

Doynton Parish Pump

A few news items and a spot of “déjà vu all over again” this month. Keep on keeping on!

Many thanks to all the villagers who have offered their services to help their neighbours – details below. Contact the **Doynton Mutual Aid Group** at doyntonvillage@live.co.uk to join the WhatsApp group, stay informed and get access to help within the village.

Seed swap: The Doynton Seed Swap Group are going ahead with the Seed Swap on Saturday February 13th, and it will last for two weeks. It is not the event we envisaged, but with restrictions due to Covid-19 we have made some alterations to our original plans. We are putting seeds collected in the late summer and autumn of last year in boxes (perennials, annuals, wild flowers and vegetables) in Doynton Holy Trinity Church porch for anyone who would like to help themselves. We would like to encourage people to bring seeds to swap or make a donation which we will then contribute towards the food bank. We are hoping this will become a regular event. Do join in and if you would like to, please do give us feedback in the comments book which will be provided.

Doynton now has a new **defibrillator**. A Zoll AED 3 with the ability to monitor the efficiency of cardiopulmonary resuscitation is now installed the cabinet in the church porch and fully operational. Many thanks to all those who gave donations during the campaign last year.

Doynton foodbank: villagers have donated a number of food items which can be found in a box in the church porch; please feel free to help yourself if you are in need. Also a big thank you for your continued support for **North Bristol Foodbank**, which is needed now more than ever. Please leave any tins or packets

you can spare in the box in the church porch (please make sure they are at least three months within their use-by date). **To avoid food waste, items which are still in the village foodbank box after several weeks will be donated to North Bristol Foodbank.**

February 6th and 20th, 10.00–11:00 a.m., in the village hall: **Doynton Village Market: for locally produced vegetables, eggs, meat, baked produce and more.** Please adhere to social distancing and wear a mask, unless exempted. Contact Elizabeth Crew on 0117 937 3168 by Wednesday to reserve your goods.

A different lockdown and a grandstand view – memories of the Bristol Blitz 80 years on

Fred Ellis writes: My mother, Mary Ellis (née Kidner), grew up at Tracy Cottage Farm which overlooks Doynton and is around a mile away from the village, where a spectacular view is afforded of sunsets and the lights of Bristol on a clear evening. It is possible from there to observe the Bristol Balloon Festival from the balloons' ascent at Ashton Court to their landing in fields around Doynton with a prevailing wind.

Just over eighty years ago, on a November Sunday at 6 p.m., the Bristol Blitz began, when German planes following the River Avon into the city rained hell onto the streets with the intention of destroying the dockland area. The city had been bombed earlier in the Summer of 1940, but this was on a much larger scale, with 148 aircraft employed, followed by a further six major attacks ending in April 1941.

During that time, with Britain in a different type of lockdown, any lighting would have been prohibited and then within a few hours on those dreadful evenings the centre would have been more lit up than today, with a grandstand view from Tracy. Along with shops, historic buildings and homes, many churches were destroyed. With the rising heat from flaming buildings aided by south westerly winds, any burning paper was lifted high and

then deposited in surrounding fields. Mary often recounted how, aged twelve, with her sisters she walked around the farm on a Winter's morning collecting charred pages from Bibles.

During these raids some of the retreating enemy dropped bombs in the countryside to lighten their load with a few dropping in fields around Doynton. Earlier in my farming career, I have filled in what were thought to be bomb craters. Later in the war, German and Italian prisoners were employed on local farms, with the Italians living in barns at their place of work but the Germans always under guard and taken back to their secure barracks. My grandfather, farming at Court Farm, recounted many amusing tales regarding the Italians who he grew to be fond of, and he greatly admired the Germans' work ethic.

As the war progressed, the bombing of Bristol and Bath ceased and one morning my grandfather Kidner told Mary to take her three sisters, Sybil, Lawna and Elsie, up the farm track surrounded by beech trees for a surprise. To her astonishment the wooded area was filled with American soldiers, with the cook dressed in white riding their pony. For young girls who had probably never been much further than Bath or Bristol, this must have been quite a shock. My mother said they were always polite and smartly turned out, and the girls looked forward over the following days to visiting their new neighbours and listening to their interesting accents. Then one morning, without warning, they had gone, leaving no evidence of their occupation apart from carving names and the states in America of their origin on the beech trees.

My mother said it was obvious some of the soldiers were not much older than herself and, within days, the news came of the D-Day landings and, much later, the very high US casualty figures on the beaches codenamed Utah and, especially, Omaha.