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The Chishills

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CHISHILL TEACHERS LEARNING LOCKDOWN LESSONS

We've all had to adapt to new ways of living and working during the CV19 crisis. Many people are furloughed, many others are sadly jobless, and everyone has had to change – among them the professionals who the rest of us rely on to make our lives possible. These people can't be laid off. From binmen to brain surgeons, we need their skills and dedication just to keep our society functioning. We thought we'd take a look at how one of these professions is coping: teaching. A number of teachers live among us, and three of them agreed to give the Newsletter an insight into how their working lives have changed.

Although **Angus Gent's** year 6 students at King's College School, Cambridge are among those who were allowed to return to school

in June, many remain at home, and those at school are working in pods – so that all the class members are physically distanced and online teaching is still the biggest – or the only – part of their school day. That means, for example, that Mr Gent's Maths class – an hour-long session on how compass bearings work – has to be delivered online from Angus's makeshift home TV studio, where, looking professional in a smart shirt and tie, he sits in a small room facing a camera and a large TV screen. At his side is a whiteboard and behind him, a green screen which to the pupils appears as an exotic backdrop – today it's France. Angus greets the class as one by one their faces appear on the screen (a repurposed domestic TV), and after some preliminary banter the session soon gets under way – Angus displaying his trademark enthusiasm and bounce, while the children apply themselves to the work. They are disciplined and attentive, and, it appears, pretty computer literate. These are 11 year-olds who handle their IT



like pros. They also need great self-organisation to download and print their lesson plans at home, and log into class on time and with the right materials. "They have had to learn time-management, and that will be an essential skill in the future," says Angus. Like most of us, he had never come across Zoom until a few months ago, so he's had to learn fast too. Preparing each plan takes at least as long as the lesson it relates to; it includes diagrams and questions to check understanding, which are to be tackled in the course of

the class. The class is very interactive, which is important as that's Angus's teaching style. He admits to early worries about transmitting his enthusiasm online,

but with Zoom, there's plenty of to and fro, and the class seems cheerful and uninhibited – on both sides of the monitor. But the humour and cheerfulness masks the rigorous preparation that this new mode of teaching demands – "It's been a dramatic upskilling" says Angus, who has even blossomed into publishing his own YouTube segments to introduce lesson topics.

Round the corner on Heydon Road, **Jill Kuenzi** sits at a table preparing to take her Year 10 Literature class at Bassingbourn Village College. These students are preparing for their GCSEs next year, and the reforms introduced by Mr Gove when he was Education Secretary mean that poems they are studying need to be analysed in forensic detail. That's what their examination papers will demand of them in a year's time - which is important, as English and Maths passes will be the must-have items on CVs required for university or job applications. Like Angus, Jill's change to online tutor *[cont'd over]*

VIRTUAL OPEN GARDENS - SOON!

The online version of the Parish Church's annual Open Gardens event will soon be open to welcome visitors. Villagers were invited to send photographs of their cherished plots to Andrea Quigley, who is assembling them into a rolling slide show which will be available for all to see on YouTube from July. There's still time for you to send in your pictures. The show won't display addresses or personal details, just a first name. Email your pictures to andreaquigley@gmail.com or contact Andrea (838844) to arrange a Dropbox link for large numbers of pictures. Angela Patrick (837353) can also help.

Keep an eye on the church's YouTube channel **Parish of the Icknield Way Villages** from mid-July to see the display in all its glory.

Recycling? Book a slot!

Thriplow Tip's open again, and it's been so popular that the Council has introduced a booking system. You can't just turn up any more; instead, you must go on line and book a slot. Find the booking app on the website cambridgeshire.gov.uk/residents/waste-and-recycling. Herts residents don't need to book to visit the Royston tip. The HCC website features a handy queue - cam.

You can still quiz with Phil

Phil Maynard's three lockdown Chishill-themed quizzes have been a great success. If you haven't tried one, they are great fun, and all are still available. The competition is now over, but you can still exercise your brain and your legs looking for the answers – which can all be found within the village. Email Phil pm@maynardprojects.co.uk for question and answer sheets.

[cont'd from P1] happened abruptly, on 20 March. However, the College had already invested heavily in electronic teaching systems: recorded presentations created in-house, which allow assignments to be set and studied online, colourful and visual with amazing graphics and embedded short videos to illustrate key points. Students can pause, rewind, edit their own input, and generally proceed at their own pace. Jill told the Newsletter "We even made a Bingo game using key quotations – students were disappointed to be told there would be, no prizes, just accolades." ('What's an accolade, Miss, is it a chocolate bar?') The lockdown has intensified the use of these systems, and, as the students are for the most part technologically very savvy they take to this style of learning well.

The downside is that it's a somewhat solitary activity for students accustomed to a learning style featuring debates, role playing, group work, filming and singing. So the school has supplemented these presentations with live lessons for groups of 8 students to encourage questions and discussion. Jill conducts these Google Classroom sessions seated at her dining table with a blank wall behind her (distracting pictures removed for the duration). "Now that we're up and running I think the students will participate more" she says. "They have given us feedback that they really like the live sessions and it has helped to consolidate their learning." And of course that works both ways for any committed teacher. Jill admits to missing the human contact with her charges as well: "It's great to hear their voices again!"

Sarah Scott is a teaching assistant, working with Year 1 and 2's. When schools shut a week before the end of term, she says, "The topic was spring and I took a good look around the garden and made blogs, making little informative videos to aid home learning. Luckily the children (and even the parents) liked them, and that was the start of it.

During the Easter holidays there were many meetings on Teams, planning and finalising the delivery of lessons for the following term. I continued with my blogs and was allocated 70 children to do a live lesson each week (in groups of 4). Memorably I did one show and share session which included four children, 2 gerbils, 1 puppy, 2 cats, a rabbit and a singing dog! Another interesting concept I had to adapt to was to undertake live handwriting lessons with a lad who had just joined the school. I managed, with the help of hastily photocopied resources from a friend, a neighbouring teacher, and a quick order of flash cards. I admit it was a bit trial and error in the first lesson, but he worked hard, his confidence grew and he did a great job."

"As time moved on, 'Good Morning' sessions were added, featuring a riddle or problem to be solved, which added an element of fun and got the day off to a happy start. At the end of the day, I did a live 'Story Time' where David Walliams' World's Worst Teachers was a big hit. Some students have returned (Foundation and Year 1) and next week Year 2 return. I have a class of 7 to look after and teach. It will be a different world, but I feel sure we can successfully adapt, as we have already done with home schooling."

PLAYING FIELD POO! (THERE'S A LOT OF IT ABOUT)

This month, the Newsletter's inbox has been flooded by one email. This is such a rare event, it's worthwhile printing it in full especially as (almost) everybody will agree with the writer.

Dear Editor,

We have been doing lots of walking, including across the playing fields, and despite the signs saying **no dogs**, we frequently see dogs off their leads running around the playing fields. Over the weekend we came across two deposits which the owners hadn't even had the decency to clear up. Do you think there could be a reminder in the newsletter that at the very least, if people flout the no dog signs, they clear up any mess?

Best wishes from one grumpy old woman

St Swithun's News

We shall soon be able to re-open St Swithun's for private prayer, and following on from the church tower repairs and the new WC, we are now planning to open up the back of the church to create a hospitality area with kitchen facilities and a new floor where we can host some village events. We have applied for grants, but while we wait for replies, we have been granted an interest free loan to cover the shortfall. This must be repaid over 4 years. We have made some fundraising plans, but because of the lockdown, our planned giving campaign in April had to be deferred, and the Open Gardens (see above) will now be a digital event. The DCC (district church council) and supporters work hard to keep our church open for the use of villagers and visitors. We all love a village wedding or baptism, and we bring our loved ones here when they die. If you would like to support our work it would be great if you could set up a standing order for an amount however small each month to keep our church alive. Follow this link:

<https://www.justgiving.com/icknielw/ayparish>

URC NEWS

Despite the Chapel not having services, it has been lovely to see family members once again, visiting relatives' graves. Interestingly, a number of genealogists have visited, looking for long lost family members. The schoolroom has not lain idle, but used as a workshop for making head visors, scrubs and scrub bags for Lisa to



take into A and E. We look forward to holding services as soon as we can.

BIN DAYS - JULY

Black Blue / Green

	7*
14	21*
28	

*SCDC will empty green bins at least once a month. But they will try hard to collect green bins every 2 weeks, so put yours out.

§ Phil Maynard reminds us that the Chequers in Fowlmere is now doing takeaway food Thurs - Sat 5pm - 9pm. Phil says it's 'superb'. § Ro Gadian recommends www.whatpub.com where you can search for local pubs etc. doing takeaway food. § By the way, has anyone tried the Coach House?

ONE-CLICK FRIENDSHIP

Point your phone's QR reader at this code and you'll go to the Windmill Trust, where you can become a Friend! No cost or obligation but they'd love to tell you how the project's doing.

