

WYE SCHOOL ROVING REPORTER | MATILDA WHARTON-SMITH, YEAR 9

Lockdown has been a rollercoaster for everyone. Especially in the educational spectrum of things, lots of children feel they have been tossed aside. Lockdown, as many of you know, has affected most of our motivation and general mood. Waking up late and not seeing friends has become a daily part of life just the same as a caged animal, having a huge effect on people's general mental health.

An average day for me consists of waking up usually half an hour before online lessons, having a shower and eating breakfast during my first lesson. Schoolwork is now always done online so the teachers can see exactly what we're typing before we submit it at the end of the lesson. Although all lessons generally are not as fun and intriguing, lots of the teachers are finding ways to try and communicate with students so they understand and do not feel alone on a daily basis. Although it is difficult to appreciate anything at the moment I would say most students do notice how hard our teachers are trying to work for our education and personal lives behind the computer.

Personally, I miss my social life which I am sure everyone can relate with, but also just the simplicity of having a hug from my best friend. I miss going to school and laughing with people I would never usually see outside of school and building memories that will last a lifetime whilst we're young. However, there are some aspects to lockdown I like, for example spending time with the people we live with and having more time to learn a new skill. I miss close family gatherings where we can all catch up and my grandparent's hot lunches and hugs.

I cannot imagine the loneliness of people living on their own. Hearing of people playing scrabble alone for hours breaks my heart and all I can say is you are not alone, you are loved, and we are all in this together. Personally, it is a small price to pay for young students to help save lives. Even though time is the most precious thing we can hold onto, we all know we will get through this one way or another.



Spring has arrived in Wye with the first daffodils coming into bloom – this image was captured by Steve Wellsted on one of his morning runs

It's been a very busy start to the year at Our Place Wye. At the end of 2020 we secured a lottery grant of £15,000 to carry out a feasibility study into setting up a social care cooperative in the village. And now we've also been granted £5,000 by the Kent Community Foundation to recruit an administrator.

By the time this newsletter is published we should be well on the way to recruiting the consultant to help us with the social cooperative. But there are still two more roles that we will be recruiting for: an administrator to help with the day-to-day running of Our Place Wye (closing date March 18) and a researcher to help the consultant with the feasibility study for the social care coop (provisional closing date April 22).

For full role descriptions please contact admin@ourplacewe.org.uk, visit ourplacewe.org.uk or ring Jasper Bouverie on 07561 600 889.

NEW SHOP IN WYE FOR THE EAST KENT FLOWER COMPANY

Local florist, The East Kent Flower Company, is set to open a new retail shop in the Granary, at the bottom of Bridge Street. On Wednesday 10th March the shop will open for 'Click & Collect' online sales and will be taking telephone orders for full florist services and gifts. When the national restrictions on the opening of non-essential retail is lifted on 12th April, the shop will open for normal opening hours.

The East Kent Flower Company is a local business that was set up initially as an Event and Wedding florist by Louise Courtenay, and has created a real buzz in the wedding industry for the quality of its event flowers.



OUR PLACE WYE SUPPORTING LAPTOP SCHEME

The organisation TopUpToTeach is collecting old laptops for distribution to children and older people who wish to be better connected but don't have the right digital equipment. If you have a laptop plus charger, under ten years old, or a tablet, please go to www.topuptoteach.org for further information on how to donate and to register your details. Any queries about this scheme please contact Maria Cox on **07745 589810**.

Our Place Wye have already distributed two laptops in the village through the scheme. These were wiped clean of the previous owner's material and pre-loaded with useful software (Windows 10, Zoom and TeamViewer) prior to delivery. The organisation AbilityNet is helping Our Place Wye with training for the recipients.



UPDATE ON SAVE THE HONEST MILLER CAMPAIGN

As many of you know, a group of Brook residents has come together to try to save The Honest Miller after it was bought by a development company during the first lockdown of 2020. We have had a busy month, with some of the highlights outlined below.

A well-attended village Zoom call gave us a chance to consider events and discuss how we can save our pub. An impressive response to our survey indicated that 85% of respondents oppose any development to The Honest Miller and 95% are supportive of a community-led pub, if the property returns to the market.

The owners of The Honest Miller released plans for redevelopment of the pub, dependent on building houses on its land. We are sceptical about these plans. They made no mention of the pub in their pre-planning application for nine houses or the subsequent application for two houses (since withdrawn). We are hopeful that the developers will accept Brook Parish Council's invitation to join an extraordinary meeting so that the community can understand more about their motivations, experience and plans.

Please email us at savethehm@gmail.com to receive our informational leaflet and a link to our survey, as well as regular updates on the survival and future prosperity of this beautiful, Kentish pub.



A VIRTUAL LUNCH WITH DIXIT PATEL | WYE NEWS

What brought you to Wye?

Wye Newsagency brought us to Wye. We used to live in Stratford before we moved here in December 2008. Wye has a good school which was very important for us when we first thought of buying a business. Also it is very peaceful to live and has beautiful surroundings.

What do you like about the area?

Well I like the people of Wye, they take care of each other, with a strong sense of local community, a healthy environment, and a relaxed pace of life.

What's changed in the village in the 10 years you've been running the newsagents?

The first change we saw was the closing down of the Wye College. We have also seen many new families coming and settling into the village and the introduction of an excellent secondary school – the Wye Free School, which was founded in 2013.



What's your favourite food and what are you having for lunch today?

My favourite food is obviously Indian food cooked by my lovely wife Hiral. For lunch today I had "Dhebra", an Indian bread from the Gujarati cuisine made of pearl millet flour, with Indian mango pickle and butter milk.

What's the secret to a long and happy life?

The secret of a long and happy life is living simply, having good friends and eating right. Eat less in general is simply good practice. Get active – staying active is every bit as important as having healthy eating habits. Find something you enjoy – whether it's taking your dog on long walks in woods or tending to your garden, low intensity physical activities are actually more beneficial in the long run. Find a purpose – having a life purpose is very important, people who have reason to get up in the morning are happier. Keep learning – the key to long life is never losing your childlike curiosity. Reduce stress – sleep well and laughter are great ways to relieve stress. Schedule time with friends and family who make you laugh or read a book that tickles your funny bone. Have a social network – accept life as it is and come to terms with the disparity between expectation and reality.

THE 3 RS – REDUCE, REUSE, RECYCLE – ENVIRONMENTAL TIP OF THE MONTH –

Get £75 off your energy bill and £44 off your water bill!

Did you know that if everyone in a four-person household spent one minute less in the shower each day, it would lead to a total saving of £75 a year off your energy bill according to the Energy Saving Trust? They say it could also save £44 on your water bill if you're on a meter.



HOW THE WEDDING INDUSTRY WILL SURVIVE THE PANDEMIC

The current pandemic has brought huge upheaval to our daily lives, affecting every aspect of what we used to call "normal life". One particular sector that has suffered greatly is the wedding industry, with all booking and activity either cancelled or postponed since the first lockdown was implemented. It was a massive blow to couples and also to the many companies that service the wedding industry.

Since then many firms have sadly closed, while the rest wait for the country to open up once again. However, the recent announcement by the government that the current lockdown is to be the last, means there is a glimmer of hope for the wedding industry. With restrictions likely to be eased completely by the 21st June, it is expected that weddings will be back on once again. After 18 months of zero activity and revenue, the wedding industry can't wait to get back to business. And after all the negativity, businesses predict they will be extremely busy, which can only be a good thing.

Garden of England Classics, which is based here in Wye, is ready and waiting with its wedding car hire fleet for the moment the restrictions are eased. If you are looking for an elegant and stylish classic car for your special day do get in touch: enquiries@gardenofenglandclassics.co.uk phone: **07366 925 687**



A PLACE I LIKE IN WYE...

My favourite place to be in Wye is near the corner of Church Street, looking down Bridge Street towards the river when the sun is setting on a clear day. The view fills me with elation at being part of a beautiful world, where houses are in harmony with the Downs on the horizon and the poplars along the Stour.

Pat Marsh



A reminder that Our Place Wye delivers the **Welcome Pack** to all newcomers to the village.

Please get in touch if someone has recently moved in near to where you live: Sue Powell
01233 812533 or
suepowell80@gmail.com

MANY THANKS TO OUR SPONSORS WHO FUND THIS NEWSLETTER – DELIVERED TO 2000 LOCAL HOUSEHOLDS



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