

3 *May 2020* **VILLAGES** and a **HAMLET**

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The magazine for Leadenham, Welbourn,
Brant Broughton and Stragglethorpe



Online edition

3 Villages and a Hamlet

The magazine for Leadenham, Welbourn, Brant Broughton & Stragglethorpe

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DEADLINE FOR SUBMISSIONS: 15th of the preceding month

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Also, the publishers reserve the right to edit any material submitted for whatever reason

FROM THE EDITORIAL OFFICE - - - - -

We hope everyone is staying safe and well in these strange and most challenging times.

As we reported in the April edition of Three Villages and a Hamlet, we already knew we were not going to get copies printed for the May edition and beyond, until the current lock down situation is eased.

We said that we intended to 'keep calm and carry on ' by putting monthly editions out on line. We asked for contributions from anyone about anything which could be of interest and you have responded! Many thanks to all who have sent us items on a wide range of subjects as you will see as you read onwards.

We have had to keep some of those contributions over until the June issue but please - - - keep sending us more.

Please read what people have sent in this issue and maybe you could be inspired to send us something too.

Email to: threevillageseditorial@gmail.com

Post hand written items to: Three Villages, 80 Main Road,
Leadenham, Lincoln. LN5 0PE

Please help us to keep Three Villages and a Hamlet going!

Meanwhile and most importantly - all stay safe!

Hilary & Paul

Benedictus by John O'Donahue

This is the time to be slow,
Lie low to the wall,
Until the bitter weather passes.
Try as best you can
Not to let the wire brush of doubt
Scrape from your heart
All sense of yourself
And your hesitant light.
If you remain generous,
Time will come good,
And you will find your feet again,
On fresh pastures of promise,
Where the air will be kind,
And blushed with beginnings.

Poem sent in by Marion Wilcox -

ALERT FROM LINCS POLICE

Fraudsters are exploiting the spread of COVID-19 coronavirus to facilitate various types of fraud and cybercrime. Please see the below top tips to avoid being scammed:

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- 2) Be wary of phishing scams - Don't click on any unknown links in emails and use two factor authentication.
- 3) Social Media – If you decide to use social media, make sure that it is set up correctly, go through the privacy setting to ensure your profile is locked down to the public.
- 4) Use antivirus and make sure that your software is kept up to date.
- 5) Backups – Always back up your most important data such as your photos and key documents, back them up to an external hard drive.

Reporting is CRUCIAL. If you think you've been a victim of fraud report this to Action Fraud either online at www.actionfraud.police.uk or by calling 0300 123 2040.

Photos sent in by Fred Cooper. A Robin in full song and a fox who was happy to be approached, photographed and then left alone - for another photo another day!



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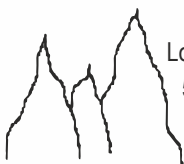
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GARDENING NOTES

1. You are doubtlessly aware that, due the current Covid19 crisis and resulting 'lockdown', it is highly likely that thousands of plant nurseries, suppliers and retailers will go out of business.

Along with the cancellations of this year's RHS Flower Shows (Cardiff, Malvern, Chelsea, Chatsworth and Tatton) with the direct knock-on effect on the many hundreds of exhibitors for whom these shows and the associated plant sales are their livelihoods, the RHS is urging gardeners to support these exhibitors who have spent the past year and more, growing plants for their displays and will now be left with a vast amount of excellent stock on their hands. These could well end up being destroyed as a result.

However, many are now providing a mail-order service. To find out more, go to the RHS website: '[rhs.org.uk/support our nurseries](https://rhs.org.uk/support-our-nurseries)' and follow the link Support Our Nurseries. There you'll find a list of exhibitors for each (cancelled) show, their plant specialities and an indication of mail order service.

2. If you're looking for plug plants, then Google 'Plug Plants' where you'll find a wealth of suppliers.

3. I heard the other day that Pennells Nurseries, who had originally closed at the beginning of the crisis, are now offering a delivery service, which sounded good to me as I had potting compost and bird/hedgehog feed in mind. After a look at their website, I called them, with the following results:

- 1.They deliver to our area. This will be a doorstep delivery.
- 2.There is no charge for delivery for a minimum order of £50. If it is below this then they will wait for that total amount in a given area. (Not difficult, spread the word!)
- 3.The website says 'they deliver anything except alcohol.' They will also deliver furniture but won't assemble it for you.
- 4.I commented that the list of plants etc offered on their website were mainly shrubs.

The reply was that customers should email them with details of anything they want and they will see if they can supply it, very useful when you consider that Pennells grow a large number of their own plants. Remember to include your name and telephone number and a member of staff will call you back. (Note they're operating with a skeleton staff.)

Pennells' email address: lincoln@pennells.co.uk.

Good luck. Happy gardening. Keep safe. (Nina McBeath, 01400 279027.)

WELBOURN'S ISOLATORS' SUPPORT GROUP- A TRIBUTE.

It seems appropriate to acknowledge and thank those who have contributed to the village community in Welbourn during the present quarantine crisis so here is the background story.

After Alison Butler's initial post on Nextdoor about support for isolators, Sarah Brown-Welbourn's Parish Clerk -invited her to attend a meeting with the Parish Council, Marianne Overton and Alison Lowe from the village shop. At that meeting they set up a card system for grocery shopping, a helpline number and a leaflet drop for the village. Marianne provided the mobile phone for the helpline, Katie Stark of the Parish Council designed the leaflets and Sarah printed and distributed them round the village. Mrs Butler set up a WhatsApp group for volunteers and didn't really have to seek any since they flooded in, first from messages via Nextdoor and then word of mouth. There are currently 45 volunteers in total: 40 in the Whatsapp group and around 5 others whom Mrs Butler can contact via email if needed. Mrs Butler also initially wrote a set of comprehensive notes for the volunteers to ensure safe working and to avoid mistakes and misunderstandings.

Mrs Butler is doing the shopping rota each week. She devised 3 routes in the central village, to be covered each Monday, Wednesday and Friday. There is a morning slot to look for the pink cards and collect the lists and an afternoon slot for the deliveries - a total of 18 slots to fill each week. Every Friday Mrs Butler puts a group message on the Whatsapp chat asking for next week's availability and then advises each volunteer about their allocated slot for the following week.

Mrs Butler and her husband do the prescription drop offs that are delivered to the shop each Thursday and Mrs Butler has the helpline which has rung a few times with shopping requests, welfare concerns and lifts to appointments etc. These have all been sorted so far with either a request in the group chat or calls to Rev Christine Goldsmith if it's related to pastoral care. So far there have not been any problems (other than too many volunteers and not enough for them to do (which is a great problem to have!) and "everything is running brilliantly."

It would be invidious to name individual volunteers (you know who you are, folks) but the scheme would not be working without the support and hard work of David and Alison in the shop.

So warm thanks and appreciation all round. What a great community we are. A very real vindication of the "caring village" phrase used in our Development Plan.

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Welbourn Reading Group – March 2020

Caligula by Simon Turney

Only hours before we were due to discuss this book at Meryl's the meeting was called off because of Covid 19. As I write this, this could be the state of play for the foreseeable future. Of course, this doesn't stop me giving you my opinion of the book, which is a habit I appear to have developed anyway.

Do any of you remember the television series, 'I Claudius', 1977, I think. Derek Jacobi was Claudius and John Hurt Caligula. I am being very brave telling you this as I could be wrong. Those with instant information at the push of a button can always check if my memory is correct.

Now to move into the book. Rome in 37 AD and another power struggle is taking place. Who is the Emperor going to nominate as his heir? Caligula is a nephew, but there are others who believe they have a closer claim to the title. Meanwhile executions are taking place almost on a daily basis. This particular Emperor, Tiberius, had imprisoned Caligula's mother and eldest sister and left them to starve to death. Did this make Caligula into the tyrant he became? Was he a tyrant, a monster?

This book is written from the perspective of his younger sister who regards him as a loving, caring brother. When he did become Emperor, and there is even more bloodshed, she still regards him as a kind person, whilst Uncle Tiberius is perceived as a villain.

As we couldn't have a meeting to talk about this book, I have no idea if it was enjoyed by anyone. I found it interesting and a good read, but require something more light-hearted at the moment. There were questions I would have liked to ask about this book. Caligula was known sometimes by another name. What did that and mean? How do you pronounce it? When we next meet I shall have long forgotten the questions, and perhaps we shall have read so many books whilst in lockdown will we ever want to read a book again?

Although this will be the last book review for the village reading group for a while, I may write about some of my favourite books. Perhaps we could all write about our 'best ever read'. Maybe my time would be better spent looking for a duster, not a book. Without my cleaning girl, this is Miss Faversham signing off.

Ruth Burton

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LEADENHAM PARISH COUNCIL REPORT

Following National Govt and Local Govt Association Guidance under the current lock down/social distancing situation - the Annual Parish Meeting will be postponed until socialisation rules are relaxed to enable public meetings to be held. Similarly regarding the AGM, where election of Chairman and other Officers are held for the coming year.

Meanwhile any issues arising, contact the Chairman - contact details on page 38 or the Clerk 01400 272835

We would like to thank all volunteers who are shopping and delivering for those in the village who are isolating.

Our thanks also to Karen who continues to keep the Post Office open, staff at the Filling Station/Shop who are providing sterling service, providing food and other essential supplies. And to Mandy and her team at The Farm Shop, who again are not only making every effort to keep the shop well supplied but have set up a delivery service too.

The Children's Play Area is closed but the Playing Field remains open and thank you to all who are using it responsibly by self distancing.



USEFUL LOCK DOWN INFORMATION

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PET SHOP GIRLS – Pet Shop food. Will deliver 01529 303413

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PARSNIPS & PEARS – can order on line or call 0115 8228622

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WOODIES AT ANCASTER – deliver boxes of toilet roll, cheese, butter, eggs, bread and possibly milk for £10 Tel: 01400 230522

MARK & SPENCER – delivering boxes of food £35 a box, £30 if vegetarian – source on line.

TAKEAWAY MEALS:

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GENEROUS BRITON (Brant Broughton) Tues – Sat 5pm – 7.30pm
Sun 12 noon – 2pm) Tel: 01400 272119

RED LION (Caythorpe) Home delivery service Tel: 01400 272632

Lincolnshire County Council Tel: 01522 782189 – they will be able to help with advice/links for food deliveries.

YOUR GP SURGERY – will deliver medication

TEL 111 – for out of hours medical support.

Barred!!!

Well, it has now happened to me
For now, I can't be with you all
No more hugs, no more fun you see
I won't be there at your beck and call

Found out the other day not allowed to go on
Being an old man has now stopped me - -
Doing what I love being with you all has gone
Helping, chatting and serving the coffee and tea

My trips to the pharmacy and MEAU
Cardiac Short Stay was also on my list
Talking to patients with their point of view
I know for a while, all this will be missed

Miguel in his bright colour "troos"
Brightened up some patients day
Even the nurses gave their views
Walking the wards with his sailors sway!!

Mike also helped pass the time
Of the girls and chaps in for a while
Helping and trying to make things fine
Now barred at 74, but still wearing a smile

by Mike Francis (alias Miguel!)

Mike Francis is a volunteer at Lincoln Hospital, working on Johnson Ward but sadly has had to stand down due to the current lock down. He wrote this poem and has sent it to the Ward to let them know how disappointed he is at not being there to help. But he says there is no doubt - he will be returning as soon as allowed!

Mike has also offered to be available for a Phone Chat to anyone in this time of crisis, who is bored, fed up and maybe a bit lonely and would just like to talk to someone, chew the fat and have a laugh - Mike is your man. So, don't hold back. He is waiting for your call.

His telephone number is: 01400 272713

Welbourn Parish Council Update April 2020

Our PC Councillors are:-

Robert Cross (Chair)

Jake Beaty

Chris Dixon

Harriet Huntsman

Maureen Lunn

Stephen Short

Katie Stark

Rod Storer

Sarah Brown (Clerk) welbournparishclerk@gmail.com

The April 2020 Parish Council meeting was held via Zoom due to the Covid-19 social distancing restrictions. It worked very well with 11 participants including our District Councillors, Marianne Overton and Lucille Hagues.

It was agreed that the Annual Parish Meeting will be postponed until social distancing restrictions are lifted and the Councillors and members of the public can physically meet at the Village Hall.

It was agreed that Robert Cross would remain in the position of Chairman until the Annual Parish Meeting when this could be put to the vote again. The Parish Council is still active therefore if you have anything you wish to raise, please e mail Sarah, our Clerk. welbournparishclerk@gmail.com

Welbourn Volunteers

The Parish Councillors would like to say a huge thankyou to Alison Butler, Alison and David Lowe from the Welbourn shop and the group of volunteers who are regularly delivering groceries to those in need of support around the village. The Parish Council supported with supplying and delivering the pink flyers and leaflets, but Alison and the group of volunteers have done an amazing job with the organisation and delivery of the scheme. The scheme was initiated by Alison Butler via the Nextdoor App.

It has been heart-warming to see it take off so quickly and it has shown what a great community spirit exists in our village. We are very lucky indeed.

Thank you to Alison and the brilliant volunteers.

Stay healthy and safe.

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Busy with the Bees.

With the beautiful weather we have recently experienced, you may have noticed the bees are out and about. The larger bees are usually solitary bees, but the smaller ones are the Honey Bees. They have been staying warm in their hives since last October, forming a large ball called a cluster around the Queen bee. During the Autumn they built up stores of food to keep them going through the winter. Although in the depths of winter they sometimes appreciate a block of fondant to keep them going.

It is always quite an exciting moment when I do my first inspection of the hives – the temperature needs to be T Shirt weather. Will the bees have survived?

When I looked in early April, all four of my hives contained bees. Two hives were fine and thriving. The third contained many drones (these are the male bees whose main job is to mate with the queen). They are usually thrown out the hive in the autumn, so they don't eat all the winter stores, so their large number was a mystery. The fourth hive was a sorry sight, maybe they had run out of stores during the colder months, just a few bees left but amongst these was the Queen bee.

Each hive contains just one Queen bee. Her job is to lay the eggs, which in less than a month grow into either worker bees or drones, depending on what the hive needs. In the height of the summer she can lay around 2000 eggs per day!

However, over the next few weeks the Queen bee might for various reason decide to “move house”. The Queen emits pheromones (a powerful scent) which effects the behaviour of the whole hive. Therefore, if the queen decides to leave the hive, most of the bees in the hive will go with her. When this happens, it is called a swarm. The swarm could arrive in your garden. If this happens you may suddenly be aware of a lot of bees in the air or you might see a large cluster of bees hanging in a tree or from a building. Basically, wherever the Queen decides to land, the rest of the bees will join her.

Please do not panic. When bees are swarming, they are unlikely to sting. Maybe move indoors, the chances are, if you leave them overnight, they will be gone by the morning. If they do not leave, and are causing you a problem, you are welcome to contact me (Julie.nelstrop@hotmail.com) and I will see if I can help.



In the meantime, take the extra time many of us have been given, to watch and appreciate the bees in your garden. The nectar they are currently collecting from your garden flowers will become a delicious honey later in the year.

Rector's letter

Dear all,

Well things have changed somewhat dramatically since I last wrote and all of us are having to deal with an unprecedented situation with this Corona virus. I hope you are all keeping safe and well physically as well as mentally and spiritually.

A few months ago I wrote how we as a group of churches were starting to look at identifying our vision and what God's plan for his churches in this place would be; little did I know then that we would have to be 'church' in a very different way for the last month or so.

It's been hard seeing our churches closed as I feel they are always a place that people like to go at times like this to just sit and be or pray but it is right that we should follow the government guidelines and find other ways to continue for the time being – which we are!

Many of you will have seen the posters around of how we are continuing to hold services every Sunday and Wednesday at 1030 am online using Zoom. This has been particularly important given we have just celebrated Easter and had all our services; Maundy Thursday, Good Friday and Easter Sunday all online and very well attended. Easter Sunday we had over 62 online joining in a joyous occasion celebrating once more the hope we as Christians have before us of the Risen Jesus, but also to be able to have a 'coffee and chat' with each other after. We even had Batman and his friends in their own living room with us – thanks James, as well as members of my old church in Cyprus, Hexham, Isle of Wight etc joining us; the wonders of technology!

Sadly not all of you can join given no internet availability or computer access but if you have and would like to just get in touch, it's easier than think and if 98 year old Geoff can manage it from Newark then so can many others. If you would still like to pray each day at home I have prayer booklets especially for this time and can arrange for one to be delivered to you if you contact me.

During the Easter period we also ran an Easter garden competition for our young ones and their entries were posted on the new church Facebook page, 'Leadenham Plurality'. I have attached some of the entries here so you can see what a high standard we saw and how difficult it was to judge them. The overall winners were Kristian and Samuel Francis from Welbourn, who will both receive Easter Eggs and a book token. However the Easter bunny has also decided that given how hard everyone worked on them that all entries should receive a prize too, so Easter eggs will be distributed as soon as we can!

I am aware that this is a testing time for all of us, being alone for some, struggling with lack of personal contact with others, missing our families, the normality of daily life disappearing for now, but we will get through this together, it won't last forever and meanwhile it is important that we all keep safe and well. If you are, or know or someone who is struggling or vulnerable and would value a regular phone call and catch up please get in touch.

I want to finish remembering the command that Jesus gave us before he left to return to his Father, 'love one another as I have loved you'. This crisis has made this more real than ever in our local communities. So many of you are volunteering to help with shopping and ensuring the needs of those who need help are being taken care of. The village shops, farm shop, post office teams are amazing, staying open so we can get our shopping etc, so many are looking out for and caring for each other it is amazing to witness and I would like to say on behalf of everybody a huge thank you to you all for all you are doing.

I feel very privileged to be part of such a community and assure you all of my prayers at this time.

Blessings

Rev Chris

Some of the Easter Garden competition entries



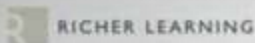
Above: Ben Goodier's. Below left: Charles Smith & Ralph. Right: William & George





Above: Lottie's. Below: The Ursula Francis Team's





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and put it on the fence? Get the children to do posters and stick them on the
bins?

Time on your hands? Why not give it a go?

My first visit to the cinema

I was four years old when I was taken to the cinema for the first time. The year was 1937 and it was thought that it would be nice for me to see the newsreel film of the coronation of King George VI and Queen Elizabeth.

Before the days of TV, DVDs, Skype and so on, the “silver screen” was thought very modern and talking films had only appeared a few years earlier.

All over the country, large Art Deco palaces were being built to show the films and to own a good cinema was almost a licence to print money.

The larger picture houses were fitted up with a huge cinema organ and at an interval between films, an organist, seated at his keyboards and swathed in coloured light, would entertain the audience while the reels of film were changed.

Nowadays, many copies of a film are made and when released, the film can be seen in many places at the same time. Then, there was only one or in exceptional cases, two copies of the film, as it was expensive to make a copy. This meant that the one copy had to be passed from one place to the next. Small towns with small cinemas had to wait six months or so for the latest film to arrive – quite often rather scratched by then.

I was staying with my grandmother at Seaton, a small town in South Devon, in September 1937. The Coronation was on the 12th May and the film of it arrived over four months later.

The cinema was quite small and did not have an organ but they had an entertainer on stage to keep the audience happy while the film reels were changed. The main film was “Shipyard Sally” and starred Gracie Fields.

My memory of the afternoon is in inverse order of what was intended.

I have no recollection whatever of the Coronation film. The Coronation was rather stale news by September, anyway. I do remember, vaguely, Gracie Fields, rushing about with a crowd of excited people who I later learnt, were shipyard workers on strike. I also remember her singing; “Wish me Luck as you Wave me Goodbye”.

However, my vivid memory of the day was when the entertainer invited a member of the audience onto the stage, chatted him up, patted him on the back and then suddenly pulled off the man's braces and waved them in the air, having undone the buttons without his victim noticing.

That is something I have not forgotten

Gannet's Diary

What is going on?

Everyone has to stay at home. But if you have to go to work, you can go out. You have to stay at home but you should go out every day for exercise. Oh, and you can go out to get food. I am confused. But I am glad He 'n She can go out to get food for us or I really would have to get out there and catch rabbits.

Apparently the whole World is sick, all the people in all the countries are getting sick. But not the cats (I'm crossing my paws just in case!). I hear the even the Doris man in Downey Street has been sick in the 'spital 'tensive place. But I see he was on the shouty screen thing again the other day, thanking the 'Elf Service, so he must be back in charge.

He 'n She don't seem to be sick and yes they are here at home – all the time. I never get a minute's peace. There never seems to be a place anywhere in house to be undisturbed nowadays. The lady who comes to scrub and clean and push to noisy sucking thing around the house isn't coming, so He 'n She are having a go. Well! No wonder I'm not getting any peace. The lady does all the work in a morning, while He 'n She have to have a bit of a go at it most days!

The only place there has been for me to find calm, quiet and relaxation was the garden because the sun has been shining for quite a lot of days. So out I went. And what did I find? They have been clearing and tidying out there. Bushes chopped back so no branches to provide shade. Grass shaved off the ground. The only good thing was the soil had been dug over making it nice and loose. This is good because I can now dig a decent hole for my poos!

But still there was no peace because if the noisy grass eating machine wasn't out, they had the chop the hedges machine going. They had a problem though because all the choppings wouldn't fit in the brown binny wheelie boxes and they had to stuff it into bags which they now have all lined up. There really is quite a lot. There are mutterings about a Tip but they are not allowed to go there. The sooner people can be allowed out again the better for me. I will not ask prmission to go out.

But I don't think they can stop people getting sick yet. They haven't found the right medicine. The Grumpy man from 'Merica said that the sick people could maybe take 'sinfectant so as not to be sick. I don't know much about 'sinfectant but watching He 'n She's reaction, it doesn't seem to be a good idea.

Now they have just told me that we are not having a proper magazine this time. You know, one with pages that you hold in your paw and turn pages over. We are going on line! Excuse me, what line? Clothes line? Railway line? I'm not sitting on there. It's something to do with the screen thing with the tappy buttons. They can make the magazine appear on the screen bit. So, do I have to jump from screen to screen depending who is looking? Something they call 'echnology apparently.

I think it's time for me to find a quiet place and practice my snooze ology!



Stay safe so we can all meet next month.

Lock up your daughters! (by Hilary Proctor)

My great grandfather was a farmer and horse breeder. In the late 1800's there was much call for horses of all types, for riding, carriage work and draught to work the land. Jim Binks had established a good business and had become well known for producing good stock of all types. So much so that the local aristocrat Lord Lonsdale, based at Lowther Castle near Penrith, purchased horses from his stock.

Lord Lonsdale was a character. Immensely rich, great sportsman on many levels (he started the Lonsdale belt for Boxing), racehorse owner and breeder. He was known affectionately by locals as 'Lordy'. He had a great affinity with the 'the common man', those who worked the land, foresters, carpenters, farriers etc. He was born and brought up on family estate in Rutland, not expected to inherit the title and Lowther Castle, and spent his youth working alongside and learning from the estate workers there. But, inheriting the title and moving to Lowther brought him fully onto the aristocratic social scene, right to the very top.

He was befriended by the Prince of Wales (later Edward VII, Queen Victoria's son) and for a good reason. The Prince of Wales was notorious for his relationships with a variety of ladies throughout his life and weekend house parties on the large aristocratic estates provided the ideal destination for him and his current 'lady'. A Castle in Cumberland (before it merged with Westmorland to become Cumbria) was the ideal distance away for a quiet weekend.

How does Jim Binks fit into the picture? A Groom arrived at our farm one day with a message from Lordy. It said:

The Prince of Wales wants to see your horses tomorrow but for God's sake lock up your daughters.

Jim had five daughters. But he was not a horse dealer for nothing. He turned the whole thing on its head and got his prettiest daughter to parade the horses before the Prince and Lordy when they arrived on the farm next day.

The Prince had taken up Polo but being of a fairly substantial frame, he needed a horse which was agile but well able to carry him and was trying to breed such a type. Lordy had recommended Jim Binks.

So the horses were paraded by Jim's daughter. A mare was chosen. The deal was carried out by the Prince's Agent and the Prince approached Jim.

"Your name is Binks I believe" he said. Jim answered in the affirmative and the Prince went on,

"And may I ask the name of your daughter?"

"Yes Sir, her name is Polly"

"Then would you object" the Prince carried on "if we call the mare Binks Polly?" Of course Jim had no objection. So the mare duly went off to do her maternal duties on the royal estate carrying the family name.

In case you are wondering, family history records that Polly Binks' reputation did remain intact!

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The Archers and Why is Ambridge Still Virus Free

I must admit that I'm not really a fan of "The Archers", although there were two periods during my broadcasting career when I couldn't avoid them.

The first was when I started working for the BBC. This was in the late 50s when I joined as a Probationary Technical Operator.

Instead of finding myself, like most of my intake, in Broadcasting House, I was posted to a little known branch of the BBC, called the Transcription Service.

This was the unit which made copies of BBC programmes for distribution to radio stations all round the world and included plays, music, quiz shows, comedy series like Round the Horne, The Navy Lark, Educating Archie, The Goon Show and of course, The Archers. The recordings would be sent out on LP discs and one of my jobs was to cut the master disc from the original tapes.

For The Archers, apart from the individual episodes, there would have to be a separate disc for the omnibus. So I'd have to listen to the week's happenings in Ambridge twice! I think that as my job was to monitor the sound quality during the transfer, I may have mentally switched off the second time around.

The next time was, years later when, as a continuity announcer with the BFBS in Cyprus, I was actually playing the Archers LPs on air.

The episodes are recorded about six weeks ahead of broadcast, but by the time they go out, they're in real time.

So, when it's Easter Day in Britain, it's Easter Day in Ambridge. If an unexpected event occurs in the meantime, like the death of a prominent person, it's often possible to modify the recording. If there's at least a reference to the event, it doesn't look as though The Archers is completely out of touch.

However, the Covid 19 crisis has put the Archers production team in an impossible situation.

As the current episodes were recorded before the lockdown, at present, the Radio 4 announcer has to constantly refer to Ambridge being "Corona Virus free".

How this going to play out with future episodes, it's hard to see. They can't ignore the crisis, without looking as though Ambridge is on another planet.

And how would they work it in to the script, months after the UK lockdown! Perhaps: (Spoken with a "Grundy" accent) "Arrgh, do ee you know there be a new virus out there!"

Hmm- perhaps not

And if or when they do manage to get the cast together – perhaps recording the actors remotely, the scenes will have to be seen to comply with lockdown rules. This means the dialogue will have to be confined to characters, living in the same household.

Therre could, of course, be an awful lot of telephone conversations!

I shall listen, now, with interest.

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Nigel & Jools Go West: Around the World in 365 Days

Part 31: St. Petersburg

We spent our final evening in Moscow navigating the Metro system. We had been warned about how confusing it was that for each line, the same station had a different name. So, unlike in London where you would go to King's Cross on several lines, in Moscow the name changes when you move from the red line to the blue line. Forewarned is forearmed as they say, and we reached Leningradsky station with plenty of time to spare.

Although we had booked our usual 4-bed shared compartment, we were due to have a slightly higher level of service which included breakfast and we were also in the two lower bunks. I was just about to get comfy when a young couple arrived to share our space. The young lady was horrified to find that they both had the upper bunks and proceeded to berate her partner. He spoke a little English and said she couldn't possibly sleep on the top bunk and would we be willing to swap? Me being me said yes and moved above Nigel. He then asked Nigel if he would also swap, to which I said and emphatic no: it was one thing to be kind and quite another to be taken advantage of. He didn't seem to take offence and we all settled down quite quickly.

This was our last overnight train and when we reached Moskovsky station in St. Petersburg, we had covered around 8,000 miles and spent 200 hours on trains since leaving Hong Kong, so it was quite a milestone moment. It was only a short walk to our hotel, the Cronwell Inn on Stremyannaya, just off the main Nevsky Prospekt. We would be close to the bustle of the city but far enough away from it to avoid too much noise. They also did a complimentary Afternoon Tea service each day with a selection of mouth-watering cakes: definitely a plus point for us and we would highly recommend it.

We are great wanderers and believe that you see so much more of a place when you explore on foot, so we were looking forward to our walking tour. Our guide began by explaining that St. Petersburg had been known as Petrograd and Leningrad at different points in its chequered history and had been the capital city of Russia more than once. It suffered hugely during the horrific siege of Leningrad in WWII which lasted 29 months. Over a million civilians died, mostly from starvation or disease, and many of the buildings were destroyed with only a few outer walls remaining. Some of the original plans for the city remained intact after the war and it was largely rebuilt using these, taking decades to complete. Luckily, Stalin chose to keep the eclectic mix of historical edifices rather than replacing them with more austere soviet style structures.

We continued our walk to the Church of the Saviour on Spilled Blood, so-called because it was built on the site of the assassination of Emperor Alexander II in 1881 and dedicated to him. There were queues of people outside, all with distinctive red

stickers on their jackets. Our guide told us that several cruise ships were in port and that passengers without visas could visit the monument if they stayed with the guide and didn't wander off anywhere on their own. We were quite content to gaze at the beautiful mosaics on the outside and continuing our walk through the nearby Mikhailovsky Garden, originally designed for Catherine, wife of Peter the Great who founded St. Petersburg.

The next day we took a boat tour on the rivers and canals which crisscross the city, earning it the nickname 'the Venice of the North'. Peter the Great loved Venice and designed his city around the natural waterways, introducing a canal network to link it all together. His vision for his people to sail in summer or walk along the frozen channels in winter was somewhat impractical and there are now 342 bridges to facilitate transportation, some of which were impressively low for the boat to pass beneath.



Exploring the canals and waterways

On our third day, we decided to be adventurous and get ourselves to the Catherine Palace at Pushkin, some 25km away from the city. This had been deliberately destroyed by the Wehrmacht as they left in 1944 but for the most part was painstakingly restored in time for the 60th Anniversary of the end of the siege. We tried to get to see the flamboyant Rococo interior but the queue for tickets was horrendous, so we opted for a walk around the formal parks in glorious sunshine. It really was spectacular, and I particularly enjoyed walking around the English Garden to see the Turkish Bath and Island Pavilion.

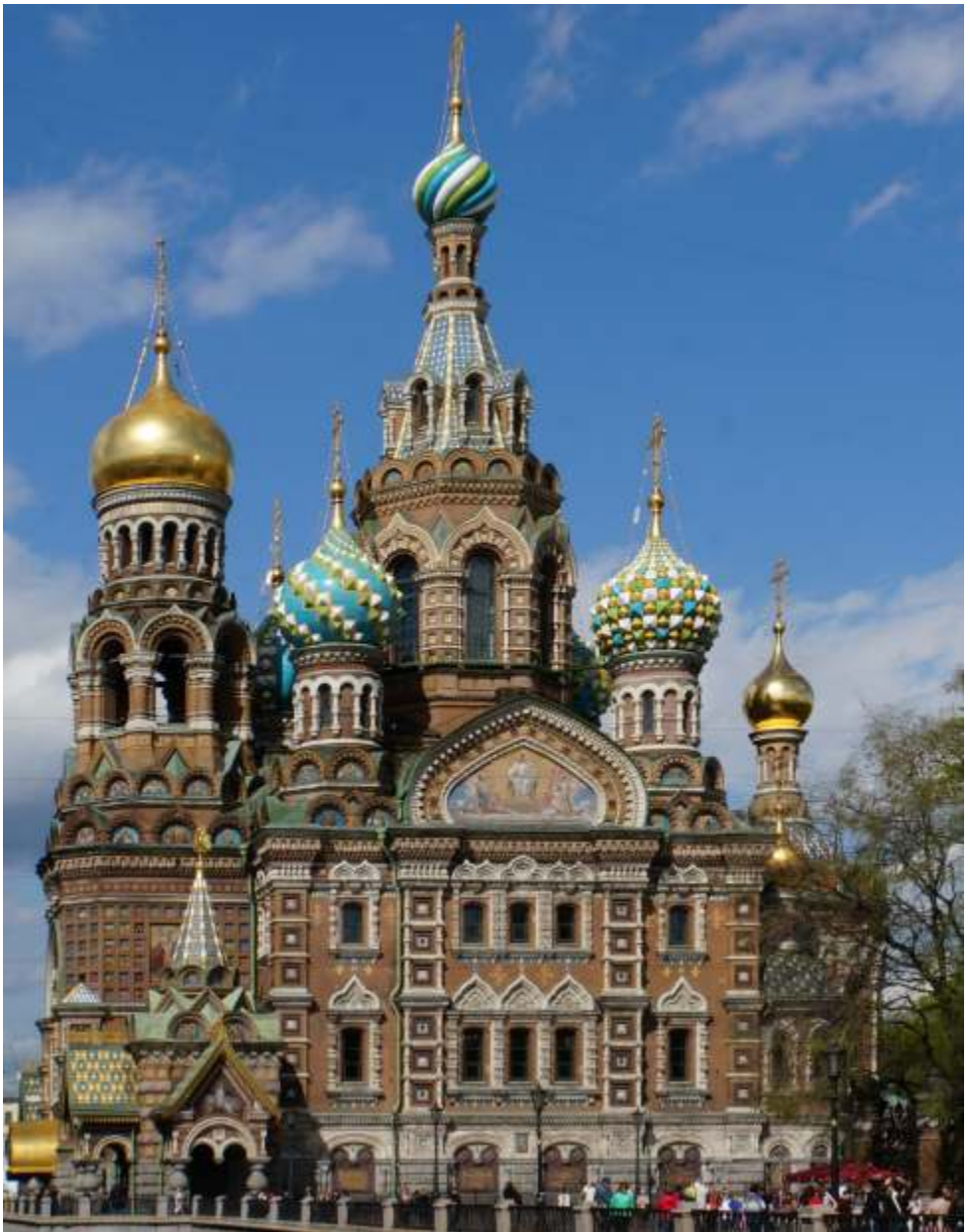
We had one more day left and, in typical style, spent it walking to our favourite places. We paused to marvel at the façade of the Hermitage Museum which occupies the Winter Palace and several other large state buildings. It is said that if you wanted to view every exhibit, it would take a year to wander through the myriad of rooms. Sadly, we didn't get the chance to linger but I hoped that I would get the opportunity to revisit this beautiful city and, indeed, Russia in general at some future date.



The Heritage Museum



The Catherine Palace at Pushkin: note the scaffolding cover on left: the gold leaf on the windows was being replaced, so they used printed covers to camouflage the work being done (real windows on right)



Church of the Saviour on Spilled Blood, probably the most recognised attraction in St. Petersburg

Next time: Europe beckons

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Wesleyan Reform Chapel			
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" "	Lesley Frances	Clerk	
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Welbourn Parish Web Site

<http://parishes.lincolnshire.gov.uk/welbourn>

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Leadenham Website: leadenhamparish.org.uk

MP Dr Caroline Johnson (Sleaf'd office) 01529 306721

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cllrm.overton@lincolnshire.gov.uk 01522 552066 (Sec)

District (Leadenham & Welbourn) Councillor: Lucille Hagues

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IMPORTANT - PLEASE NOTE

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THE NHS NON-EMERGENCY TELEPHONE NUMBER IS

111

999 should be kept free for REAL EMERGENCIES

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