) way round the garden late one evening recently. They are eating the dog food (as recommended by Mrs. Tiggiwinkle), but I hope they don't start barking! There are plenty of slugs etc for them to eat around the main garden, but the veg garden will not be very sluggy - we hope.

The birds are busy nesting. Blackbirds, wrens and pigeons are flying around with beaks full of nesting material. I put a few pieces of lambswool around, to give them a nice nest liner. The house sparrows and hedge sparrows started earlier - they make quite a clatter in the berberis bushes near the barn. Some house sparrows nest in holes in the barn wall - they have a few fights over the best spots. The pigeons are doing a lot of cooing and wing-flapping. I will have to make sure my veg nets are secure, as they do love my juicy lettuce. I suppose it makes a change from the wild bird seed I put down. They don't eat the mixture of lard, smashed peanuts and biscuits I put into holes in small logs hung around. They are strictly for the bouncing blackbirds, blue-tits and other visitors we get.

The rain has come and the temperature has dropped. We will have to cover the plants in the evenings for a few days: we are hoping it doesn't drop too much or we will be replanting everything which is outside the greenhouses.

I hope the corona thingy will soon have finished, and we can get back to something like normality. In the meantime, keep safe and separated, and enjoy your garden, if you have one.

### June

**Flowers:** The weather will hopefully be a bit drier so careful watering will be necessary, especially for newly planted bedding plants etc. Tie up the taller plants or they could be damaged by wind. Hardy primula can be lifted and divided. The crowns can be divided into several clumps and transplanted into a moist, shady position.

Aphids and greenfly can be troublesome, so regular spraying will be necessary to keep them under control.



*Peonies*

Don't forget to give your plants a good feed now and again - it will pay dividends in helping plants. As alpine and rockery

plants finish flowering, trim back the growth to keep plants neat and compact. Sow seeds of winter-flowering pansies in seed boxes and put them in a frame, then when they are large enough they can be planted out in the garden.

Dead-head peonies after flowering and cut back oriental poppies. Lift and clean spring bulbs, store in a light, airy shed. Pinks can be propagated now by means of cuttings. Select healthy-looking none-flowering shoots, 10-13 cms long (4 to 5 inches). Pull them out at a joint (this is termed "piping") and insert these pipings firmly 5cms (2 inches) deep and about 10 cms apart in sandy soil, preferably in a frame but a shady border will do. Keep them well-watered, shaded from direct sunlight.

Sow biennials such as Canterbury bells, foxgloves, pansies, violas and sweet Williams in frames or cloches

**Vegetables:** Make successional sowings of all vegetables such as lettuce, carrots, turnips, radishes, mustard and cress, all the salad vegetables and turnips will be better in a shady spot. Plant out winter greens, including brussels sprouts, broccoli, kale and savoy. Stake up peas and beans.

Plant outdoor tomatoes when they have been hardened off. Choose a sunny spot - a border at the foot of a wall or fence with a southerly aspect will be best. Soil should be in good condition but not too richly manured. Let them set a few fruit, then feed with tomato fertiliser.

Plant out runner beans 20cms (8 inches) apart, and provide a stout stake or cane for each plant.

Plant celery, set plants that are 8cm (3 inches) high or more - I find the self-blanching type less time-consuming. Plant out marrow plants - they will be ready in time for the Show. I plant mine in well-rotted compost between 2 bales of straw



This keeps them off the ground and holds the moisture, which they love. Pinch out broad beans when they have set 3 clusters. This may prevent an attack of black fly.

You may be able to lift a root or two of early potatoes for an early taster - keep earthing up. Sow a further crop of parsley and stump rooted carrots.

Make a sowing of french beans in a sheltered place. These will crop in September (just right for the Show) and continue until the first sharp frost. Don't forget to water and feed, don't just spray the tops, give them a full soaking. This should last and prevent surface rooting which make the plants susceptible to drought conditions. Keep hoeing to prevent weeds taking hold.

Plant out leeks for winter/spring. Sow chervil and dill in a sunny spot to be ready in late summer.

**Trees, Shrubs & Fruit:** As with all plants, keep well watered and weed free. Remove dead tips of cotoneaster and cherry.

Pick the poisonous seeds of laburnum, especially if there are children around. Give azaleas, rhododendrons, camellias and hydrangeas a feed of sequestrine especially if they are yellowing.

Keep an eye out for pests and diseases and deal with them as soon as they are seen.

Planting of new shrubs and trees is best left until late summer. Increase your stock by taking semi-ripe cuttings from a wide range of trees and shrubs. Root in a frame or on a window sill. Layer clematis and flowering quince.

Prune deciduous shrubs like deutzia broom and mock orange after flowering. Keep raspberries moist at ground level by mulching with straw or strawy manure between the rows. Keep the young shoots of blackberries and loganberries tied up. Peg strawberry runners which have been earmarked for propagation into posts.

**Greenhouse and Indoor Plants:** For plants, keeping an eye on temperatures is the order of the day, damping down if the weather is hot and giving plenty of ventilation. Early June nights can be very treacherous, so watch the weather forecast.

Keep plants well watered and fed, take out side shoots on tomatoes and feed with fertiliser when the first truss has set.

Pollinate flowers using a fine brush - or a cottonball on a stick will do nicely.

Watch out for white fly. I use yellow sticky cards placed strategically around. They are very effective. If they get really bad, use a whitefly smoke cone. You will need to repeat this every 5-6 days to give effective control.

Sow greenhouse calceolarias now. Sow seed in welldrained trays, and give the lightest covering of sand. Cover and place in a frame to germinate. They do not like excessive heat. Continue to feed flowering and fruity pot plants, and stand on damp pebbles to maintain humidity.

Pot up rooted cuttings taken in May. Watch out for aphids etc and treat when seen. I find plant pins very effective. Take stem cuttings from geraniums, busy lizzie, fuschia, heliotrope, kalanchoe, plumbago and peperomia. Take leaf cuttings from African violets, rex begonias, echeveria and gloxinia.

**Lawns:** Cut, water, keep clean regularly. Trim edges, it really makes the garden look smart. New lawns should be gently rolled and lightly cut over. Apply lawn feed if you haven't already done so. Apply selective weedkiller when weeds appear. Prepare ground for new lawn areas to be laid in autumn. That should keep you busy for a while.

## July

**Flowers:** Remove any blooms or flower spikes that are faded and no longer decorative - the object of the exercise is to prevent seed formation which weakens the plants.

Watch out for the nasties: caterpillars, aphids, etc which will all be munching and sucking at your plants. Deal with them before they get a strangle-hold.

Tulips, hyacinths and other bulbs will now have completed

their growth and may be lifted and cleaned. Lay the bulbs in shallow trays in a cool dry place.

July is a good month to plant Madonna lilies. Plant them about 8" apart and 2" deep. Lilies prefer a sunny positioning in good but not freshly manured soil.

At the end of July start feeding chrysanthemums, take geranium cuttings, propagate pansies and violas by cutting off the present flowering shoots to within 1" of the roots, and cover with a little fine soil. They will produce shoots which will provide cuttings next month.



*Chrysanthemums*

**Vegetables:** Thin out vegetable seedlings sown last month before they become overcrowded, and cut globe artichokes as they become available - do not leave them on the plant too long.

Continue to plant winter greens. Keep them well watered. Leeks need to be blanched by drawing earth around the stems or wrapping them with roofing felt or similar. Have you tried letting a few radishes run to seed? The pods they produce are quite delicious if picked young.

Gather herbs for winter use, mulch and spray runner beans.

**Trees, Shrubs and Fruit:** Thin out apples, pears and plums if the crop is heavy - the fruit will develop better. Blackcurrants will benefit from a feed of high nitrogen fertiliser such as nitro chalk.

Cordon trained apples should be summer pruned to keep them in shape and check their vigour.

**Greenhouse and Indoor Plants:** Keep the greenhouse well ventilated. Most plants prefer a moist atmosphere which also reduces the chance of spider mite invasion.

Do not allow coleus plants to flower. They are grown for their foliage - the flowers are insignificant and do not smell very nice.

Tomatoes should be fed and watered to a fairly strict routine to prevent blossom end rot (where the tomatoes develop a nasty black base), but do not allow them to be stood in water and make sure the pots or grow-bags have sufficient drainage.

Greenhouse primulas, calceolarias, and cinerarias sown in June will need pricking out into trays or boxes; earlier ones can be put into pots.

Keep a wary eye open for greenfly etc and deal with them before they get out of control.

**Lawns:** Set the mower high in dry weather and remove the grass box so that the cuttings act as a mulch to keep in the moisture.

Let's hope we have the weather to sit out on the lawn, perhaps have a barbie or a picnic.....or just lay back with a glass of something! Lovely.....

**Tom**



# 8th May 2020 - Totley celebrates





# 75th Anniversary of VE Day 1945





## All you need is love... and some toilet rolls

### The story of how our community stepped up

As January 2020 came to a close, we started hearing news of a new virus hitting Wuhan, a city in the Hubei province in China. It seemed so far away. We could never have imagined that only six weeks later we would not be getting into the car and heading off to work in the morning, but we would be setting up office at the kitchen table. That our children would not be at school but would be doing PE with Joe Wicks in front of the TV and parents would be bluffing their way through long-forgotten quadratic equations. That we would not be popping round to see our friends and loved ones for a cup of tea, but would be using phones and tablets to talk to them by video.



*Respite from lockdown - a walk in Gillfield Wood (Photo: Chris Measures)*

We could not imagine that in households around the land, we would be questioning each other on excessive toilet roll usage because heaven forbid if we were to run out we would have to join a queue at six in the morning and pray there would still be some on the shelves. No socialising in pubs or restaurants. No walks on Higger Tor or trips to the Grindleford café for egg and chips. Worst of all, we would be worrying for our own safety and that of our loved ones.

L.P. Hartley said "The past is a foreign country; they do things differently there". It certainly seems like that today as we look back and marvel at the people, privilege and comfort that many of us took for granted BC (Before Covid-19). However, in the depths of confusion and fear, in a world where scarcity and isolation has become a reality, a remarkable thing has happened. Across the UK, a swell of goodwill and action has washed over individuals and communities. This has been no more evident than here in S17.

As it stands today, there are around 150 active helpers, and an incredible 1900 members of the S17 Covid-19 Community Support Group on Facebook. This is the story of how our community mobilised ready to handle the impending health disaster heading our way.

Adam Slade, co-owner of an architectural practice in Hathersage, lives in Totley with his wife Susie and their three children. He had been keeping up with the news and following the effects of Covid-19 first in China and then in Italy when on March 11, the World Health Organisation declared the corona virus a global pandemic.

Adam says "It was increasingly apparent that the same things happening [in Italy and in China] would happen here. I love our local community, but we still have an insular culture. It was time for our community to come together. I am a thinker, often working ideas through in my head before actioning them, but on this occasion, there just wasn't

time." On the morning of 13 March, while he was getting his children their breakfast, Adam created a 'Group' on Facebook with the simple mission being "To provide a support network to the S17 community at this time of need."

By lunchtime he had approved 250 members and his phone battery was dead. By the evening it had 450 members. Adam recognised that one pair of hands wasn't going to be enough and support would be needed, so later that day he put out two appeals - firstly, for some admin help and secondly, for ideas on how the group might reach and support the most vulnerable in the area, particularly those who were least likely to have access to social media.

Two of the first people to respond were Simon Parker and Liz Nicklen. Simon, who has lived in the area with his family for eight years, had great confidence that the community would come together. He says "I've seen a great community spirit here". The

first task was to get a community of helpers signed up: "We decided to set up an online survey. Little did we know that within 24 hours more than one hundred people in S17 would have put themselves forward". Hundreds had joined the Facebook group, but not all would be willing or able to actively help others; the survey meant those who could give time could register their interest and be added to a WhatsApp Helpers' Group to enable better communication and coordination.

Liz has lived in Dore for twenty years and brought her two boys up here (they are grown up now and living out of the area). She has previously been a Community Responder, but her career and children meant she hadn't really got involved in the local community as much as she would have liked - until now that is.

"Over breakfast on the 13th March," says Liz, "I spotted the community group and joined - I must have been one of the first. It was beginning to sink in just how awful this situation was going to get, and I was feeling almost panicky, so it was brilliant to be able to volunteer". Liz offered help with the admin side of things and shared a flyer template from another group. This was the answer to Adam's problem: how could the helpers make contact with the people who would most need support? Before she knew it, Liz would become the administrative control centre, matching volunteers to every street in S17. And Simon would become the powerhouse behind the printing and distribution of thousands of leaflets. Adam, Simon and Liz became a team - determined, focussed and dedicated. There was no turning back... a job needed doing.

The weekend of 14-15 March was the last relatively 'normal' weekend in the UK. Although no sports were being shown, people were able to visit local bars and restaurants. The weather was amazing, and the hills were busy with people. Meanwhile, hand sanitiser and toilet rolls were hard to find, and lockdown loomed over us all. Things were about to change for everyone.

Local shops and providers began adapting the ways they worked to make sure their customers (existing and new) could receive the services they need. Liz created a list of all local businesses who were offering takeaway / delivery, and these were included on the leaflets. Adam ensured they were engaged and supported via the channels available. Connections were made with churches and other community groups to enlist help from their active network of established volunteers and be more joined-up.

In the following days, all over Dore and Totley, computer printers died and print cartridges ran dry. Within just five days of starting the group, 2,500 leaflets had been produced; soon after, enough leaflets were printed to cover every one of the 6,500 houses in the



S17 postcode.

Liz then began the mammoth task of checking which roads had received leaflets, and through the WhatsApp Helpers' Group, looked for help to fill gaps with great diligence and success. Whole days were spent tracking coverage and seeking help to cover any gaps. Before long, the busy WhatsApp Group was supplemented by seven micro groups and clusters of helpers started working together. Within just a week of the initial Facebook post, they became self-managing, an essential factor for sustainability going forward. Over a hundred and fifty volunteers spent hours writing their details on leaflets (people talked of writer's cramp) before setting off to deliver them through the doors of their local streets. One person spent 8 hours delivering leaflets in total.

Conversations were had – from a safe distance – between helpers and people in their front gardens. Introductions were made and reassurances given. People were appreciative, and volunteers felt helpful. Neighbours unknown to each other for years were acquainted for the first time. Even though there was a growing sense of anxiety and concern for the challenges we would be facing in the coming weeks, a sense of connection and community started to bud and blossom much like the spring bulbs and hedgerows coming to life all around us.

Almost immediately, responses started coming in. Phone calls to reassure that things are OK for now, but "it's good to know you're there". Requests for shopping were made by people who were self-isolating. Urgent prescriptions needed collecting. Post needed to be sent. Helpers offered connection, reassurance and support, and those that needed it reached out gratefully to accept it.

One helper shared this story: "I shop every two or three days for an elderly person who is vulnerable and has no family nearby, apart from an elderly brother in Hillsborough that can't help. I shop for essential items and pay his rent weekly and he has asked if he gets sick can he call on me to help, which of course I will. He is very scared, and I keep reassuring him he will be ok and that myself and the whole community support group is here to support him. He is so overwhelmed by the kindness and help he is receiving, and he can't thank me enough each time I go to see him. He blew me a kiss from his door today which made me smile. Each time I go and deliver his items I well up with emotion knowing that this support is truly making such a difference to his life. I can't thank everyone enough and the organisers for everything you are doing. In this crazy world it's good to know I'm doing some good and bringing joy to [this gentleman's] life, I'm so glad I can be there to support him."

Another helper received this message: "Thank you so much for the kind message and useful leaflet information. Yes, we are trying to self-isolate, being in the age group that the government advises should. At the moment, we have all that we need for a while, but it is reassuring to know there is a helping hand when we might need it in the future weeks or months. Thank you once again also to the Community Group."

And here are just some of the other comments that helpers have shared: "I delivered a prescription for an elderly gentleman - he was so grateful and left a bunch of daffodils on the doorstep for me."

"A lovely thank you on the Facebook

a fever and needed some groceries until they had a Tesco delivery. I could procure most of what they needed from the Totley greengrocer and Border View Farm! I also had a neighbour who wanted to help S17 (but had difficulty keeping up with the Facebook/WhatsApp flow); I asked her if she could take a meal to them for a Saturday evening (I knew she loved to cook for others and is good at it), and she was delighted to do that. The mother was very appreciative and this story has a happy ending with her excellent recovery and she is a mainstay in our small neighbourhood WhatsApp group."

"An 84 year old lady - who is quite self-sufficient and her daughter is helping, but we have chatted a couple



*Springtime colour in lockdown (Photo: Chris Measures)*

group from a man who lives 300 miles away. Just to know his parents are not having to worry and that I am helping to reduce his stress levels so he is not worrying about them is really pleasing."

"All three households I am supporting have someone classified as vulnerable, two of which have had letters telling them to stay in for twelve weeks. They are all very grateful for the support."

"Collected a prescription for a person with diabetes who was self-isolating. Had a lovely chat from the end of the drive with them and the bonus was they lived opposite a close friend so had a chat with him too at a distance."

"One household in particular now telephones and emails regularly and is very happy to know that there is support in the community. They were pleased to see me after not seeing anyone at all for two weeks."

"A self-isolating 85 year old called for some supplies. He doesn't have family in the area. He was worried about having to go out to get shopping."

"One of my first calls was for groceries for a family of four, the mother had

of times on the phone and did a Skype call!"

"We have been able to help two households with their weekly shopping. Both households are shielding elderly people with underlying conditions and who were scared to venture out. Whenever we pop around to one house with shopping, they open their window to thank us and have a chat and they express what a difference it is making. In fact, this couple told their daughter (who lives in Kent and who therefore cannot support her parents) about our efforts, and they explained to us that this had motivated her to start a similar initiatives for those who were vulnerable in her local area."

It is testament to our community that so much has been achieved in such a short time... that so much has been achieved collectively. It is a silver lining in this terrible situation. From one person's flash of inspiration and action, others stepped forward and spent hours getting the initiative off the ground. More people contributed with printing, advice, information and offers. As it stands at the beginning of April, a hundred and fifty helpers volunteered their time to reach out



to their neighbours (more are always welcome). Over 1900 people joined the community group which gives everyone a sense of connection and encouragement as ideas, suggestions and gratitude are shared.

All this is now backed up with a website to ensure people can easily access the most relevant useful information whether they are looking for support, or they are volunteers. What's App groups continue to be used by helpers to make sure every request is honoured and satisfied. At the time of writing we know the peak of the virus is yet to come, and as a nation we will soon be dealing with the challenges that brings. But having harnessed the willingness of people across our community and taken collective responsibility for the most vulnerable amongst us, we are as ready in S17 as we can be. The exponential growth of this virus has been more than matched by the exponential growth in the generosity and goodwill of the people in this community.

What is really hard to believe is that the three-person powerhouse who got this initiative off the ground didn't know each other BC, and have never met in real life. That will have to wait until this lockdown is over. In the meantime, here are their reflections of the last month:

"I've been overwhelmed with the community's response. It's all happened very quickly, from getting set up to where we are now; it wouldn't have been possible without people's time and commitment. We have merely been facilitators. The thanks are all down to everyone working together in the community. From time of writing we know there are dark days ahead, but as a community we can and must keep pulling together to provide light"

*Adam ("I can't wait to get out and about again with the family and of course go to the pub!")*

"I've been blown away by the level of support shown by the whole community, and the way it's been embraced by everyone involved, whether that is through the help and support network or those who are using the support offered. Everyone is filling a much-needed gap that will in time need to dovetail with the longer-term support network that will be created by the hundreds of thousands in the GoodSAM programme. There are lots of ways to get involved...so please do get in touch on our Facebook page. And do keep your leaflet handy, because we don't know what tomorrow will bring or when we will need to call upon a helping hand. We are there to support each other equally through this."

*Simon ("I'm looking forward to one heck of a set of street parties")*

"I am utterly humbled. There are truly amazing people where we live. People

who are adding to their own risk because they want to help others. They are the real heroes. It's one thing to do the practical stuff (setting things up) but I think the biggest thing our volunteers have achieved is giving people the comfort of knowing there are people out there who are strangers but they care and are just a phone call away if needed. THANK YOU to every single one of you for every gesture and kind action you have done so far and for everything you will continue to do.

We don't know the twists and turns that this story will take, so my second message is STAY STRONG. We will get through this. We're all going to have bad days in the times ahead as we have to face the increasingly harsh reality of this illness but just know that there are people out there, in your community, who care and are there to catch you."

*Liz ("Technology is amazing but nothing beats a proper hug. I can't wait to hug my boys, my mum, in fact all my family and friends")*

[www.facebook.com/groups/S17Covid19](https://www.facebook.com/groups/S17Covid19)  
[www.S17covid19.co.uk](http://www.S17covid19.co.uk)

*Claire Knight*

## Dore and Totley United Reformed Church

**Totley Brook Road, S17 3QS**

As with all churches, the URC building has had to close until further notice. However, our worship continues, either with a printed service or via zoom. If you'd like to know more check out our website at [www.sheffieldurc.org.uk](http://www.sheffieldurc.org.uk) or get in touch with me, Elaine Ferguson.

The zoom service on Sunday morning at 10.30 am is followed by a virtual coffee session where we break out into smaller groups to chat together. This new form of worship challenged us to do church differently and has proved very popular, whatever age we are.

We miss all our building users and hope we can meet together again, guided of course by the politicians and scientists as to when this might be.

Our fundraising project, to raise money for Trachoma, a branch of Sightsavers, will be carried over to 2021.

We are aware that for many of us the lockdown to stop the rapid spread of coronavirus has been of benefit, giving us chance to draw breath and reassess busy, hectic lives. But for many it has been a drastic change, unable to work, businesses closed down and with the loss of loved ones, not to mention the many challenges of children at home and older people isolated. We hold everyone in our thoughts and prayers.

What has been outstanding has how our local community has pulled

together with many volunteers ready and willing to do whatever has been needed. Thank you everyone.

*Elaine Ferguson*

## Litter Picking....

We've all been finding the lockdown hard at times.

I've had Litter Picking Withdrawal so imagine my surprise when I opened my front door and discovered this wonderful Womble made by my friend Helen left as a gift to raise my spirits.



Local community volunteer group Sheffield Litter Pickers will resume activity as soon as it is safe and appropriate to do so.

*Julie Gay*

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**Tuesdays to Friday's 12.00 to 2.30pm and**

**6-30pm to 9-30 pm**

**Saturdays 12.00 to 3.00pm and**

**6.30pm. to 9.00pm (drinks – open all day)**

**Sundays 12.00 to 9.00pm**

**Phone 01433 630 423**



## Councillors' Surgeries

Surgeries at both Dore Old School and Totley Library are suspended until further notice. You may still contact our local councillors through the website at [sheffield.gov.uk](http://sheffield.gov.uk) but bear in mind that they are subject to the same restrictions as we all are at present.

## Disabled Access Gates at Gillfield Wood

Friends of Gillfield Wood have for a number of years been trying to get the Council to provide better access to the wood for the disabled and people with limited mobility. We know others have been trying too, and perhaps for a lot longer.

Nevertheless, we are very pleased to report to those who are not already aware that we have at last been successful and two kissing gates have so far been erected. Chris Brewster and David Steward, both members of our committee, have recently worked hard to get this result and during a site meeting with the Council at the end of last year we gained their assurance such gates would be put in place.

One of the gates is at the bottom of Totley Hall Lane and the other is on the main footpath that runs directly down from there to the wood. The Council has also assured us that the state of the path will be improved because they know it has been badly eroded, more by fast flowing rain water than by footfall. A third kissing gate is due to be erected at the entrance to the wood.



One of the new access gates (photo: Chris Measures)

These gates are special gates as are the two existing metal kissing gates at the east end of the wood. The gates have locks that can be unlocked with a RADAR key. By using a RADAR key the gates can be swung wide open so a wheelchair or mobility scooter can pass through. These keys are available for the disabled to use and one of the places they can be obtained is from the Council direct.

At the time of writing this, work on the gates and access has been suspended due to lockdown, but hopefully it will not be too long before the path is resurfaced and the third kissing gate is in position. Our thanks go to Sheffield City Council's Public Rights Of Way team for their endeavours, and in particular special thanks go to Tony Andrews, their Senior Officer, who very kindly ensured this work took place just prior to his retirement.

We are also pleased to report that we have agreed with the Council that another RADAR kissing gate should be erected by the bus terminus to enable the disabled to have access along the wide ride there and the woodland at the west end. We understand that the erection of this gate requires separate funding so we await progress in this respect. And we asked the Council to widen the path between the Scout Hut and the east end of the wood to make disabled access to the wood easier from that end, especially as there are already two RADAR kissing gates in place at that end. The path has since been cleared to a suitable width which is very pleasing.

Friends of Gillfield Wood have already received thanks from the local community for their efforts, as people with limited

ability are finding it so much better to use the kissing gates rather than have to negotiate the stiles. One couple has even written to express their gratitude which was very nice: 'May I say a big thank you to whoever has made it more accessible to get into the fields off Totley Hall Lane, with the new disabled access gates. Both my husband and I were not able to climb over the stiles, which enable you to get towards Gillfield Wood, these last few years. We are both in our nineties now and had previously been walking into the woods for over 60 years from the lane' (Mr and Mrs W of Totley.)



We have also drawn the Council's attention to the fact that the white ladder stile nearest to the bottom of Totley Hall Lane is in a poor state. We understand they are aware of this, so we are hopeful this stile will be repaired or replaced over the coming months. In addition we have reported to the Derbyshire County Council the stile by the brook and bridge at the foot of the footpath up to Woodthorpe Hall because it too is unsafe. The stile stands on the south side of Totley Brook so is in Derbyshire, the brook there being the county boundary.

Chris Measures, Chairman, Friends of Gillfield Wood

## DANCE, CUPPA AND CONNECT

Come and join the Carers Outreach Project for an hour's FREE virtual session of Dance and connecting with others!



For unpaid Carers and their cared for adult with a mild/moderate learning disability and/or autism



To find out more, sign up and collect ZOOM ID for DANCE, CUPPA and CONNECT email the Carers Outreach Team on [COPE@sheffieldmencap.org.uk](mailto:COPE@sheffieldmencap.org.uk)

Or call the Carers Project Outreach Workers:

Katie on 07447 381437  
Ellie on 07735 316347



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STARTING  
29TH APRIL







## Totley Library

Totley Library remains closed because of the coronavirus crisis. This means that all events and activities at the Library, including Community Cinema showings, and all meetings organised by community organisations, are cancelled until further notice. We're keeping up communications, however, through an emailed Newsletter – the first one went out a few weeks ago, and as we write this, we're about to start working on the next one.

Library volunteers and CRIC trustees are, however, discussing ways in which, when the day comes when we can re-open, we can do so in ways which maximise the safety of volunteers and library users. We are thinking, in particular, about availability of volunteers, social distancing, quarantining and sanitising arrangements.

**FindMyPast and British Newspaper Archive** Sheffield Libraries is offering free home access to findmypast and the British Newspaper Archive for library members during the Covid-19 closedown. Email [archives@sheffield.gov.uk](mailto:archives@sheffield.gov.uk) for log-in instructions. If you're tracing your family tree, findmypast is one of the best places to start. You'll find national census records for England and Wales, 1841–1911; Scottish census records, 1841–1901; Irish census records, 1821–1851, and 1901–1911; Exclusive 1939 Register for England and Wales (the closest thing to a census between 1921–1951); England/Wales electoral registers with over 200 million names and more than 800 million indexed records with 150 million record images for baptisms, marriages, and burials up to 1837.

The British Newspaper Archive provides online access to local and regional newspapers from across Britain and Ireland. Over 36 million newspaper pages from the British Library's vast collection are digitised, with more pages being added every week. Through Sheffield Libraries subscription to findmypast you get free access to the British Newspaper Archive too.

**NHS Hearing Aid batteries** The Totley Library stock of NHS hearing aid batteries has been transferred to Totley Pharmacy, Baslow Road. Please take your card with you when you collect.

**Lottery Winners** Congratulations to recent Library Lottery winners! The first-prize winner in the March draw was Amanda Hardwick, and the second-prize winner was Sally Steel. In the April draw, the first prize was won by Shirley Elliott, and the second prize was won by Barbara O'Connor.

**Free Plants Raise Funds!** Josie Dunsmore, a Totley Library

volunteer, had grown plants for the Library Sale and for the stall at Totley Open Gardens. As they were no longer needed, she asked her neighbour's gardener if she could use any. She took 8 plants and gave a generous donation, which inspired her to dig up some more and put them on the pavement by her house offering them for FREE with any voluntary donations going to the Library. £80 was raised for library funds!

**Remember** - the council has extended loans on all council books until the beginning of August but this will be reviewed as necessary. They have assured us there will be no fines for the period of our closure. Similarly, during the period of closure, you will not be receiving reminder letters for the Orange Sticker (Totley) Loans and you will not incur any fines.

You can still use your library card to access the eLibrary. This includes eBooks, eMagazines, eAudio, and eComics.

Visit Sheffield City Council Libraries and Archives website for more information.

**Totley CRIC website** We will endeavour to keep everyone posted about any new developments through our website – keep an eye on it at <http://www.totleycric.org.uk/>

**Adventures of Alfie Bear** Hayley Stones and her family on Green Oak Road have been brightening up the days with different scenes of Alfie Bear in their front garden. Here's a scene with the theme of "Missing the Library"! Hayley says: "Good morning from Totley library where Alfie bear is making the most of the peace and quiet in the children's corner. I want to say a huge thank you to the army of volunteers who saved our local library and who continue to provide such a valued resource in the community. The children's side is a beautiful space that me and my children have enjoyed many times and loved Storytime/craft sessions on Wednesday." Thanks Hayley - we'll see you when we re-open!



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# The Spanish Flu Pandemic 1918-1920

## Its effect on Totley and Sheffield

Anyone who has read the names of the WWI victims on Totley War Memorial will have seen James Parker amongst the ten men remembered there.

James (Jim) was raised in a large family living on Summer Lane and was serving in 507th Agricultural Labour Corps, having been transferred from his original Lincolnshire Regiment posting when he became unfit for frontline duty. The reason for this is unknown.

He died on 10th November 1918, the eve of Armistice Day, not as a result of war action but from Spanish Influenza, and not 'in a foreign field' but in East Yorkshire where the army was training soldiers to provide agricultural labour for British farms (food production being paramount). Influenza, pneumonia and heart failure are recorded as the causes of Jim's death, aged 30 years. How sad to have survived the fighting only to be struck down by this new and mysterious illness.

The Spanish Flu Pandemic was to infect 500 million people worldwide and claim the lives of 50 million victims before it was spent, many more than had been killed by the fighting and horrors of the Great War.

Knowledge of viruses was very limited in 1918. Some scientists of the day thought a bacterium was responsible, while others admitted the cause of this devastating disease was a mystery. It was in fact an Avian related flu virus, only positively identified a few years ago when DNA was extracted from infected lung tissue, retrieved when a corpse buried in the perma-frost of Alaska was exhumed.

Today we are somewhat shocked to realize that the new coronavirus (Covid-19) can still present modern-day scientists and doctors with many unknown and challenging twists and turns, despite huge medical advances having been made in the intervening years. Experts in the field are racing to understand it, to produce a vaccine that will return us safely to our 'normal' lives, to beat it. No such expectation was being fostered among the population a hundred years ago. So how did the authorities of the day seek to manage this disaster, unfolding at a time when politicians were preoccupied with the problems of the continuing war?

During the spring of 1918 the illness had been recorded in American soldiers travelling to Europe on a troop ship and was first reported by the Spanish press, thus giving it the label 'Spanish Influenza'. Being aided by such troop movements and frequently overcrowded billeting, the pandemic moved quickly throughout the military, passing into the general population and eventually encircling the globe. It lasted almost 3 years, peaking in the late summer and November of 1918, with smaller fluctuations continuing throughout 1919 and into 1920.

Sheffield suffered its greatest number of casualties during the devastating peak in November 1918. More than 400 deaths per week were recorded and it was listed among the ten cities nationwide to have the highest rate of deaths per population.

**From October to November 1918 alone there were 1,332 deaths from influenza in Sheffield. Burials took place late at night to cope with the numbers.**

At that time many of the city's inhabitants would have had common 'underlying health issues' of the day... poor nutrition, slum dwelling, industrial disease and poor access to medical help, the norm for many. Crowded working and living conditions also increased the danger of passing on the infection.

Conversely, small and isolated rural populations surrounding Sheffield could well have avoided contact with it altogether.

Totley may well have been fortunate in this respect.

As in the current pandemic, certain age groups were more likely to succumb to its ravages...babies under 6 months, the 20-40 age group and those over 65 years were all badly affected. Bearing in mind that life expectancy for a male was around 50 yrs at that time (and probably lower for the steelworkers of Sheffield) there were few who didn't fall within these categories.

Much like today the authorities introduced restrictions and advice in the hope of controlling its spread.

**INFLUENZA REGULATIONS.**  
In view of the prevalence of influenza, the Local Government Board require that in all places of amusement no performance shall be carried on for more than three consecutive hours; that there shall be an interval of at least 30 minutes between two successive entertainments; and that during the interval the building shall be thoroughly ventilated.

**the Electra Palace, in Fitzalan Square, promised: "This theatre is fitted with Haden's ventilation, the air being changed twelve times per hour and is drawn through screens saturated with disinfectant."**

The Sheffield newspapers printed daily advice, updates and statistics:

'WHEN ENTERING CROWDED VENUES BREATH WITH MOUTH SHUT WHILE SUCKING ON A DISINFECTING LOZENGE'  
'FLUSH YOUR HOUSE WITH FRESH AIR'  
'MAKE THE BEST OF IT' - advice when tram services were affected  
'DON'T WORRY' - a totally futile suggestion!

Lodge Moor Fever Hospital created five extra wards to manage the influx of patients, and pleas for extra nursing staff were made in the press when all of the city's hospitals became overwhelmed. Two doctors on home leave from the army were given permission to extend their time in Sheffield in order to help the overstretched medical staff.



Lodge Moor Fever Hospital was a long drag out of the city

A report also claimed that the hills of Sheffield were proving too difficult for the horsedrawn ambulances. There were a few early motorised vehicles in operation, but insufficient in number to meet demand.

Each patient was issued with a number. The morning newspapers printed a daily bulletin to keep relatives updated



on any changes in their condition:

SHEFFIELD FEVER HOSPITALS.											
Last night's report of the condition of patients in the Sheffield Fever Hospitals is as follows:—											
I.—Dangerously ill:—2116 2166 2146 2172 2003 1945											
2173 2171 2189 2104 2000 2096 2065 2181 2143											
2050 2179 2142 2165 2169 2110 2175 2145 2098											
1952 2176 2187 1950 1869 2114 2111 2105 2193.											
II.—Very ill:—2124 2163 2137 2162 2071 2178 2099											
2194 1973. Slight improvement: 2034 2108 2134											
2138 2112.											
III.—Ill, but making satisfactory progress:—2020 2150											
2122 2158 2156 2026 2161 2159 2099 2183 2186											
2125 2053 2160 2190 2074 2133 2136 2109 2144											
2072 2177 2141 2132 2188 2170 2180 2115 1870											
2185 2184 1898 1786 2192 2191.											
V.—Progressing slowly:—2012 2079 2129 2168 2167											
2058 2060 2070 2107 2101 2151 2113 1741 2056											
2127 2013 1920 2084 2126 2100 1742 2088 2097											
2128 2130 2174 2139 2151 2075 2118 2157 2152											
2082 2102 2101 1857 1879 2163 2140.											
VI.—Satisfactory:—2182 1865 2046 1840 2037 2009											
2063 1997 1998 2067 1982 2089 2119 2061 1768											
1830 1597 1730.											
VII.—Doing well:—All others not mentioned above.											
VIII.—Doctor wishes to speak on telephone to 1945.											
IX.—'Patients' own clothes required:—1959 2121 2120											
2117 2081 2148 1730.											
* Clothes (to be plainly marked may be left at the											
Winter Street Hospital.											

As the pandemic continued, statistics were published to inform the public that problems were being recorded and hopefully addressed.

Throughout its course the epidemic has been most severe in the district known as Ecclesall North, which includes Walkley and the houses running down towards the Barracks. This condition of affairs still exists. Another rather badly affected area is the lower part of Ecclesall West Central, which includes Wentworth Street, where the epidemic began, and runs up as far as Fulwood. The death rate in Broomhall has risen considerably, but in Abbeydale, Heeley, and Sharrow it is rather below that of the rest of the city.

The question of the interment of bodies of victims still presents many difficulties, but matters are not in such an acute state as they were. There has been a meeting between the City authorities and the undertakers, all of whom are fully alive to the seriousness of the situation, and steps have been taken to improve matters. The question of the preparation of graves is now described as being "satisfactorily in hand." The assistance of a number of soldiers to perform the duties of grave-diggers has been obtained. The undertakers have also been able to obtain assistance in the making of coffins, and coffins have also been obtained from other towns. It is hoped that these two very awkward problems have now been carried to a point which borders on solution.



Advertisements abounded for products that claimed to protect or cure. From the distance of a century it's easy to be scathing about their efficacy, but with little medical understanding and fear ruling the population it is understandable that people would be prepared to try anything that might work.

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Articles were frequently featured in which favourable opinions were made about the make/price and availability of someone's latest life-saving idea...1918 versions of the false news and scams to be found on social media during this present pandemic. People are still gullible!

Products disappeared off the shelves...sound familiar?!

Drinking Oxo or Bovril was thought to be of great benefit. So much so that the inability to supply troops was of concern, forcing the manufacturers to place this apology and request in the papers...

*Influenza*

*An Apology for the Shortage of Bovril*

*In view of the immense value of Bovril during an Influenza epidemic, the proprietors of Bovril are making every effort to meet the demand. The shortage of bottles is seriously hampering the endeavours to increase the supply, and it is hoped that men will now be released for the bottle factories.*

*In order that the available supplies may reach those who have most need of Bovril, consumers who already have sufficient Bovril in the house are urged to refrain for the moment from further purchases, except for including in parcels to the front.*

*The proprietors of Bovril wish to express their regret to all those who have been unable to obtain Bovril in time of need.*

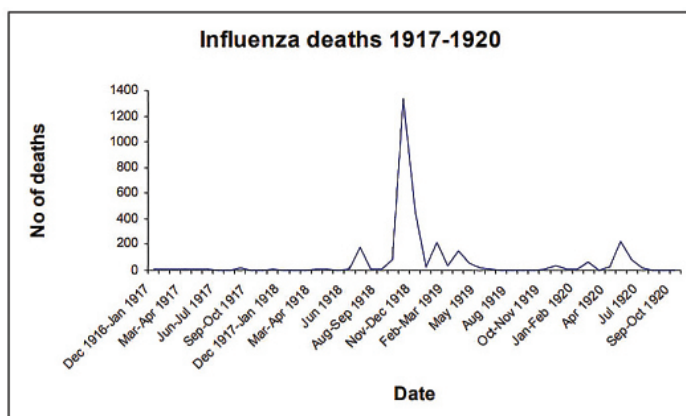
This has echoes in our recent flour shortage. The product itself was available, but only if the packaging problems could be resolved. In 1918 it was a shortage of bottles, in 2020



the limited production-line capacity for producing 1.5kg bags of flour.

By the early months of 1919 Sheffield's worst peak was beginning to decline, just as the Derbyshire newspapers were reporting a significant increase of victims in the Peak District. Topley residents must have felt they were being squeezed between these two areas of infection but I have been unable to find any reports of deaths in our area specifically due to influenza, so hopefully the villagers managed to escape the worst of the pandemic.

However, deaths recorded by the Medical Officer of Health for Sheffield are shown in the graph below and illustrate the devastation that Spanish Influenza wreaked on the city over a period of more than two years.



Pauline Burnett

## Dore Gilbert & Sullivan Society

First of all I hope that none of you has suffered either directly or indirectly from the Covid19 virus. My heart goes out to the thousands for whom it changed their lives unmercifully especially those who have lost loved ones long before their time.

The Society, like everything else, has been put on hold for heaven knows how long and none of us have any idea when we will meet up again. Sad to say that I have just received some sad news. Ken Jones, a founder member, has lost his wife. She had been ill for some time but never-the-less we are all saddened by it. There is one piece of good news to lift the heart and that is that Alice Bird gave birth to a son, George Andrew, on 21st April.



Mother, Baby and Robert, her husband, are all doing well.

This business will have screwed up everyone's plans good and proper. It certainly has blown ours out the water. This year is our

50th wedding anniversary year and my eightieth birthday year so we were going to do all sorts of things. Luckily we only started to plan our year after Christmas, what with Brexit, and by the end of January it started to become clear, at least to me, that we might be in for a pandemic. Being of a scientific bent I watched very closely and read everything I could and initially was hopeful that we might be able to do something later in the year but that any immediate plans should be put on hold. We still have one tentative visit to Iceland planned for September but even that might still be scotched. Ah well, there's always next year!

In the meantime, our garden has never looked so promising although if we don't get some rain even that might change.

At least we have had some wonderful weather so going out for our limited exercise has been a delight and who'd have thought we'd have been able to sit in the garden with a glass of wine in mid April. We are grateful for small mercies.

Until next time be sensible, enjoy what you can and stay safe.

Derek Habberjam

## Thoughts...

It's a mess out there now. Hard to discern between what's a real threat and what is just simple panic and hysteria. For a small amount of perspective at this moment, imagine you were born in 1900.

On your 14th birthday, World War I starts, and ends on your 18th birthday. 22 million people perish in that war. Later in the year, a Spanish Flu epidemic hits the planet and runs until your 20th birthday. 50 million people die from it in those two years. Yes, 50 million.

On your 29th birthday, the Great Depression begins. Unemployment hits 25%, the World GDP drops 27%. That runs until you are 33. The country nearly collapses along with the world economy.

When you turn 39, World War II starts. You aren't even over the hill yet. And don't try to catch your breath. On your 41st birthday, the United States is fully pulled into WWII. Between your 39th and 45th birthday, 75 million people perish in the war.

Smallpox was epidemic until you were in your 40's, as it killed 300 million people during your lifetime.

At 50, the Korean War starts. 5 million perish. From your birth, until you are 55 you dealt with the fear of Polio epidemics each summer. You experience friends and family contracting polio and being paralyzed and/or die.

At 55 the Vietnam War begins and doesn't end for 20 years. 4 million people perish in that conflict. During the Cold War, you lived each day with the fear of nuclear annihilation. On your 62nd birthday you have the Cuban Missile Crisis, a tipping point in the Cold War. Life on our planet, as we know it, almost ended. When you turn 75, the Vietnam War finally ends.

Think of everyone on the planet born in 1900. How did they endure all of that? When you were a kid in 1985 and didn't think your 85 year old grandparent understood how hard school was. And how mean that kid in your class was. Yet they survived through everything listed above. Perspective is an amazing art. Refined and enlightening as time goes on. Let's try and keep things in perspective. Your parents and/or grandparents were called to endure all of the above - you are called to stay home and sit on your couch.

Anonymous

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## Walking The Dog...

**Rony** Enjoying your furlough, Jack?  
**Jack** Not much. I never know where I am these days when we've got to walk for an hour without stopping.  
**Rony** We're in Jilly Woods.  
**Jack** Why are there suddenly so many couples everywhere?  
**Rony** Because they've got to do their courting for an hour without stopping while taking full advantage of this historic wood where of course -  
**Jack** I bet you're now going to give me a lecture on historic Totley history? To try to impress your readers?  
**Rony** I merely think that in this historic wood which -  
**Jack** Oh, hello Sally? Fancy finding you behind that tree!  
**Jack** Sally Hello Jack. It's an alder. They grow by the stream where it's wet and its wood in olden times was used for clogs.  
**Jack** Didn't you write a long essay about these woods on the Friends of Gillfield Wood website?  
**Sally** Yes, Jack dear.  
**Jack** I'd be very interested to know what you can tell me about these woods Sally?  
**Rony** But not very interested in what I could tell you? Even if I've lived next door to these woods all my life?  
**Jack** You'd only be telling me yet again about when you used to have your den on that island where the river curls round just after the bridge up to Woodthorpe? And then about Podge Turton's teeth.  
**Rony** Actually I might be trying to tell you yet again about the teenage party me and ...  
**Jack** The teenage party you and Cracky Jones and Jim Cash and Baz Readman had? With the real fire and the real crate of IPA you'd carried all the way from Mrs Gratton's on the Rise? But then no girls turned up from the training college so you had to -  
**Rony** Actually Jack I would have tried to tell you about the cubs' wide games that Skip Turton used to start from exactly where those two paths cross, coming down from the Flu and then -  
**Jack** There isn't a Flu any more, and I'm trying to listen to the history and ecology of the wood from Sally.  
**Rony** Who has only lived round here for fifteen years?  
**Jack** And who is far more popular than you and knows everything about everything in Totley compared to you.

Pause

**Rony** I'll cut all this out you know, Jack? I'm not having this kind of bickering in the *Totley Independent*.

Pause

**Jack** Sally?  
**Sally** Yes, Jack Darling?  
**Jack** Would you tell me something interesting about these woods please?  
**Sally** Certainly, Jack. For a start, nobody quite knows what the pairs of stone posts are in the brook, but we think they might be of a system to slow the flow at times of potential flooding.  
**Jack** Would you tell me something else interesting about these woods please Sally?

**Jack** Thank you.

Pause

**Rony** I'm now resuming my piece for the *Independent*, and pointing out that older Totley residents call these Jilly Woods. Incomers however call them Gilly Woods. People who are dead call them Gill's Field Woods, because, they think that there was a Totley family called the Gills.  
**Jack** Is he making this up Sally?  
**Sally** Probably. When he doesn't know things, that's what he does. He says that's what he learned from

studying history at Oxford.  
**Rony** Because at Oxford there is no such thing as history, there are only historians.  
**Jack** He always tries to mention Oxford doesn't he?  
**Sally** I'm afraid he does. And when people aren't listening to him he just goes on talking because that's what he learned at -  
**Jack** Oxford?  
**Sally** Yes, and from when he was famous on the radio.  
**Jack** Was he famous?  
**Sally** Not really.  
**Rony** Interestingly, as I was saying, and not without some difficulty, the road that circumscribes Jilly Woods...  
**Jack** (whispering) Will you show me the stone posts?  
**Sally** (whispering) Of course, let's go, but shhh...  
**Jack** Shhhhhh...

They go

**Rony** ...is known by older Totley residents as The White Line. Graham Gregory however, and indeed some other by now semi-historical figures, tend to mis-name it as White's Lane or indeed as The White Drive. Incomers on the other hand, often carelessly call it...where've you gone? Sally? Jack? I'm barking up the wrong tree here. Hello? Jack? Come here boy? Wuff? Sally? Can anybody hear me?

by Jack and Rony Robinson, with historical ecological and scatalogical comedic material from S E Goldsmith BA MA

## John Wade Singers

John Wade Singers is an amateur choir based at Millhouses Methodist Church. We sing a variety of different styles of music, from opera choruses and popular songs to selections from musicals and religious works such as oratorios and requiems. We do not audition our singers, and rehearsals are open to anyone who enjoys singing. We particularly enjoy our Christmas Concert with music, carols and readings set amongst the festive trees of the magical annual Millhouses Methodist Church Christmas Tree Festival.



John Wade Singers

The social side of rehearsals is just as important as experiencing the music and singing. The choir draws members of all ages and abilities and has a strong focus on supporting each other. And we all look forward to our mid-rehearsal break - a chance to enjoy having a cup of tea or coffee and a biscuit, and a chat with our singing friends.

The main focus of John Wade Singers is to support local charities, and we are pleased to say that since we started out in 1984, our concerts have raised in excess of £50,000 for charity. Recent recipients have been Sheffield Churches Council for Community Care, Sheffield Young Carers and Bluebell Wood Children's Hospice.

Jonathan Lazell, Musical Director





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## The Right Time to Write

Lots of us now have to spend most of our working (if we still have a job) and leisure hours at home, and at least a metre away from the hidden coronavirus in the bodies of others, especially if we venture outside our doors. To help us cope, we receive reams of advice, such as how to keep bored and overactive children from complaining they cannot go out and play with their friends who are not allowed to play with any of their peers either.

Well, what about us grown-ups, from those in our prime to lots of us oldies in the prime of their decline, how are we to be kept occupied, especially when getting fed up of being confined at home for who knows for how long? And, as for being inmates of Codix-19, time passes ever so slowly, with no complete end in sight, including no chance of parole for best behaviour for keeping our unsocial but necessary distance from one another. Even so, you might think of taking up writing, not only for passing the time, but for using talent that's been too dormant for too long.

After listening to lots of expert advice on how to keep busy, I would suggest the following, based on my experience in trying my hand at writing for different magazines since, whenever I've put down words on paper or screen, the hours spin by quickly, and at a faster rate than any other pastimes I can think of, including griping over being confined for my own good or what I think of panic buyers who actually don't panic when they leave nothing left for anyone else.



Like most people, you've probably had the urge to write about something that's been on your mind for years, so don't let age or inexperience prevent you from making a start. Don't even worry about the 'embarrassment factor,' or 'what will everyone think' of your efforts at arranging words in a particular order, which could interest or entertain readers or, better still, energise your brain cells in producing creative thoughts.

Needless to say, no-one will see your first, your second or even your 100th draft unless you want them to. The most important factor is getting your thoughts down while they're still in your mind, with no one looking over your shoulder.

If you decide to try and get your efforts published, one of the positives about writing is that it is between only you and some unseen editor. If you are successful in getting a piece of work published, don't immediately expect reams of praise from friends or colleagues. Instead, they might comment they could do likewise, if only they "had the time", to which it's best simply to smile and ask to have a look at what they've written.

Should they offer genuine praise, don't let it go to your head, since you may still be thought of as you've always been, warts and all. If, instead, you're rudely asked how much you were paid for your creation, it's best to think of a figure and then double it, which should put an end to such queries.

One advantage of writing is that you soon learn how your brain works when it has to convey, in the right order, your ideas in the form of words, with only 26 symbols in lower or upper case, plus a few pieces of punctuation and digits from zero to nine. And, when you've had a good read at what you've actually written, it can 'sound' much better than an attempt by voice alone, since if it's put down as you've actually said it, your oration may not come across as intended or, worse still, not be coherent to begin with.

When you write, there is an opportunity to inform, to amuse or even make others stop and think about what you've written. You also have a chance to make contact with many people you will never meet. What's really ego-boosting is when strangers, at simply hearing your name, tell you how much they've enjoyed reading your work and offer to buy you a drink. With luck, they may then invite you to speak at their club social group, with the welcome offer of a fee, and the chance to pick up new readers.

Should you manage to get enough of your submissions published, don't be surprised if an obviously very over-stressed editor (it's a rather high pressured job), telephones

you because of desperately needing a quick 1250 words on some subject you're not overly familiar with. But as soon as you reluctantly agree to so, you're immediately told it must definitely arrive by no later than "12 noon tomorrow!"

If you can rise to the challenge, then you know you're on your way to being a real 'pro' instead of a mere amateur, who writes only when in the mood. So, do not delay over what could be another boring minute longer. After decades of thinking about composing a short story, a whole book or perhaps a poem or two, motivation is the best starter, and who knows where it will lead to?

Besides, where the passage of time is concerned, the process of writing is one of the best ways of passing time. You may find that you're not only totally absorbed, but in having to do re-writes - nothing reads just the way you want it to the first time round or even umpteen rounds later.

When absorbed in writing, the first glance at the clock or your high IQ watch will tell you it's much later than you think. It will also delay the onset of hunger pangs, given that one reason for over-eating and weight gain is boredom, especially if stuck at home with the fridge and high calorie foods and drinks too close by.

So, before thinking any longer about what you're reading here, set up a new document, or pick up the nearest biro and get at least 100 words down. If it helps, have a good look at someone else's article that you've found dull or not well written, which might inspire you to do better. This is how I got started in writing for publication, when I was at my dentist and picked up a few ageing magazines in his waiting room while trying to divert my attention from the drilling to come.

From what I saw on their faded pages, my reaction was "Gosh, I could do better than that," and I haven't looked back since. It even makes having to go to the dentist that much easier, but not at present, as they're all closed for the time being. Which reminds me, I'm desperately waiting for the barbers to open.

Arthur Kaufman



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## Organic Wildlife Gardening

The Soil Association was founded in 1946. In the first quarterly magazine (*Mother Earth*), one of the articles included was written by the founder, Lady Eve Balfour. The following is an extract from that article:

"Disorder and chaos are not natural phenomena. Left to herself, nature always produces order. It is man who causes chaos by his persistent attempt to resist or ignore natural laws, an attempt doomed to failure from the start."

The magazine is now called *Living Earth*, but many areas are not "living". The fires in south-east Australia have killed millions of animals and the land will take many years to recover. Other countries are suffering from drought, the ice-caps are melting, the oceans are warming and, in this small but beautiful country, the seasons are not predictable or pleasant, and the extremes of weather are having an adverse effect on the wildlife.

Currently, we are enduring a pandemic. Coronavirus is killing thousands of people. Is nature trying to regain "order" by reducing the population? Maybe, in time, scientists will be able to find the answer to this question.

As individuals, there are many ways that we can make a difference, although one's economic situation may affect what you can achieve. Travel less - the reduction of air flights, together with less car travel during this pandemic has made a significant difference to our air quality. Cruising is popular, but causes considerable damage to the seabed and the wildlife that depends on it. Holiday in this country but have less regular trips into the countryside. Electric cars are helping and, with more improvements and the phasing out of diesel cars, will also make a big difference.

Home insulation is important and using sheep wool in the loft is better for the environment than cheaper, unnatural alternatives. Solar panels and storage batteries if possible are worth while and, where appropriate, wind turbines and ground/air source heating. While expensive initially, all these are very good for household budgets and the climate.

Think before you buy - do you really need it? Look for more environmentally-friendly products which have been certified organic, eg organic cleaning and personal necessities. The manufacture of organic cotton uses far less water than non-organic cotton and no wildlife-destroying chemicals and so it is best to buy organic cotton clothing, bedding and towels if you can.

Buy organic food as finances allow. It is generally produced without chemical fertilisers, herbicides or pesticides. An article in a recent issue of *Living Earth* reports on evidence exposed by the Soil Association and the Pesticide Action Network (PAN) on mixtures of pesticides in our food, water, rivers and soil, and government testing data for 2018 showed residues of 157 different pesticides in food. Sixty-three are known as possible or probable carcinogens and 43 are suspected endocrine disruptors. Forty-three percent of bumble bees had detectable levels of 2 or more pesticides, with up to 7 found in one bumble bee.

We are being encouraged to eat less meat as cows produce methane which contributes to global-warming. Eating less but organic meat would be healthier for us all, support the environment and support organic farmers who are producing meat in the most sustainable way.

There are many very hard-working organic farmers, who are producing top-quality food. Intensive farming needs to change to improve the soil, the quality of our food and animal welfare. It is not all the farmers' fault, however. We have demanded cheap food. The Government's new draft Agricultural Bill is a step in the right direction as it aims to put the soil at the centre of future policy.

So what has that all got to do with wildlife organic gardening? Well, everything is interlinked . . . so quite a lot!

The garden should be as natural as possible with a relaxed, informal layout that draws one in.

Choose native trees, shrubs and flowers which support our native, and struggling, wildlife, and which are suitable for the soil type and acidity/alkalinity. Plant in a position which

suits them, eg shade or sun, and with consideration to their eventual height. Unfortunately, many foreign plants do attract insects, but their pollen and nectar is not as beneficial as native ones.

Cultivated and foreign plants are popular but take up space that could be used for native species which benefit our own native pollinators and other insects much better, having evolved with them over millennia. Most people are now aware of the desperate situation regarding populations of our native bees and other pollinators and insects - in fact, whole ecosystems are suffering with catastrophic effects on our overall biodiversity . . . when did you last see a hedgehog, fox or swallow? And how many or how often? How does that compare with when you were younger?

Lawns should not be mown too regularly or too short. If it's very dry, allow some of the cuttings to cover the lawn as they will help retain moisture and support the lawn and wildlife beneath naturally. Never use chemicals as they destroy the important microscopic soil-life which supports plant growth, and, even if the lawn dries out, it will recover when rain returns, so no need to water the lawn! There should be as little hard-standing as possible as the earth below will be lifeless. Small step stones can be used or, better still, a bark path.

A pond, or even a shallow boggy area, is very good for a huge variety of wildlife. I am hoping that all the frogs, newts and insects which were around in my garden last year will have appeared again by the time you are reading this.



*The Marsh Marigolds look very happy - by the ponds*

In my garden, apart from long-established conifer hedges at both sides which do give cover and nesting places for birds, some *Pyracantha*, well trimmed back to the walls, whose berries are useful to birds in the winter and a *Pieris* which was given to me over twenty years ago by my late but very special friend, my plants are all native.

Trees are important for early pollinators. They also give shade for animals and certain lower-growing plants, and absorb carbon dioxide.

The Downy Birch, Goat's Willow and Alder Buckthorn I had ordered all arrived safely. As whips, they are all very small and will take a long time to mature, but the mature tree is likely to be a better specimen having been given this extra time. They will provide support to different wildlife compared to the trees I already have, including several Hawthorns and the two oak saplings which I mentioned in my last article. The wildlife they all support will go into the many hundreds. It is also lovely to think that, one day, children might be playing on swings hanging from the branches of the mature Oaks.

Along with the Wild Cherry Tree, planted years ago and blooming well this year, wild Daffodils, native Primroses and Lesser Celandine are all doing well, Marsh Marigolds are in flower round the ponds, and bees are busy round the newly-flowering White Deadnettle, which is very popular with bees and so easy to grow. Also flowering are my special favourites: the delightful Wood Anemones and Wood Sorrel, both seeding themselves in new areas, the latter at the bottom of the Alder trunks, felled last year as they (*cont. p. 24*)



## Organic Wildlife Gardening (from p.23)

were infected by Phytopthera, and almost tucked in and clinging to them which just looks so natural and very sweet. A great help to spring butterflies are Cuckoo Flowers (Lady Smock), especially Orange Tips which feed on the nectar and lay their eggs on the leaves of this very delicate and pretty wildflower after mating.



*Cuckoo Flowers, planted in the lawn haven't appeared, but these popped up in the front garden!!*

The Soil Association has worked for years, lobbying governments to improve soil quality, our food and animal welfare. They have done so much on our behalf. Visit their website at: [www.soilassociation.org](http://www.soilassociation.org).

We need to support them and the organic farmers by growing native flowers in our gardens, as well as by not using any chemical products to allow a healthy population of bees and pollinators to increase as it desperately needs to do.

*Marian Tiddy*



I'm sure you'll not be surprised to learn that your local history and archaeology group has suffered the same temporary fate as the rest of the world and all of our activities are currently suspended. We are though still keeping in regular contact with Time Traveller members through emails, making people aware of upcoming television programmes, online courses and other snippets of news, as well as trying to keep ourselves amused!

Before our closedown in March we were able to fit in a couple of events from our winter programme.

Ken Dash gave us an update on the recent discoveries at Bishop's House and eminent archaeologist Dr Clive Waddington gave us a fascinating talk on Mesolithic and Neolithic flints, explaining how the making and use of flints had changed during the ages of prehistory. We had several other events planned for the spring and these have been put on hold for the time being. When we do resume our activities then Time Travellers can look forward to a varied and diverse programme including a talk about the history and archaeology of Troy, one on Osteoarchaeology, a presentation on the final results from the Sheffield Castle excavation, a trip to Wentworth Woodhouse and of course, our popular monthly coffee mornings.

The Time Travellers pride ourselves on being involved in and supporting local community events and resources, for example we attended the Heritage Exhibition at the Sheffield Millennium Gallery in January. A very important and fascin-

-ating historical site not too far away is Creswell Crags. This prehistoric gorge and museum is a favourite location that the Time Travellers have visited as a group and individually many times. Unfortunately, the current COVID-19 restrictions are preventing it opening to the public and school groups. This means that its main income stream is closed off. The charitable trust that manages the site has launched a fundraising campaign with the aim of raising sufficient money to prevent permanent closure and The Time Travellers were pleased to be able to contribute some of our own funds to this worthy cause.



*Creswell Crags*

If you are interested in finding out more about The Time Travellers then log on to our website at <http://www.thetimetravellers.org.uk>

*Glynn Burgin*

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## The Great Western Railway 'en fête'

It seems that most summer fête events in 2020 are going to be cancelled or postponed. But we can at least look back fondly at how some of these events were reported in the past. Nearly sixty years ago I was a railwayman on what had once been the GWR and at nationalisation had become British Railways Western Region. There was a great tradition of fêtes organised by the railway staff's association. These events grew in scale and the most lavish were laid on during the 1930s.

### WESTERN REGION

Saturday 24th August 1935 saw the Grand Floral Fête staged in Oxford, believed at the time to be the biggest fête of its kind in the kingdom. It was said that the fête for charitable purposes was being held to encourage railway employees to grow flowers, fruit and vegetables. The railway had always promoted railway station gardens, allotments and even the use of suitable railway embankments for horticultural purposes. This effort was helped, no doubt, by Suttons Seeds of Reading whose trial grounds were next to the railway line and whose products were distributed by rail. That year, funds were being raised for the orthopaedic hospital in Oxford where many railway staff had been treated. About 15,000 people, GWR employees, families and others came from far and wide to be at the Botley Road Recreation Ground, Oxford. Some exhibitors had come from as far afield as Cornwall, North and West Wales, the North West and London. The nine-hour event started at 2 pm with the official opening by GWR director Lord Elton. Lady Elton performed the next business of the day which was the ceremony of crowning the Floral Queen, who that year was Miss Violet Wigley. She was escorted to her throne along with her child attendants by the Paddington Band of Pipers and the Swindon Silver Band.

There was a very large produce show staged in three grand marquees in which were displayed fruit, vegetables, flowers, baking, eggs, home-made jams, honey and crafts produced by staff members and their families. Some prize categories were open to all comers and there were cash prizes, cups and medals to be won. The first prize for honey was a tie between bee-keeping employees from Somerset and Wales. There were special prizes for home-grown gladioli, roses and sweet peas, with a special prize for the most successful amateur exhibitor. This was Mr Brake, an employee from Yeovil who almost swept the board in the fruit, flower and vegetable sections. For his success he was given the 'Banksian' silver medal of the Royal Horticultural Society. He also won the Humphrey Challenge Cup and Medal for the most points in the fruit classes. In the women's classes, Mrs Purchase of Taunton tied with Mrs Wheeler of Oxford for the most points won with their exhibits.

Almost a thousand GWR employees were involved in different parts of the entertainment provided on the day. The Paddington Pipers and the Swindon Silver Band played throughout the afternoon and evening. Fifty railway staff took part in a cabaret show which included a troupe of over twenty step dancers performing clog and tap routines. They performed in an outdoor theatre, complete with scenery, in a specially floodlit arena. A 'Pageant of Empire' which was based on a book written by a retired railway employee was performed during the evening. Part of the entertainment also included what was described as a grotesque carnival-type display called 'The Giants' Parade' with its alternative name 'The Bad Boys Dream'. This featured 21 'Giants' representing famous figures of the time such as Harold Lloyd and Mickey Mouse. The organisers had clearly thought of something for everyone, and throughout the afternoon there were gymnastic displays with parades of sports girls and bathing belles in costumes promising 'charm and beauty'. A grand baby show and a beauty competition for ladies over 17 years old offered modest prizes. Then there were parades of the latest fashions with 'beauty queen' models and mannequins, and exhibition dancing performed by ballroom professionals. The event

concluded at 11pm with a grand display of fireworks.

The following year, 1936, the Grand Floral Fête for staff and others was once more held at the Botley Road Recreation Ground, Oxford, on 22nd August. According to the lavish publicity it promised to be the biggest event of its kind arranged under an industrial welfare scheme, or by any railway or any industry. The staff association was said to be the liveliest organisation of its type known at the time. Sir William James Thomas, a GWR director, opened the proceedings at 2pm Lady Thomas then performed the crowning ceremony of the Floral Queen who entered the ring towards her throne in procession attended by her Maids of Honour with accompaniment from the Swindon Silver Band. The Floral Queen that year was Miss Dorothy Snow of Didcot.

The list of attractions for the event was many and varied. Fifty lady clerks from the railway offices at Paddington who were members of the League of Health and Beauty gave a display of physical culture. Madam Belle Cleverley, the daughter of a GWR employee from Newport, described as a 'gold medallist', although for what was not specified, presented an open-air review which was performed to songs of the day. Bearing in mind what's normally said about the risks of performing with children and animals, this entertainment involved 50 'Tiny Tots' described as 'talented and versatile' in costumes made by their mothers from whatever materials were to hand including, apparently, crepe paper. Comedy was provided by a 'mechanical donkey' operated by three 'World's Premier' clowns named Barrett, Elius and Astley.

**GRAND FLORAL FETE**  
THE EVENT OF THE YEAR AT THE  
**BOTLEY ROAD RECREATION GROUND, OXFORD**  
**SATURDAY, AUGUST 22nd, 1936**  
THE PROCEEDINGS WILL BE OPENED AT 2 P.M. BY **SIR W. JAMES THOMAS, BART.**  
Prizes will be awarded to various Clubs. Free Food, Music, Punch and Special Amusement.  
**BEST ATTRACTIONS:**  
**CROWNING OF FLORAL QUEEN**  
AND PRESENTATION OF MAIDS OF HONOUR  
**MADAM BELLE CLEVERLEY** presents **FAMOUS "TINY TOTS"**  
**THE GREAT RISK**  
MAGNIFICENT DISPLAYS BY FIFTY LADIES  
**BOXING—TEN SPECIAL CONTESTS—BOXING**  
**PARADES OF BATHING AND SPORTS GIRLS**  
**BARRETT, ELIUS AND ASTLEY**  
**THE BAND OF THE PADDINGTON PIPERS**  
LIFT GIRLS ON PARADE  
**BABY SHOW** **BEAUTY COMPETITION** **COMPETITION FOR HANDSOMEST GENT**  
**UNIQUE DISPLAYS OF DANCING** by London Competition Winners  
**THE SWINDON S. & E. U. SILVER BAND**  
**HUGE MARQUEES FLOWERS, FRUIT & VEGETABLES**  
**PUNCH AND JUDY**  
**ALL THE LATEST AMUSEMENTS**  
**GRAND FINALE!**  
**GREAT DISPLAY OF FIREWORKS**  
RECKONS BY AGENT OF FIRST BALLOONS  
CAME OVER 12 P.M. SPECIAL MUSIC FOR THE ENTIRE EVENING  
**ON THE DAY! ADULTS 1/3 including Tax: CHILDREN 6d.**  
Tickets if purchased before the Day. Adults 1d. (incl. Tax). Children 6d. (incl. Tax).  
Admission to the event is free. The event is held on the grounds of the Botley Road Recreation Ground, Oxford. The event is held on the grounds of the Botley Road Recreation Ground, Oxford. The event is held on the grounds of the Botley Road Recreation Ground, Oxford.

The Punch and Judy show was provided by a GWR employee who for several years had been giving shows in the entertainment coach on the GWR's Kiddies' Seaside expresses. The Paddington Pipers piped and marched in formation. Fairground contractors Charles Thurston & Sons of Norwich had installed their latest waltzer rides and amusements. On a specially-constructed dance floor, London dance professionals were to demonstrate the latest waltz, foxtrot and rumba routines.

During the evening there were due to be ten special boxing contests for GWR men at different weights, along with a six-



round professionals' exhibition fight. An acrobat going by the name of 'The Great Risko', also known as 'The Human Fly,' promised to perform the 'Bridge of Death' 70 feet up in the air without a net. His act featured amongst other things upside down walking! Apart from the regular fashion displays with mannequins, there were beauty competitions for ladies and 'beviess of bathing belles' who held court in a specially-decorated kiosk. The organisers that year had clearly thought long and hard about broadening the range of attractions and had added a special competition for 'beautiful ankles', presumably female ones. More charm was provided by the special parade of uniformed lift girls from the Whiteley's department store in London's Bayswater which promised to supply 'everything from a pin to an elephant' (and from where Agatha Christie's Miss Marple bought her vests!). The store had close links with the GWR and offered discounts to



*Whiteley's, Bayswater, in the early 20th century*

employees. Meanwhile, the grand baby show had attracted over 200 baby entrants to compete in several prize categories. So that the menfolk weren't excluded, a different slant was taken on the competition for the handsomest gent. It had been decided that year that the men's beauty competition should have conditions which stipulated that bald heads had to be unpolished and ladies' hats had to be worn, although beards and moustaches would be allowed.

In the huge marquees, 75 classes of flowers, fruit and vegetables, whether grown on railway premises, embankments or more conventionally in gardens and greenhouses, were there to be judged for the many prizes alongside other home-made produce and crafts. There were reported to be around a thousand entries. Music accompanied the proceedings all day, and a wide range of refreshments in the form of lunches, teas and ice creams were on offer. Stalls in an open-air market offered a wide range of goods. The end of the day promised a grand finale with a display of fireworks which was due to be preceded by the ascent of 'fiery balloons' which may have been some form of Chinese lantern.

The Grand Floral Fête was again run at Oxford in 1937 with a crowd of 20,000 expected. That year it was due to be opened by the Honourable Arthur Windham Baldwin, a GWR director and son of former Prime Minister Stanley (now Earl Baldwin) and Lady Baldwin. In his opening remarks Mr Baldwin said that he had only been a director for a few months and it was his first experience of opening such a large fête. He admitted that it was also his first experience of speaking into a microphone. He said the only experience he had had an opening anything connected with the GWR had hitherto been opening stubborn railway carriage doors! One suspects that the many proud railway workers present wouldn't have found that comment hilarious at all and probably were deeply offended.

The crowning of the Floral Queen followed the opening ceremony and this year it was the turn of Miss Julia Emily West of Long Hanborough to be Queen. Preceded by a retinue of Rose Maidens, she was piped to her throne by the Paddington Pipers under the direction of Pipe Major Clancy. The previous year's Floral Queen, Miss Dorothy Snow of

Didcot, handed over her symbol of office to Lady Thomas who then crowned her successor. A gold watch was then presented to the Floral Queen by the Honourable Mrs Baldwin who also gave a souvenir gift to Miss Snow. With the ceremony over, entertainment in the large arena started with the Swindon Silver Band conducted by Mr J G Alder. Then Madam Belle Cleverley's 'Tiny Tots', possibly by now a year older and wiser, appeared for a second year with their performance. A music hall group called the Five Lyntons performed trick cycling, juggling and comedy acts.

Dogs were next with a display by Aninee Dawn's 'Clever Alsatians'. Mannequins from the Whiteley's Bayswater store laid on a parade of the latest fashions and then there was a display of dancing by the pupils of Miss Vera Legge's School of Dancing. This was followed by the highlight, a breathtaking 'death dive' by the two Lindbergh Brothers who jumped from a tower 80 feet high into a large tank of water below with a depth of a mere five and a half feet. The metal tank was bolted together from sections before being filled, and many years later it brought about the death of one of the brothers who misjudged his dive and hit the metal side.

For the audience there was the usual funfair, market stalls, boxing bouts, music and dancing. Beauty competitions for men, women and children featured prominently, and the women's beautiful ankle competition made a reappearance by popular demand. The baby show award for the 'finest baby' was judged by the wife of the GWR Assistant General Manager. During the afternoon, celebrity comedienne Elsie and Doris Waters who were well known for their 'Gert and Daisy' film appearances and national radio broadcasts helped to judge the children's and men's beauty competitions.



*Elsie and Doris Waters - 'Gert and Daisy'*

Three marquees contained displays by professional florists along with the many public entries. The main award, the 'Banksian' silver medal of the Royal Horticultural Society was presented to Mr Dixon of Oxford who had won the largest amount of cash prizes for his exhibits. Mr Saunders also of Oxford won a trophy and medal for gaining the largest number of points for exhibits grown from Sutton's seeds. Challenge cup and bowl prizes were given for the best displays of sweet peas, roses, dahlias and gladioli. Then there were cash prizes for displays of annual flowers, cut flowers and the best arranged vase of flowers.

The many vegetable categories included white round potatoes, kidney potatoes, coloured round potatoes, coloured kidney potatoes, peas, runner beans, onions, turnips, long carrots, short carrots, shallots, heaviest marrow, table marrows, long beetroot, globe beetroot, cauliflowers, lettuce, cabbage, celery and leeks. While most of the winners hailed from within a twenty-mile radius of Oxford, the shallot category was won by an entrant from Tavistock who had brought his specimens 200 miles. Fruit categories were represented by dessert apples, the six heaviest apples, cooking apples, pears, the six heaviest pears, plums, currants, collection of fruit and collection of soft fruit. There were additional categories for tomatoes of one variety and another for not more than three varieties; for light and medium honey in single and three jars each, and for white eggs. There were separate women's classes for bottled fruit, table decorations, a Japanese bowl garden, marmalade, fruit cake, small cakes and a sponge



sandwich. There are also prizes for children's arrangements of wild flowers and wild grasses. As in previous years the event ended with a firework display usually described as 'great' or 'grand'.

There seems to have been controversy in the year 1937 in that Oxford City Council had apparently said it was the last year that they would allow their recreation ground to be used for the fête and that it would be banned from using the site in subsequent years. Organisers protested, saying that its fundraising charity work was worthy, that it would be a pity to go elsewhere and it must surely be a great revenue boost for traders in Oxford city. With war less than a fortnight away, the Floral Fête still took place in Oxford in August 1939 although it was a more modest affair. On this occasion the fête was opened by Lady Edmondson, wife of the MP for Banbury, and there were the usual prizes for vegetables, fruit and other produce. Flowers dominated, thanks no doubt to Sutton's Seeds, with special prizes for three categories of sweet peas, zinnias, asters, phlox, antirrhinums, stocks, and bunches of perennials, herbaceous and garden flowers. That year's event featured an evening boxing tournament which was presided over by Mr Jimmy Wilde, the former flyweight boxing world champion. It looks as if the war brought an end to the days of the GWR's Grand Floral Fêtes, although more modest local events carried on well after nationalisation in 1948. But it's doubtful if the great heights of the 1930s fêtes were ever achieved again.

Mike Peart

## Letter to the Editor

### From 'It's Our City!'

The Sheffield Referendum is not going away! Due to the current health crisis, the government has passed emergency legislation that postpones our city referendum on changing the way our city council works - to May 2021.

Sheffield People's Referendum was won by lots of Sheffielders from across the city working hard for a year to inform and engage communities, and we presented the resulting legally-binding Petition at the end of August 2019. Under the Localism Act 2011, this has won the people of Sheffield the right to change the way our council operates. Sheffield People's Petition was the biggest of its kind ever presented in the country!

Communities want to ensure that we as voters in Sheffield have councillors who can actually represent us in decision-making. We also want to see communities themselves have a meaningful voice in decisions that are made. Under the current Strong Leader system (written into the council constitution) only a tiny minority of hand-picked councillors (10 out of 84) are decision-makers - most of us currently have no representation via the councillors we elect to represent us! There is also no mechanism that devolves any power to communities to make decisions.

Sheffield is way behind other cities in many of its decision-making practices, and many people and communities have experienced its negative effects.

It is only a modern Committee system of decision-making that will be able to provide a sustainable platform for democratic decision-making in our council. The Strong Leader & Cabinet model excludes almost all of us and our elected representatives, and does not fit our community-minded city.

Lots more information is on our website at [www.itsourcity.co.uk](http://www.itsourcity.co.uk) - the coordinators are It's Our City! - a community (volunteer) network in Sheffield who believe communities can make a big difference (and we are strictly not connected to any political party).

We will be thinking about what more we might do over coming months - and as the coronavirus situation hopefully improves - to ensure word gets out further to Sheffielders!

*It's Our City!*

## The Much-Split Totley


From the *Sheffield Daily Telegraph*, Saturday 15 May 1915:

'Totley is a scattered, aggressive parish, we are told in 'More Rambles Round Sheffield', which adds: 'It has no church, and no centre such as Dore has. It is split up into Totley, Totley Bents, Totley Brook, New Totley and Totley Rise; and now a new hamlet is being spatchcocked into parish between Totley and Totley Rise with the name of Heatherfield.'

But it has become one of the most popular centres for country rambles, thanks to the Corporation motor-'buses. It is also providing architectural ideas in villas. The Ramble Book says in Totley Brook Road 'some of our young Sheffield architects have been letting themselves go with much novelty of design.' Details and maps of many motor-'bus rambles from Totley, and in the Don Valley, as well as over Redmires way, are given in the Ramble Book.'


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FROM 29TH APRIL**





## Transport 17

My last article was written on the 14th of March when the threat of coronavirus was beginning to make its impact felt. Now, as I start to write again we are waiting to see whether some restrictions will be lifted. My goodness what a strange and weird time it is for us all.

During the week prior to lockdown more and more of our lunch clubs decided they were not going to be operating so by the end of that week Transport 17 had closed its doors for the foreseeable future. The AGM had to be postponed and a new date will be set once it's possible to do so.

As you are aware it has been a challenging few months for us all at Transport 17 so the enforced shutdown has provided what feels like a welcome break, although I'm sure we would all prefer to be operating and getting our clients to their social gatherings. The imposed isolation will be having a huge impact on these folks and we hope they are managing to stay well and safe. Overcoming the sense of loneliness which the clubs help to ease will have been a huge challenge for them all. It will have been extremely difficult for anyone, young or elderly, who finds it difficult to get out of their own home. At least the sunshine has brought some brightness and does make you feel better.



*Christmas Fayre 2019: Aileen Kirkup and Dave Billington on the Bottle Bonanza Lucky Dip*

Over the last few months our volunteers have certainly been going the extra mile. When we contacted them as the lockdown commenced to find out whether they would be willing to continue with the additional commitment they were giving, we got a resounding positive response. Once again we have to say a huge thanks to them all.

It goes without saying that we are all missing our routines. However, we also seem to be acquiring a whole set of new skills as we try to overcome the difficulties we face. Technology has come to the fore as we all try to find ways to keep in touch and keep wheels turning. Zoom seems to be on everyone's radar!! It has enabled a core group from the management committee to 'meet' as we begin to look at ways forward since Mike Finn left. He played a big role in coordinating the organisation and a replacement for him will need to be found. Also, there are a number of tasks that still need to be done even though we are not operating, and the management committee are also dealing with these.

We are maintaining our links with Joanne Woodward and People Keeping Well through the network meetings. The future for us all is uncertain as we grapple with the impact of the current situation. As the lockdown commenced we had a little room for manoeuvre with our schedule of commitments. We hope this will remain the case once things return to

'normal'. However, in the interim as things begin to ease there may be opportunities we can respond to. We aim to be as flexible as possible.



*Bus launch coffee morning, March 2018*

Thankfully Transport 17 ended 2019 in a stronger financial position than it started, which is standing us in good stead currently. However, as time progresses we, like all charities whether locally or nationally, will struggle as fundraising opportunities are lost. We were very lucky to squeeze our coffee morning in on the 14th of March especially as it was originally booked for the 21st and certainly would never have happened on that date. We were very fortunate - others will not have been so lucky. We have another coffee morning arranged for the 11th of July but are not at all confident that it will happen. We'll have to wait and see. All our local charities are going to need your support.

On the positive side, our new landlord, Andrew Morton, has given us a three months rent holiday which is much appreciated and we would like to thank him for this. Whilst the buses are 'locked down' they are not costing us, but neither are they bringing in any income, and once we start operating again we will be faced with a number of scheduled maintenance jobs with all the associated costs. Similarly, we are unsure of what we may need to do to physically get them up and running after a long period of inactivity.



*Coffee morning, March 2019*

The copy date for this article was the day after the 75th anniversary celebration of VE Day. We like others would have been participating in an event organised by Totley All Saints Church to mark this special anniversary. How different things can be. Hope, strength and optimism brought people through the upheavals of those times and I'm sure that they will help pull us through the current challenges. Stay safe, stay well and perhaps by the time of the next article we will be closer to being able to do all those little things we perhaps take for granted which are a huge part of our day to day living.

*Sandra Longley  
(On behalf of the Management Committee)*





Sadly, since the last edition of the *Totley Independent*, things look very different at TASS as they do everywhere in the country during these difficult times. The only bonus has been the lovely weather.

TASS is open every day to look after the children of key workers and, of course, we are taking every care to keep the children and the staff caring for them as safe as possible. Our wonderful Woodland Workshop has come into its own and the children here have been able to do lots of outdoor learning.

Our hardworking teaching staff have been preparing out of school learning that is posted on our website with links to the great resources on the BBC and the new government site. Of course, we want to support our families and not make them feel more stressed so we have shared the advice from the government which included the following top tips:

- Have a routine and structure, but don't worry if the routine isn't perfect – remember, this isn't a normal situation. If you find that planning and sticking to the routine is causing more stress, friction or conflict, then it's OK to be more 'free-flow'. Perhaps be guided by the activities that children want to do.
- Avoid putting too much pressure on academic work. Don't try to replicate a full school timetable – It won't be possible to replicate a full school timetable for a variety of reasons. Giving yourself and your children permission to accept this can be a big weight lifted. It is more important to be spending time together, building relationships, enjoying shared activities and reassuring children.

Advice from Healthy minds mental health support has also been shared on the website.

Our amazing children are responding to a request for cheerful artwork for local care homes to lift the spirits of those not able to have visitors or go out.



Class teachers are contacting the families and children in their classes at least once a fortnight to have a chat to try to keep our relationships strong and to offer what support they can. We are also using this unusual time to make sure that our curriculum is even better equipped to engage and excite our pupils when we do return to school.

We are all following the advice so we can get through this crisis as quickly as possible because it will end, but let's all keep doing our bit to ensure that this is sooner rather than later.

*Karole Sargent and Trudi Brown, Proud Headteachers*

## Support our local businesses!

The coronavirus is having a huge impact on Sheffield. The loss of life and economic damage in our city have been devastating, but we have also seen a remarkable upsurge in community activity. Sheffielders are pulling together and volunteering in large numbers to help their neighbourhoods get through the current crisis.

Small businesses are playing their part too. Corner shops, pharmacies, post offices and garages have stayed open, sometimes when it was really difficult for the people who run them. During lockdown many of us have rediscovered the great service they provide to the local area. Staying at home and staying healthy has been much easier with their help.

At a national level experts are predicting a deep economic recession over the next 12 months, so the Council and other stakeholders must move quickly to develop a long-term recovery plan for the city. A key feature of this must surely be greater support for our small, independent companies. Every time we spend money with them, more of it stays in our local economy. The same goes for goods and services bought by the Council and other public bodies. More of it has to come from Sheffield.

OK, I'm not suggesting that we should change all of our spending habits, but even a small adjustment would help our city bounce back from the crisis. So when we come out of lockdown let's celebrate our independent local businesses; the ones that have kept us going through the crisis. Keep giving them your support and custom, because we will need them in the future. And that's good for Sheffield.

*Councillor Martin Smith*

## Community Defibrillator

This is a reminder that at there is a public access defibrillator at Totley Rise Methodist Church. It is a portable device that can be used by a member of the public to help restart the heart when someone has a cardiac arrest.



Always call 999 and follow the instructions from your local ambulance service. It is really important that the professionals are called and are on their way.

The defibrillator is in a yellow box, attached to the Community Hall, reached via the church car park. It is easily visible from the main road.



## Rowan School – a really special Sheffield school

Rowan School is located at 4 Durvale Court, Sheffield, S17 3PT (<https://www.rowanschool.co.uk/>) and the children come from all over Sheffield. This small special school caters for primary school age children with complex speech, lang-



uage and communication difficulties, including Autistic Spectrum Disorders (ASDs) – a group of lifelong conditions that affect how a person communicates with and relates to other people. Many pupils have special educational requirements in areas such as -

- motor skills
- sensory difficulties
- emotional and behavioural difficulties; such as Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder
- development of social and communication skills

According to the National Autistic Society, over 500,000 people in the UK have an ASD and as many as one in 100 children may have this condition. These children don't develop the social and language skills that other children do. As a result, they find relating to other people difficult. They may also have unusual behaviours and learning difficulties.

The word 'spectrum' is used because ASDs vary widely from person to person and affect people to different extents. Autistic spectrum disorders include autism and Asperger syndrome.

**Autism:** Children with autism have difficulty communicating and interacting with others. This is often first noticed by the time they are two. Some children with autism may have learning difficulties. Autism is four times more common in boys than girls.

**Asperger syndrome:** Asperger syndrome is similar to autism, but is usually less severe. Children with Asperger syndrome generally communicate better than those with autism and have average or above average intelligence. They don't usually have the learning difficulties seen in children with autism.

Rowan School endeavours to create a safe, happy and supportive environment that promotes respect and understanding and encourages sensitivity to the needs of others to nurture all. Its aim is to support children in building a secure foundation for learning and life.

The school has been judged as outstanding by Ofsted, and recently has been presented with the National Nurturing Schools Quality Mark Award by the national charity Nurtureuk. This prestigious accolade it awarded to schools that demonstrate exemplary practice in supporting a range of pupil needs in their school nurture groups - in-school, teacher-led groups that help children overcome barriers to making the most of school and learning.

As a Teaching School, Rowan works collaboratively to provide support for other schools, lead teacher training and staff development and raise standards for all students. The school has been developing an innovative creative curriculum with a large percentage of outdoor education and practical teaching and learning opportunities, and has recently increased its

capacity from 70 to 90 children. Facilities are made available to other local schools and to the local community.

The school is supported by The Friends of the Rowan School (FOTRS), <http://www.fotrs.org.uk/>, established in 2003 and registered with the Charity commission the following year. The purpose of the Trust is to support children, parents / carers and staff by raising funds to provide items or services to enrich the curriculum, broadening and enhancing learning, and enabling each child to have the widest possible range of childhood experiences. It is hoped these benefit the wider local community.

Past Projects have raised money for -

- specialist perimeter fencing to create a "World within a fence", a safe outside learning environment, accessible to the local community
- drainage and paving of some outside areas, creating more space for play and cycling
- a minibus (together with Yorkshire Variety)
- a sensory room allowing children to react to music and visual stimulation
- a polytunnel and raised bed planting area.
- a climbing boulder
- an outdoor gazebo
- a log cabin for all weather teaching in the woodland area
- a heated yurt
- a second minibus (together with Lord's Taverners)
- a soft / sensory play area
- a new Variety Sunshine Coach (together with Pieroth Wines)
- ongoing support for a range of music therapies



A visit to Rowan School is a magical experience – despite their physical and emotional disadvantages the children are active, happy and fulfilled. They have the benefit of dedicated specialist teachers, who endeavour to bring out the best in each child. At a personal level getting involved with FOTRS and the school was a steep learning curve, but oh so worthwhile! During my ten years as Trustee and Chairman we have raised over £150,000, thanks to our many supporters and local grant giving organisations,

*Barry Hancock, Chair of the Friends of the Rowan School*



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## Our Totley Hall Fields

I wonder what the Lord of the Manor would have been thinking as he gazed down from the windows of his Totley Hall many years ago - the open sweeping view of his land, his fields, his hedges and his beautiful old trees; a view all the way down to Gillfield Wood. He must have had a sense of pride in ownership plus perhaps a sense of responsibility in maintaining and managing his estate for future generations to enjoy.

Little has changed in this landscape. Most of the fields are the same size and shape as they were all those years ago and some of the hedgerows and trees are now hundreds of years old. As I walk the numerous footpaths that cross the land, I think about the men that have walked these lovely fields to go to work in the wood and the men who worked in the now quiet little field quarries to extract the stone for the dry-stone walls that still border the north side of the wood and some of the fields. And I also think of those men who worked the land when these fields of Totley Hall yielded crops and when folk worked together to bring in the harvest. Then I wonder what birds, mammals and other wildlife they would have encountered in those distant days.



This is where I have seen young fox cubs emerging from hedgerows to play, and I have seen adult foxes hunting and carrying food back to the den, and I have seen a large dog fox stand with head back in the middle of a field howling to the night.

This is where I have watched badgers trundling across these fields on their well-worn paths to visit their dung pit sites by the sides of hedgerows and then they have marked these boundaries of their territories. I have watched badgers dragging fresh bedding into their setts and working wet fields for worms in the fading light. It is also at dusk like this that Woodcocks can be seen roding overhead in the spring, croaking and squeaking as they fly over the wood and land. This is where, also at dusk, Song Thrushes sing while Tawny Owls and Little Owls break the night air with their calls. I have seen Little Owls sitting out in the sun in the low branches of gnarled Oak trees. I have also seen Little Owls feeding young that have perched out in the open on top of silage bales and even in winter I have seen them flying low over snow covered pastures to come to rest on a nearby fence post.

This is where I have watched Nuthatches and Great-spotted Woodpeckers calling from and nesting in old hedgerow trees, and Goldfinches, Greenfinches and Chaffinches flocking together to bathe in a hedgerow stream and then rise to preen in the cover above; such a pleasure to hear them all calling and chattering away from the depth of the hedge. It is here that a pond provides habitat for Irises and aquatic life. These tall unkempt hedgerows also entertain House Sparrows, Dunnocks, Robins, Blackbirds, Bullfinches and so much more.

It is from these hedgerows in the spring the song of Blackcaps burst. And from the tops of hedgerow trees, another summer visitor, the splendid Chiffchaff sings out its arrival. And while

the tiny Goldcrests quietly search the ivy covered trees for morsels, parties of Long-tailed Tits move through the branches trilling away excitedly as they search for food themselves. These high hedges are vital corridors of safety for wildlife and there is nothing better than seeing Rabbits in residence below or Whitethroats spiralling above in full song to make a claim to their territory. And numerous bats, mainly Common Pipistrelles, take full advantage of these hedges, hunting the edges at dusk.

This is where Stock Doves and large flocks of Woodpigeons feed in the fields along with various numbers of Rooks, Crows, Magpies, Jays and Jackdaws; an excellent mix of the corvid family. But it is their larger relative the Raven that creates most interest and excitement as it puts in a fairly regular appearance now, croaking in flight overhead or landing heavily in a nearby tree. Starlings too find these fields an important food source; they are often seen swooping down in small flocks to feed on their favourite leatherjackets no doubt. These fields also provide a food source for Curlews that nest on the nearby moors; these large waders are a wonderful sight when they are seen strutting and then probing the ground with their very long down-curved beaks.

These pastures, hedges and trees provide an ideal habitat for flying insects on which Swallows and House Martins feed during their summer, and this habitat also provides much needed food for Fieldfares and Redwings during their winter visit before they move on. And then there is the silent industrious mole, regardless of what is going on above ground, continues to create tunnels and hills wherever he pleases in these pasture, in his ongoing search for food.

This is where Kestrels have been seen over numerous years feeding young at their nest in an old decaying Ash tree. And while they are seen hovering over the fields in search of food, that other hawk, the powerful Sparrowhawk can be seen flying low and fast over walls and hedges in attack mode. Sparrowhawks can also be seen carrying prey into the nearby wood to feed their noisy young during the breeding season. Another bird of prey the Buzzard also make full use of the fields, circling low over them hunting as well as stealthily walking the grass in search of worms and invertebrates. And the magnificent Red Kite too has been seen to drift on long extended wings across these fields in search of food.



This is where fungi and flowers hug the base of hedgerows, where honeysuckle entwines, Lords and Ladies stand proud and the blossom of Blackthorn adds that splendid splash of white in spring and May blossom adorns the Hawthorn. Ivy in full flower abounds the hedgerows and attracts hundreds of insects including bees and hoverflies. And one should not forget the beautiful butterflies like Small Tortoiseshells, Peacocks, Commas, Meadow Browns and Ringlets that lift the spirits as they grace the fields with their presence.

These are just my memories, not old but recent. This is such "a green and pleasant land", our Totley Hall Fields. They mean so much to so many of us. Surely they will not build on this land. I hope not, I do sincerely hope not. But they have tried before.

*Green Belt*



## Go Peat-free for Wildlife!

With garden centres reopening, Sheffield and Rotherham Wildlife Trust are urging people to go peat free in their gardens to help wildlife. As part of their Action for Insects campaign, Sheffield and Rotherham Wildlife Trust are asking the local community to make small changes in their gardens, homes and lifestyles that will help insects and other wildlife. One of these small changes is to go peat free in your garden. Peat has been a major ingredient of the compost used in gardening for many years.

Peat is made up of decayed organic matter and vegetation, developing slowly under particular, wet conditions over thousands of years. Peat can be found in wetlands such as bogs and moors, and its composition makes it home to a unique ecosystem. This peat is dug out of wild places, damaging some of the last remaining peatlands in the UK.

When it comes to climate change, peatlands are vital. The excess carbon in our atmosphere is causing the planet to heat up. Peat bogs act like a sponge, absorbing carbon from the atmosphere and storing it like a sink.

But sadly, more than 94% of the UK's lowland peat bogs have been destroyed or damaged, and a wealth of wildlife has disappeared along with it. This vital habitat isn't easily replaced.

Ian Cracknell, Advocacy Officer for Sheffield and Rotherham Wildlife Trust said "Insects are arguably the most important species on the planet for the essential ecosystem services they provide, from pollinating the majority of our food crops to providing a key food source for many other animals. Sadly, insect populations are now suffering worrying declines, with 41% of species currently facing extinction.

"We now have a critical chance to reverse these declines by creating better insect habitats in our gardens and reducing our use of pesticides, or even better by going pesticide free. But we also have an opportunity to protect important places for wildlife every time we buy our gardening supplies.

"Multi-purpose or 'reduced peat' compost often contains a high proportion of peat, which has contributed to over 94% of the UK's peat bogs being destroyed. Peat bogs are unique ecosystems for many plants, birds and insects and are also a significant store of carbon. By committing to only buy peat free compost, you will also be helping to protect these precious wildlife habitats and vital assets in the fight against climate change."

Peat bogs are home to all sorts of plants, including colourful sphagnum mosses, insect-eating plants, and curious plants such as 'butterwort' and 'bog myrtle'. They also provide an environment for rare dragonflies, spiders and other invertebrates, and a feeding ground for birds, such as golden plover, meadow pipit and skylark.



Skylark

So the Wildlife Trust urge shoppers before buying compost, always ensure it's peat-free – this applies to potted plants too. There are many peat-free composts to choose from, including grow bags. Other options include bark chippings, coconut shells, and wood fibre as a mulch, or composting waste from your own home and garden.

There are many other ways you can help insects and other wildlife. Sign up to take action for insects today and you

will receive a free wildlife gardening download from Sheffield and Rotherham Wildlife Trust, full of advice and tips to help you create a wildlife and insect-friendly garden, plan your garden and choose the right plants, stop using harmful chemicals inside your home and in your garden and make lifestyle changes that will benefit insects. For more information visit [wildsheffield.com/afi](http://wildsheffield.com/afi)

## Totley Rise Methodist Church

Totley Rise Methodist Church is very much part of the life of this community, and although the doors of our building have had to be closed during the pandemic, our church is very much open. Members continue to be active through the work of the Covid-19 community help group, and also in other ways - offering a friendly voice through phone conversations, supporting both the food bank locally and agencies abroad who are working in some of the poorest areas, where there are few healthcare facilities available to those who contract Covid-19. Our family worker is leading baby singing time, normally done at the library, on Facebook, and we underpin everything with prayer and our new on-line time of worship. Specifically we were asked at this sad time, when limited numbers are allowed at funerals, to offer a virtual community space to remember loved ones who have died. So every week on Thursday at 10am live on our Facebook page ([www.facebook.com/TotleyRise/](http://www.facebook.com/TotleyRise/)) we offer a virtual space to "Pause for thought". Please do link in, and if you would like the name of a loved one or friend read out please email me at [gail.hunt@methodist.org.uk](mailto:gail.hunt@methodist.org.uk)

On Sunday morning we also meet virtually at 10.30 on our Facebook page with specific activities for children also included. Our Sunday talks, video links for the children and activities are also available on our webpage [www.totleyrise.co.uk](http://www.totleyrise.co.uk)

Above all we continue to hold this community, country and our wider world in prayer as we all journey through this pandemic.

God bless

Rev Gail Hunt

\*\*\*\*\*

Dean Duke writes: Just over eight weeks ago now our Church, like other Churches and public gathering places, had to close their doors to keep people safe.

And my first thought was not as the caretaker of the buildings but as a worship leader here at Totley Rise Methodist Church. I thought what do I do now, what is a worship leader without people to lead.

That week I had been learning a new song called *I will follow*, which had the lyrics 'where you go I'll go, where you stay I'll stay.' And by now people had been told to stay home, so I thought, wow, this is a very appropriate song for this time in our lives, and just by thinking what do I do now, was God actually answering me before I had even asked the question.

I spoke to Gail, our Minister, and we decided to try something different and new, and keep the worship going here at Totley Rise. Friday is my day off as the caretaker so that Friday, I said a prayer, sang the song and recorded it all on my phone and then posted it to our Church Facebook site hoping that people may see it and join me in worship, I even got brave and posted it on my own Facebook page.

It turned out to reach way more people than I had expected and some very encouraging responses came back from further away than I thought possible.

I believe our God does love us and will go or stay with us wherever we are and whatever we are doing.

So it is now my pleasure, and I do look forward to praying a prayer of hope and singing a song of Joy every week with who ever wants to pray and sing along with me. Whoever you are, wherever you're from.

God Bless

Dean Duke



## Friends of Dore & Totley Station

I started my article last month by saying "The Pacers have finally gone – what next?"

Coronavirus, that's what!

Rail and bus services have been slashed and we are being exhorted not to travel unless it's essential – not a good incentive to patronise a business by suggesting that by using it you may become seriously ill or die! The crisis will pass.

The encouraging news is that a train carrying 10 passengers was recently spotted, and one day as many as 5 cars were seen in the car park – big increases on the zeros we've been seeing in both! By the time you read this an increased service should have been operating since 18th May, although it will be quite a few weeks before we get the full services that should have been operating from this month. It's very likely they'll be deferred until December or even May 2021.

### Let's look back 150 years

Today much is made of Sheffield being in a railway backwater. Most recently that has been confirmed with HS2's eastern line to Leeds avoiding the city, if it ever gets built, with Sheffield's service a spur. It all leads back to the early railway period when George Stephenson's designs were very dominant, nationwide.

George happily built the Stockton and Darlington, opened in 1825, and the Liverpool and Manchester five years later. Their routes were mostly flat. Stephenson's surveys showed the gradients necessary through the Drone and Sheaf valleys would be too great for the locomotives then in service. A spur had been opened from Rotherham into The Wicker in 1838. By 1840 the North Midland Railway's line opened from Derby to Leeds, running from Chesterfield to Rotherham and by-passing Sheffield.

Sheffield folk weren't happy and agitated for a more direct and through link. The Midland Railway proposed one scheme and a consortium a different route that would have taken it nearer Ecclesall before heading down to Twentywell Sick, Bradway Tunnel and the Drone valley. At this time there was no railway south of the Wicker, but Sheffield was growing very fast. Trains were running between London and Edinburgh from 1850 and lines were being driven across the land.

There was a big public meeting in December 1862 chaired by the Mayor. The Midland's first plans weren't ready until the following November and it wasn't until March 1864 that both presented Bills to Parliament seeking permission to proceed. The Midland's Bill received Royal Assent on 25th July 1864. It was quite an undertaking requiring the line to leapfrog the River Sheaf in several places and a number of diversions of the river. The new station in Sheffield was built on a platform supported by a series of brick arches as the Sheaf and Porter were channelled beneath.

Along the Sheaf valley new stations were built at Heeley, Ecclesall (later renamed Ecclesall and Mill Houses), Abbey Houses (now known as Beauchief), Dronfield and Unston (no E), all opened on 1st February 1870. The 1 mile 266 yards long Bradway Tunnel may have been completed by 1868.

Those following the progress of the Hope Valley Capacity Improvement Scheme will have noted that this entire line of 13.5 miles with all the substantial associated work took only 8 years from proposal to trains running. It will have taken 8 years from the first consultation to trains running, at best, just to restore a pre-existing section of track and platform and build a couple of loops.



Bradway Tunnel was a big undertaking and at one time 1,074 men were employed. Quick completion was assured by workmen proceeding from both ends and seven intermediate shafts. In the aerial photo from 1950 (below) most of them can be made out, although 70 years later they are much harder to see thanks to the trees that have grown up in the meantime. Two are between the tunnel mouth and Bradway Road and five along a ridge that runs over the Dore & Totley Golf Course. That strip of land was bought by the Midland Railway and comprises the spoil from the tunnel below.

The tunnel could have been a little longer but they decided to dig out a cutting between Twentywell Sick Wood and Poynton Wood, the two originally split by Twentywell Lane in a slightly lower position. The spoil from that is what we now call the railway triangle and was previously the site of a Walk Mill and mill pond. The River Sheaf was probably slightly diverted. There were two beer houses at Bradway, one in the row of cottages that we know today as The Castle Inn. At the time the tunnel works started there was a quarry behind that row of cottages. Tedbar Tinker ensured a very productive brick works was ready to provide thousands of bricks on site to line the tunnel below. Did the men deep down at rail level look up and see a castle above them, the Outram family's beer house?



In the 1860s a curiosity of the line was that from Whittington Moor to Bradway it was in Derbyshire, but from just north of our current station it crossed the Limb Brook into Sheffield, and almost as quickly crossed back into Derbyshire. It didn't get fully into Sheffield until passing the Meers Brook, that being the Derbyshire boundary on the east side of the Sheaf until 1934. The stations at Beauchief and Millhouses were built with goods yards, principally for deliveries of household coal from collieries supplied to coal merchants. They'd break up the truck loads into hundredweight bags and load them onto horse drawn carts for delivery to the new houses springing up on both sides of the valley. A ton of coal might be ordered for delivery in summer at lower prices, thus keeping the yard busy all year round.

A station wasn't built at Dore & Totley in time for the opening and maybe if it had it might have been called Bradway! There may have been some local opposition to that part of the line and the arrival of all those railway navvies may not have been entirely welcome. There weren't many homes nearby although John Roberts of Abbeydale Hall can't have been too happy with the work so close to his property. However, his protegee and business partner Ebenezer Hall clearly saw an opportunity and bought up a large estate along the valley towards Green Oak and Totley. Others saw an opportunity, in particular the Duke of Devonshire who saw the prospect of a garden suburb at Dore. Which idea came first, Dore Road or the station?

Two acres of land were bought for £450 and the buildings cost £1,517. There was enough land for a stationmasters house and a goods yard. You'll have to wait another 2 years before we celebrate the 150th Anniversary of the station to



hear more of what followed. By then we must surely have a completion date for the redoubling.

### Summer House

We welcome the intended improvements to the neighbouring Summer House Restaurant that includes a railway carriage as part of the first floor. It will certainly attract attention to the station site. If an early start can be made it may be complete before rail services at the station are fully restored.

### And now?

We did put up the bunting for VE Day 75 and it doubles to celebrate 150 years of the line. If it stays up until 15th August let's hope it can also celebrate VJ Day 75 and be seen by a lot more passengers than are using the station just now. What chance we'll get a VC Day, Victory over COVID-19?

*If you're a Facebook user, you can find and join us by searching for FoDaTS. It's a very active group. If you're not on Facebook and would like more information please send an email to our Secretary; njbarnes@outlook.com There's lots of information on our website at; www.fodats.net*

*Chris Morgan, Chairman*



## All Saints Church

Totley Hall Lane

### Unreasonable Hope

We have just celebrated the strangest Easter ever. No church services, no family gatherings, no celebrations. Suddenly, our world with all its familiar patterns and routines has been turned upside down. Everything we put our trust in and thought was certain changed overnight and we were left wondering and fearful for our future safety and security, for both ourselves, our loved ones and our world.

Who would have believed it just a few months ago, if it had been suggested that we would find ourselves in global lockdown? It is the stuff of science fiction, but here we are in the midst of a situation, the like of which most of us have never experienced before (nor hope to again). There is fear, anxiety, disbelief, anger, frustration and we don't really know what will happen to us or what life will be like when this pandemic is under control.



In many ways the disciples must have felt similar emotions on Good Friday when in a few hours their certainty and hope in Jesus was gone as he was crucified. They lost their faith, it died with Jesus on the cross. They had put their trust in someone who promised but failed to deliver. The political and religious authorities had demonstrated that Jesus was a fake, his claims were unrealistic, he was dangerous and so needed to be put to death. But of course, that wasn't the end of the story.

The women who went to the tomb were in despair. To be told that Jesus was risen from the dead was beyond their imagination. In his Easter 2020 sermon, Justin Welby, The Archbishop of Canterbury, described it as "unreasonable hope" and most of those who heard the news didn't believe it. The disciples and others struggled to understand. Thomas (known as Doubting Thomas) refused to believe it until he had proof of the wounds Jesus had suffered on the cross. Yet gradually the disciples began to understand the significance of Jesus's teaching. Their "unreasonable hope" became a reality. They began to build communities where they loved and supported one another and these have grown and flourished into the global church of today.

In the current climate too, it is easy to believe that God has abandoned mankind. Maybe this pandemic is the proof you need to show that God never existed anyway. If God is real he would never have allowed this to happen. How can a God of love allow this suffering? It is perfectly understandable and in fear, many believers may have wondered the same. Faith is not an insurance policy. Believers will suffer because of COVID 19, God doesn't have favourites and save them from suffering. This dreadful virus will not discriminate and yet in the midst of the darkness and fear of COVID19 we too are seeing love and light in ways that we might never have imagined or hoped for.

After the resurrection, life was changed, the old way of life transformed. Now, locally, nationally, internationally and globally, communities are coming together and supporting each other with selfless love and generosity. People of faith and none are working together sharing their resources and offering hope and comfort. The world is not perfect, as Justin Welby said at Easter "There will still be wickedness and war, poverty and persecution, greed and grasping. There always has been; always will be."

This pandemic has made the world stop and think. It has made us question our priorities. It offers us a vision of how society could be transformed, an "unreasonable hope" for a world where we consider the needs of others before our own. This hope is open to everyone, believer or not, just as it was after that first Easter.



Mrs. Jones got a little too used to watching online worship from home.

Meeting together for worship is important for all people of faith and so it is at All Saints. Join us for virtual church on a Sunday <https://www.allsaintstotley.church/category/vchurch/>. We are pleased to say that over 100 people have been watching these services every week. The service is on the website from 10am every week and is available to view whenever you wish. Please like our Facebook page (All Saints Church Totley) where we post news and links to other sources information.

For all of us, people of faith or none, this is a time of great challenge, fear and anxiety and members of our church family, along with members of the local community are working hard to ensure that we do all we can to support each other. As a church we pray regularly for our community here in Totley, this will not change and as much as we are able to, we will continue as a church and as individuals to help and support our community. We pray that you will stay safe and well.

*Liz Hayden and Angela Waite, Churchwardens, Totley All Saints.*



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