



Dear Members and Friends,

I hope you are all keeping well. We are living in strange and challenging times but amidst the daily dose of alarming statistics there are also uplifting stories which will go down in history such as the amazing achievement of Captain Tom Moore in raising money for NHS charities.

Many of you are familiar with the Charterhouse Environs Research Team (CHERT) which was founded about twenty years ago. Their work is best summed up by Vince Russett who took over CHERT from archaeologist Penny Stokes in 2001.

What did CHERT achieve in its 20 years? It generated hundreds of surveys of sites, which will become more important as 'points in time' as the years go by; these are now in public ownership in Wells Museum. It raised awareness, both locally and regionally of the importance of Mendip: it directly inspired the then English Heritage to run a major survey of the Mendip AONB, but probably most important of all, it inspired a group of friends to spend many happy days roaming and recording our ancient precious Mendip landscape.

For a comprehensive report by Vince Russett on CHERT's achievements please see this month's Parish Magazine. In recent years their membership had dwindled and it was felt it was time to close. At the end of March CHERT held their AGM on-line and decided to wind up the group and transfer their remaining assets (about £240) to BLHS. Some of their members will join BLHS and, as they have experience with surveys and archaeology, we hope they will work with us in the future. They also plan to continue their walks on Mendip and once the lockdown is relaxed, we will be inviting members to register their interest in joining these activities.

Under the current restrictions we are not able to hold talks or let out our premises and we will be compensating our members for the lack of meetings. We have been looking at our finances with some concern as we still have to pay our utility bills. Court Lodge is described as 'Meeting Rooms' on the North Somerset Council Rates bill. The rates are calculated as £948 per annum, but the Society receives full rate relief so we do not pay anything. On 1st April the Government announced grant funding of £10,000 for all businesses, whatever their sector, who already receive small business or rural rate relief. It was a great surprise to us that we qualified! No application was necessary, we were contacted by North Somerset Council and asked to submit details on-line - it has just been confirmed that £10,000 has been deposited in our account. I'm sure some of you will think that there are far more worthy causes, but we will treat the money with great respect and put it to good use in raising the awareness of local history in the community.

Last, but not least, we decided to put together a newsletter to keep in touch with our members. Many of you will have watched the VE-Day coverage on the television over the weekend and it's not surprising that we have adopted a World War 2 theme for this edition. Some of you will remember that Peter May produced some *Blagdon Life and Times* leaflets in the early days of the Society, and I'm sure you will agree he has done a brilliant job as editor of the attached *VE-Day Special*. Peter is also working on a website for the Society and we are very grateful for the time and effort he is spending on these projects.

We had planned a meeting and exhibition, sharing local memories of WW2, in November to coincide with Remembrance Sunday. We don't know if we will be able to go ahead, but if you have any family memorabilia such as documents or photographs, or memories of the war period you would be willing to share, we would be very pleased to hear from you - by telephone, email or letter. We can scan or photograph items without any damage to the originals and we would return them promptly.

We'd love to receive some feedback about the newsletter too – do get in touch with our secretary pip.riley@talk21.com, telephone 01761 462120 or Jacky 01761 462491 for WW2 information.

I wish you all good health in these difficult times,

Kind regards.

Sheila Johnson

Chairman, Blagdon Local History Society