



The Chishills

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THE CHISHILLS BC



I look back on life Before Covid and remember the joy of social interaction, being in a crowded public space, and hugging. Oh those days! They will return. Last month I wrote about the Wine Circle. This month I would like to remember the Cinema Club, which used to meet once a month in the URC Schoolroom. For the small price of £5, guests would receive a snack and a free glass of wine while enjoying a feel-good film. Those who arrived early would be able to snuggle down on a sofa, late arrivals would be on wooden chairs. One of the more recent film evenings, before everything was locked down, was "Fishermen's Friends", the true story of a group of locals who used to sing on the Platt in Port Isaac, Cornwall, to raise money for local charities. They were spotted by a holiday-maker who worked in the record industry and offered a £1 million recording contract. Tess and Angus Gent, who host the cinema club, provided all the guests with fish and chips, a mini Cornish pasty and Cornish beers. The evening was so popular that it was repeated the next evening. I look forward to all these village activities returning later this year.

THE VILLAGE LOCK-UP

Many of you may not even have noticed this tiny building on the verge of Heydon Road. It was probably erected at the parish expense sometime between 1876 and 1896. Information supplied in about 1910 describes it as a "parish cage, having been let for a short time as a cobbler's shop, annual value 15 shillings per annum (75p) which was in the possession of the Parish Council".



Village lock-ups were used to detain breakers of the peace, drunks and felons until they could be brought before a magistrate. The official necessary for their detention was the parish clerk who, in the 19th century, was usually appointed by the vestry. I suspect that Sarah Scott, our current Parish Clerk, would love to have such powers today!

For some years now, the lock-up has been used to store the wooden funeral bier which was used to transport coffins to the church for the funeral service.

Older village residents may remember this being used. Unfortunately there does not seem anywhere else to exhibit this piece of history.

BIN DAYS - MARCH

Blue/Green	Black
2	9
16	23
30	

SLOE GIN

Despite the notice cancelling the slow gin competition, which appeared in the



February issue, I am very pleased to say that the World's oldest sloe gin competition has been saved. Thanks to Robin and Ruth Diblee, and Stella and Nigel Russell,

everyone in the village was mail-dropped. The competition took place on 27 February, after this edition went to print. I will announce the winners in the April issue.

BOOK EXCHANGE

There are plenty of good reads for free at the Great Chishill Book Exchange. This is in the old telephone box next to the Plaistow. There's a huge variety of fiction and a shelf and a half of non-fiction to choose from. In the red box on the floor are a few books for young children but we don't have many of those at the moment. If you have any suitable, good condition, books for children we would welcome a few more.

Many thanks to Helen Whitehead who has been looking after the book exchange for us. She has recently removed two wheelbarrow loads of very old, damaged and mouldy books, plus two boxes of additional stock which may find its way back sometime. Helen says there is no room for more donations unless you are going to make room by taking some existing books away first!

Please help yourselves to books and enjoy a good read.

By the way, this telephone box is one of 44 listed buildings in Great and Little Chishill!



THE PLAISTOW

Plaistows are pieces of land found very close to churches and, since medieval times, were mainly used for the game of camping or campball - described as a blend of football and handball.

Campball was played throughout East Anglia. The custom in medieval times was to play games after church services, and often these 'camping fields' were sited near the church. The two sides started at opposite ends of the field. A leather ball was thrown into the centre by an impartial bystander and the idea was to get the ball to the far end of the field from your starting point in order to score. The game was rough, and it varied slightly from place to place. Matches were often between rival parishes and stirred local passions.

The historian Moore, writing in 1823, described a version of the game as follows: "Each party has two goals, ten or fifteen yards apart. The parties stand in line, facing each other at about ten yards' distance midway between their goals and that of their adversaries. An indifferent spectator throws up a ball midway between the confronted players and makes his escape. The rush is to catch the falling ball. He who first can catch or seize it speeds home, making his way through his opponents and aided by his own sidesmen. If caught he throws the ball [he must in no case give it] to some less beleaguered friend more free and more in breath than himself, who if it be not arrested in its course or be jostled away by the eager and watchful adversaries, catches it; and he in like manner hastens homeward, in like manner pursued, annoyed and aided, winning if he contrive to carry or throw it within the goals." This was written in



the same year that William Webb Ellis is said to have invented Rugby football at Rugby School.

Moore also wrote: "amid shouting and roaring of the population the players were not disposed to treat one another gently." Some games even turned so nasty that

there was serious injury and loss of life. It was recorded that a match at Diss Common in the early nineteenth century was so brutal that nine men were killed or died of their injuries. While some people thought that camping was a combination of all athletic excellence others saw it as little more than a stand up fight. The contest for the ball "never ends without black eyes and bloody noses, broken heads or shins, and some serious mischief," a writer said in 1830 when camping popularity was at its height.

In Great Chishill the Plaistow was also used as the village butts, where archery could be practiced. Each village was required to be able to provide a few trained archers to the Crown in times of war.

'Hear Say' - a new collection of Great Chishill Poetry

Villagers have once again been busy putting pens to paper, only this time have been creating their poems collaboratively. 'Hear Say' is the result of an idea based on the children's drawing game of Consequences. A first line of poetry was written and then the last three words only of that line were sent to another villager. They had 24 hours to write the next line, after which they returned it and their last three words were sent to the next person. And so on.

We had 6 poems on the go at once, and mostly we had no idea what the poems were about, where they were heading or even who was playing the game!

The results are now on display in the village phone box. We hope you enjoy reading them as much as we did creating them!

If you would like to be part of any future poetry projects please do get in touch with me by email:

hilaryjgoodall@btinternet.com

Thank you - Hilary Goodall



To complement the snowdrop and aconite area on the Plaistow, the Parish Council is planning a wildflower area and during February over 60 cowslips were planted.

A MESSAGE FROM TESS GENT

Many people have kindly asked after Guy, (our son in law) who has just completed a gruelling course of radiotherapy, every day for 6 weeks, for his brain tumour that had regrown. He has coped admirably, especially as he has had to travel daily from Wokingham to Addenbrookes for his treatment. He now has to wait 6 months to know the success of it. Very sadly, due to the Covid restrictions and the distance they now live, we were unable to support them in quite the way we would have most wanted.

Our Charity for this year, therefore, is for Brain Tumour Research.

We thought 'Wear A Hat Day' on March 26th would be a good, fun and

easy way to start, and something in which, in these extraordinarily testing times, the whole family could participate. If anyone is short of a hat, I have plenty you could borrow and I will hang them on our gate, weather permitting! Perhaps children could make an Easter Bonnet to jolly up Easter Day this year. I have set up a 'Just Giving' page, if anyone feels they want to support this cause, as generously as they are able. The link is:

<https://www.justgiving.com/fundraising/angus-gent>

The charity's magazine 'Believe' gives so much information of what it does, what it needs and future fundraising events.

Thank you.

