



## RETTENDON & BATTLESBRIDGE NEWSLETTER ★ MAY 2020

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Contributions for next Newsletter to be with [RetBatNews@gmail.com](mailto:RetBatNews@gmail.com), by 18<sup>th</sup> of the month

Government Corona virus advice can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/government/topical-events/coronavirus-covid-19-uk-government-response>



### ALL SAINTS' CHURCH, RETTENDON

Although there are no services in any of the 3 parishes churches, we are live-streaming prayer and worship in our [Facebook Group](#) and then posting the videos on this site in our [Prayer and Reflection page](#) where there are also other resources for worship.

We will do all we can to support those affected by the current situation, [please do get in touch](#) if you have any questions or suggestions.

All are welcome to join our [Facebook Group](#) or visit our [Covid-19 page](#), for the latest news.

The website is <https://hrr-churches.org.uk/>

**Jane Fallows Churchwarden on 01245 400394**

### Battlesbridge Matters

The 8" x 6" green window cards I designed to be displayed if any resident requires assistance of any kind, especially the elderly or unwell - I and others have distributed a large number of these cards throughout the area. I have about 50 left, so ring if you may need one. I had no personal contact 2 meters plus. The feed back was very good, in fact one resident who did not get on well with his neighbour for 15 years, informed me his neighbour had just been round to see if he was OK or needed anything. It is these acts of kindness that will help tremendously to pull us all through this awful situation of Covid 19.

I have had only one very small request for help, but I am sure this will increase. I have some excellent contacts in Rettendon who keep me up-to-date with any problems which might arise. There have been good reports that Morrison's are delivering food boxes very quickly (groceries and meat).

I have been in 2 violent storms both Force 11, and both at night, in the Atlantic going North to the Arctic on my own, and with a crew of 7, when we felt we may not see the dawn! To calm myself and crew and to keep morale up by informing everybody that after the storm the sun always shines through. Two shining examples: the 99 year old Captain Tom Moore (he is 100 on 30th April) has raised over £27million for the NHS, walking around his garden with his walking frame, and Katherine Jenkins singing a duet with Dame Vera Lynn "We'll meet again". These are the rays of sunshine which will see us all through. **Very Sincerely Roy Hart**

**Garden Notes** - Stunning colours and we have the rare time to enjoy the display. Plan your next move and look forward to the next display - remember - food plants can be doubly pleasurable! Keep it growing. **Mrs. McGregor**

This newsletter can be found electronically on the website

<https://e-voice.org.uk/retbatnews/newsletters/>

Please note this newsletter is compiled from various entries and is not the work of any one person. The views expressed in this newsletter are those of the contributors and not necessarily those of the compiler, or of the Newsletter Organisation, though spelling and grammar may be corrected.

### Notes from the Compiler.

No diary this month, as most people are in lockdown and it seemed superfluous.

However the 3 Parishes churches are holding online/virtual services or events via their [Facebook Group](#). Battlesbridge Free Church are emailing their service out to their congregation to allow for gathering "in spirit" at least.

Rettendon Parish Council are trying virtual public meetings - look on their Facebook page for information.

This is still a special edition for the VE75 Day celebrations, albeit cut back to 2 pages of pictures and memories.

However, as there are many with memories and we have some other sources given to us, we may add to the edition by publishing more on our website.

Thank you to everyone who contributed memories, photos and video of the events, with special thanks to R. Smith.

**If you need help please get in touch 01245 321554.**

**STAY SAFE, STAY HEALTHY & KEEP SMILING!**

### Rettendon Village Memorial Hall.

Sadly - but with your health in mind - all activities have been cancelled at present, but rest assured our facility continues to be cared for and will be ready for reopening in good order when permitted.

We look forward to that day and for now we wish you all well. **Hall Management Committee**

### Old Woodham Road Farm Shop (01268 768704).

**Opening hours:** reduced only open from 8am until 2pm, but shut on Mondays and Thursdays.

**East Hanningfield Post Office** is also still open and has a "one customer in the shop system", rigorously applied for safety of both customers and staff.

### Rawreth Village Hall Popup Greengrocers

Every Tuesday until further notice, Rawreth Village Hall, Church Road Rawreth will be used by Blewsgates Farm Shop to provide fresh produce to the local and surrounding communities. The shop will be open between 9.30am and 4pm and will be run by volunteers including myself.

Pre-Ordering of boxes, with contents, is available by contacting the shop on 01277 822459 or visit the hall and choose or wait whilst we make a box up for you. Please adhere to all safety precautions: social distancing measures, use hand sanitiser and wear gloves before entering the hall (both are provided) for vulnerable residents a delivery service is available.

Please spread the word to neighbours and family and those not on email. Please stay safe, and stay well.

Any questions please feel free to call me on 07773 952455. Kind regards, Hayley Bloomfield, Rawreth Parish Council Clerk and Covid-19 Volunteer

### Garden Notes

Still many spring bulbs showing off here but finally we have purple Honesty whizzing up everywhere. Latin name is Lunaria, aptly, as the seed cases resemble the moon and are traditionally known as moon pennies.

Love your garden.

**Mrs. McGregor**

## Battlesbridge Free Church

As we grow more used to self-distancing and some of us self-isolating, the threat of this hidden Corona scourge lurks at the back of all our minds. This ever-present threat has been off-set for we live in the countryside, by the glorious spell of weather and that the majority of us have gardens to enjoy for fresh air and exercise. To the majority of us who, 75 years ago, lived under the threat of war and invasion, our God was a very real presence of protection and encouragement. We sang "O God, our help in ages past, our hope for years to come, our shelter from the stormy blast and our eternal home." Even those with scant connection to a church community, drew comfort from the inherited Christian belief that God was there, somewhere.



In today's situation, God is strikingly 'there'! He is in every unselfish act of kindness and caring concern that has seen shopping, etc. collected for the elderly or lonely, the devoted care of the NHS doctors, nurses and staff, the efforts of all the caring services and those who ensure that food supplies continue to be available. Where there is good in any act, anywhere, there is our God at work.

We have been saddened that, at this time, we can no longer meet at the church for Sunday Worship, but we have decided a means of holding virtual services. The service consists of a passage from the bible, one or two hymns, space for personal prayer, the Lord's prayer and finishing with a blessing to each other. The format of each Sunday service is e-mailed to each member of the congregation and we all undertake to follow the service around 11am each Sunday morning, so we are together in spirit. We are also pleased to be able to share in the service broadcast on Essex and other radio stations at 8am each Sunday and Songs of Praise at 1:15pm on TV. We have prayed for the recovery to full regained health of the Prime Minister, and pray God will continue to guide those in government who are striving so hard to steer the country through this life-threatening crisis. May God in his mercy, hear our prayers and keep us in his care.

**June Edwards**

## Country Diary

What glorious weather we have been enjoying this month. I suggest that it is very unseasonal. I was married fifty-three years ago in April and it snowed quite heavily the previous week and again right up to the actual wedding day.

However, due to the sunshine especially around the Easter weekend I have seen masses of butterflies. Peacocks were the most numerous with the tortoiseshell a close second followed by the orange tip, common blue and then the cabbage white were all on the wing. I even thought I saw a comma but I am not sure.

The bluebells are out in full bloom but unfortunately I cannot get out to Norsey Wood or Danbury Common to enjoy them in their full majesty as I am in Lock Down. One can also see the greater stitchwort, or shirt buttons as named by some, gracing the hedgerows as well as the treacle mustard which incidentally is the host plant of the orange tip butterfly.

Helen my neighbour tells me she has seen a Swallow. I hope to do so as they are markers for the coming summer but I have not heard the distinctive call of the Cuckoo yet. Have You?

The Ash is coming out – this points to a wet summer – i.e. If the Ash is out before the Oak we will get a soak.

Quite a few trees are in flower and are coming into leaf – the Birch near my back door is liberally scattering its catkins. Fortunately neither Ron nor me suffer from Hay Fever.

**Jane Fallows 01245 400394**

## Retendon Horticultural Society

The April committee meeting, a telephone conference call, was held to decide on what to do about the various events we should be holding. The main decision, which was unanimously agreed, was that with deep regret we would have to cancel this year's Summer Show, and therefore the Village show (which includes the open planning meeting in June). We apologise to all, but in this climate we cannot hold such an event safely. We will just have to look forward to next year.

However, the committee are looking into some virtual ideas, perhaps photographs of gardens or plants to keep up the enthusiasm. We still have the Autumn Show on the agenda, but will be keeping an eye on events. We are thinking about a craft and cookery show later in the year if at all possible, so the skills you are practising now will come in useful. We will keep you informed.

Obviously the plant sale is cancelled, though we continue looking at how to get to people any plants so that your gardening can be productive and beautiful. We found the committee each know of various shops and nurseries which are selling plants and compost for delivery, including supermarkets. A list will be put on the website and emailed to members. If you know of any other places please let us know so we can add them.

A lot of us are growing our own seeds, and may have spares (seeds or plants). Please get in touch if you need any plants and we will do what we can. Obviously in the safest way possible. There have already been a few exchanges - safely carried out.

Unfortunately our trip to Sissinghurst Gardens has been cancelled. September's trip is in the balance.

The Royal Horticultural Society are advocating a "grow your own rainbow" for the NHS, either by yourselves or with others in your street. Let us know if this is of interest, or you are actually going to do it. We would love to see the results.

**Hazel Dale-Evans 01245 401538**

For more information or help:-

**Barbara Wright, secretary Tel: 01245 321554**

**Secretary email: [RetHSsec@gmail.com](mailto:RetHSsec@gmail.com)**

**Website: <https://e-voice.org.uk/rethortsoc/>**

## Musing from our Special Correspondent

Just when I thought thank heaven we have had enough of Brexit for two years or more when along comes Corona virus (or Covid19) two new words to include or not in next year's edition of the dictionary.

The enforced lock down has to some been seen as a gift to endlessly trawl the internet, play mobile phone games, read a book(s), even tidy the garden or diligently work through the list of the 'essential' DIY jobs which seems to grow longer by the week – cross one off the top and two get added to the bottom of the list.

Painting appeared next on the list, no not oils or watercolours but walls and ceilings. Fortunately, my library of half-empty tins of paint did not contain the required colours so it was off to read the whole of the Sunday Times, not just the first three pages and the sports section. Mysteriously the Sunday Times had disappeared perhaps to the recycling bag.

I was then left with no choice but to ponder so took a well-earned rest and sat down in my favourite armchair and after a discreet forty winks resorted to a thorough visual survey checking the number of sparrows that frequent the bird table.

Oh, the choice one has to slim down managements 'to do' is in itself a worthy task, if of course I had time to do it.

**Name and Address supplied**



# VE DAY 75th Anniversary

## VE DAY 1945

For these celebrations I was lucky enough to be staying in London near Buckingham Palace - a turning off of Bird Cage Walk. On the Friday evening we went down Pall Mall and around Hyde Park. People were sleeping everywhere and anywhere. I particularly remember seeing sailors in their hammocks slung between trees and lamp posts. So very many people.

The next morning we went out again and the crowds were overwhelming to a 10 year old girl, but still very exciting. The most memorable part of the day was seeing the King and Queen and Mr. Churchill on the Palace Balcony. A fitting end to a very exciting weekend and one I shall never forget.

Resident of Rettendon

## Memories of VE Day 1945

We lived in Rayleigh at the time and I remember going down Rayleigh High Street with a big bonfire in the middle of it. The place was jammed with people. A soldier, who must have been drunk, was trying to get on top of the bonfire!

Resident of Battlesbridge



VE50 Celebrations at Battlesbridge.

## WWII Memorabilia

Found an old Blanket in the bottom of my bedding store. It bears the following cotton label stitched on:

National Price Controlled Blanket No. 281.

Size 70" x 90" (inches) Weight 4 1/4 lbs

Selling price to the public incl. P Tax (Purchase tax) 34/- (shillings) [£1-14 shillings, or in today's money £1.70]

This label must not be removed before purchase by public.

Whole section of the goods and services Price Control Act.

(I have weighed the rather threadbare blanket now, and it is about 3 3/4 lbs. So have lost 1/2 lb of fluff in 80 years - Life in it yet I think.)

Name and address supplied.

## ARTIC CONVOY MEMORIES

I was a young Midshipman on board HMS Vindex, an escort carrier, anchored in the Clyde, having just returned from a convoy to Murmansk, (my second convoy).

When we heard the news that the war had ended, cheering broke out and we were all relieved and grateful that we would not have to face enemy action and the appallingly bad weather again.

Party Time.

Alan, Rettendon Common.

During World War II convoys of ships from Britain and Russia sailed the Artic Circle route to provide food and arms for the Russians, our allies, to fight the war. There were terrible losses both British merchant navy, the Royal Navy and Russian ships. Nearly 1,000 British merchant mariners, and nearly 2,000 Royal Navy personnel lost their lives. Russia's losses are not known, but 30 of their ships were sunk.

In 2013 only about 200 of these brave sailors were left. Up till then their sacrifice had never

been acknowledged, but finally David

Cameron's government produced a medal, with the design approved by the Queen, for the remaining survivors and families who had lost their loved ones on these convoys.



The medal was called the Artic Star.

Alan was one of the lucky ones to have survived and to receive one of these medals.

Picture from Imperial War Museum

When they sound the last all clear,  
How happy my darling we'll be.  
When they turn up the lights,  
On those dark lonely nights,  
Are only a memory.  
Never more we'll be apart  
Always together sweetheart.  
All the peace bells will ring,  
And the whole world will sing,  
When they sound the last All Clear.

## Taken from the Rettendon 50th Anniversary Programme.

A reminder that all street lights were turned off and blackout curtains used so no light was seen to guide the Luftwaffe bombs.



VE50 Memories at Rettendon Village Hall

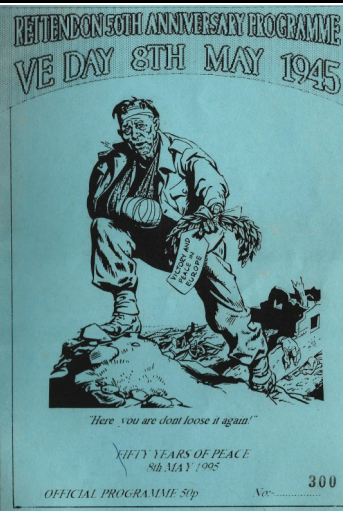
Memories from 25 years ago.....How Rettendon celebrated.....

# "50 YEARS OF PEACE"

## COMMEMORATIVE PROGRAMME RETTENDON VILLAGE

50 YEARS OF PEACE 1945-1995

Sunday	12 Mid-day till 5pm	Static Exhibition in the Village Hall
Monday	10am till 4pm	Static Exhibition in the Village Hall
	11am 12pm	Jubilation Service
	12:30pm 2pm	Lunch available at the church
	3pm 4:15pm	Children's Party
	4:30pm 6pm	Disco in the Marquee
	5:30pm 6:30pm	Tea Party for the Senior Citizens. Village Hall
	7:30pm 10pm	Melody Makers in Concert in the Village Hall



### Do you remember VE 50 - Celebrations of 50 years of peace - 25 years ago?

Perhaps you have a copy of  
this magazine from the  
50th anniversary of VE  
day?

Fortunately the newsletter  
archives have, so included  
here are excerpts from it.  
We are also lucky people  
provided photos and even  
a video taken of the  
events. Our thanks to all.

### A PRISONER OF WAR RETURNS HOME

Fifty years ago, I with many others were still on the march after several weeks feeling very tired, hungry and bedraggled. At long last we were freed by the Americans - we were no longer Prisoners of war.

Our weary column stumbled across a bridge which had been bombed treading cautiously amongst the rubble and as we came to the other side of the river we were directed to what had been a Hitler Youth College about two miles further on. On the side of the road I found a potato which was a luxury, I sat down and ate it.

When we arrived at the college it was dark. I laid down on the stone floor and slept. In the morning we were given clean underclothes by the liberating forces and then taken to a block of flats where we had the luxury of finally sleeping in real beds with proper blankets, three to a room, we thought we were in heaven.

In the morning we were medically examined and given double rations, unfortunately this proved to be just a little too much for our wee stomachs so we suffered for it. I awoke on the 8th of May and during the day I heard over the loud speakers the news of peace. I looked out of the windows and saw people dancing and singing in the streets, but I was too ill to join in the celebrations. But oh how I thanked God for his preserving power, all I wanted then was to return home to England.

This did not happen for another three weeks because of our condition. At long last we were given clearance and we were taken by a Dakota aircraft to Brussels and then by Lancaster bomber to England.

The day finally came when, with a huge pack on my back and with a kit-bag over my shoulder I travelled by train to Rayleigh station. I stood at the bus stop filled with emotion wondering how long I would have to wait when a car pulled up, the driver opened the door and said 'Get in soldier'. I asked him where he was going and he said 'Wherever you're going'. I told him that I was going to Rettendon Common. He did not know the neighbourhood, so I directed him.

He dropped me at the top of Cole Hill. He would not accept the money I offered him - he just wished me well. Going down the lane I saw 'Side View', my home, it was draped with a banner saying 'Welcome Home Jack' Home at last.

There is a verse in the book of Psalms 143, Vs 5 which says:-

I remember the days of long ago:

I meditate on all your works.

And consider what your hands have done

25 years ago: Sadly the writer who was looking forward to reading this himself passed away just a few weeks ago. He was a local hero. Awarded the Military Medal by King George VI for gallantry in action.

### A HOUSEWIFE'S MEMORY

*The postman was late that day, I remember it so well. I was expecting a letter from my sister who was expecting a baby.*

*Eventually the postman called but there was no letter, he just passed the time of day and we discussed the same topic as we had done every day for the past two years since I was bombed out from my home in Coventry. "When would the war end". We had heard the news that Berlin had fallen, and as I closed the door, I had this strange feeling that I felt sorry for the woman and children who had been killed by the Russians.*

*I recall watching him cross the road to number 43 when the radio suddenly stopped playing the tune I was humming to, and I heard the announcers plain firm voice say 'This is London! The Prime Minister. The Right Honourable Winston Churchill'*

*There was a slight pause, and then I heard that wonderful familiar voice of our Prime Minister, stern and very confident. He said. 'This morning at 2:41am at General Eisenhower's Headquarters. The representatives of the German High Command signed the act of Unconditional Surrender'.....*

*I sat on the edge of the settee, stunned. Lost for words. It was all over. At Long last. It was really over. And I cried. And cried. And I prayed to the good Lord for our Victory.*

*But the tears of Victory mingled with the tears of sadness, for I learned that my dear Len who lay somewhere in the desert would never be with me to enjoy the peace.*