

Cranbrook & Sissinghurst Parish Council – March 2017

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CHAIRMAN'S REPORT:

Chairman Cllr. Bridget Veitch

Spring is a lovely season, with snowdrops, crocuses, early daffodils, and all the other shrubs and flowers coming into bloom. It brings joy and cheer to us all. I hope any of you that had one of the winter viruses, and any other aspects of ill health are now fully recovered and can enjoy this beautiful time.

We were saddened to learn of the death of Peter Jempson, who was the Chairman of the Parish Council from 1988 to 1991. He was a long term friend and supporter of the work of the Parish Council and the community as a whole. His knowledge, intelligence and sense of humour will be much missed.

Our valued Clerk, Coral Kirkaldie, retired at Christmas after 47 years of public service. Her experience and sound advice will be missed. I know that she appreciated how many of you called into the Parish Office to wish her well in the future. Lori Ham has now taken over as Clerk, and I am sure that she will do an excellent job, having worked alongside Coral for several years. Meanwhile we welcome Laura Larkin to the team, and wish her every success and enjoyment in her new role. Her cheerful smile has already been appreciated.

Cllr Francis Rook resigned from the Parish Council in February so that he could spend more time with his wife and at his hobbies, which include his boat and his carpentry. We thank him for all his time, energies, contributions to the work of the Parish Council over 15 years, and hope that he enjoys his retirement.

So there is now a vacancy on the Parish Council. Anyone who wishes to consider joining us at this exciting and challenging time should contact the Clerk.

By the time you read this the Help Keep Kent Clean weekend of March 3-5th may be past, but I encourage you all to continue to help us keep the parish free of litter. Litter pickers are available to borrow from the Parish Council.

At our February Parish Council we were presented with the Feasibility Fundraising Report for the building of the Community Centre. Thank you to those of you who were asked to contribute your views to the consultant, in total confidence. Her conclusion was that raising the latest predicted amount for the Community Centre project would be too difficult, and that ways should be sought to reduce the cost. She did express the view that the community facilities were needed. The Parish Council will form a Project Steering Group to take the project forward. We will be looking for some members of the community to take an active part, so if you are interested, please make yourself known to the Clerks. The resolution of the access to Wilkes Field from the Regal Car Park is

closer, with everyone expressing willingness to achieve it. I remain confident that this will happen and that we will build a Community Centre on Wilkes Field.

The Neighbourhood Development Planning Committee have been very busy, and we all look forward to the outcome.

There has been some new play equipment added to the Jubilee Field in Sissinghurst. I am sure our younger residents and their friends will enjoy using it, and I thank Mrs Lane and Nettles for their ideas and for raising money towards the project. Thank you to all of you that contributed.

Bridget Veitch
Chairman
Cranbrook and Sissinghurst Parish Council

REPORTS FROM COMMITTEES:

POLICY & RESOURCES DEVELOPMENT:

Chairman Cllr. Peter Goodchild

Visitors will have appreciated the helpful and friendly faces in our parish office. Our smiling Parish Clerk Lori Ham has been joined by Laura Larkin who completes this great team: You will discover light, love and laughter in our local council offices, with Lori, Laura and Lynn! As a parish council we are delighted to have such persons serving the town and area to help us all through this new year of '17.

The busy work that emanates from the office continues to keep the wheels turning on many and varied responsibilities throughout the parish: For example, notice boards; seats, lights and boundaries need to be kept in good order despite the mischief caused by vandals, litterbugs and just the wear and tear of everyday use of provisions helpfully around us. Boring maintenance suddenly becomes obvious when damage is done or neglect shows through. We do our best, when and where we can, with resources that we have.

With discretion and determination, we can assist financially, bringing encouragement to various organisations who seek the good of the community to different sectors: children; families; the elderly and several 'interest' or sporting groups'. Sometimes the P.C. can be the glue that helps to join the individual efforts together as a whole.

Thanks to the several sub-committees who have given time freely to thoughtfully consider such things as "Five-Year-Plans". This all helps to budget

for unforeseen and projected expenses. Our particular thanks to Councillor Brian Swann for his ongoing commitment, experience and honed wisdom in this respect.

The annual TWBC rate-rise for local businesses is the ever-present challenge. All we can do as loyal parishioners is to support our shops & business the best we can.

The rates bill has of course seen another increase for this coming year, but it is remarkably small considering the wider picture. With savings on various aspects the increase has been limited to a mere 4.31% (£5.25 per annum) for a Band D property. This would have been less, but for two major expenses: The 2016 by-election that was called for by some parishioners, and the projected costs for the development of a Neighbourhood Plan in the parish (which will benefit us all).

Lastly may I again mention the entirely new proposed parish magazine! We wait with rising expectation and growing excitement. As you read this, a dedicated committee is beavering away with the backing of the parish council, to present a 'must have' publication to put into your hand, at no cost to you! You be the judge... in a few months' time!

Best wishes, and thanks for your support, at every level.

Peter Goodchild

BURIAL GROUNDS AND PROPERTIES:

Chairman Cllr. Brian Clifford

DAMAGE WE COULD DO WITHOUT...!

However, news that one of our BT Telephone boxes had been very badly vandalised in Cranbrook has cost the Parish Council over £500 to repair. Why of why pleasure is gained from causing damage to publically owned assets is a question only those responsible answer – the Police were made aware.

Our very positive working relationship with the Parish Council contractors, Grassland Services, now provides very relaxing and peaceful visits to the three cemeteries in the Parish that we are responsible for maintaining.

At the Vestry Hall the entrance stair well is in need of decoration, and estimates are now being acquired – the Vestry Hall is well used and needs to have a welcoming entrance.

Forgive me for reminding you the Vestry Hall, Council Chamber, and the Information Centre Conference facility are all available for hire – Lori Ham and

Laura Larkin, the Clerk and Deputy Clerk have information about hire charges should you be interested.

And in St Dunstan's Churchyard work will have started when you read this Newsletter, to fell some tress and provide 'tree surgery' to others following the recommendations in the tree survey the Parish Council commissioned. A similar tree survey is taking place in the cemetery at Sissinghurst.

Brian Clifford
Chairman
Properties and Cemeteries Committee

ECONOMIC & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT:

Chairman Cllr. Graham Holmes

The Council has received some disturbing news that Arriva intends to withdraw Sunday bus service No.5 between Cranbrook and Hawkhurst commencing in April of this year. This is allegedly due to poor loading figures or, in other words, this section of the route is not being used by enough people to justify it continuing. At the time of writing, we have not seen any of these figures. The Parish Council is a member of the Transport Accessibility Group that campaigns for improvements in local bus services and it is understood that the Group are to discuss the proposals at its next meeting. Unfortunately for Hawkhurst, this is another blow having already seen a virtual elimination of all its Sunday bus services as a result of cuts in subsidies by East Sussex County Council. Your Council has no powers to stop this sort of proposal becoming a reality, save for protesting and working with the Transport Accessibility Group.

Looking to the year ahead in the Parish, local groups and societies are no doubt planning forthcoming events and might be wondering how they can better promote what they are doing to a wider audience. The Parish Council fully supports the work being done by The Cranbrook Experience whose primary aim is to promote enterprise and entertainment in Cranbrook, Sissinghurst and the surrounding villages and hamlets. It achieves this by pooling resources, time, energy and skills to promote festivals, fairs, markets and other events for the benefit of their communities, good causes and the local economy by increasing footfall. They have already been successful in helping to promote a number of local events and the Council would encourage any group planning something this year to talk to The Cranbrook Experience first. This can easily be done by contacting the Secretary, Julie Taylor on 01892-502354 or mobile, 07939 490539.

If you are involved in running a local business and want to take advantage of a regular, monthly networking event followed by lunch then consider going along to The Pudding Club. It takes place at lunchtime, usually the second Wednesday of the month, at The George Hotel, Cranbrook and is followed by lunch. Over the past year or so the numbers attending have been steadily increasing thus widening the networking possibilities. The event is organised by local solicitors, Buss Murton, for whom the contact is Julie Taylor either by telephone or e-mail :01580-712215 or JTaylor@bussmurton.co.uk

ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT:

In bidding farewell to our colleague, Francis Rook, we should not forget the valuable contribution he made to this Committee, both as Chairman and member. Francis was always ready to put the needs of this community first and for that we are very grateful. We wish him well for the future.

Since publication of the last Newsletter, the Council have now had some new play equipment installed on the Jubilee Field in Sissinghurst and are also arranging for some much needed repairs to be carried out to swings at the Ball Field play area and in the Crane Valley.

A recent survey of the grounds within the Parish, for which the Council are responsible (Allotments, Ball Field, Crane Valley and Jubilee Field) found them all to be in generally good order. The Crane Valley, unfortunately, requires constant vigilance since it seems to attract more litter than other areas. In addition it was found necessary to remove one of the benches, due to vandalism.

In the December Newsletter, it was reported that a decision had been taken to remove the cardboard recycling bins in the Regal Car Park, since residents now enjoy doorstep collections along with their other recyclable domestic waste. Despite removal of these bins, quantities of cardboard are still occasionally left on the site. Whilst the Council will arrange removal, the thoughtless dumping of this material in an area used by many visitors, is spoiling our Town and we appeal for it to stop.

With Spring just around the corner, here is a timely reminder that an extensive network of footpaths exist within the Parish and beyond and can contribute to a healthy lifestyle. The Weald Information Centre has copies of the "Walk Through Time" maps and leaflets available covering all local areas.

At the time of going to press, the Council is still awaiting advices from the Borough concerning the fate of the public conveniences in Crane Lane that were the subject to extensive vandalism and forced to close.

PLANNING & PRESERVATION MANAGEMENT:

Chairman Cllr. Alison Bunyan

We have recently received the detailed plans for the major application in Common Road, Sissinghurst and we will be considering this very carefully and encouraging the developer to hold a public meeting in the village.

NEIGHBOURHOOD DEVELOPMENT PLAN:

Chairman Cllr. Nancy Warne

The Future of our Parish

As you will know, Cranbrook & Sissinghurst may well experience some new housing growth and other forms of new development over the coming years, alongside social and economic change. The Parish Council has therefore agreed to produce a Neighbourhood Plan to help address these potential changes. The Cranbrook & Sissinghurst Neighbourhood Plan will help make sure that any growth is planned and designed in the best possible way to ensure we have an attractive, sustainable, and balanced parish, fit for the future.

What is Neighbourhood Planning?

Neighbourhood planning is a right for communities introduced through the Localism Act 2011. Communities can shape development in their areas through the production of a Neighbourhood Development Plan (NDP). When finished, a NDP becomes part of the Local Plan and the planning policies contained within them are then used in the determination of planning applications. It must be stressed that the policies produced for a Neighbourhood Development Plan cannot block development that is already part of the Local Plan. What they can do is shape where that development will go and what it will look like.

How Does Neighbourhood Planning Work?

The Parish Council has formed an NDP Steering Group that will run the process, reporting back to the Parish Council on a regular basis. The Steering Group is made up of residents from Cranbrook & Sissinghurst as well as Parish Councillors. To support the NDP Steering Group, the Parish Council has recently appointed Feria Urbanism, an independent planning and design team (www.feria-urbanism.eu) who will provide advice on the process of developing a neighbourhood plan and will provide fresh ideas and new ways of thinking. They will also help organise and run the forthcoming community engagement events.

The Local Planning Authority in this instance is Tunbridge Wells Borough Council and it too will be involved. It will support the process at key stages, such as the approval of the neighbourhood area within which the Neighbourhood Plan will have effect. It will also organise the independent examination of the plan and the community referendum that is held at the end of the process. The referendum is an important part of the process allowing those that live in the neighbourhood area to decide whether the Neighbourhood Plan comes into effect or not. This is direct democracy and outlines the importance of working with the wider community and securing their support at an early stage in the process.

What Happens Next?

With the importance of working with the wider community and securing their support at an early stage in mind, Cranbrook & Sissinghurst Parish Council with the support of Feria Urbanism will be organising some key events over the coming months. Dates for you to note include:

Sissinghurst Visioning Event

- 22nd March 2017
- at St. Georges Institute, The Street, Sissinghurst
- 7.30pm – 9.30pm

Cranbrook Visioning Event

- 23rd March 2017
- at Cranbrook School 6th Form Centre, at the top of Barham Drive, Waterloo Road
- 7.30pm – 9.30pm

These events will examine some of the critical issues affecting both Cranbrook and Sissinghurst. The Parish Council and the independent planning team would like to hear the view of different organisations and amenity groups. Representatives of these groups are being invited to these events to share their views about what makes Cranbrook and Sissinghurst a special place to live, work and visit. Please put the dates in your diary and attend the event most relevant to you. This could be because it is where you work, where you live or where you spend most of your time in the parish. If you don't belong to a group and would like to represent your neighbours in your street or patch you are very welcome.

Please confirm your attendance by registering with info@cranbrookandsissinghurstndp.co.uk stating the name and contact details of your group and your preferred event.

We now have a **Facebook** page “Cranbrook & Sissinghurst Neighbourhood Development Plan”, so please like us and share with your local friends and neighbours.

You are also welcome to attend the follow-up Design Forum event, which will produce the building blocks for the future of the Parish and will be held for three full days on 9th, 10th and 11th May 2017. This will help to produce the definitive Neighbourhood Development Plan.

We look forward to seeing you there.

Cllr Nancy Warne & the NDP Steering Group
On behalf of the Parish Council

GOLFORD CHAPEL



For private openings please contact the Clerk, who will be happy to arrange this for you.

MORE PARISH NEWS

Sissinghurst Primary School is looking for outside speakers to come into the school to share local interests, special or historic events with the children.

Please contact the school office – Tel: 01580 713895 or email:
office@sissinghurst.kent.sch.uk

Cranbrook Town Band are in need of rehearsal and storage space –

Can you help?

Cranbrook Town Band are in need of a new premises to store the bands equipment and space to rehearse on a regular basis.

The band have a regular Thursday rehearsals from 6:30pm – 7:30pm for the training band, 7:30pm – 8pm for the main band.

They do run the above sessions in the school holidays.

If you have a premises that would suit them, please can you contact David Newsom on 07957 681923

CRANBROOK VOLUNTARY CAR SERVICE

AN URGENT APPEAL FOR DRIVERS

This service is available to transport people who are unable to drive or use public transport to attend appointments to local hospitals, doctors, opticians, dentists or clinics.

If you can spare an hour or two occasionally (you are always free to say no if it is inconvenient) we would love to hear from you. Fuel expenses will be covered.

To find out more please contact:
Dave Campbell on 01580 714373 or
Evelyn Fishenden on 01580 713386

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

MARCH

Saturday 11 th	Kitsch & Stitch Craft Fair – Vestry Hall 10am to 3pm
Monday 13 th	Messy Church – Vestry Hall – 3.30pm – 5.30pm
Friday 17 th	Cranbrook U3A – Vestry Hall - 2.30pm
Wednesday 22 nd	Sissinghurst Visioning Event – St George’s Institute - 7:30pm – 9:30pm
Thursday 23 rd	Cranbrook Visioning Event – Cranbrook School Sixth Form Centre – 7:30pm – 9:30pm
Saturday 25 th	Cranbrook Farmers’ Market – Vestry Hall – 9.30am – 1pm
Saturday 25 th	Scouts Race Night – Vestry Hall – 6.30 pm

APRIL

Monday 10th Messy Church – Vestry Hall – 3:30pm – 5:30pm
Wednesday 19th Annual Parish Meeting – Vestry Hall 7:30pm
Friday 21st Cranbrook U3A – Vestry Hall 2:30pm
Saturday 22nd Cranbrook Farmers’ Market – 9:30am – 1pm

MAY

Monday 8th Messy Church – Vestry Hall – 2pm – 6pm
Friday 19th Cranbrook U3A - Vestry Hall – 2:30pm
Saturday 27th Cranbrook Farmers’ Market – Vestry Hall – 9:30am – 1pm
Sunday 28th Cranbrook Goes Nuts in May – Vestry Hall – Times to be confirmed
Monday 29th Cranbrook Goes Nuts in May – Vestry Hall – Times to be confirmed

JUNE

Monday 12th Messy Church – Vestry Hall – 3:30pm – 5:30pm
Friday 16th Cranbrook U3A – Vestry Hall – 2:30pm
Sunday 18th Cranbrook Garden Safari – Vestry Hall – Times to be confirmed
Saturday 24th Cranbrook Farmers Market – Vestry Hall – 9:30am – 1pm

KENT COUNTY COUNCIL/KENT COUNTY CONSTABULARY **RURAL PARTNERSHIP**

Emergency Services – Police, Fire & Ambulance Service – 999 (or 112)

For calls where Life and Property are in danger. When a crime is being committed. When there is a Road Traffic Collision and there is serious injury.

Crime Stoppers- 0800 555111

If you have any information about any crime. Calls are free and totally anonymous and you could be eligible for an award.

Police Community Support Officer – PCSO Lee Jules

Mobile 07772226048

KCC Community Warden

Cranbrook & Sissinghurst – Adam Osborn – Mobile 07813695741

Neighbourhood Watch Area Co-Ordinator – 01622 604395

For information on setting up a Neighbourhood Watch Scheme please contact David Spitter on the above number or email david.spitter@kent.pnn.police.uk



WHEN LUCK RAN OUT – Cllr. Graham Holmes

It was just after 10.00pm on the night of the 15th September 1943 and Flying Officer Edward Richard Hedgecoe DFC along with his navigator, Sgt. James Richard Witham, were on patrol along the coast of Kent and Sussex. They had taken off earlier in the evening from their base at RAF West Malling. The focus of the patrol was to locate and destroy enemy aircraft engaged in night intruder operations against targets in London and the South East.

Their aircraft, a De Havilland Mosquito Mk.XII was well equipped to undertake such a mission, having been fitted with the latest centimetric radar housed in the nose and supported by four 20mm cannon. Whilst it was Hedgecoe's job to fly the aeroplane it was Witham's job to operate the radar set and search for the tell-tale signs of an enemy aircraft. The Mosquito, serial number HK123 was attached to No.85 Squadron, and been the first to be allocated these radar equipped night fighters.

Meanwhile, out of range of Witham's radar set, and en route for Le Culot, Belgium, having bombed targets in the London area was a Junkers Ju88A-14 of the 6th Staffel of Kampfgeschwader 6. It was now heading south away from the capital and approaching the Hastings area. Its four man crew comprised the pilot, Fw. Dietrich Bruns, Observer Oblt. Josef Galli together with Uffz's Heidenblut and Kauthold who acted as Radio Operator and Flight Engineer and had responsibility for manning the aircraft's machine guns. It should be noted that both Heidenblut and Kauthold have never been positively identified as crew members, although there is no doubt that at this stage both would have been at their gun positions given the likelihood of attack by night fighters.

Following a period of thunderstorms over the British Isles the weather was now settling down to occasional rain showers and the presence of a full moon would have been unsettling for the pilot who was probably seeking the cover of any banks of cloud available.

Meanwhile aboard HK123, Sgt. Witham suddenly noticed a “blip” appear on his radar screen and he immediately alerted F/O Hedgecoe of the presence of an enemy aircraft and passed on its position. Hedgecoe stared into the darkness and is likely to have been rewarded by the sight of the Ju88 as it flitted in and out of the clouds. It would now become a game of cat and mouse. Hedgecoe checked to ensure that his guns were in the firing position as he closed in on the Ju88 and, satisfied that the crew of the bomber had not realised their perilous position, Hedgecoe opened fire.

Unfortunately, he was mistaken. Aboard the bomber one of the gunners had spotted the lurking Mosquito and simultaneously yelled to the pilot that he was about to open fire on a night fighter. The Junkers Ju88A-14 was fitted with an MG FF cannon in its ventral gondola which would have serious consequences for the attacking Mosquito. It is almost certain that Hedgecoe opened fire simultaneously and would have seen hits on the Ju88. However, the fire from the bomber had found its mark and the Mosquito had suffered fatal strikes – in all probability one, or both of its engines.

The Mosquito was in the vicinity of Rolvenden when Hedgecoe gave the order to bale out and having notified West Malling, they took to their parachutes. Both landed, unhurt. HK123 impacted near to Lower Woolwich Farm and was completely destroyed. It has not been possible to chart the events aboard the Junkers Ju88, save to say that it flew on and eventually crashed in the sea off Dungeness killing all its crew. There are however, two likely causes ; fatal injuries to the pilot following the initial attack or catastrophic damage to the Ju88 itself which left the crew with insufficient time to bale out. The bodies of the crew were never recovered.

Six months later, on the night of the 24th March 1944 F/O Richard Hedgecoe was on patrol over Hastings with a new navigator, F/O Norman Llewellyn Bamford DFC, when they carried out an attack on another Junkers Ju88 this aircraft belonging to the 1st Staffel of Kampfgeschwader 66. This unit was participating in Operation Steinbok, a campaign referred to previously in this column as retaliation raids in response to RAF Bomber Command’s attacks on Berlin. For reasons unknown, the aircraft only carried a crew of three, Uffz. Gerhard Hetmann the pilot, Obfr. Hans Morhmann, the Observer and Gefr. Rudi Cranauer, the Radio Operator/Gunner. They had taken off from the airfield at Avord in France in the late evening along with other units of the Staffel to act as pathfinders for the main force of over 100 bombers briefed to attack the Westminster area of Central London. The raid would be timed at just after

midnight and their route home from the target would take them over the Sussex coast – and into the patrol line of Hedgecoe’s Mosquito.

Mindful of the events of the 15th September 1943, Hedgecoe was cautious in his approach to the enemy aircraft once it had been confirmed by Bamford as “hostile”. Having manoeuvred the Mk.XVII Mosquito within range, seemingly undetected, Hedgecoe opened fire. It is thought that a direct hit on the Ju88’s fuel tanks caused the aircraft to disappear in a huge explosion and fire ball. Unable to dive away because of his proximity Hedgecoe flew straight through the inferno of what was once an aeroplane. The last known location of the Ju88 according to Luftwaffe records was 40km south of Brighton and there would be no survivors. Unfortunately, the Mosquito was in trouble too. Bearing in mind that this type of aircraft had an airframe constructed of wood with a fabric covering, the debris from the Ju88 initially started a number of small fires.

The crew remained on board as the fires burnt themselves out and despite losing control of the rudder, Hedgecoe managed to carry out a successful landing at West Malling, but not without help from Bamford who opened the cockpit side window and wiped away quantities of burnt fuel that had covered the cockpit canopy. This was Hedgecoe’s eighth enemy aircraft destroyed, but he and Bamford had enjoyed a lucky escape.

There followed an interlude during which Hedgecoe and Bamford were posted to the Fighter Interception Unit at RAF Ford in West Sussex and they became involved in training and development using the latest technology in battle situations. Whilst attached to this unit Richard Hedgecoe received the DFC and at the end of 1944 both he and Bamford joined No.151 Squadron at RAF Hunsdon in Hertfordshire, Hedgecoe as a flight commander.

Their first employment at Hunsdon was to air test a Mk.XXX Mosquito, NT253, which carried the latest, but rudimentary, electronic countermeasures equipment. All apparently went well and they were on their final approach to Hunsdon when the aircraft suddenly stalled and crashed killing both men.

Squadron Leader Edward Hedgecoe DFC + bar was buried at North Mimms (St.Mary) Churchyard and his navigator, Flying Officer Norman Bamford DFC + bar was cremated at Mitcham Road, Croydon Crematorium.

PARISH WARDEN:
Ivor Hatcher

Several people have remarked to me regarding my previous newsletter in which I talked about our library being formerly a thriving youth club. It is interesting when one thinks about it, when the town had a much smaller population, there was more to do socially in some ways, than there is today. I have just mentioned the youth club and we also had a cinema where the car park is now. Hence the name 'Regal' car park. We also, as young people, (keep this quiet!) were allowed in some of the pubs. There was also the Working Man's Club on St. David's Bridge which provided family entertainment.

During my early teenage years, I was never bored, nor previously to that. There were clubs to belong to, Red Cross Cadets, (links for younger children), Jucos and Covenanters were part of the Congregational Church and of course, the youth club. The youth club met on Thursday evenings but most weekends the band and majorettes were out performing somewhere. There was always something to do or somewhere to go.

I am not sure if I am correct in saying that things were safer in those days but a child could be much more adventurous. Living near the Tomlin Ground meant crossing the busy Angley Road (I don't think a young child would be safe crossing that on their own today!) to get to the 'bomb crater field', now part of the Rugby Club. It was a big hole in the ground made by a 'doodle bug', a legacy from the war. Small children would disappear into this vast bowl to play. We also built camps of wood with tin roofs in the small wood bordering the road and utilised old carpets on the floors. When we 'got bigger', we were allowed to go with the older children in to the 'big wood' (Angley) or went fishing at Angley lake.

If these activities weren't enough, we worked on the farms to earn pocket money. Apple picking, hop picking or blackcurrant picking was always a good chance to earn some extra pocket money. Health and safety wasn't quite the issue it is now and from a very early age, my preferred activity during school holidays was driving tractors and carting straw on the farm. I also spent many early mornings milking cows at Buckhurst Farm.

As teenagers, we did hang around the town, mainly at the top of Jockey lane. We had fun, we got into mischief. We did have respect for our elders, we helped those who needed help. I walked an old couple's dog sometimes or did a bit of shopping for an elderly gentleman. We knew everybody and they knew us. Our parents knew what we were up to, even if we thought they didn't. Parents watched each other's children as friends do. If we got into trouble, there were repercussions. That wasn't a bad thing because it meant boundaries and boundaries can mean safety. There were more Police Officers in Cranbrook and we had respect for them. Many lived in the town in 'police houses' and their children went to school locally. They were part of the community.

There was so much more to do for young people. I was fortunate to have many adult friends who taught me so much. They were like mentors, someone to share the ups and downs of life with. There are schemes in some areas where this is happening in a formal way which I think is brilliant especially for young people who struggle to communicate with their parents for whatever reason.

Unfortunately, there are not the opportunities for young people to be occupied that my friends and I had when we were young and growing up in today's society is not easy. It is so easy to pour scorn the young for hanging around the town, but honestly, what is there for them to do that doesn't cost money or mean travelling to the bigger towns.

It also doesn't do anyone any favours not reporting misdemeanours such as the lighting of fires in the Crane Valley. By reporting the incident and it being dealt with stops situations like this escalating. It also brings much needed policing into the area. No crime reported means no Police Officers. Unless situations are highlighted they go unreported. We do need more activities and funding to do things for the young people of Cranbrook. It is not just a situation that the relevant authorities should deal with. The young people of Cranbrook are very much a part of Cranbrook and its future. We all have a part to pay in their growing up and guiding them in the right direction. Simply passing the time of day to a young person can make a difference but unfortunately, in today's society, merely looking at a young person could be misconstrued. How times have changed! That doesn't mean we have to give up finding the best way forward to help change the current situation with some of our younger community. It means we have to look harder.

Cranbrook WI

Cranbrook WI meet on the first Tuesday of each month at the Sixth Form Centre at Cranbrook School. The meeting starts at 7.30 pm until 9.30 pm and all age groups are welcome.

MILK HOUSE BOOK CLUB

Do you fancy reading and discussing books?
The Book Club meet mid-morning in the
Milk House Pub on the first Tuesday of every month

If you are interested give Anne a call on 01580 292108

OVER 60's TEA PARTY

Wednesday 4th January
2 p m in Sissinghurst Primary School

Tea and Entertainment by the school pupils

If you have not been before and would like an invitation to this
Please contact Tanya McKie

Tel: 01580 291028 or email: tanyamckie@gmail.co,

CRANBROOK PRIMARY SCHOOL

SENIOR CITIZENS LUNCH CLUB

Wednesdays during term time

2 course meal with tea/coffee £4.00

Book the Monday before

Phone 07894041662

THOUGHTS AND IDEAS FROM THE CLERK:

As you know I have taken on the role as Clerk. I would like to welcome Laura to her new role as Deputy Clerk and we are both working together learning what is expected of us in our new roles. I would like to wish Coral well in her retirement after working for the Parish Council for 14 years. Coral provided vast

amounts of knowledge to the Parish Council and me in preparation for my new role and will be sorely missed.

This will be our last Parish Newsletter as we look forward to putting together a Parish Magazine with a “new look” watch this space. We are hoping this will be a great new magazine bringing the community together.

Clerk: Mrs. Lori Ham
Deputy Clerk: Mrs. Laura Larkin

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