

Aylesbeare 'Topics'

Issue No: 561 - July 2025



NEWS - VIEWS - EVENTS

AYLESBEARE PARISH COUNCIL

Unfortunately, the meeting arranged for the 4th of June was postponed as a quorum could not be raised. A rescheduled date has not been confirmed at the time of going to print.

The draft minutes from the Parish Council meeting in May are not yet available, either on the Parish Website or from the Parish Clerk, but will hopefully be published in the next edition of Topics.

Best of The Buzz!

The Editor's picks from the 'Aylesbeare Buzz' Facebook Group this month...

**Aylesbeare Church**
👤 3,955 points · 8 June at 13:11 · 🌐



**Aylesbeare Church**
8 June at 13:11 · ⚙

A heartfelt thank you to Alex Thompson for an inspiring fascinators workshop at St Mary's Church yesterday! We had a fantastic time shaping, stitching, and steaming Sin... [See more](#)

Book Review

A History of the World in 47 Borders – John Elledge

A fascinating book. Borders you did not know about and those you sometimes wonder about. Lines have been drawn ever since maps became available. Some make geographical sense whilst others appear arbitrary. Often behind the lines are stories of history, politics or war.

John Elledge, a journalist has put together a collection of short stories about 47 borders with a bonus chapter. Some are big picture divisions of the spheres of influence, most are country borders, and the occasional micro-state. European expansion and imperialism accounts for some of the straight lines we see in Africa and the Middle East. Today's maps divide the landmasses of planet Earth into roughly 193 discreet bits. Most of these country borders are less than two centuries old. The changes are often the result of empires crumbling.

Each chapter is short – 6-8 pages. Helpfully for the more complicated borders there are maps to illustrate the story. These range from explaining why Europe is not a peninsula in Asia, the legacies of the Charlemagne empire that dominated western Europe and the borders of Great Britain. State boundary disputes in the USA feature, the British and French carve up of the Middle East with the Sykes – Picot 'line in the sand', the border in Ireland, and the partition of India, plus many others.

Part two examines the legacies of foreign policy disputes, some of which remain flash points today. Eastern Europe, Russia, the Korean division between north and south, China's claim to the South China Sea, Israel and Palestine, plus the US – Canada border and the trouble with straight lines on a map. Then there are the surprises – enclaves of one country in another, why microstates exist and then some interesting stories about where cities draw their boundaries with the US Capital Washington DC as a square shape between two states.

In the final part Elledge considers the borders found at sea and in the air along with where and how the date line and time zones were established. Richard Branson's flight into space in July 2021 is disputed by his rival Jeff Bezos, owner of Amazon. Bezos argues that Branson did not reach the boundary of space at 86Km above the Earth. Bezos' spaceship is designed to fly above the Karman line at 100km, which is where space begins some say. Even in space disputes over where borders are drawn occur.

There is humour from the author in the way he writes and his lively style. There are footnotes but they are very far from conventional; often witty and add interesting facts. The bonus chapter is about Poland and how it has survived as a country even though at times it has not existed when neighbours have taken over. The message is that at times to be a country is more about the people than the lines on a map.

Mike D Williams



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VE DAY QUIZ

TOTAL
SCORE
24

ROUND 1 - FOOD FOR THOUGHT

- 1 Made with hot water and now usually served with ice cream, what dessert became popular during the war? **A: Jelly**
- 2 Dig for Victory was a wartime campaign encouraging people to do what? **A: Grow their own food**
- 3 In the UK, what restriction lasted until 1954? **A: Food rationing**
- 4 Often included in military rations for British troops, what was corned beef also known as? **A: Bully beef**
- 5 During the war, vinegar and baking soda replaced what ingredient as a rising agent in cakes? **A: Eggs**
- 6 The root of what common yellow flower was often used during WW2 as an alternative for coffee? **A: Dandelion**
- 7 What was the name of the character created to encourage people to use more potatoes during the war? **A: Potato Pete**
- 8 What needed to be presented every time someone purchased a rationed food item? **A: Ration book or coupons**

ROUND 2 - STEP BACK IN TIME

- 1 What does the VE stand for in VE day? **A: Victory in Europe**
- 2 At what time did Winston Churchill, the Prime Minister leading Britain during WWII, deliver his VE Day speech on May 8th, 1945? **A: 3pm**
- 3 Who sang the popular wartime song 'We'll meet again'? **A: Vera Lynne**
- 4 Codebreakers at Bletchley Park successfully cracked which code, that helped to shorten the war? **A: Enigma Code**
- 5 Due to rationing and shortages, which item of clothing worn by women was famously hard to obtain during the war? **A: Silk stockings**
- 6 Which British aircraft played a significant role in the Battle of Britain in 1940? **A: Spitfire**
- 7 Which native British flower is commonly associated with remembering the war? **A: The red poppy**
- 8 What protocol did Britain introduce to help move children away from cities because of air raids? **A: Evacuation**

ROUND 3 - COMMUNITY SPIRIT

- 1 What tradition was revived during the 1940s to bring people together and lift morale? **A: Street parties**
- 2 What was the name of the campaign that encouraged saving food and household items? **A: Waste Not, Want Not**
- 3 What women's organisation helped raise money, produce food and evacuate children during the war? **A: The Women's Institute (WI)**
- 4 How did British Troops stay in touch with their families during the war? **A: Letters**
- 5 Which organisation, known for its mobile canteens, provided hot meals and drinks to soldiers and civilians in need? **A: The Salvation Army**
- 6 What popular ball sport was encouraged within British troops to help keep up morale? **A: Football**
- 7 What well-loved slogan was used after The Blitz to help lift spirits? **A: Keep Calm and Carry On**
- 8 A popular pastime during the war, what was the Jitterbug? **A: A dance**

Celebrating VE Day's 80th anniversary.
ve-vjday80.gov.uk

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