

Year March 2020-2021 report on ARDLEIGH by Local History Recorder Jill Hamblin

March 2020 Dominic Morgan completes filming of budget disaster movie at God's House Farm. Charlotte Tree appointed Assistant Captain, Colchester Swimming Club. Cancer sufferer Jackie Halsall fined for parking at hospital (wrong time shown). Lee Partridge manages E Bergholt United youth team. Because of threat from Coronavirus, plans for big celebration of 75 years since VE Day on 8th May cancelled 23rd March was start of 1st Covid 19 Lockdown, with instructions to stay at home, work from home, no travel etc; schools shut; surgery carefully managed: masks and waiting outside. Every household received a govt booklet. Village shop and PO stores remained open, deemed 'essential services' but reservoir & Green Island Garden closed. Tendring Show cancelled. Help hotline set up for Ardleigh & Dedham parishes. A12 closed when digger hit bridge near Ardleigh interchange. TDC approved erection of horse stabling on land by Elm park, a protected site (bronze age burial ground).

April 2020 Schools shut for all summer term – lessons online. 'Clap for NHS' on doorsteps every Thursday night well supported in village. Official approval for Chinese takeaway (was Fish & Chip shop). Joe Nutkins, animal trainer, starts online dog training classes. Tractor damaged in Morrow Lane. Permission sought for housing cows in barn off Coggeshall Road.

May 2020 Celebrations for 75 years since VE Day held in own gardens – all lunching outside and decorating own houses. Fiona Edmonds of Green Island continues submitting uplifting articles to the local newspaper about the gardens. Rev Antony Wilson 'climbing' 3 peaks for Christian Aid by going up & down stairs 1362 times. Prettyfields Vineyard recruits 'army' of vine planters for other vineyards Gladman Developments application for 145 homes by Salary Brook passed on appeal. New 9000 house town on Colchester/Tendring border, including part of Ardleigh, approved by Planning inspector (other two new towns failed); including £70m road plans linking A120 & A133. Red lines painted on part of Old Ipswich Road to deter parking.

June 2020 Annual Headway run goes online. Graham Cole organises outdoor dance sessions (in own gardens) on Sundays, playing music in school yard. Fire crews sent to Morrow Lane for out of control fire (very dry weather). Local newspapers full of govt adverts for keeping safe from Covid-19; also ran article on Elm Park and past celebrations in Ardleigh. Builders told to reinstate hedge at Salary Brook.

July 2020 Plans submitted for a new children's home in Wivenhoe Road. Parish Council launches Neighbourhood Plan. Jake Lay Flurrie, 17, makes surgical masks for healthcare workers (500 since March) using GoFundMe to raise £1000 to use 3D printing. First newspaper reports of overwhelming opposition to plans for huge storage & distribution centre on Old Ipswich Road at end of Wick Lane (Sureya Foods). Spartan Tiles of Slough Lane fined £10,000 for incident where man's arm crushed by machine. 92% of respondents rate Ardleigh Surgery as 'good'. Year 6 leavers at Ardleigh School reunite at safe distances outside for their leaving ceremony; no parents; all filmed for parents to watch; end of a term with the school closed. Tip reopens.

August 2020 Combine harvester bursts into flames and sets light to field opposite The Wooden Fender pub (tinder dry because of lack of rain); newspapers report 'a field of flames' with 1500 square metres alight (equivalent to 20 football pitches); no-one hurt. Brawl reported at Ingram's Piece. Antony Kleingeld admits arson at village hall. Permission granted for demolition of Weltons old shop at Dedham Road end of Rookery Chase and for erection of 2 bungalows. Revamp announced for Ardleigh Service Station. Anglian Water advises against using hosepipes etc. 177 objections made to plans for huge development at end of Wick Lane by Sureya Foods, The Flying Trade Group, including 19m high buildings & 24 hour working..

September 2020 Primary School reopens with Covid measures in place. Boxford Suffolk Farms Ltd, based in Lawford (Robert Rendall), takes over Wallings Nursery, adding glasshouse space equivalent to 11 football pitches. P Tuckwell, agricultural machinery firm with Ardleigh base, acquires Burden Bros Agri Ltd John Deere dealership (Kent, Sussex, parts of Surrey). James Blyth of Wick Lane given permission to build a Glamping and holiday resort at his former quarry in Brightlingsea. Permission sought for further reservoir extension at Martells Quarry by Sewells Ltd. Outdoor film 'The Greatest Showman' at Ardleigh showground preceded by JC Aerial School performers. Thatched cottage at end Harts Lane completely rebuilt (dog on roof).

October 2020 Romany Foster wins Colchester Golf Club's Ladies Autumn meeting. John Bland of Moze Hall dies aged 94. Leanne Beverage & partner Michael Bruce, launch a delivery service for the family firm, M Bruce Fruit & Veg Suppliers in Boxted. Green Island Gardens, run by Fiona Edmond, reopens for the National Garden Scheme weekend.

November 2020 Darren Leggett's company, The Property Ladder Group relocates to Slough Lane and grows. Arsonist, Antony Kleingeld, is convicted for 5th time and finally given mental health treatment. Popcorn Movies stage drive in firework display at Ardleigh Showground at end of month. Dominic Morgan launches crowd funding campaign to finance his film making.

December 2020 Christmas services scheduled for outside because of pandemic; some cancelled because of weather. Emma Thrower organises collection of Xmas goodies and deliveries of parcels to older residents 'Kings & Queens of Ardleigh', then organises a Father Christmas 'sleigh' ride round Ardleigh distributing presents to children whose parents subscribed. First villagers called to the Colchester Hospital for Pfizer vaccination against Covid-19. Deb Outar is crowned Play Golf's Senior Champion. Mercury Theatre's 1919 pantomime screened at Ardleigh Showground for drive in performance. Yvonne Boud dies; with late husband, John, was great literary influence in village. Resignations of three Parish Councillors: Lynda Chase-Gardener, Keith Thompson & Helen Fontaine.

January 2021 Many villagers vaccinated at a variety of locations, many with Oxford Astro Zeneca vaccine (Can be kept in fridge). Third lock-down started Boxing Day, so no New Year celebrations; all schools closed except for children of essential workers. Plans submitted for 30 start up units at Systematic Business Park, Old Ipswich Road. Dog trainer, Jo Nutkins, provides online tutorials teaching dog tricks. Emma Thrower, Clive Salmon, Emma Twine & Jonathan Waters become Parish Councillors. Sir Bob Russell formally requests permission to erect 'Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star' statue by Mandy Pratt in Colchester High Street. Long time resident, Nora Mary McEneaney, dies. Cyclist injured near Coggeshall Road – car failed to stop. Some snow.

February 2021 Heavy snow followed by Spring sunshine; easing of Covid lockdown measures announced & school prepares for reopening to all pupils on 7th March. Tiny poodle cross dog lost and thought dog knapped: villagers out looking for her. Rest of roads in Avellana development named after airmen lost in 1943 Halifax crash (Smith and Widgery). New town plans available for comment online. Work begun on two bungalows at Dedham Road/Rookery Chase corner.