

Hilltop News



June & July 2008

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Had your say on the flight path debate?

St Leonards village hall was packed on the evening of April 14 with over 130 residents, each concerned about the impact of the proposed re-routing of departure flights from Luton Airport. Ten days later, a County Council meeting at Green Park in Aston Clinton drew more members of the public, some carrying protest banners.

Our local Parish Councillor, Caroline Coates and County Councillor, Tricia Birchley, have worked tirelessly and campaigned passionately on behalf of the Hilltop Villagers. They each provide a report in this issue.

Many locals have made their views known to the National Air Traffic Services (NATS). If you haven't, the consultation deadline has now been extended to **19 June**. So there is still time to have your say (a feedback form can be found on the NATS website: www.consultation.nats.co.uk).

In our regular feature, Chris Brown is on the trail of the black squirrel! **Plus**, in this issue, all the news from our Churches, Clubs, Councils and Societies.

Front Cover Picture

The Cholesbury-cum-St Leonards Horticultural Society: Liz Firth has been delving into the past to write for Hilltop News a short history of this long-established society.

*Who has been butterfly spotting?
Find out inside...*



MISS EDWARDS

Elizabeth Tomlin, Miss Edwards' niece, would like to thank all friends, school staff, parents and pupils, both past and present, for all their cards and messages of sympathy, which have been a great comfort to her in recent days. The sheer volume of correspondence has proved it impossible for her to thank each one individually, and she would like to convey her heartfelt thanks through Hilltop News.

Elizabeth thanks friends for their generous donations to the fund set up in memory of her aunt. For those who would still like to make a donation, the fund is organised to provide money towards entertainments and concerts for parishioners, and to contribute towards school needs, both under the administration of Hawridge PCC. Cheques, made payable to **Hawridge PCC**, should be sent to Margaret Walton, the PCC Treasurer at The Laurels, Hawridge.

This year's Patronal Festival Concert, dedicated to Miss Edwards' memory, will be the first event. To make sure of your tickets for this annual fixture on **Friday 27 June** at 7.00pm in the School, please contact the PCC Secretary or the Churchwardens on (respectively) 758214, 758332 and 758914.

Reverend David Burgess pays tribute to Miss Edwards on page 18.

A short history of the Horticultural Society of Cholesbury-cum-St. Leonards

At the Show last summer, I was talking with one of our judges about the age of the Society, which I believed had been in existence since before the Second World War. In fact it will be 70 years old in 2009. As I have been involved with the Society for 30 years I decided it would be good to record some of the Society's history before it got lost in the mists of time. I was loaned the first Minute Book from the Local History Society and also had all the subsequent Minutes to start my research.

The first meeting was held at Cholesbury Village Hall on 17 April 1939 where it was agreed to hold a Horticultural Show on July 29 that summer. The office bearers were elected at a meeting on 28 April and they started off with £20 in hand. The first Chairman was Mr. Malcolm Stewart, and the first President was the Hon. G.H.G. Williamson who lived at Braziers End. Anyone who donated £1 to the Society became a Vice-President! A Committee was elected and the entrance fee to the Show was fixed at 3d and children 1d. Thereafter meetings were held at The Full Moon by kind permission of Mr. Hearn, the publican, who was one of the founder members of the Society.

Lady Reed, wife of Sir Stanley Reed MP for mid Bucks, was asked to present the prizes at the first Show. She presented a Silver Challenge Cup to be awarded for the best collection of four different vegetables grown by a 'Cottage'. If

anyone won it three years in a row they could keep the cup and she would donate another one. I have been unable to find out if this happened, but the Society has three different Challenge cups, which are presented to winners in the Fruit, Flower and Vegetable classes.

In 1940 a Show was held and classes expanded to include a class for children and cookery for the ladies. At a meeting in May 1941 it was agreed, due to the War, not to hold a Show and events did not restart until April 1946, when a needlework class was added.

By 1950 the Show was becoming too big for Cholesbury Village Hall and a marquee was hired, for £7, for the first time. The Show continued at the Hall with the marquee on the Common until 1980, when the cost of insurance became too much, and the Show transferred to the Hawridge and Cholesbury School where it has been held ever since.

In 1965 it was decided to hold a midsummer show which was known as the Rose Show and this was held at St. Leonards Parish Hall until 1987, when it ceased due to lack of entries.

In 1976, to raise funds for the Society, it was suggested a village calendar be published for sale. Local artists were asked to provide pictures and these popular calendars solved many a Christmas present until by 1996 it became uneconomic, as costs for a small print run became too great. For many years there was a grand draw at the Show, also to raise funds.

The Society has twice hosted a BBC Gardeners Question Time: first in 1973



and again in 1994. Our little moment of fame. Unfortunately the second recording never went on air due to internal politics at the BBC. This was a disappointment, but everyone enjoyed the event, which was held at the school.

By 1980 meetings were held with a speaker and/or slide show in the winter months. The local annual Open Garden and teas was a popular fundraiser and the tradition started of asking the hosts to present the prizes at the Show. In 1987 the popular Plant and Ploughmans evening was introduced.

In 1996 to encourage people to attend the AGM, the Committee decided to provide wine and a light supper with a quiz, rather than have an outside speaker. This proved to be a great success and membership increased. By 2007 the 'Foodie' aspect of the Society's events has become a feature - thanks to the good cooks on the committee. Similarly the enthusiastic sale of raffle tickets by George Finlay is unforgettable. Also in the 1990s the Society started arranging evening visits

to local gardens. In recent years we have had visits to gardens further afield - the most notable was the long anticipated trip to Highgrove to see the garden of the Prince of Wales.

As it will be The Society's 70th anniversary in Summer 2009, the Committee must plan something special to celebrate the 'Hort Soc' as it is now affectionally known.

THE CUPS

There are three Challenge cups belonging to the Society:

The **Open Challenge Cup** for the winner in Division 1, which is the Flower classes.

The **Silver Challenge Bowl** for the winner in Division 2, the vegetable classes.

The **Challenge Cup** for the best exhibit in Division 1.

The **Firth Prize** is for the best exhibit in Division 2. The cup was given by Liz and Charles Firth who live at Buckland Common. Liz has been involved with the Society since 1978.

The **Phyllis O'Connor Bowl** for Flower Arrangement in Division 3 was presented by Mr & Mrs Newmark in memory of Phyllis O'Connor. She lived in Buckland Common and was an enthusiastic member of the Society and the Women's Institute.

The **Tomlin Cup** is for the winner in the Dahlia classes. Mr. Alfred Tomlin was a founder member and was a keen dahlia grower who lived in Shepherds Cottage on Hawridge Common. His family had a wheelwright and funeral directors business at the Old Smithy, which was where the first petrol pumps were in the village.

The **Bowden Cup** is for the most prize money in Division 2. Mr. A. Bowden lived in Hawridge and was a gardener at Hawridge Court, and probably gardened for others in the area. He was a long term committee member.

The **Hodgson Children's Cup** was presented by John Hodgson, who was a past Chairman of the Society, and lived at Beechwood Farm, Buckland Common.

The **Ladies Cup** is awarded to the winner in the cookery classes. Donor unknown but possibly it was given by the Society.

The **O'Brien Cup** is for the winner in the handicraft classes. This is in memory of Miss Alice O'Brien who was a keen needlewoman. She and her sister rented Cherry Cottage in Buckland Common from the Butcher family.

The **Basil Newall Prize** is awarded to the winner in Division 5 for Art and Photography. This was given in his memory by his wife Maureen who lives in the family home Four Acres in Cholesbury. He was a trained artist and enjoyed photography and especially loved country pursuits around the villages.

The **John Horn Allotment Trophy** for the best kept allotment at Buckland Common was given by the Society in his memory. John Horn lived at Renrut Cottage in Buckland Common and had an allotment for many years growing prize-winning vegetables. He always gave plenty of good advice to new allotment holders.

The **Stephens Award** is for the most prize money won by a 'Villager' in the fruit, flower and vegetable classes. Jackie Stephens lived at Orchard End, Buckland Common where she created wonderful herbaceous borders and had a prolific vegetable garden. She was trained as a horticulturist at Waterperry in Oxfordshire and was happy to give garden advice. She now lives in Devon.

The **Connie Brown Award** is for the winner of the chocolate cake made to her recipe. Connie lived at the White House, Parrotts Lane, Buckland Common. She was a member of the Society since the 1950s and long time committee member. She loved her garden and was the greatest cook – you had 'arrived' in the village when you were given her chocolate cake recipe. She won endless prizes for her sponge and fruitcakes at the shows. She died in 1997 having just made her final fruitcake.

In compiling this historical note I would like to thank Betty Gomm, Margaret and Joan Walton for their help and memories of earlier days of the Society.

Liz Firth

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THE PARISH COUNCIL

The Parish Council has been working on several issues in recent weeks. They include responses to the NATS proposals and Neighbourhood Action Groups. Councillor Caroline Coates reports separately on these.

The other main issue is the state of our roads. The County Council has instituted a programme of 'Planing and Patching' to address non-dangerous potholes. The only area to be covered in our Parish between April and October will be Chambers Green Road from St Leonards Church to Arrewig Lane, where small sections of poor surface will be dealt with. The Parish Council has arranged several meetings with Bucks County Council to press for more action but, so far, with little success.

The County Council has now provided a 'Community Gang' (two men and a truck) who will address the issue of roadside verges and drainage. We get them for one week in eight and share that week with Chesham, Latimer, Chartridge, The Lee and Ashley Green. So, with any luck, a couple of hours every eight weeks! Your Council is working to improve this.

You can expect some minor changes in speed limits and new village entry signs in the next few weeks. The Central Chilterns Traffic Management Project is still in operation and Councillor Chris Brown is actively chasing them for promised actions.

David Clarke,
Clerk to the Council 758567

Parish Council's Response to the NATS Consultation

The Council concentrated on two aspects: the effect on this Parish and the AONB, and the Consultation

Document's flaws and omissions. We highlighted our fears for humans, flora and fauna from increased pollution (noise, visual and air), and quoted instances where NATS is ignoring regulations or guidance that they should be complying with. We identified two great weaknesses in NATS's case: first, their failure to describe why the "do nothing" option wasn't viable (or, to put it another way, their failure to make a convincing case for change); and second, their failure to consider moving the 'Bovingdon hold' further west. We also said they had included too little evidence to support their case or to measure the adverse effect on our environment. We protested about the short consultation time; the late changes to maps denied us 32 days out of the 13-week period we should have had. So we cited at least three clear grounds for rejecting NATS' proposals as presented and sent 15 copies to government departments, MPs and our local authorities urging them most strongly to do the same.

The full response is on Parish notice boards and the Grapevine or you can ask any parish councillor or the Clerk if you'd like a copy. Courtesy copies have gone to our neighbouring parishes, the Chilterns Conservation Board (AONB), the Chiltern Society, and Michael Nidd of the LLATVCC who gave us so much useful ammunition.

Caroline Coates 758102

ROGER BEEDELL

It is with great sadness that we announce the death, on 12 April, of Roger Beedell, who lived for many years in Buckland Common. We shall be writing about Roger's life in the next issue of Hilltop News.

ANNIE'S CONCERT A ROUSING SUCCESS

There was a lovely warm Spring evening on Saturday 10 May, with much of the audience standing in the open-air behind St Leonards Parish Hall, sipping a pre-concert drink. The music started with a medley of choral songs by Pieces of Eight, a small à cappella choir of The Damon Singers, led by Bob Okey. Ann Crisp, another Damon singer, then gave three fine readings. A charming classical Guitar Suite in C was played by three members of the Pearce family. Fourteen years old Simon Pearce then stole the show with two solo piano pieces that had the audience utterly enthralled. Our great team of cooks served an excellent supper. The star of this part of the evening was hot sticky toffee pudding with cream. A dozen donated raffle prizes were then drawn to close the interval.

Prompted gently by MC, Francis Sanger, Simon opened the second half with another piano piece as an encore. Susanna Blamire-

Brown and Windsor Thomas, with piano accompaniment by Carole King, then sang some opera arias. Ann Crisp gave another fine reading, which was followed by the guitar/wind instrument duo of Clive Pearce and Alan Power, who played two delightful bossa nova jazz numbers. Susanna, Windsor and Carole rounded off the concert with a medley of show songs including Noël Coward's 'Some day I'll find you' from 'Private Lives'. The audience joined in a final chorus and left the hall with smiles on their faces and the melodies still ringing in their ears. There was a warm and friendly atmosphere in the hall, which was packed with the organisers, performers, villagers and their invited guests. It was all just simply magical!

The punch line is that over £800 was raised for each of our chosen two good village causes. Our thanks go to everyone, and there were very many of you. You have all helped to make this event an outstanding success. Thank you!

Windsor Thomas

HAWRIDGE & CHOLESBURY COMMONS PRESERVATION SOCIETY

Summer Party

Tickets are now on sale for this year's Summer Party, which will again be held at Hawridge Place, on **Saturday 28 June** from 6 - 9pm. We will have marquees; a chef's carvery, with quiches and delicious salads with lots of vegetarian options; summer fruits and other desserts; a licensed bar; lots of activities for children, including a bouncy slide and games; terrific raffle prizes plus Paul Nicholson and The Cholesbury Swing Band.

Admission is by ticket only.

Adults - £15; HCCPS members - £12.

Children 0-5 - Free; 5-16 - £6.

Family tickets (HCCPS members only) - £35.

Tickets are available from your Newsletter distributor or from John Cooper 758607, Lindsay Griffin 758440 or Mike Fletcher 758419.

This is the main fundraising event of the year for HCCPS and it always provides a good opportunity to meet your friends and

neighbours as well as helping us continue the work on the Commons.

You can contribute to the success of the evening by helping with the setting up or dismantling of tables; washing up afterwards; providing a donation or a raffle prize. Alternatively, if you would like to help by making a salad, dessert or quiche, please contact Doreen Cooper, Lindsay Griffin or Joan Barnard 758365.

John Cooper and Lindsay Griffin - Party Organisers

Beech Tree

John Caple has kindly bought the remaining stump of the Hawridge beech tree from the Society. He intends to have something made by a chain-saw sculptor for his garden.

Linden Bevan-Pritchard.

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BUTTERFLY WALK

For this, the third annual Butterfly Walk on the Commons, we chose a spring (May 11) rather than a summer date in the hope that the increased risk of rain would be offset by seeing a different range of species.

Well, the risk paid off! The walk took place on one of the hottest and sunniest days of the year so far, reaching 27°C at peak. Sixteen walkers turned out including three highly observant youngsters, who increased our 'spotting' success significantly.

We did not expect to see too many butterflies at this time of year, as many of the grassland varieties don't get going until June or July, but the ones that brave the uncertain weather of April and May have their own charm.

High in the 'charm charts' is the Orange Tip, well named – at least as far as the male is concerned. The female, however has no orange, but the same beautiful green and white filigree pattern on the underside. Almost before the walk started we saw a male pursued by a yellow Brimstone, another common spring species, and shortly after that, a Green-veined White (one of the white butterflies that doesn't eat your cabbages!). So with three species in the first 5 minutes, I felt 'off the hook' to some extent!

The butterflies of spring include some that have newly emerged from their pupae, and others that have over-wintered as adult insects. The Brimstone is one of these hardy creatures that will have survived, hidden away throughout the winter storms, deep in foliage, with neither food nor water for up to six months! In the spring they emerge to mate and lay eggs, extending their adult life to nearly a whole year. This endurance test had also been passed by the many Peacock butterflies that we saw – some very much the worse for wear after their tough winter.



As we entered the woods the dappled sunlight gave just the right environment for the Speckled Wood, the only member of the 'browns' to fly in May. Sure enough, within a few minutes one flew up and circled around us. This is a highly territorial insect, and we had clearly trespassed on its patch! Several more of these delightful insects entertained us, one posing nicely on a bracken stem for everyone to get a good look.

Back out in the open, we explored one of the excellent paths through a glade of elm trees, and found the one butterfly that I had secretly been hoping for – a Holly Blue. So named because holly is one of its food plants, it is the only blue butterfly to fly in the early spring, and has a beautiful powder-blue underside with black flecks.

Our tally remained at six definite species, although many of the whites we saw passing swiftly by may well have been either Small or Large Whites – they didn't stop to let us find out!

It was, as always, a pleasure to spend a lazy afternoon walking around this lovely environment that is just on our doorsteps. My thanks go to Linden, Lindsay, Isobel and the HCCPS team for inviting me, and for all the splendid work they do to maintain the Commons.

David Dennis



Lee Patrick
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GONE MISSING!

It was discovered in May that the following items have disappeared from St Leonards Hall:

Window Keys

The small bunch of allen-type keys that lock the various types of window in the hall. They should hang in the key cupboard in the kitchen. We have located one type as a substitute but the other windows are firmly closed until the missing keys return.

HAVE YOU USED THEM AND MISTAKENLY TAKEN THEM AWAY WITH YOU?

Miniature Dustbin

This little bin stood in the front hallway, full of sand, for the benefit of those who wish to smoke outside the hall. This probably did not mistakenly find its way into a pocket of handbag! Has anyone seen it anywhere?

Please call Michael Reynolds 758548



HAWRIDGE & CHOLESBURY SCHOOL

Easter celebrations...

As Easter approached we found yet another opportunity to stretch the children's imaginations as we challenged them to create their own interpretations of an Easter garden. They did not disappoint us. Indeed we were inundated with ideas ranging from the more traditional (cave, stone pushed away, Kleenex tissue shroud, etc.) to designs that would not look out of place in an upmarket shop window. Daffodils featured heavily, from plastic and silk right through to the real thing, and there were baskets festooned with ribbons, bunnies, chicks and eggs. We even had one bright spark who wired up a small light bulb to a battery (with on/off switch) to illuminate his scene.....the science lessons are obviously up to the mark here at school! All entries

were rewarded with stickers and/or house points and parents were invited to see the final entries on display in the school hall. A great effort.

We also attended the School Praise Proms at the Royal Albert Hall after our choir was successful in winning a place to perform on stage. They gave a sterling performance, encouraged by a large group of parents, teachers and fellow pupils who travelled up to support them. We are extremely proud of all the hard work the choir and their conductor have put in and hope we may even be performing again next year.

So as we romp through the summer term we now find ourselves busy planning our Summer Fete which will take place on **Saturday 21 June** from 11am to 2pm at the school. All are welcome and we hope you will join us for barbeque, teas and many lovely stalls and attractions.

Kay Bass 786016

INSTALLATION OF THE REVEREND DAVID BURGESS

There is to be a special service on **Tuesday 10 June at 7pm** at St. John the Baptist Church, the Lee, to mark the Reverend David Burgess' Installation as Vicar of The Lee and Rector of Hawridge, Cholesbury and St Leonards. This will be a simple service led by The Revd. Mark Dearnley, Area Dean of Wendover, during which David has to be officially presented with the keys of his four churches. Everyone is most welcome and we do hope you will come and support David.

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THE COUNTY COUNCIL

It's official! The Halifax has confirmed what we already knew, that Buckinghamshire is the best place to live in Britain. We have the highest life expectancy, typically the biggest homes, the highest average earnings outside London and are the healthiest, with 95% of local residents rating themselves as having good or fairly good health. Other attributes are the third-best GCSE results in the country, low unemployment and high home ownership, not to mention the extra hour of sunshine every week!



That said, we are all conscious of our precious environment and the proposal by the National Air Traffic Service to make changes to flight paths through the Chilterns AONB has filled us with horror. Our airspace is already some of the most complex in the world and we will do everything possible to stop the massive expansion of Luton Airport from having a detrimental effect on the Chilterns.

NATS is a public private partnership between the Government and stakeholders. A consortium of seven airlines holds the majority of the voting rights and 41.9% of the shares of NATS Holdings Ltd. I believe it should have been made known in the Consultation Document that last year it made an operating profit of £144 million on a turnover of £701 million and experienced exceptional net gains of £3.8 million.

NATS must invest in alternative ways of enabling these aircraft to achieve a higher altitude over the AONB. Thanks to our arguments at County Council their response to the Consultation will now be to reject the

proposed changes over the Chilterns AONB. The political climate has changed. Boris is now Mayor of London and I spent the morning of election day supporting his campaign in Uxbridge. It's too early to say how the change will affect us but many people use the Underground, pay the Congestion charge and visit London regularly. I sincerely hope the cost of doing so will be contained in the coming year.

The County Council has announced an extra £3.25 million to spend on the County's roads. Buckinghamshire continues to receive a raw deal from Government but it is my expectation that we will see a difference by the end of the summer, with extra gangs employed to repair and tidy up where necessary. I have arranged an on-site meeting this week with the Parish Council and County Council officers to do the best possible job for our community.

Please let me know if I can raise your concerns with Officers at County Hall.

Tricia Birchley 01296 621138

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Michael Reynolds (left) with Sue and Jim Hetherington

TO BRIDGE THE GAP...

On 26 March players gathered at the beautiful barn at Old Bruns Farm for a day of bridge with lunch, organised by Sue Hetherington.

The day began with coffee and home-made biscuits. There was an inviting Raffle table covered with excellent prizes, all donated to the beneficiary of the day: the Improvement Fund for St Leonards Parish Hall. Play began until a delicious quiche, salad and crusty bread lunch was served with wine. This was followed by a choice of home-made puddings before play commenced for the afternoon.

Sue had worked extremely hard beforehand, not only with the detailed administration of the Bridge itself but by making numerous delicious quiches for the lunch, gathering a team of helpers on the day and sewing beautiful velvet cloths for each of the seventeen tables.

Following the Raffle Draw by Michael Reynolds, Chairman of the Parish Hall Management Committee, he thanked Sue for her enormous achievement in bringing about such a successful and happy day.



Michael also thanked Anne and Nick Butterworth for so kindly allowing the event to be held at their lovely home.

The summing up by the Bridge Players - should a similar day be arranged in future, there would be a stampede for tickets!

Well done Sue! Your hard work and determination added just over £1,000 to the Hall Improvement Fund!

Ann Horn

THE THURSDAY CLUB

19 June - AGM & Birthday Party - 7.30pm

St Leonards Parish Hall

Following the short meeting, by popular request, we are being entertained again by Sparkies Jazz Band. A fish and chip supper will be available and the evening is open to everyone - we welcome visitors. Those who have visited us before know how excellent Sparkies Jazz Band is and we are very lucky to have the group at the Thursday Club. Please contact a committee member by **Monday 16 June** if you would like the fish and chips. The exact cost of the evening has yet to be finalised but will be between £6 and £10.

*Brian and Anne Lake 01296 620169;
Violet Lovett 758775; Primrose and Alan
Langdon 01296 696092; Joan Walton
758332*

As you know, I shall be retiring at the AGM and a decision will be made on the future of the club - which has been in existence since 1956. Please come and give your views about whether the club still forms an important part of village life and still has a function to provide entertainment at St Leonards Parish Hall.

Joan Walton 758332



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INSPIRED BY THE CHILTERN WOODLANDS?

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*More details can be found at
www.chilternsaonb.org/special,
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MISS FRANCALIEN JOYCE HOLDEN EDWARDS

Miss Edwards was born in Wrexham, Clwyd, the youngest of three sisters. She was educated in Bangor and at Lady Margaret Hall, her specialist subjects being mathematics (with art). Her teaching career brought her to Chesham and White Hill Girls (Secondary) School.

In 1942 she applied for, and was offered, two headships; one in Swaffham, Norfolk, and the other here in Hawridge. She moved from Chesham to Putnams, and took up the school post on 14 April 1942, remaining there for 37 years before retiring on 31 August 1979.



After this time, she continued for many years as a School Governor, attending school functions as long as she was able. She presented the school with palm crosses every year. As headmistress, she encouraged each child to adopt the school motto 'Aim High', and jobs were never left to languish, as she carried out her other maxim 'Kill It'. For many years she led the local scouts, climbing the fantail of the windmill to hoist the flag at the end of war. In August 1945 she was at the Scout HQ, Gilwell Park, Chigwell, Essex when the bomb fell on Hiroshima.

Miss Edwards was on the original committee of the Hawridge Church Fete (1942). After a number of years the school and Cholesbury joined and took their share of profits – Cholesbury sharing to this day. After many years running the crafts and

gifts, she took over the Grand Draw. Over recent years a procession of past pupils, residents and friends visited her in the blue tent in the afternoon.

Loyal school staff and pupils from every decade remained in touch and will have their own individual memories, from playing cricket and taking nature walks on the common opposite the old building, to Christmas parties and participation in local music festivals. Right up to a year ago staff met annually in the summer.

In the early 1970s the closure of the schools at St Leonards and Ashley Green led to the amalgamation of the three schools, and children were brought in by bus for the first time. She oversaw this expansion and the ensuing increase in staffing.

New buildings were built for the expansion of the school here to accommodate the greater numbers. Soon after, she led the school in a week's celebration for its centenary in July 1974. When the hall was built, she prepared a time capsule which is buried in the foundations of the new hall.

Miss Edwards was a long-serving member of Hawridge Parochial Church Council, a former Diocesan Synod Representative, and latterly Electoral Roll Officer, and a regular member of the church congregation, ringing the bell for each service. She acted as Sacristan, looking after the altar linen.

In 1988 she moved from Putnams to Tudor Cottage. For many years she could be seen pursuing her hobby of gardening, mowing the lawns and common at breakneck speed. Nothing was done slowly.

Miss Edwards had battled with poor sight after complications when she contracted measles at the age of five. Typically, in latter years she refused to let increasingly failing sight and hearing curtail her activities, and until the last three weeks of her life she managed to get out and about in the car. Her indomitable spirit kept her going to the end.

Revd. David Burgess

MORE TEA, VICAR?

by the Reverend David Burgess

Most of the time, life in the Four Parishes proceeds pretty serenely. Unusually, though, I've had something of a hot question to deal with over the last six



months or so - one variation or another on: "David - what's the difference between a Priest in Charge and a Vicar?"

It's a fair question. If you've not been privy to PCC discussions over the last few months, or you're not an avid follower of the Church press or an eagle-eyed reader of the 'Daily Telegraph' appointments column, you may be wondering why it's surfaced at all.

Historically, each parish in the Church of England has provided its minister with the freehold of his or her church - referred to as the 'living'. The minister is an incumbent and literally takes possession of the church at the time of his or her induction.

This is still the situation throughout the C of E, though, slowly, moves are underway to place the employment situation of the clergy on a more modern footing. As things stand, though, any exception to this rule has to involve the suspension of the living.

This was the case when I was appointed eleven years ago. If (and only if) there's likely to be pastoral reorganisation within a parish or group of parishes - merger or closure, for example - the Diocese can apply to have the freehold suspended, and the minister, rather than being an incumbent, is appointed as a priest in charge.

It's a complete reversal of an incumbent's status. If a parish situation were ever to

break down completely, a priest in charge could have a very difficult time of it indeed. There are isolated incidences of this happening, and when it does, there are no employment rights attached to the post whatsoever; no contract, terms or conditions of employment, line management, or disciplinary and grievance procedures. Conversely, short of being found guilty of disgraceful moral conduct, an incumbent has absolute security of tenure.

Personally, I think that neither extreme is healthy, and I hope that the new arrangements being proposed will offer a balanced solution. For now, though, the Diocese has agreed that no pastoral reorganisation is in the offing, and together with four other colleagues in the Wendover Deanery I've been made an incumbent - in my case, Vicar of The Lee and Rector of Hawridge, Cholesbury and St. Leonard's.

In one sense, the change is legal; in parts quite obscurely so. It certainly won't affect what I do in the parishes on a day-to-day basis - unless you've held back these last eleven years on offering me "More tea, Vicar?" because you didn't believe I was one.... In another sense, though, the change is genuine. Security in employment isn't the be-all and end-all of things, but having a measure of it has made a slight psychological difference. And for the parishes as well, there's a degree of uncertainty that's been removed, and that has to be good for the consistency of Christian mission and ministry within our communities.

David

Postscript

I'm aware that I've left an obvious follow-up question unanswered - "What's the difference between a Rector and a Vicar?" To explain that would take almost as much space as this current article. Perhaps I'll prepare an answer for those who really want to know, and email it to those who ask. Perhaps...

CHURCH SERVICES - June & July 2008

DATE	DAY	St. John the Baptist THE LEE			St. Leonard's ST LEONARDS			St. Laurence CHOLESBURY			St. Mary's HAWRIDGE			NOTES
1 Jun	Trinity 2	8.00	Holy Communion	DB	11.00	Parish Communion	DB	9.30	Parish Communion	IC	9.30	Family Service	DB	Mid-Week Holy Communion 10.00am every Wednesday at the Lee
		11.00	Matins	IC		Sunday School	VO				6.00pm	Evensong	IC	
8 Jun	Trinity 3	10.00	Parish Communion	DB	6.00pm	Parish Communion	DB	10.45	Matins	IC	9.30	Holy Communion	IC	
			Sunday School	JuH										
15 Jun	Trinity 4	8.00	No Service		11.15	Family Service	DB	9.30	Holy Communion	IC	10.45	Parish Communion	IC	
		10.00	On the Green	DB		& BBQ								
			Family Service											Holy Communion Matins & Evensong (Book of Common Prayer)
22 Jun	Trinity 5	10.00	Parish Communion	JH	11.00	Matins	DB	9.45	Family Pets	DB	10.45	Parish Communion	GB	Parish Communion & Morning Service (Common Worship)
			(Patronal)			& Baptism			Service					
29 Jun	Trinity 6	11.00	Joint service at		11.00	Joint Family	DB	11.00	Joint service at		11.00	Joint service at		
			St Leonards			Summer Praise			St Leonards			St Leonards		Hawridge Patronal Festival
6 Jul	Trinity 7	8.00	Holy Communion	DB	11.00	Parish Communion	DB	9.30	Parish Communion	IC	9.30	School/Family	DB	DB = Rev. David Burgess IC = Rev. Ivor Cornish JH = Rev. John Hull JW = Rev. Jack Walne GB = Gary Benyon JuH = Judy Hart VO = Virginia Oldham JoW = Joan Walton
		11.00	Matins	IC		Sunday School	VO				6.00pm	Evensong	IC	
						& Baptism						Holy Communion		
13 Jul	Trinity 8	10.00	Parish Communion	DB/	6.00pm	Parish Communion	DB	10.45	Matins	IC	9.30	Parish Communion	IC	
			Sunday School	Lay										
20 Jul	Trinity 9	8.00	Holy Communion	JW	11.00	Family Service	DB	9.30	Parish Communion	IC	10.45	Parish Communion	IC	
		10.00	Family Service	Lay/DB										
27 Jul	Trinity 10	10.00	Parish Communion	JH	11.00	Matins	GB	9.45	Quiet	IC	10.45	Parish Communion	IC	

PARISH OFFICERS

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The Revd. Ivor Cornish
01296 630345

Hon Curate

The Revd. John Hull
01296 624487

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Hawridge

Joan Walton 01494 758332
James Watson 01494 758914

Cholesbury

John Farmer 01494 758715
jandb.Farmer@btopenworld.com

FROM THE REGISTERS

ST LEONARDS

Holy Matrimony

29 March 2008 Liza Shirley and Mark Henry

Holy Baptism

11 May 2008 Alice Elizabeth Baddon and Timothy Martin Barber

CHURCH MATTERS

HAWRIDGE

Patronal Festival – Our annual Concert with

Iain Ledingham at the
School is on **Friday**

27 June at 7pm. We are very fortunate to have Iain and singers from The Royal Academy of Music to perform for us once again on this delightful occasion. Those of you who have been before know what an excellent evening this is and, if you have not been before, a real treat is in store for music lovers. Tickets available from 758214, 758332 and 758914. The Concert is dedicated to Miss Edwards.

Celebrations will be at the church on **Saturday 5th and Sunday 6th July**. The church will be decorated with art work by the children of Hawridge and Cholesbury School and with flowers arranged by members of the congregation. The theme this year is famous people from The Bible.

The church will be open for viewing the displays on Saturday 5th from 2-5pm and on Sunday 6th from about 10.15am to 5.30pm. Light refreshments will be available.

Sunday 6 July – We are holding two services: **9.30am** – a **Family Service** to which pupils from the school with their families are invited and **Evensong with Holy Communion** at **6pm**.

We want to make this a day of



celebration and a 'Back to Church' day by asking people to bring a friend to the services.

The Churchyard – Most of you who have seen the churchyard recently will agree that it is being well maintained and has really been looked after beautifully. We do not have the manpower to maintain the churchyard voluntarily so we need to employ someone to do this work for us. This obviously costs money and therefore we would be pleased if anyone would like to make a donation towards this cost so that the churchyard can continue to be kept tidy. Please contact the Treasurer, *Margaret Walton* - 758332

Don't forget the joint (with Cholesbury) Annual Fete on August Bank Holiday Monday 25th.

Help is needed with running stalls, setting up in the morning and clearing up at the end. If you feel you can contribute in any way - even for a short time - we would be so grateful. Please contact *John Farmer* 758715 – *James Watson* 758914 – *Joan Walton* 758332 or the *Fete Co-ordinator, Elizabeth Tomlin* 758214.

Hawridge Church Walking Group – The **June** walk will be on **Tuesday 3rd** at the later time of 10.30am – meeting at the car park halfway along the road leading to the Bridgewater Monument at Ashridge, with coffee served afterwards.

The **July** walk will be on **Tuesday 1st**

meeting at Hawridge Church at 10am and returning to The Laurels for coffee. A donation of 50p towards church funds is always much appreciated.

ST LEONARDS

Our new choir – well OK, not quite but we are practising and singing a particularly

lovely version of the *Gloria* and will have the music at the back of the church for

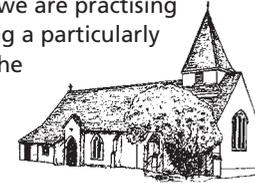
anyone interested in taking a copy home to look at it. It just needs a little confidence and with Richard's playing and encouragement, we will certainly get there!

Family Service and BBQ – Sunday 15 June. This has been a very popular event in the past few years and is our 'thank you' to the many families and children who support us at our Family Services and Sunday School. The service doesn't begin till 11.15am and the BBQ will start at 12 noon. Do please come and join in! It's Father's Day as well... rest assured Dads, you won't be forgotten!

Tea Parties – These continue to be extremely well attended and there is always a new face in the group! Do join us for an hour – whether you are young or old you will be most welcome. We meet again at about 3pm on **Wednesday 25 June** and on **Wednesday 23 July**. If you prefer to be collected and returned home, please ring *Anne Lake* – 01296 620169

Quinquennial Inspection – This has been carried out by Michael Bartosch of Bartosch and Stokes and while he was in general pleased with the condition of the church, we badly need to repair and renew the outer churchyard boundary wall which is now considered unsafe. When we have obtained estimates, the PCC will take a decision as to how we are going to deal with this.

Headstones - There are a number of headstones leaning badly at varying



Mark Henry and Liza Shirley wedding

angles. Please do get in touch with the Churchwardens if you know that a family headstone might need attention – we would be delighted to hear from you.

Wedding – Nothing, not even the rain, could dampen the spirits of Mark Henry and Liza Shirley who were married on Saturday 29 March. Liza, who grew up locally in the Chesham area looked beautiful in pale cream silk, matched by her two little bridesmaids. Mark and his family moved to St Leonards when he was only ten so it was a truly local occasion surrounded by family and friends. Our congratulations to you both!



Alice Baddon and Timothy Barber christening

Baptism - It was a perfect day in every way for the Christening of Alice Baddon and Timothy Barber. The church was full to overflowing as David welcomed these new and beautifully behaved members into the Church. Barbara and Richard and Julia and Martin – with their families – were piped into the church and Alice’s brother Jonathan and Timothy’s brother, Albert looked very handsome in their kilts! The sun shone!

The Small Rural Parishes Forum took place again in the Church Room on Thursday 10 April. This is proving to be of enormous benefit to all of the country parishes in the Deanery.

There was a good exchange

of ideas covering a wide range of matters common to us all from services for children to different ways to fund raise! We will meet again in October.

Fortnightly Discussion Group in the Church Room – David has begun his study course for the summer. His subject is ‘Visionaries’ and we met first on Wednesday 30 April when there were so many of us that David ran out of papers! It was a really good start to the course and everyone is most welcome to join in. Each course stands on its own and engenders lively debate...even if straying occasionally from the initial subject! We meet on 11th and 25th June and finally on 9 July at 8pm.

Roger Beedell – It was a great tribute to a very dear man that so many people were at the Crematorium on Thursday 1st May for Roger’s service. This was a simple service to remember and rejoice in the many things Roger had achieved and to express our love and support for Cindy and the family.



The piper

CHOLESBURY

We will be serving Cream

Teas on Sunday 1 June in the Village Hall.

The home-made cakes and scones are the big attraction and will be available from 2pm to 5pm. There will be stalls and, at this time, Tombola and a Plants stall are definite. If the weather is favourable you can relax outside and watch a rural world go by. This is an important fund raising event for the church and we look forward to seeing you.

At the end of June we hold the annual **Pets Service**. This is on **Sunday 22 June** at 9.45. The service will be outside the Church if the weather is good. Dogs have been the Cholesbury favourite over the years but all pets are welcome to be blessed as part of God’s world. The service is based on our Family Service and all are welcome.



Our best wishes to Ian and Amanda Williams and two year old Sam as they move to Huntingdonshire. Sam was baptised in Cholesbury Church and the family said goodbye to us on Sunday 27 April.

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CHOLESBURY-CUM-ST LEONARDS W.I.

The Quiz and Supper held on Wednesday 7 May was a great success. It was a warm summer evening - at last - and very pleasant to have all the doors open at St Leonards Parish Hall. Thanks to everyone involved from WI for the very good food and to Sandy Clarke for setting the questions and being quiz master on the evening.

The next event will be the **Murder Mystery Evening**, so why not join in with this on **Saturday 14 June**. Tickets for the evening are £12.50, including supper - bring your own drinks. Get in touch with Carol Henry 758435, to book your seats for what promises to be a lively evening.

The regular monthly meeting follows on **Monday 16 June**. **Creative Colour** is the theme, and if you have ever bought an outfit which you later realise just does nothing for you, this is the evening to find out which colours you should be wearing. Looking ahead to **July 21**, which is our birthday meeting, Louise Reed is coming along as **Marjorie Thurston**, to tell us about her **Life in World War II**.

The Murder Mystery Evening starts at 7.30pm and meetings start at 8pm, all in St Leonards Parish Hall. Give Carol a call.

A STEP IN THE RIGHT DIRECTION

At The Full Moon PH you will find a special shoe recycling box, provided by The Variety Club. Put any unwanted shoes in pairs and in a bag. They will eventually be re-furbished and repaired, providing valuable employment in developing countries, and footwear for those in need.

NEIGHBOURHOOD WATCH

The Traveller Liaison Officer has said that travellers have recently been offering building repairs and tree-cutting services. They tend to target elderly and vulnerable residents who they can intimidate more easily. Please report any such visits to the police on **0845 8 505 505**, with details and descriptions of any vehicles being used, and ask that your information is passed to PC Jim McGuinness to assist his on-going enquiries.

If you see a blue Rover 827, registration number M320 TVW, please report this to the above number. It is believed this car has been involved in thefts from motor vehicles and burglary of dwellings, particularly in the early to late evenings. Description of the occupants would be very useful. There is a warning to all owners of rural property to be aware that the theft of oil and diesel is on the increase, as well as quad bikes, power tools, hay and animal feed. Please report any suspicious vehicles, with the make, colour and registration plate where possible, as well as a description of occupants. Be suspicious of anyone who cold calls asking about vehicles/animals for sale, lost dogs, grazing/livery enquiries, or selling any equipment/tools from the back of a van. Police advise that asking people to call back to see 'the owner' at a more convenient time should sort out the genuine callers. Use the non-emergency number **0845 8 505 505** to report an incident and if a crime is in progress, **dial 999**. A red van and a maroon transit type van with two Irish males were involved in the Henley area earlier in May. For information on crime prevention and securing your property, contact your local crime reduction advisor on **08458 505 505**.

Shirley Blomfield 758314



The 'NAG'

The Neighbourhood Action Group (NAG) for our 'Chesham Rural' area covering the 'horseshoe' of parishes from Hyde Heath to Latimer was launched on 1 May, led by PC Melvyn Mutch (our Neighbourhood Specialist Officer) and several of his colleagues from Chesham police station. Representatives from County, Chiltern District and Parish Councils were there and some members of the public who have agreed to be part of it. The aim is to take **action** (not just talk!) on 'quality of life' things bothering people in our community. At the exploratory meetings in December and February the top three worries turned out to be **speeding, fly-tipping, and potholes**, so those are what our NAG is tackling to start with. Potholes is of course Bucks CC's responsibility and your Parish Council has already been working hard for months (years!) to get it to repair ours - our chairman was out with the BCC repair managers yet again on 6 May to agree where the worst patches are that need planing and patching. But we're in competition with all of Bucks for limited resources so don't hold your breath! The next NAG meetings will tackle speeding and fly-tipping.

Our Neighbourhood Policing team is led by **PC 6150 Melvyn Mutch (mobile 07976 989238)**. Our Police Community Support Officer is **PCSO 9418 Les Roche (mobile 07813 101881)**, with whom I drove round our parish in March to show her some popular fly-tipping spots, etc and to meet a few people such as key holders of churches and village halls. You can also ring the **police non-emergency number 0845 8 505 505** and ask for them by their names (and numbers) at the Chesham station. Ring them if you spot any suspicious activity - for example, there's a lot of metal being stolen round our area at present.

I am your parish councillor on the NAG and will report progress through **Hilltop**

News. The main point from the 1 May meeting was that people claim not to know what's being done, so if you want to find out or get action moving, turn up at our monthly parish council meetings and NAG your councillors!

Caroline Coates 758102

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CHOLESBURY- CUM-ST LEONARDS HORTICULTURAL SOCIETY NEWS

On Friday 9 May the Hort Soc hosted another successful plant sale and supper. We were also delighted to welcome Brian Hoar back to give a short talk on preparing vegetables for showing - there is now no excuse for us all not turning out correctly presented exhibits at the autumn show! Thank you to all who made donations of plants, especially those of you who were unable to attend the sale and supper but who sent pots along anyway!

Our annual Open Garden and Tea will be held at 'Hengrove', in Chivery on **Sunday 22 June** from 2 - 5pm. 'Hengrove' has a beautiful country garden with herbaceous borders, woods, and a walled vegetable garden, and we are grateful to Mr Burgess for opening his gardens to us again. All proceeds will go to the Iain Rennie Hospice at Home charity.

St Leonards Parish Hall Fete will take place on **7 June**, and this year Barbara Baddon will be running the Plant Stall. Plants not sold at the Hort Soc plant sale in May will be available, but Barbara will be grateful for as many additional plants as you can spare. Please take plants up to the stall on the morning of 7 June or at the start of the Fete.

CHILTERN CATS PROTECTION

Registered Charity 203644

Rescue and re-homing of cats and kittens in the Chiltern area.

Can you offer a home to one of the cats in our care? Please contact

Sue on 01494 776151

Details of the evening open garden for members only will be circulated as soon as these have been finalised. If you are not already a member, this is an opportunity to view a garden that is not always open to the public. Membership costs only £2 per year and as well as the evening garden visit, other benefits include discount at several local garden centres and reduced entry for classes at the annual show. Please contact Diana Garner on 758347 for details.

The Schedule for the Horticultural Society Show, which this year takes place on **Saturday 30 August** at Hawridge and Cholesbury School, is now available on the Cholesbury web site at www.cholesbury.com. If you click on the Horticultural Society tab on the left hand side of the screen, and scroll down to the bottom of the page, you will find a button to click to print the schedule, as well as the pattern and instructions for the stitching challenge class.

Anne Brown 758890

Hort Soc Committee

www.cholesbury.com/hortsoc.htm

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2nd Prize £10
Mr M Reynolds, Asheridge

May 2008

1st Prize £15
Mr T Harris, St Leonards

2nd Prize £10
Mrs E Redding, Buckland Common

New Members always welcome, please contact the Treasurer, Mick Mariscotti 837093

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"DORIS SCADDING AND HER INFANT CLASS": RESPONSE...

I read with interest the article about Miss Scadding's Life as an infant teacher at St. Leonards School. (Hilltop News April/May issue). However, I note that in the paragraph at the bottom of column two (p.44) it refers to Mr Wescombe as being the headmaster at the time she started work at the school; this is incorrect.

Mr. Charles Wescombe was headmaster of St. Leonards School for 35 years from 1890 until his retirement in December 1925. He married Elizabeth Clement in 1891 and their only child, a daughter Georgina Victoria (Ina) was born in 1895 at St. Leonards. On leaving St. Leonards in 1925 Mr and Mrs Wescombe retired to live in Bath.

Charles Wescombe was held in high esteem by all the people in St. Leonards and beyond and his school was run with discipline – the exercise books that remain are evidence of the high standard of English, arithmetic, writing and art that was achieved. Charles Wescombe was not just the headmaster but was a friend and support to all who came his way.

The Wescombe grave, with its cross and stone plinth, commemorating also his wife Elizabeth and Georgina Victoria (Ina), stands to the right hand side as one looks out of the south door and will be familiar to many.

Sheila Davies

CRICKETERS OFF TO A FLYER IN NEW LEAGUE

After heavy rain had made the pitches soft, welcome dry weather greeted the first day of the new season. The Saturday 1st XI travelled to White Waltham, near Maidenhead, for their first match in the Chilterns League. After a wayward start, our bowlers re-discovered their line and length to bowl out our hosts for just 125. H&C openers Sankalpa Gunasekara (known to all as Guni) and Sean Robinson knocked off the runs in just 15 overs. Guni finished on 79 and peppered the front gardens of houses lining the ground (just as well we were not playing The Leel!).

The early finish enabled us (after sharing a pint or two with our hosts) to get back home in time to see our 2nd XI beat White Waltham seconds. Chasing 223, Chris Philippou (96) and Craig Hill (61) set up the victory, with Lindsay Penn applying the coup de grace with some lusty hitting to win in the very last over.

The colts, as ever, have turned up enthusiastically and in great numbers for the start of the season and I am sure they will have great fun. In the next Hilltop News, I hope to report on continuing success throughout the club.

Graham Lincoln, Secretary, Hawridge & Cholesbury CC: 758449



Black is the new grey for the shadow-tailed one

I'm not sure if it is just me or have others noticed all our seasons seem mixed up these days? I guess it could be to do with a climate influenced by global warming but then again just as easily the English obsession with the weather. Last year, our summer was much wetter than in recent years (as wet as 1914; a very wet year). This year, although a repeat is not expected, the Met Office tell us we are liable to have some unsettled spells with cool wet spring-like days as late as June or July.

The name 'squirrel' comes originally from a Greek word meaning 'that which makes a shade with its tail'. Squirrels are back in the news again for two reasons. Firstly grey squirrels have established themselves in Scotland, territory of the 'reds', for the first time and secondly, black squirrels are displacing greys in England. In mainland Europe black and albino variants of red squirrels are quite common but are unusual in Britain, meanwhile albino variants of grey squirrels have been regularly reported, mainly in Essex, Kent, Surrey and Sussex. Between 1876 and 1929, around 30 introductions of American grey squirrels were made into England and Wales although the ones introduced to Woburn Park (Bedfordshire) at the end of the 19th Century are attributed with their subsequent naturalisation in England. 'Black' examples of 'greys' have until now been limited in number but the situation is

changing rapidly in seems. Surveys indicate there are about two million grey squirrels in the UK and between 125 and 150 thousand 'reds' the majority of which are in Scotland. However it has been estimated there are at also at least 25,000 black squirrels distributed across the eastern side of England. The 'black' is a variant of the common American invader the 'grey'. When I say black, some are ruddy/brown/black while others are a sleek jet black, the latter offspring of two ruddy adults, two black or combination of both.

But why? Where blacks occur they appear to be dominant over their grey cousin. Genetically they are missing a sequence of DNA. As originally described by Darwin in his theory of Natural Selection for such a mutation to persist it must be giving the black variety an advantage: in this case providing the black with a better immune system or higher levels of testosterone in its blood, which in turn influences the animal's behaviour. In short they are thought to display more aggressive behaviour than the more placid grey – tell that to a red squirrel at the time the greys were introduced!

The first sighting of the black mutant was in 1912 in Letchworth Hertfordshire, which now has a black squirrel as its town mascot. Since then they have spread out to other parts of Herts and Cambridgeshire where in some villages (e.g. Girton) they represent 50% of all the squirrels present and it is anticipated to move into parts of East Anglia. So are they coming this way? Maybe. The sightings nearest to us have been in Whipsnade and nearby Studham,

which is, but a squirrel leap from Ashridge forest. So it is quite possible the odd black shadow-tail is lurking in a beechwood around here. Keep an eye open.

There are around 260 species of bee in the UK. Each year, regular as clockwork, our outhouse plays host to a small but growing colony of wild social bees. The queen that hatched at the end of summer last year and hibernated over winter is first seen in late March/early April, seeking out a suitable venue to lay its eggs. In this case the space behind some pine lap, accessed via a discrete knot-hole. May sees the first activity of this year's brood of workers. As I write this they are streaming back and forth, decked in the yellow pollen gathered in the rape fields about a mile or so away. By June the hive is at its height of activity as the queen will be in full-swing egg-laying, supported by the drones, which according to a local (female) apiarist, are "just typical of males, hanging around the nest just in case the queen needs servicing!" These small bees are almost silent; there is just a slight hum as you listen close to the entrance. The peace is disturbed though by the low-frequency drone of a larger very black and hairless bumble bee ferreting (can a bee ferret?) back and forth aside the pine boards until it alights, switches off the power and then silently enters via the hive entrance. This methinks may be a cuckoo bumble-bee, one of six varieties we have here. Their life is one of solitude and their habit is parasitic and brutal. They carry no excess baggage so are honed for speed and attack. The mission of these all female agents 'women in black', is to enter the hive undetected, kill the queen, lay their own eggs and exit unscathed mimicking the behaviour of the social bees and so avoiding discovery. Meanwhile the 'midwived-cuckoos' are looked after by the mesmerised host drones. Not this time though as this cuckoo has been rumbled and makes a speedy retreat from the nest.

Hedgerows are at their very best this

time of year. My suggestion this time is to make a bee-line for one near you and dally a little to take the vista in. Hedges are just blooming alive with animals on the make at the moment. The creamy-white of elderflower takes over the baton from hawthorn. Clumps of yellow archangel point to a hedge-line that is all that remains of scrubbed out woodland. A typical hedgerow herb is the pinky-white cuckoo flower (lady's smock), which is out between May and June in these parts. It's just one of many given an alternative name by poets or herbalists of old associating them with the arrival, call or departure of the eponymous bird. Others include cuckoo buttons (burdock), cuckoo's bread and cheese (wood sorrel), cuckoo boots and stockings (bluebell), cuckoo rose (wild daffodil) and cuckoo buds (buttercup) used by Shakespeare in Loves Labours Lost.

**Cuckoo, bring your song here!
Warrant, Act and Summons, please,
For Spring to pass along here!
Cuckoo Song - Rudyard Kipling**

And finally, I will have to be more careful in the future when asking as I did last time for reports of the first cuckoo as it seems I may be causing a bit of a frenzy around these parts. This year I had both emails and calls over the 12 hours between 15-16 April (a day earlier than last year) announcing arrival of at least one very busy male bird in Hawridge and St Leonards. The males arrive first and fly around calling a lot to try and maintain as large a territory as possible ahead of the females. Interestingly enough, cuckoos are not the only ones on the hunt for bird nests this time of year. Despite having strict vegetarian habits for eleven months of the year, the shadow-tailed one is also partial to a bird's egg or two about now.

Questions and comments welcome as always.

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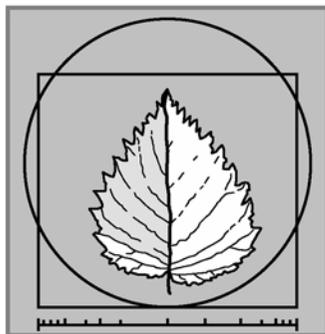
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We welcome all news, letters and articles which are of general interest and relevance to the Hilltop Villages. Material for inclusion in the next edition (August/September) should go directly to Graham Lincoln, Imogen Vallance (Societies), or Anne Butterworth (Church Matters) by 9 July latest.

Please note that photos sent online must be at least 2,500 x 1,750 pixels in size.

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