

Burgundy Friends' NEWSLETTER

Feb/March 2020





Locked out



hmmmm.....

Book Swap

The Fennell bookswap comes along
Sunday in March you can't go wrong
It always seems to be a must
As friends shake off their wintry rust

This year was a feast of pork
Sausages 4 ways created talk
Hummus, tea loaf and of course the Welsh cakes
Everyone loves these homely cake bakes

It was indeed an event not to miss
Tho with Covid 19 there was no kiss
Shaking hands was a definite no no
Elbow bumps was the way to go go

So here we all are, a week down the line
The whole world has changed, things are not fine
With all events cancelled, we must really take care
But to all at the bookswap, you'll be glad you were there.

Look after yourselves through this unusual time
You've always got Netflix and Amazon Prime
Watch out for the grape juice and keep yourself trim
And by all means make contact with Barbara and Jim.

Stay safe nos amis.

Jim Fennell 2020



Where are the books



MIKE in the Rees Mogg position (getting bored?)

The Ghost of Marston Moor



The air was parted by a tearing screech, then a blinding flash followed by an ear splitting explosion. For a while nothing, until slowly my eyes focused on a scene of utter desolation covered with wisps of smoke giving off the acrid smell of gunpowder. Where was I, what happened, yes, I was standing in line with the pike men, then I can't remember.

As part of Prince Rupert's Army we had marched North to relieve York but had encountered the Parliamentarians at Marston Moor. I feel a searing pain in my shoulder and on touching it my hand is covered in blood. I think who won this battle, if the Parliamentarians won they have the reputation of not taking prisoners, I must get away but how.

Around me there is much groaning and I can hear screaming from the mortally wounded and I can only think that those that do not move are dead. I try to drag myself to my feet but my left arm is useless. I push against the earth with my good arm and after many falls I am standing but which way to go. It's dusk and I can't tell where the sun is, so I have to make a guess. If I was on my back when I gained consciousness then behind me must be the way to safety.

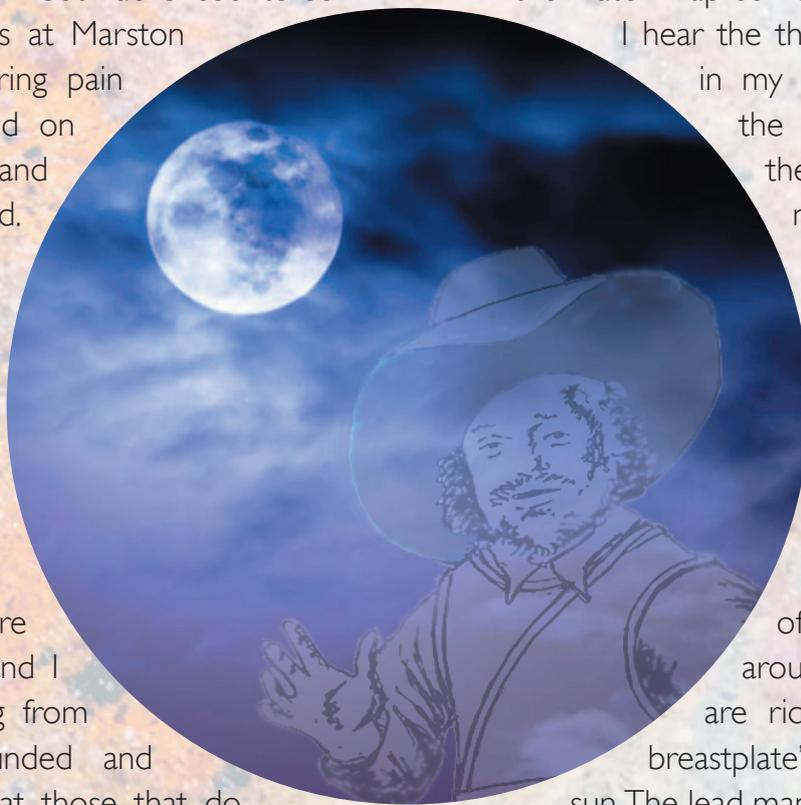
I start walking but am light headed, then I trip, I try again to stand but I can't. I see a tree stump in front and slowly crawl through the mud towards it. I manage to pull myself up and lean on the stump for support but my wounded arm has left me weak, exhausted and fighting for breath. It's

now night and there are fires all around lighting up bits of landscape here and there. Ahead of me is a small hillock, if I can make it perhaps I will have a better view. The pain is unbearable and I fall over a few times before reaching the top. I see a stream, I need to drink, my throat is parched, so I make tortuous movements every one of which sends a sharp pain down my arm. Lying beside the water I lap some up in my hand just as I hear the thunder of hoofs coming in my direction. Oh god not the Parliamentarians but they pass within yards of me and ride into the distance.

It is morning and the sun is rising slowly. I must have slept during the night or I fell unconscious. Behind me again I can hear the sounds of horse's hoofs. I look around and some horsemen are riding towards me, their breastplate's glinting in the morning sun. The lead man is almost upon me. He raises his sword. Oblivion.

I'm standing upon the hillock looking down on a peaceful verdant moorland with an abundance of heather. It's a spring morning, the birds are singing. In front of me a father and son are using a metal detector to find artefacts of the famous civil war battle fought here over 400 years ago. By the stream a family are having a picnic. I can see them but they can't see me unless they are around here when there is a full moon then they might see my illusive form illuminated by the moon's rays for I'm the ghost of Marston Moor.

Mike



Coronavirus

The UK situation – as I write, we have not been put into a state of lock down, yet. Workers, who can do so, have been working from home for the last couple of weeks. Businesses, small and large have had to close down including John Lewis, causing enormous financial implications everywhere. B+Q has had increased business with people buying in DIY equipment to carry out all those jobs to be done, when the lock down comes.

Government advice: social distancing of 2 meters, only leave our homes on “essential” business, over 70’s to stay home, do not go anywhere where there are people. Wash hands for 20 seconds. If anyone has cold symptoms with high temperature they are to self isolate and their households with them for up to 14 days.

Government concerns; unless the public take personal responsibility and follow the advice, our NHS could find itself overwhelmed. Retired doctors and nurses have been asked to return to help out, if the need is there. Hospitals, private and NHS are being cleared of non-urgent cases to give space to those in greater need. Industry is being requested to produce more ventilators. A vaccine is being explored, but will not be on the shelves for months, yet.

School closures: are to take effect from tomorrow (Monday 23rd March). Not being involved in childcare of our 2 small grandsons who live in Cheltenham, it means that we have a lot more time on our hands. I can now start up my hobbies again, of which I have plenty. Children who have a parent in the categories of essential workers are being kept in school, however. The number amounts to 10%, so no rest for school staff. GCSE’s and A levels have been cancelled for this year.

Greater London - Largest number of cases are here but then the population is 10 million. Pubs, bars and restaurants, places of mass gatherings in the UK are all shut. Public transport is still running, but on a reduced basis, due to reduced demand.

Food: toilet rolls, pasta and tinned vegetables were the first things to fly off the shelves, leaving none at all. We could not buy eggs, flour or sugar but we did manage to get some fruit and veg this week. We have been told that there is plenty of food in the supply chain, but the supermarkets are having great difficulty with deliveries and stacking of shelves. Tesco has closed its 24h stores to aid restocking. All supermarkets are opening an hour in the mornings only for the over 70s and medically vulnerable.

My concerns – I was a radiographer in the NHS until 8 years ago, when I retired. Am I likely to be called upon? I do not know.

Should I offer my services? Only my conscience will tell me that. But my registration has lapsed, so how would that work? Do I want to be in the front line and put myself at risk?

My son works for the NHS in accounts for Kings College Hospital, Denmark Hill, London. No home working has been offered. He has to go in on the tube everyday, to an environment where there are active cases of the virus. Is he at risk of bringing it back to us or getting it himself? I am sure that the back room boys are not being released so that they are available for other duties if the need arises. Perhaps for making deliveries and other administrative duties necessary with huge influxes of ill patients. He is unimpressed with this prospect, but in war time, we have to pull together.

Where we live: we live in northwest London, on the Metropolitan Underground of Northwood. Houses are well set apart, the population density is low. We can walk into the countryside from our house. I consider ourselves to be very lucky as we do not have to come across anyone else at all, other than for shopping.

This is just a quick resume of where we are, so best wishes to you all in France, keep safe and catch up when we get the all clear.

Jacqueline

It was just before lunch when our two sons and their Adam Faith look alike friend arrived very disappointed from the french Alps. They had only two days of snowboarding before all the ski resorts were closed down. They stayed in B & B near Chalon for the night as they did not want us oldies to catch anything. They had their sandwiches in the garden, all I did was to make coffee for them. It was sad to see them for a brief moments circling around them in one meter distance. They had a box full of food from England for the next few days in France but left it for us as their car was overloaded with snow boards clothes etc.

So now we sit in the garden in the sun drink coffee with English biscuits, have lunch with English cheese and nice hot drink of oxo (my favourite), no wine as I gave last bottles to the boys.

Then for a walk around the vineyards clutching declaration form in our hands just in case helicopter will spot us and gendarme jumps out of the bushes....no....not in our village....

Our local shop has everything you need (so far) only one bottom shelf is empty and that’s the shelf with cheapest wine. Back to reading, painting and gardening.

Ewa

So far it hasn't been that different from my normal daily routine, as I live on my own and don't generally have much contact with people anyway. I'm grateful for that, and the fact that unlike many others, I have nobody else to consider within my home. Luzy's quiet anyway, but yesterday Sunday was so like a ghost town that I thought I'd gone deaf! I live on a main road and so missed the regular trundlings of lorries, cars, and farm vehicles past my door. I walked up to the supermarket on Thursday afternoon (no signs of panic buying) and was stopped by two gendarmes in a little van. Showed them my attestation, and was told I needed a new one for every trip out - I'd been trying to save the planet by reusing mine from the previous day, just changing the date and purpose of trip.

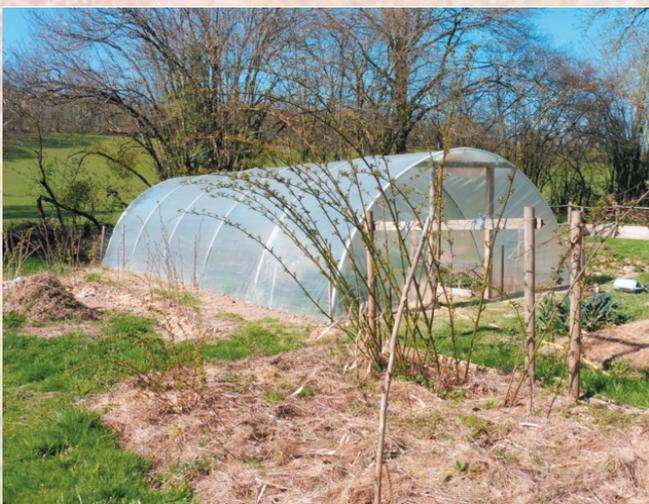
Well, we know how seriously the French take their documents, so I continued home in a chastened mood (not really, but I didn't want to go off in a huff - they were gendarmes, after all!). All my neighbours seem to have spent the week mowing, the hum of lawn mowers a constant background noise. I wonder what will happen when the results of all this gardening start to pile up, though?

Our tip is closed, and we're forbidden bonfires, so how long will it take the French to rebel and start lighting up? My neighbour's already got a pile fit for Guy Fawkes. And if they do, I'll join them, because at the moment gardening's just about all I can do without a permit, and there are limits to how much I

can "Keep in a corner of the garden," as the official advice has it. I'm glad the Government took the decision to impose this lock down, as at least we know where we are - my friends in the UK don't seem to know what they can and can't do, and we've all heard of the scenes of mass gatherings in Skegness and Whitby (Japan and Florida too). So - sit tight, take deep breaths, avoid going out, and above all, to quote Corporal Jones of Dad's Army, "DON'T PANIC!"

Kate

What we've been doing



Bernard

PUNS FOR EDUCATED MINDS

1. The fattest knight at King Arthur's round table was sir Cumference. He acquired his size from too much pi.
2. I thought I saw an eye doctor on an Alaskan island, but it turned out to be an optical Aleutian.
3. She was only a whiskey maker, but he loved her still.
4. A rubber band pistol was confiscated from algebra class, because it was a weapon of math disruption.
5. No matter how much you push the envelope, it'll still be stationery.
6. A dog gave birth to puppies near the road and was cited for littering.
7. A grenade thrown into a kitchen in France would result in Linoleum Blown apart.
8. Two silk worms had a race. They ended up in a tie.
9. A hole has been found in the nudist camp wall. The police are looking into it.
10. Time flies like an arrow. Fruit flies like a banana.
11. Atheism is a non-prophet organization.

12. Two hats were hanging on a hat rack in the hallway. One hat said to the other: 'You stay here; I'll go on a head.'
 13. I wondered why the baseball kept getting bigger. Then it hit me.
 14. A sign on the lawn at a drug rehab center said: 'Keep off the Grass.'
 15. The midget fortune-teller who escaped from prison was a small medium at large.
 16. The soldier who survived mustard gas and pepper spray is now a seasoned veteran.
 17. A backward poet writes inverse.
 18. In a democracy, it's your vote that counts. In feudalism, it's your count that votes.
 19. When cannibals ate a missionary, they got a taste of religion.
 20. If you jumped off the bridge in Paris, you'd be in Seine.
 21. A vulture boards an airplane, carrying two dead raccoons. The stewardess looks at him and says, 'I'm sorry, sir, only one carrion allowed per passenger.'
 22. Two fish swim into a concrete wall. One turns to the other and says 'Dam!'
 23. Two Eskimos sitting in a kayak were chilly, so they lit a fire in the craft. Unsurprisingly it sank, proving once again that you can't have your kayak and heat it too.
 24. Two hydrogen atoms meet. One says, 'I've lost my electron.' The other says 'Are you sure?' The first replies, 'Yes, I'm positive.'
 25. Did you hear about the Buddhist who refused Novocaine during a root canal? His goal: transcendental medication.
- Dennis

Friday the 13th March our friends Wendy and Dennis arrived for a two week stay, oh dear, what a let down for them - not going to any of the places planned !!

Although we did do some shopping which was an experience one person to one cart, standing 1 metre plus, away from the next person. We speak to neighbours from across the road asking if OK and did they need anything, bread has been fetched from the lovely Boulangerie in Marmagne by us for our neighbours.

At least we've had some good bonfires and the garden is looking tidy, thanks to our friends efforts too.

Jane

To be perfectly honest, it has not affected me too badly yet. I am used to living alone; I am (as you all know!) a bit of a loner and quite happy with my own company.....not that this means I do not like You Lot - I do! Apart from the obvious emails and phone calls, I read a lot, walk around my (fortunately large) garden, watch DVDs and Netflix. I am knitting squares from left-over tapestry wools to make a blanket for the Pet Rescue. I am doing a Future Learn online course on the history of the Scottish Clan System. I am finally sorting out old photos and my stamp collection. Meals are becoming increasingly interesting. The frozen Haggis will probably stretch my culinary imagination quite a lot.

My daughter is sorting out communication via Zoom (whatever that is) as she thinks I am too dim for Skype.

I always carry pretty comprehensive stocks here due to lack of nearby shops and there is plenty left of provisions for the Winter snows which never came. A supermarket visit should not be needed for another week, which will make over 2 weeks since I last left home. Lorien's Paddington Bear stands in the window opposite my arm chair so I chat to him quite a

bit. He is a bit taciturn so far, but I guess that will change as I get more crazy. So for now I am just determined to look on the bright side and ignore most of the tosh on the internet, just relying on the BBC. A 'glass half full' person by nature, I just hope and pray that we all survive this misery intact. We just have to "keep on stringing pearls.". Love and best wishes to all,

Carolyn.

Cutting the grass and hedges, reshaping the bushes, reseeding some of the grass, a complete waste as it he won't appear until April, revarnishing the wood surrounding the bathroom sink, extending the racks in the garage for EWA'S paintings. think she may have asked two or is it three years ago.

I'm so busy that I don't seem to be aware of the lock down until I read of the accelerating deaths from the virus. I try to think of the positive side. I see a satellite photo of China a year ago in various shades of nicotine and next to it a more verdant photo taken yesterday. I see a photo of the clear water in a Venice canal where you can clearly see the bottom. Are we at the start of a revolution. Will the there be no new runways built. Sadly I think not Mammon always seems win.

Mike

The churches are celebrating when the angel Gabriel announced to Mary that she was to be the mother of Christ. All the churches in France are going to ring their bells at 7.30 p.m. on Wednesday. At the same time people have been asked to show solidarity with those who are ill during this time by putting a candle in their window.

Daphne



When we could go around edges of village, to be able to see the wonders of nature as Spring arrives. Now no venturing around as a person in their 20's has been confirmed with the virus. This small village (around 600) had two motor cycle gendarmes on the bridge checking people moving in and out!

Cheryl

I would like to thank all who contributed to this Newsletter especially Jacqueline whose idea it was to have a section on how we were managing with the lock downs.

I started the Newsletters in 2012 and I think to date this one has been the most lively and it represents what I first envisaged with members writing their various experiences. Facebook is the future but early members who have been very loyal in their support of B.F. but either can't or do not want to use facebook its is vital that they should be kept in the loop.

I would like also to thank Jane and Norman who put in a lot of hard work last year keeping Burgundy Friends going and I am sure most B.F's would agree.

Mike

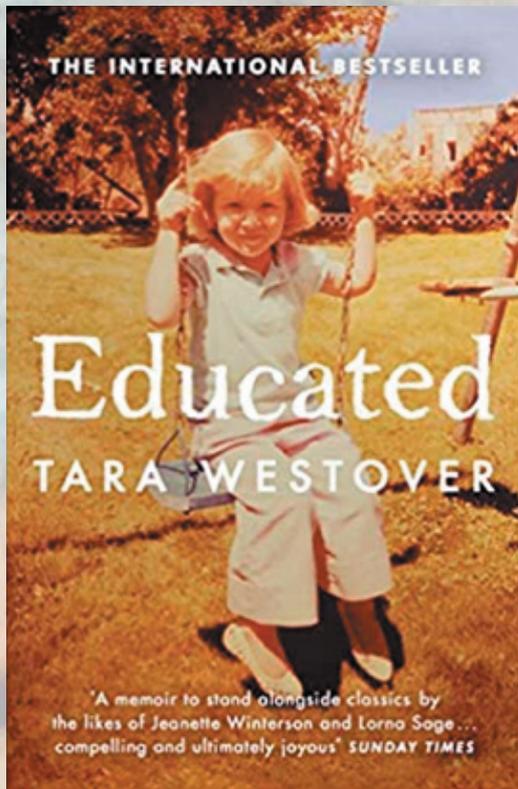
WARNING

A reminder, that they will be fined if they leave the house without a completed "Attestation_de_deplacement_derogatoire". and a ID, Carte de Sejour or Passport. If you don't have it, you can be fined between E137 and E375 and sent to prison for five repeat offences. Kate got caught with out an identity card but got away with it as under 600m from home and first offence.

As you know, I sent all BF members, in France, a pdf copy of the form on 17th March, as the Gouv website was difficult to access as it was so busy; so that they could print it.

Norman





Book Readers'

Book Readers Report February 2020 Educated by Tara Westover If there is one thing to say about Dr Tara Westover's memoir about growing up and finding an education, is that this is a story that needs to be read!! It was the subject of quite a fascinating discussion when the eager Book Readers met again at Karen's home on a spring-like afternoon in February.

Born to survivalist parents in the mountains of Idaho, Tara Westover was seventeen the first time she set foot in a classroom. Her family was so isolated from mainstream society that there was no one to ensure the children received an education and no one to intervene when one of Tara's older brothers became violent. When another brother got himself into college, Tara decided to try a new kind of life. Her quest for knowledge transformed her, taking her over oceans and across continents, to Harvard and to Cambridge University.

Although not necessarily the happy ending that one might expect, this book opens up the idea that there are probably many people in twenty first century societies that choose to live 'off the grid'. It is a story with very strong themes: of family, of determination, not allowing yourself to be defined by others or allowing those we love, to have too powerful a hold on our lives. It is thoughtful and considered writing which makes it a story not easily forgotten.

The next meeting of the Book Readers will be at Kris Adams date to be confirmed, when the book under discussion will be 'Becoming' by Michelle Obama.

Karen Baker

If anyone is interested in taking part in the Book Readers' or Writers' Groups please contact me at mikiwebb@hotmail.com

S.P.A. Dog and Cat Refuge - our chosen local charity

The committee are happy to accept any practical donations for the homeless dogs and cats, particularly pet food. Please bring the items along to any home based B.F. event and hand it to a committee member who will ensure it gets delivered to the Refuge.

A big thank you from Jane (and the cats and dogs), to those who have made very generous contributions of food for the sanctuary.

Forthcoming Events

All events have been cancelled due to the coronavirus rules until further notice

Acknowledgements

Front Cover

Artwork: Mike

Book Swap

Poem: Jim

Photos & Layout: Ewa

Writers

Story & Illustration: Mike

Book Readers

Report: Karen B

Coronavirus

Reports: Jacqueline

Ewa

Kate

Bernard

Jane

Norman

Dennis

Carolyne

Daphne

Cheryl

Mike