

Brogdale CIC and Wild Outdoors Week *By Louise Funnell*

September is usually the month of new adventure, some people call it the second 'New Year', a chance to make the last four months of the year count! This year feels a little different but here at Brogdale CIC we are continuing to grow our suite of business and projects and there is a hive of activity in Iwade!

Lockdown gave us an opportunity to plant new ideas, becoming creative in our resources! We launched a youtube channel, transitioned our youth clubs to Zoom, created a new youth group for siblings of young people with disabilities, ran online transition workshops for Year 6's and continued to support our adult learners and volunteers. All this ran parallel to our College site remaining open for students of Key Workers, a podcast starting for staff welfare & connections and Brogdale CIC itself expanded into three areas, becoming a suite of business.

There is a College in Iwade...

One of these areas is our Post-16 Specialist provider college: Craftworks. We host six college sites across Ashford & Swale and one of them is based here at Willowway on Culnells Farm. During lockdown it was wonderful to see our students pull together to create our first in-house student newspaper, design and create



furniture, look after the land and, for those who were at home, be an asset to their community. One of our Iwade students worked hard transforming his garden and gave himself to regularly cutting his elderly neighbours grass & weeding her flower beds.

Our College is still open for 2020 applications. Our college provision is tailored to small class sizes with a focus on practical and interactive learning, equipping young people for a positive next step into adulthood. We work with students who have Education and Health Care plans, those who prefer to learn through project-based work, and incorporate Maths and English qualifications within these projects.

Unlocked Youth Work

After a successful 'Wild Outdoors Week' and with the restrictions changing we have been able to start meeting in person at Iwade Youth Club. Youthwork is exempt from the 'Rule of Six' and we can meet with up to 15, 8-13 year olds at Iwade

Playing Field. Places must be booked cost £2pp (free first session). We meet every 1st, 2nd & 3rd Friday of the month. 'Sibling Club' continues to meet online (for siblings of young people with disabilities). We are also developing our wellbeing work and can offer mentoring & workshops to any young people who would benefit.

Pruning Time Back in Action

Our garden service Pruning Time offers valuable work experience to our Adult 'Learnabout' (Day Service) participants and learners. Working alongside an experienced landscape gardener our team can take on many garden projects from clearance to fencing, decking, design & build. They can truly transform your outdoor space. Call Maria on 07903476881 for enquiries or bookings.

Find out more:
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Youth & Wellbeing Work:
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Oct 2020
The Iwade Observer



IAA - Iwade Allotments in Lock Down 2020

By Christine McQuade

This year has been difficult and different from anything we have seen before. The Allotments have seen more people enjoying their plots, more time to attend them, and more time to get them looking their best. We unfortunately had to cancel all our normal activities i.e. Summer Picnic, BBQ and most of our usual competitions. We did manage to have one



competition for Best Plot, which was judged by last year's winner. All three plots chosen were worthy winners as you can see from the photos. Well done to Christine & Peter Hill for Best Plot.

Fingers crossed we are looking forward to next year when hopefully we may be back to normal.



Best Plot





Happy Days By Caroline Wiles

Life has not been without its complications over the last few months but we have been open for most of the lock down period to support our Key Worker parents. On 1st June we opened more widely as restrictions were lifted, and welcomed many families back. It has been so lovely to hear the sound of children's voices throughout the building again.

Our fabulous families have been so cooperative with our COVID-19 safety adaptations, supporting our team as we made the adjustments needed to keep us all safe. Communication with parents is so vital, and even more so during these difficult times, so we have recently launched new software which, with its Facebook style App, facilitates an easy two-way dialogue with updates and photographs throughout the day. The feedback has been fantastic and parents are really enjoying sharing their child's day in this way.

As Autumn approaches, we are welcoming many new children and their families to all our rooms. We have limited availability for preschool children in our Bumblebee Room and some availability for younger children in our Butterfly, Ladybird and Honeybee Rooms. If you are interested in any sessions for your child, including use of Early Years Free Funding for three- and four-year olds, please do not hesitate to contact the office (01795 424348) for more information.



Iwade Toddler Group By Louise Wade

I thought I'd write an update, although unfortunately as of yet there's not really much to update on! This time last year we were planning the Toddler Group Halloween party. But currently we are yet to open, and with things like social distancing, face masks, limiting numbers, toys inevitably being shared (and no doubt put in their mouth!) it seems unlikely we will be able to open any time soon! However, if you join our Facebook group, then when we do have any news we will share it there first.

Some good news though is that the Iwade Parish Council very kindly donated some money to the group to ensure that (when it is safe to open again!) we will be able to provide lots of activities for the babies and toddlers to enjoy. Hopefully we won't have to wait too long.

Don't forget check our Facebook for any updates.



"Hello," from Iwade Brownies

We were finally able to meet!

Following risk assessing, and more risk assessing, Iwade Brownies met together at one of the Girl Guiding sites locally.

We had a picnic, made pictures from natural things we found, played some games and painted stones which are being used to decorate the area alongside the hall! Our initial event was postponed due to the rain and so we rescheduled. We had lots of laughs, smiles and catching up – and it was great! That's why we don't have many photos!

We are hoping to meet again indoors soon, so watch this space...



*continued from
page 6 opposite...*

have been found on the site indicating that the crew went down with their aircraft the area will need to be excavated, sifted and analysed to glean more information about the aircraft and its crew.

Dick and Janice are hoping that any human remains discovered can be forensically identified and are hoping at some point to be able to get across to Holland to see the site for themselves.

Sgt Leonard Richard James Shrubsall is remembered on a plaque in All Saints' Church, Iwade, and also on Panel 164 at the Runnymede Memorial, and on the headstone of his parents Richard and Ada Shrubsall in Milton Churchyard.

Rynn Kemp with Dick and Janice Shrubsall

This is a true story that is still emerging, pieced together with research, documentary evidence and the kind help of Dick and Janice Shrubsall. The Observer hopes, over the coming months, to be able to update you with the latest progress in this fascinating story.

Noble Chafers at Iwade

Background

About 13 years ago, whilst carrying out an orchard survey, the Traditional Orchard Officer at Peoples Trust for Endangered Species (PTES) discovered that the rare and beautiful Noble Chafer Beetle was living in the plum trees in the overgrown orchard at Iwade. We immediately got in touch with the parish and borough councils to see what could be done to make sure this beetle was well looked after, especially as this was the first record for over 50 years in Kent! When PTES learned that part of the orchard was due to be built on, we began to work with the developers and ecologists too, in the hope that something could be done to save this secretive beetle and that it would continue to survive here after the houses were built.

All about Noble Chafers

- A striking metallic green beetle which glistens gold and bronze in different lights
- Only lives as an adult for a few weeks and is most often seen on hot sunny days in July
- Needs decaying wood in living trees to lay its eggs and for the larvae to feed on
- Is associated with traditional orchards (but also found in the New Forest)
- Loves to feed on nectar from meadowsweet, hogweed and elder

Community Orchard

The beetle was also found in the community orchard. We encouraged the borough council to plant some new fruit trees to try to replace the rapidly aging trees. They also agreed to mow less often and try to encourage hogweed and meadowsweet to grow around the edge of the orchard. The Kent Orchards for Everyone Project (funded by HLF) provided a wooden Noble Chafer sculpture and an information board so that

locals and visitors can learn about this fascinating beetle.

The Development

Before the houses were built, each tree in the building site was painstakingly dug up and re-planted in the mitigation site. Many survived for 5-6 years but now more and more have died or have been reduced to just one living branch. In 2019 I put a trap up in the mitigation site and I'm pleased to report that I caught 2 females. They were carefully released unharmed and were able to go about their business (hopefully mating and laying eggs to start the next generation). However, there is very little suitable habitat left for them in this orchard, so something needed to be done.

Artificial Nesting Boxes

After reading research carried out in Sweden by Nicklas Jansson at Linköping University, we decided to try his method at Iwade as a last chance for noble chafers in Kent. He found that wooden boxes filled with wood shavings and leaf litter (to mimic the inside of a hollow partially decaying tree) were successful in attracting beetles to live and breed inside them although it takes approximately 3 years for the material inside to rot down and be suitable for the beetles.

Today, probably just a handful of the trees in Iwade orchard are suitable for the Noble Chafer, so we have placed extra habitat for the beetles in the orchard where the trees are gradually dying. It may also be possible to help the Noble Chafer population to expand and gradually move to other areas if they can use these boxes as stepping-stones to other suitable areas. Therefore, the next step is to place boxes along roads and in



private gardens. So far, 8 boxes have already been erected in the orchards and 1 in a private garden (thank you very much to Marion Hawkins for hosting a Noble Chafer nesting box).

The future

We don't know what the future holds for the Noble Chafer Beetle at Iwade, it now hangs in the balance. But we are optimistic that the boxes will at least prolong its ability to survive here and may bridge the gap between the remaining old trees and the young trees which will become suitable in about 30 years time. I think it would be beneficial to plant more plum trees in both orchards, where old trees have been lost. It is also important to retain the dead trees and stumps for as long as possible as these are a great habitat for birds, bats and insects.

What can you do to help?

- Please report any sightings of noble chafers to PTES
- Let us know if you would be willing to host a noble chafer box in your garden
- Be aware of the importance of both traditionally managed orchards and dead wood as a fantastic habitat for wildlife
- Find out more at: www.ptes.org/noblechafer and www.ptes.org/orchards

I would really like to thank the Iwade Nature and Conservation Group and in particular James Hunt for all your help over the years towards the conservation of the Noble Chafer Beetle.

Laura Bower
Conservation Officer, Peoples Trust for Endangered Species



“Deeply regret to inform you ...”

A sharp rap on the door at the School Lane home of Richard (“Dick”), and Beatrice Shruballs. It was March 30th 1943 and Beatrice, opening the door, would have been horrified to see the Telegram Boy standing there. A long dry month brought the warmest day so far, but Beatrice must have felt a cold shiver and her heart must have missed a beat as she anxiously took the telegram from the boy and slowly, with trembling hands, unfolded the two small sheets of paper bearing the message, “Deeply regret to inform you that your husband Sgt. Lenard (sic) Richard James Shruballs failed to return from air operations night of 29/30th March 43 Letter follows Any further information received will be immediately communicated to you – OC 218 Squadron” That same message had been sent out another thirteen times that day, by the

Officer Commanding 218 Squadron, Wing Commander Donald Saville. 218 Squadron based at Downham Market, in Norfolk, had lost two aircraft on the night of 29th/30th March as they took part in a massive bombing raid on Berlin. One of them, BK702, a Short Stirling bomber shot down by flak over Germany, and BK716, another Short Stirling Bomber was posted missing, lost without trace. It was on this second aircraft that Sgt Leonard Richard James Shruballs, “Dick”, was a gunner.

Thus, Beatrice Shruballs, who was three months pregnant, found out that her husband Dick tragically wouldn’t be coming home again. It may, at least, have been some comfort that Dick had known that he was a father to be, as his last letter home opened with the words “To my darling mother to be...” Later that year (1943) Beatrice gave birth to a bonny boy who she named Richard after his late father. Richard also came to be known as Dick and was brought up in



Iwade until aged 10 when his family moved to Kemsley. Subsequently Dick (junior) moved back to Iwade where he still lives with his wife Janice.

Our story moves quickly on to 2008 (the intervening 65 years being a whole other story!). A boat had broken down on Markemeer, a huge body of water close to Amsterdam, and on pulling up its anchor brought up a piece of aircraft wreckage that was identified as being from a Stirling bomber, and eventually, some ten years later, identified as Dick’s Short

Stirling BK716. It had taken over 10 years to make this positive identification, with the breakthrough coming when a cigarette case was recovered from the wreck



site, by Johan Graas and members of the Stichting Aircraft Recovery Group, with the initials “JMC” engraved on it. That linked the aircraft to one of its crew members, air bomber, Flying Officer John Michael Campbell.

Johan Graas set about trying to trace and contact members of the families of the lost crewmen and eventually managed to track down Dick and Janice Shruballs to their Iwade home after much detective work and not a little luck! The news that his father’s aircraft had been found in Markermeer initially then he’d never really knew what had happened to his father and believed he had probably crashed somewhere in the North Sea. Dick and Janice are both pleased and excited and not a little emotional to know that the aircraft is now be lifted from its watering resting place. Dick is thought to be the only child of one of the crew members left.

Salvage operations, funded by the Dutch government, began on August 31st and, so far, an engine has been recovered that further confirms the wreck as being that of BK716. There is still much work to do as the area of the site is something like 6,000 square metres in size and wreckage is widely strewn in the heavily silted lakebed. Although still fastened parachute clips

continued opposite...

Monthly update from Cllr Mike Whiting

RASPBERRY HILL

August was generally a quiet month, however, the continuing issues relating to activities at Raspberry Hill Farm continue to be of huge concern. There is a lot of work going on behind the scenes to address any illegal or unauthorised activity, but I will continue to press the agencies to take urgent action. One example is HGVs using our country lanes to access the site. Unless their purpose in visiting the site is a lawful one then they can be prosecuted for using the lanes, which are restricted. That is one example of the practical steps I have suggested to the police chief at Sittingbourne. There are also some existing planning enforcements dating back years. I have asked Cllr Mike Baldock, cabinet member for planning enforcement at Swale Council, to look at this and at the time of writing await a reply.

ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR

Also in Iwade there has been some anti-social and threatening behaviour by a small group of youths. Matters were reported to the police and a dispersal order was put in place over one weekend during the month. Police and other agencies are involved and it seems to have got a lot better in recent days. It is vital that people report these sorts of issues directly to the police via 101 or using their online reporting page at: <https://www.kent.police.uk/ro/report/ocr/af/how-to-report-a-crime/>

The police do not monitor Facebook or other Social media and unless it is reported properly there is no official record.

CLIMATE CHANGE

As part of its environment strategy, KCC has published the Kent and Medway Climate Change impact assessment. Details are at https://www.kent.gov.uk/data/assets/pdf_file/0015/111381/CCRIA-for-Kent-and-Medway-part-one-methodology-and-summary-findings.pdf with further appendices at <https://www.kent.gov.uk/about-the-council/strategies-and-policies/environment-waste-and-planning-policies/environmental-policies/kents-changing-climate> It is an extensive piece of work, and if you have questions or want to know more then please email climate.change@kent.gov.uk.

PLAN BEE GRANTS

On the subject of the environment, you may recall I proposed a Pollinator Strategy during my time as KCC’s Environment Cabinet Member. Known as Plan Bee. To help Parishes and other groups get involved I am making available grants of up to £200 to organisations to plant more wild flowers, for example, or create bee hotels (yes there are such things for those solitary bees) and bee highways. It’s all in the Plan, details at <https://www.kent.gov.uk/about-the-council/strategies-and-policies/en-vironment-waste-and-planning-policies/environmental-policies/kents-plan-bee-pollinator-action-plan>.

If you want to apply for assistance in setting up a pollinator-friendly environment, or know of a community group, youth organisation or other, then please ask them to email me or fill out a grant application form which can be downloaded at <https://www.kent.gov.uk/leisure-and-community/community-grants-and-funding/combined-members-grant>.

Yours sincerely **Mike Whiting**

Member serving Swale West Cabinet Member for Economic Development, KCC

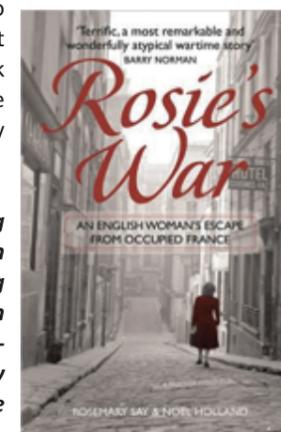
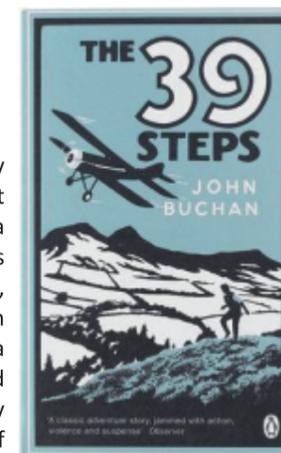
Iwade Reading and Book Group By Hilary Foulds

Our September pick was The Holiday by T.M.Logan. Everyone who’d read it enjoyed the book. Some found it a real gripping page-turner whereas others felt it was a bit of a slow burn, a tad repetitive, particularly the main character who I personally felt to be a bit whiny. However, everyone agreed it was full of twists and turns they didn’t see coming. With each bit of new information there is time to digest it as we are given a new point of view and a new situation to think about until the final pieces of the jigsaw start to fit. Definitely recommended.

The next meeting of the Reading Group at the Woolpack is 10am on Tuesday 13 October. We are visiting a classic adventure novel by Scottish author John Buchan, “The Thirty-Nine Steps”. We’ve seen many versions on film but now’s the opportunity to read the book.

On Tuesday 10 November we will be reviewing “Rosie’s War” by Kay Brelland.

We’ve also pencilled in a Christmas lunch at The Woolpack at our meeting on Tuesday 8 December. More details to follow as well as our book choice for the month.



All Saints’ Church Iwade

All Saints’ Church, Iwade will be now be open from 10am to 4pm everyday for private prayer. We are not yet sure when our first service will be and obviously we are asking the public to adhere to the Covid-19 guidelines. Posters are in place and the church will be thoroughly cleaned at the end of each day.

In addition, every Wednesday morning there will be somebody in church from 10.30 till 12.30 as a point of contact for those who would like prayer or just someone to talk to.



IWADE PARISH COUNCIL
MINUTES OF THE PARISH COUNCIL MEETING - Wednesday 12 August 2020
MEETING HELD VIA 'ZOOM' DUE TO COVID 19 RESTRICTIONS

Minutes of the Previous Meeting

Proposed by Cllr. Langham and seconded by Cllr. Lancashire, the Minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on the 8 July 2020 were agreed and will be signed by the Chair as a true transcript.

Visitors/Public Time

Due to the restrictions on Zoom time, residents, County and Borough Councillors, PCSOs and Community Wardens were advised that they could attend as normal but, on this occasion, would not be able to speak; they were also invited to forward reports/questions to the Clerk beforehand.

County and Borough Councillors – County Cllr. Whiting written report advised - The main focus for the month has been to stop the burning at Raspberry Hill Lane, Iwade, and liaising with various agencies, including the Director of Public Health and Public Health England.

Key Street roundabout. Phase 1 work to improve flows of traffic has now almost finished. This was a prerequisite of the current local plan. Phase two will be more substantial and final designs must be agreed between KCC and Highways England. This will involve a new slip road off Chestnut Street. There will also be major improvements at the Grovehurst roundabout. Both projects, totalling some £38m, will be paid for by Government. Once the final works at Key Street and Newington are complete, hopefully the remainder of the A2 will be resurfaced, that is the stretch between the Medway border and Key Street.

Have distributed hand sanitiser and face masks to each parish to deliver to their vulnerable residents and volunteers. I am very grateful for the Parishes in their help in ensuring these reach the right people. Am working with parishes to introduce 20mph zones, as I have in The Meads and Mungore Lane, Borden, and have used my Member grant to pay for speed surveys to assist parishes in making their case.

Community Warden/PCSO – the Community Warden written report -

Working with PCSO on anti-social behaviour in the area. We are trying to encourage residents to report more and we looking to put camera outside shops, but this will only happen if more reports come in.

Am going to be organising a surgery with PCSO for residents to air concerns in area, am also meeting via internet with someone from Swale Borough Council who is a community engagement officer newly employed and will be going over issues in Iwade.

Since lockdown Kent Community Warden have been delivering food parcels, welfare checks and checking on residents who are not contacting services. We are also at the start of a restructure and we are looking to expand into more areas but would also include doing more welfare visits and helping social services and NHS more. Promoted to am deputy leader for Swale and Thanet team currently and have been given more responsibility.

The PCSO written report – Crimes of note: Assault on Saxon Shore Way after argument between cyclist and walker – crime report taken. Further verbal comments made to a disabled person – crime report taken. Anti-social behaviour and other incidents of note: After last month's rise in anti-social behaviour, the number of incidents has fallen rapidly after home visits were made and parents spoken to. There have been further incidents of youths swimming in the lake at the top of School Lane, especially during the recent hot spell. Patrols attend when possible, and people are again being moved on. A series of fires on land near Raspberry Hill Lane covered the village in smoke during part of July, plus a huge explosion was reported on the 16th by many villagers. These fires have since stopped for the most part, after an investigation spearheaded by the Environment Agency and involving police and other agencies.

Planning

20/502879/FULL: Erection of single dwelling house (Revision of house type following 17/503442/LDCEX): Plot 1

Land South Of 10 Ferry Road Iwade Kent ME9 8RR – agreed to respond that Iwade Parish Council objects to this application. **(Ed's Note – The PC made very detailed comments on this application – to see the full response and to read the full minutes of this meeting see:**

<https://www.iwadepc.kentparishes.gov.uk/minutes-2020/>

KCC/SW/0008/2020: Construction and operation of an Incinerator Bottom Ash (IBA) recycling facility: Plot 6B Ridham Dock Estate, Iwade, Kent ME9 8FQ – also see Swale BC - 20/503266/COUNTY - Agreed to respond as follows Parish Council Members expressed concern that, yet another facility of this type will be located at Ridham Dock. However, we note that most of the material for processing will be generated by Kemsley SEP and Wheelabrator Kemsley North so the HGV movements will be via Swale Way and Barge Way and the export of processed material will be by barge. If the development doesn't go ahead the bottom ash generated by both plants will need to be transported via the A249/M2 adding to an already overloaded network. Members asked for further information relating to the following, as this is not contained within the Planning paperwork:

- We assume that extracted metals from the ash will need to be transported for further processing so what are the expected traffic movements?
- Our main concern is dust from both unprocessed and processed ash. In the past Iwade village has suffered badly from dust from the Ridham Dock area and you are aware that Ridham sits on the edge of the SSSI/Ramsar site with highly protected species; therefore -
A) How will unprocessed ash be stored?
B) Will there be dust suppression facilities on site?
- According to the Bottom Ash Fact Sheet, processed ash needs to age and stabilise before use so will this aging take place on site?

Finance

Snow Machine – Bring back to

MINUTES CONTINUED

September meeting. **Bulbs** - Proposed by Cllr. Langham and seconded by Cllr. Lancashire; agreed to purchase 2 x 1000 Crocus bulbs and 4 nets of Daffodil bulbs; at a cost of £262. **Lamp Column Poppies** – Proposed by Cllr. Langham and seconded by Cllr. Cheeseman, agreed a donation of £150 to Royal British Legion for the supply of Lamp Column Poppies.

Projects – Updates on Current and New

Hornbeam Trees Woodpecker Park – Clerk advised that Swale Borough Council is agreeable to this but needs location and how many trees. Agreed to plant six trees, three either side of the pathway leading up to the Cairn. Clerk to await Swale's response and then contact the Nursery for their advice as to planting this year.

Village Entrance Sign – notes KCC have agreed to install a sign at no cost to the Parish Council.

Village Clean Up Day – 6 September – in light of Covid-19, agreed not to pursue this in 2020.

Village Hall Site – Clerk advise that although she had sent the statement to the Iwade Observer, it had not been included in the August edition; it will appear in the September issue.

Policies

Updated GDPR Inventory and disposal Policy August 2020 – agreed and adopted.

Updated Data Inventory August 2020 – agreed and adopted.

Reports from Representatives

Hall – still closed. Tinkerbells Nursery will be back in September, but there are no hirers at the present time. Doors to be fitted to the chair storage area. as regards re-opening to all. Clerk advised a copy of the July 2020 ROSPA report on the garden area has been sent to the Hall Committee and via them to **Tinkerbells Nursery** as both these organisations need to do some work on the areas under their control.

Any Other Matters Arising

Cllr. Langham advised that it is hoped Speedwatch will be active in the near future, with the purpose of tackling speeding cars within the Village. The equipment is with Cllr. Whiting who is waiting for it to be calibrated by Kent Police. One roadside assessment has been undertaken by the Police; others are awaited.

Note: For reasons of space these minutes are abbreviated – to see the full minutes please see <https://www.iwadepc.kentparishes.gov.uk/minutes-2020/>

Iwade Walking Group
Walking through the Lockdown
By James Apps

By the time this is printed we will have completed our second "one-off walk"; a group effort rather than individual excursions imposed by the Lockdown. The editor suggested we share lockdown experiences which I agree is a good idea. (Ed's not – nice to see somebody reads what I write!!)

When the government announced the lockdown, giving good reasons. and asking us to protect the NHS etc., the logic was fine; so far so good. However, as the weeks went on, the weather became more pleasant, parents more frustrated with restrictions whilst trying to cope with home schooling, it was obvious that patience was running out. I had very few of those problems. Happy in the company of my cat, lucky to live in a block of small flats with a garden I had some easy exercise.

My neighbours, Nicola and Stuart, seeing an older person in need, offered to do my shopping for me, an arrangement still continuing. I have to say I was glad of the help, having experienced the chaos of the early days when people hoarded bog rolls, and to make sure I had enough cat litter I bought a 30kg bag from B&M. I was prepared for a siege, and wisely resorted, for some needs, with online shopping.

But I missed the weekly walking and to add to my chagrin my left knee was, as my Mum would say, giving me gyp, and that curtailed my perambulations somewhat. I managed to acquire a brace and that has helped a lot. It helped with the garden too as far as kneeling was concerned and I found working on digging and such was much safer.

Then lockdown was eased.

The resulting chaos regarding holidays, what each devolved government was doing and the general 'fed upness' of the people as Summer loomed without beaches and pubs was predictable. But I did not succumb to the frenzy - too damn lazy to bother!

I was now taking trips to Iwade Farm Shop for fresh fruit, eggs and plants with the occasional trip out to Homebase. Exciting life! Local group activities ceased especially when I saw people not observing the rules. My sister and I even went down to Boxley to tend to our parent's grave in separate cars.

It was with relief that we were able to organise our first 'one-off' walk on 6th August and our second now schedule for the 17th September.

A few good things have come of the lockdown for me. I have made some good friends, made the garden better, regulated my weekly shopping spend to what I need rather than what I fancy and surprisingly have drastically cut my alcohol intake.

However, it is good to know that some of our walkers have traipsed the walks in the absence of the group and passed on information plus pictures. Thanks to you all and thanks also to those of you who support our walks. Remember that The Plague was nastier and today we have a better chance of dealing with such pestilences, although with the present confusion, conspiracy theories and Donald Trump it does not always seem so.