



## Life during Lockdown

It's nearly three months since the dreaded Coronavirus arrived and became the undesirable focus of our lives.

The government faced massive problems and had to make momentous decisions unlike any ever made before, except, perhaps, in wartime. Those decisions may sometimes have been questionable to some of us, but we have to presume they were always taken with the best of intentions and with our collective interest at heart.

Lockdown, self-isolation and social distancing became the new 'normal' and by and large we responded positively and obediently to the restrictions on our freedoms of choice and movement. We did this because we wanted to protect as best we could the NHS and the care services, but most of all, our own families and ourselves.

Life in lockdown has not been the same for everyone. Some have been shielded and have stayed entirely at home, but many have had to continue to work, despite the threat to personal safety, to keep the rest of us safe and well. We particularly thank the frontline staff in our hospitals and care homes, but we are also grateful to many others including delivery drivers, refuse collectors, shop workers and the many volunteers who put themselves forward to assist the elderly and vulnerable. They are all heroes of the pandemic and we owe them all a big THANK YOU.



*Sunnyside House, Front Street - probably the best-dressed house in Topcliffe. Well done Fran & Andrew Eckersley*

Locally, it has been both eye-opening and humbling to witness the many acts of kindness and support that people have shown to other villagers. It's always heart-warming to see people putting themselves forward to help others. I mention a few individuals in this article, but the list of those worthy of praise is too long to include in its entirety. However, a Roll of Honour has been created and I hope at some point after this crisis those on it will be publicly thanked by our community.

I particularly would like to mention the many volunteers who came forward to sew scrubs and make face masks for local hospitals and there's no doubt their selfless work will have been much appreciated at The Friarage and Harrogate hospitals.

Life during lockdown had to go on. Some amongst us had to keep working to maintain some semblance of normality for the rest of us. So, thank you John Mulley for keeping the Post Office open throughout this period. At home, parents had to knuckle down and continue their children's education, and they needed huge



*Kev Young leads the Exhortation and two minutes silence in Dovecote Mews*

amounts of patience and energy, as well as invention, to keep the young ones active and entertained. Dogs still had to be walked daily and us humans needed to escape occasionally to get some exercise and time to ourselves. And wasn't it nice to have really fresh and clean air, little noise pollution and to see nature working its wonders around us?

One might have thought that an event like the 75th Anniversary of VE Day might have been postponed or simply forgotten during the pandemic, but quite the reverse: villagers rose to the occasion and made more of the celebration than might otherwise have been the case.

*Continued on page 3...*

[VE Day: There are more photographs showing how Topcliffe and Asenby marked this special event on pages 4 and 5.](#)

## ART CONNECTIONS

We look forward to being able to restart our Art Connections classes at the Village Hall. Until then, stay safe and stay well.

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## The Swan At Topcliffe

Jane and George look forward to seeing and serving our regular customers and new ones too in the near future.

Although there's no date set for pub reopening, we hope it won't be too long. Until then, keep safe and well.



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Continued from page 1...

Houses throughout Topcliffe and Asenby were dressed for the occasion, street parties were held, and a few bottles of beer and wine were downed. There was a real party spirit, but the importance of the occasion was not forgotten, and the villages went silent for the two-minute silence at 11am on 8 May.



Teas prepared by Louise and friends

And VE Day produced another magnificent act of kindness when Louise Bumby, with the help of some of her family and friends, prepared and delivered sumptuous afternoon teas to over one hundred people across our two villages...and raised over £1,000 for Help for Heroes.

And it's unlikely we'll forget this particular VE Day - not just because it occurred during the pandemic, but because Topcliffe's very own professional photographer, Joanne Brierley, wandered the streets of both villages taking photographs of people on their doorsteps and in their gardens marking the anniversary. These pictures will be produced in a commemorative online album and maybe presented on the large screen at the village hall at a date in the future.

It has been a fascinating, though sometimes painful, journey through the pandemic. Sadly, a few villagers and individuals with local connections died during this period and only a few close relatives were able to attend their funerals. I am sure our thoughts are with those who have lost loved ones.

In the last few weeks we have seen a gradual lifting of the restrictions on our lives, but it will be some time before we are back to some sort of normal. We all hope that Covid-19 is now substantially under control and that very quickly we'll have a vaccine to help protect us in the future. Social distancing may still be required for months to come but that's a small price to pay to avoid a recurrence of recent events.

The community is stronger for the experience. We have all mostly been kind and generous to one another - to family, friends and neighbours, but also to strangers. Let's hope that these positives can be retained and maintained in the new 'normal'.

Doug Allan  
Editor

### Village Hall AGM

The Village Hall is required by law to hold an AGM each May. Obviously, the committee can't organise a meeting at the present time and it is not inclined to attempt a virtual meeting as it is required to give full access to members of the public. The Chairman, Andrew Eckersley, has said that he will organise an AGM as soon as the Coronavirus problem has receded and the village hall is back in use.

### Refuse Collectors get a thank you

Residents of Dovecote Mews prepared a lovely surprise for the two crews - refuse and green waste - when they visited one Thursday in April. All the wheelie bins had been lined up across the end of the cul-de-sac and each had a letter attached spelling out 'Thank You Very Much'. "It was a well deserved acknowledgement of the refuse collectors ongoing service during these awful times" said one of the residents.



### Freecycle Stall

Every Saturday and Sunday during the lockdown, the Burnett family, who live in Pear Tree Cottage on Long Street in Topcliffe, have organised a Freecycle Stall so that other villagers could pick up books, magazines, toys and more



### Scrubs teams were amazing

There were several dedicated teams in Topcliffe and Asenby making scrubs and face masks for local hospitals. In Topcliffe, Debbie Roberts, Liz Marsh, Sandie Wright and Fran Eckersley gathered together a huge collection of fabrics and sewed them into scrubs and scrub bags.

And in Asenby similar work was undertaken by Liz Hall, Carole Ford and Julie Hunt. Steve Hall also had an important role running a fabric hub, ensuring that materials were delivered as required and on time to the various volunteer teams operating in the area.

Anyone wanting to know more about Yorkshire Scrubs should check out their Facebook page:

[www.facebook.com/groups/Yorkshirescrubs/](http://www.facebook.com/groups/Yorkshirescrubs/)

### Thanks to John

A big thank you is given to John Mulley who generously kept the Post Office open throughout the worst of the pandemic. Though he did have to restrict opening times and introduce social distancing rules, he managed to maintain all services and keep customers safe. Thanks and well done, John.



# VE Day Celebrations

There was incredible enthusiasm from residents of both Topcliffe and Asenby to celebrate the 75th anniversary of VE Day. There were garden parties, afternoon teas, picnics and BBQs in gardens and many houses were creatively decorated in red, white and blue.

Louise Bumby, who was a catering superstar for elderly and vulnerable residents throughout the pandemic, excelled herself by supplying 105 mouth-watering afternoon teas to families in both villages. She asked for donations to go to Help for Heroes and she was over the moon to raise around £1,000.

On Facebook, Louise said: "...these words are from the heart. Life is tough at present but if we all work together and help one another where we can, we will come out at the other side stronger and more determined than before. We British never give in and one day we will put the Great back into Britain."

Residents observed a two-minute silence at 11am and later many watched The Queen's televised address to the nation and sang songs from the war years, including a rendition of Dame Vera Lynn's classic We'll Meet Again. It may have been a party in isolation, but it certainly went with a swing.



*Carole Ford toasts the heroes*



*5 Deans Square, Topcliffe*



*Fred Gifford enjoys his afternoon tea*



*Duart House, Front Street, Topcliffe*



*Celebrations at Asenby Hall*

# A Big Hit



*Front Street, Topcliffe*



*Kim Hughes and Heather Holt get into the spirit of things*



*Long Street, Topcliffe*



*The Post Office stamps its mark on VE Day celebrations*



*VE Day street party in Dovecote Mews*



**The Lockdown Memory Album**  
*Joanne Brierley, a professional photographer living in Topcliffe, photographed families on their doorsteps and in their gardens as they celebrated VE Day. Joanne, pictured here with her son Sebastian and daughter Emilia, has presented her images on the Top Residents Facebook site and has created a fantastic album. Hopefully there'll be a photographic display in the village hall after the pandemic ends.*

**Although this message from Susanne Jukes was included in one of the Sunday Emails, it's worth printing here in *The Tattler* as a final farewell to our Vicar.**

"It feels very strange not to be saying a 'proper' goodbye to people but I would like to say an enormous Thank You to you all in Topcliffe and Asenby for your welcome when I came here; for your friendship and care over the years; for allowing me to share in some of the most precious moments in your lives; and for your support for the Church.

"It will be an enormous wrench to leave here - I will miss you all - but it goes with the territory that I have to move when I give up the job. My License came to an end on 30 April and that's the day I ceased to be your Vicar. In terms of the actual move to County Durham - who knows? I will move whenever it's possible to do so.



All we can do now, as at all times, is to place ourselves in God's hands. I leave you with great thankfulness, and with every blessing for now and for the future, whatever it holds".

*The Church Wardens organised a collection among parishioners to get a leaving present for Susanne. Because of lockdown it hasn't been possible to organise a handover but it's hoped that Susanne will be invited back early next year for a presentation and farewell do.*

**Farm Shop Plans Approved**

Planning approval has been received for our farm shop at 81 Long Street, Topcliffe. It will be named the Milk Churn Farm Shop and will provide fresh meat, fish and vegetables, specialist cheeses and charcuterie...as well as artisan breads and cakes. Customers will be able to order vegetable and meat boxes, as well as weekend boxes for a full English and/or Sunday lunch, any of which will be delivered to local homes, if required. The aim will be to also cater for vegetarians, vegans and those requiring gluten free products

The owners - Debbie Roberts, Kerry Parker and Hannah Alderson - report that conversion work is progressing well. There's no date for opening as yet, but they are extremely busy sourcing suppliers for fresh fruit and veg, fish and meat...all of which will be local.



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**Postponed...but they'll be back**

At the start of the pandemic the Village Hall Committee had to close the village hall and cancel or postpone day to day activities and events scheduled over the summer. It's still too early to reopen the hall or to reschedule any events, but it's hoped the following events will be organised as soon as it is safe for the public to start meeting together again.

- The Topcliffe & Asenby Challenge Quiz and Curry Night
- Topcliffe Tidy Up Day
- Topcliffe Big Race Night
- The Attic Auction
- Topcliffe Heritage Weekend.

**Produce Show**

The Annual Produce Show is still booked in for Saturday 5 September and it would be great if it could go ahead, but there is still great uncertainty about when things will get back to normal after the pandemic.

For the time being it is suggested that everyone proceeds on the basis that it will go ahead. The organisers will make and announce a final decision well in advance.

The rules and list of categories are available on the two village websites.

**Topcliffe benches refurbished**

Two of Topcliffe's public benches have had a total refurb and are now looking amazing in their new livery.

The benches were originally installed in the village to mark the Silver Jubilee of King George V and Queen Mary and they each carry a plaque stating Silver Jubilee 1910 to 1935.

Over the years the benches began to deteriorate badly and a few months ago the Parish Council decided that they should be restored. Peter Billet, who operates from a shed on Barningham's farm, kindly agreed to sandblast the benches and apply a base metal paint to hold back future rusting. Then Malcolm Morley undertook some necessary fabrication work before handing them over to Heather Holt and Kim Hughes for a final paint job.



Heather and Kim contacted Williamsons of Ripon for advice about the best paint for the job and the company was very helpful and provided paint at cost...and some free of charge. The colours - dark blue and gold - were chosen to reflect the main colours on the Magna Carta shield installed on the side of the Toll Booth.

The benches have now been re-installed in their usual positions close to Topcliffe school and at Swale View.

## Chris Millross

Former resident of Asenby, Chris Millross, sadly died on 11 April 2020. Although he and his wife Pauline had moved to Boroughbridge two years ago, he had strong friendships in Asenby and Topcliffe.

Because Chris had died of the coronavirus, no more than ten family members would be allowed at his funeral at Rawdon Crematorium, so his family made the decision to hold a virtual celebration of his life watched by more than 100 family and friends.

Their son Rob said "We held our own memorial service in my mum's back garden, watching a video with a montage of photos and his favourite songs at the time of his cremation. The video was watched at the same time by extended family and friends so they could share the celebration of his life. We wanted to come up with something where everybody could take part. It went really well and was very emotional. There were a lot of happy memories and tears as it was the final goodbye."

Chris died at Harrogate District Hospital. He had no underlying health conditions but had started suffering with coronavirus symptoms on March 22 and was taken to the hospital on March 27. Pauline, his wife of 55 years, was allowed an hour's visit wearing full personal protective equipment shortly before he died. Rob said "Dad received wonderful care at Harrogate District Hospital."

Chris was born in Scarborough and lived in Moortown from 1977-1992 before moving to Asenby. He played cricket, as well as rugby union, and was a former junior football team manager. He worked as a patent agent for printing plate business, Howson Algraphy at Seacroft, Leeds, and later ICI in Middlesbrough.

During his time in Asenby he served as a parish councillor and was chairman for several years. He greatly enjoyed the weekly pub quizzes in The Angel and continued to do so after their move to Boroughbridge. Always busy, he became a volunteer at Boroughbridge Library and a volunteer with the Scout Association.

Chris also leaves a daughter Clare, son-in-law Daniel, daughter-in-law Chloe and grandchildren Molly, Henry, Jake and Megan.

Rob said, "Our dad lived life to the full: both he and Mum had a great love of travelling. He was a wonderful and devoted husband, father and grandfather with a genuine desire to help other people. He'll be greatly missed by family and friends alike and was taken from us far too soon."



## John Trollope

John Harold Trollope was an extraordinary man who loved his family unconditionally. He sadly passed away at the age of 80 on the 13 March 2020 after a short battle with cancer, surrounded by his closest family.

When I began to write this, I started thinking of some of the words I would use to describe my Papa John.

*Loving.* He adored his family and friends. Especially his caring and devoted wife Jen, kind-hearted son Andrew and thoughtful daughter Andrea. John had a gentle humour and warmth which he extended to every person he met; he would always take the time to ask how you were doing and listen. I was only 10 when I met Papa John, but I remember he welcomed my mum and me into his family with open arms. Even though I wasn't related to him by blood, I became his granddaughter instantly.

*Determined.* My Papa John was a very determined man. Whether that was a job he needed/ wanted to get done, saving his money or trying to get his own way (which Nana Jen assures me he didn't always). I would go around and always find him in his workshop building something new. I still have a wooden lamp in my room that he made for me. His hard work and determination throughout his life has been inspiring.

*Intelligent.* He amazed me with how much knowledge he had, how quick he was with numbers and how fast his brain worked. The experiences he's had have truly blown me away, the stories could keep him talking for days. There was never a dull moment when Papa John was around, there was always something new to learn from him.



*Inspiration.* The conversations I shared with him will stay with me forever. He has influenced me more than he will ever know, and I am truly grateful. His grit inspires me to push myself and to always try my best.

Papa John was a man of many talents but without realising it his best was being a grandfather. I will forever hold a special place in my heart for him, as will so many others who had the pleasure of knowing him.

John Harold Trollope, we love you and will miss you terribly.

*Maisie Johnson, John's granddaughter*

## Ron Maites

In April, Asenby resident Ron Maite, aged 93, died peacefully in his sleep in Sowerby Lodge where he had lived for the last four years or so. Ron moved to Asenby from Devon over 20 years ago to be near one of his daughters, Helen, who lives in Dalton. Another daughter lives on the Scottish island of Raasay. Ron had been in the Household Cavalry and later was a police officer with Devon Constabulary. His military and police service was always reflected in his day to day dress throughout his retirement: he always wore a shirt and tie and brightly polished shoes that you could see your face in. He loved North Yorkshire and driving around the many beautiful parts of the county. He also loved gardening...and was partial to the odd chocolate.

# THE ELM GALLERY

Front Street, Topcliffe

We are hoping to re-open the gallery as soon as we can after the 15th of June, subject to us being able to meet all the health and safety requirements in relation to COVID-19.

Thank you for all your kind messages of support and we look forward to seeing you soon!

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## THE Angel at TOPCLIFFE

Hi everyone

We hope that you are all safe and well.

You are all making a fantastic effort to keep the community together during this pandemic. It is amazing to see how close everyone is while keeping distance at the same time.

The Angel team cannot wait to re-open and to see you all again. We are currently looking into all options to ensure that we do so in a safe manner.

Follow us on Facebook for updates. In the meantime, keep on looking after yourselves and see you soon.

*Greg and The Angel Team*



[www.facebook.com/TheAngelatTopcliffe](https://www.facebook.com/TheAngelatTopcliffe)

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