

A photograph of a forest path. In the foreground, there is a large field of yellow daffodils with green leaves. A paved path winds through a forest of tall, thin trees. The trees have sparse green leaves, suggesting early spring. The sky is visible through the canopy, and the overall scene is bright and sunny.

# *Hilltop News*

*April & May 2018*



# Spring into an early Easter!

This edition of Hilltop News should reach you a little earlier than usual. This is because Easter comes early this year and we want to give you plenty of time to note our special events and church services.

Coloured eggs are ancient symbols of new life and are now connected with Easter. Traditionally, hard-boiled eggs were given as Easter presents. Today, to the preference of most of us, Easter eggs are usually made of chocolate. It is calculated that every child in the UK receives an average of 8.8 Easter eggs every year – double their recommended calorie intake for a whole week! No doubt our children at the forthcoming traditional St Leonards Easter Egg Hunt will be no exception!

**Have a Happy Easter!**

### TIM TAYLOR

It is with much sadness we report the death of Tim Taylor – known by so many of us in the Hilltop Villages. On 16 February more than 230 people came to St Leonards Church to pay tribute to him – a mark of the esteem in which he was held. A Celebration of Tim’s life will appear in our next edition.

### Front cover

*March came in like the proverbial lion, with snow and freezing temperatures causing disruption. Let’s hope the month goes out like a lamb, with us enjoying spring-like scenes like this in the Hilltops...*

### Inside cover

*David Dennis continues to provide stunning photos – this time with some of the flowers, butterflies and moths to be seen locally during April and May...*

Hilltop News

## A note from David

As I write, I’ve been home for six weeks now after spending ten weeks in hospital.

There’s still a long way to go to full recovery after four operations and a total of thirty hours

under anaesthetic! However, things look promising and my specialist thinks things are on track, though it will take time.

Penny and I are enormously grateful to members of the four churches and the community for their help, support, good wishes and prayers. I’ve said before that I believe it’s possible to discern when you’re being prayed for, and we’ve been very conscious of this throughout the last five months. We in turn send our best wishes and I hope to be around in the four villages as soon as I can.

In the meantime, I’d like to wish all a happy Easter. Do take advantage of the services that are still being organised and led in my absence – as always, there’s plenty of variety and choice across the four parishes.

David and Penny

### Also in this issue:

**Tony Francis** goes from presenting to painting

**Geoff James** remembers our old brickfields In his Nature Notes, **Chris Brown** looks at the harbingers of Spring

Our **Curvaceous Cook** always thinks of lamb at Easter

...plus all the news from our churches, school, pubs, clubs, councils and societies.



## THE PARISH COUNCIL

The freezing weather has really taken its toll on the roads and we have unfortunately gone, from a position not that long ago, where road repairs were almost up to date, to another long list of repairs needed! TfB are so overwhelmed that they are on an emergency footing of only carrying out essential pothole repairs. Hopefully this will improve along with the weather! On a positive note, Horseblock Lane was repaired in February after several years of it being requested. However, use of topsoil to fill the gulleys was not a sensible move, considering that cars have to come off the road to let others pass, which resulted in a very muddy and slippery drive. TfB were informed of the mistake, but hopefully they will not need to return to repair the road again for several years. The Vale and Hawridge Hill to Pound Lane should be resurfaced in the next few months, with drainage works now completed, and the council is now pushing for resurfacing from Pound Lane to Rays Hill the following year.

Following several delays to the Local Plan, due to changes with parameters set by central government, the plan is back on track and expected to be published in draft form mid to late summer – watch out for updates from us to make sure you get to have your say!

As promised, here is a quick introduction to our two new councillors, who have already been rolling their sleeves up and getting involved in local matters...

### Diane Brackley

"One wet and windy day I was checking emails, like you do, and looking to see what the Hilltop Grapevine had to say, when I saw a notice from the Parish Clerk asking if anyone would like to consider joining the Parish Council. As I had been a councillor for Chesham and Chiltern District Council

for eight years I thought 'why not?' so I attended the next meeting to see what was involved. It was a lovely surprise that I was asked to join them in January. I was married to Malcolm Brackley for fifty years, but he died in 2016 and it was his wish to live in St Leonards, as his great grandparents and grandfather came from there. I have already been involved with local residents on the mobile library consultation, Park Home review and will attend the St Leonards Parish Hall AGM as Parish Council representative."

### Bill Ingram

"Although myself and my wife, Joan, were born in the USA, we are naturalised UK citizens, and our three daughters grew up in St Leonards. We have been full-time residents in St Leonards since June 1979. We came to the UK as an international business executive and international lawyer, respectively. I have been active in village life since arriving. I was a principal participant in the Save the White Lion campaign, an active volunteer supporting the Parish Hall Fete for 35 years and in 2003, I was one of four organisers of the successful campaign to bring ADSL broadband to the Cholesbury exchange. More recently, I have supported Chris Brown in his totally effective campaign to bring SuperFast Broadband to our community. I contributed to the Parish Council's NATS TCN submission document and, more recently, wrote a response on behalf of the community to the recent UK Airspace Policy Consultation. I have also contributed regularly to Hilltop News."

### Greatmoor Energy

Do you ever wonder what happens to the things you put in your waste bin? Your recycling is sorted and passed onto recycling companies, but what about your non-recyclable waste? So far over 2500 visitors to Greatmoor Energy from Waste have found out. All of the residual (non-recyclable) household waste generated in

Buckinghamshire is now processed at the Greatmoor Energy from Waste facility, at Woodham, near Aylesbury. Greatmoor is operated by FCC Environment, in partnership with Buckinghamshire County Council. Greatmoor has the capacity to treat up to 300,000 tonnes of waste a year (approximately 900 tonnes a day), waste which would otherwise have gone to landfill. As a result, it generates a minimum of 22 megawatts of electricity to the national grid – meeting the energy needs of around 36,000 homes. This alternative treatment of waste will result in a saving to Buckinghamshire County Council of approximately £150 million over the 30-year life of the contract.

Guided tours of Greatmoor are available by prior agreement and at no charge. Visiting groups have included WIs, U3As, Rotary Clubs, Scouts, Cubs, Primary Schools and Colleges. A group visit to Greatmoor can be tailored to your requirements and will include a tour around the facility, which includes the control room (where you will be able to see the cranes loading the waste), a visit to the viewing hatch providing an exciting view into the heart of the fire, the turbine hall and the huge condenser fans. The maximum group size for a tour is 15. School visits are available for Key Stage 2 upwards.

If you are not a member of a local group but would like a tour, you can come to one of the open tour days. These are on the following Saturdays - 30 June, 22 September and 24 November. On each day there will be tours at 10am, 12.30 and 3pm. Note that places are available on a strictly booking-in-advance basis only. There is a minimum age limit of 12 on open tours. For more information about Greatmoor please visit [www.Greatmoor.co.uk](http://www.Greatmoor.co.uk).

There are still two half plots available at the allotments, should anyone be interested - rent £12.50 per annum per half plot.

Any queries regarding the Parish please get in touch...

I can be contacted by phone on (01494) 758843, or by email at [parishclerk.ccsipc@gmail.com](mailto:parishclerk.ccsipc@gmail.com) ...and don't forget to check our website... [www.cholesburyparishcouncil.org.uk](http://www.cholesburyparishcouncil.org.uk) where you can find all you need to know about the parish council as well as loads of local information on our noticeboard, including surveys, details of meetings and updates on local services that will affect you!

*Hayley Lewis, Parish Clerk*

### Your councillors are:

John Allen, Chairman: 758095

Nigel Blomfield: 758314

Diane Brackley: 01296 625081

Chris Brown: 758890

Philip Matthews: 758205

Bill Ingram: 758258

Francis Sanger: 758767

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## THE COUNTY COUNCIL

*The Beast from the East made life up in the Hilltop Villages very uncomfortable, however IT made it possible to pin-point the worst affected areas. Thank*



*you to everyone who offered advice on which roads were open and to Transport for Bucks on the huge gritting operation to keep the roads clear as best they could. The snow ploughs were out in the villages and local farmers across the Chilterns were marvellous in helping us to keep mobile and look after the elderly.*

I have been talking to the HS2 team at County Hall about the use of our local roads during the construction phase. The county highway network really isn't adequate for the type of vehicles that will be moving in and we are currently discussing pinch points, junctions and capacity issues with the contractors. The Council will continue to do everything in its power to hold them to account and to ensure you know what work is time-tabled and where. Fusion's work in Great Missenden is an example of the parishes and local liaison groups working with the contractors and HS2. There will be 20 cameras operating locally to monitor truck movements once work starts.

The cold snap has seriously impacted roads across the county and it is proposed to release the maximum amount of money prudently possible from County's reserves to urgently patch and plane as many local roads as possible. The Local Area Technician, Chris Nash, and I had to postpone a visit to look at the worst affected areas during the storm but we will be working closely with

the Parish Council to get our roads into better shape as soon as possible. Please do report any defects quickly so that we can rectify them.

In late February I attended the opening of the Buckingham University Medical School Academic Centre, adjacent to Milton Keynes hospital, by the Duke of Kent. Professor Karol Sikora, the Dean of Medicine at Buckingham, has an opportunity to use this new centre of excellence for the benefit of Buckinghamshire residents as it is well equipped with modern technology.

Several residents recently came to a Reception at County Hall to celebrate the success of local business. We invited everyone who had won the Queen's Award for Enterprise in the last five years and of course several companies in the Chilterns were present. We also invited the Queen's Award office to come along and explain the application process and hope that more companies will apply.

In early March Lady Justice Macur DBE, the first female Senior Presiding Judge in England and Wales, came to Aylesbury for the closure of the historic Crown Court building in Market Square and the opening of the new Crown Court in Walton Street. The new building is a credit to our local judge, His Honour Francis Sheridan, who has made enormous efforts to keep one of the busiest Crown Courts in England and Wales fully functional in Aylesbury.

Please get in touch if I can help raise your concerns with officers at County Hall.

*Tricia Birchley,  
Pbirchley@buckscc.gov.uk, 01296 651823*

## HAWRIDGE AND CHOLESBURY C OF E SCHOOL

*The two "bonus" (depending on whether you are of school age or not) days off due to the snow are now in the past and it's lovely to see the bulbs coming up around the school grounds. Hopefully, we are now experiencing the start of Spring for the last weeks of term before the Easter break.*

As we approach this important time in the church calendar all the children have been invited to create an Easter garden to display at school before the holidays. All completed gardens will be shown at school and everyone who creates one will be given house points. The gardens are a fun way for the younger children to focus and learn about what Easter is actually about – not just the chocolate side of things!

The second working party for the school pond took place before the snow fell and parents and the older children were invited to come along and help develop this wonderful outdoor learning space. The damaged pond liner has been taken out and a new one put in and the pond landscaped to make it better for the wildlife and for pond dipping. It is hoped that by the time the children return from the Easter break it will be back in full use again.

The snow did manage to disrupt World Book Day which was subsequently held the week after. All the children came dressed as a character from a book they have enjoyed. Prizes were awarded for some of the best costumes and, as an extra challenge, the children were also tasked with dressing one of their toy bears as a favourite character. The school are also using this time to have a refurbishment of the school library with new books for the children to choose from as well as some extra bean bags. Key Stage 2 children are currently reading a number of books that have been chosen by the

teachers. After Easter there will then be a 'Battle of the Books' afternoon where children are asked questions, in their house groups, on the books they have read.

The school held a RE afternoon which was deemed a great success as the children considered the title - Christianity: A worldwide religion? The children learnt about the similarities and differences of Christianity around the world today. In one activity they learnt about Christians in Uganda before heading off to think about how Easter is celebrated in Germany. There was African singing, church building using Lego, the making of Catholic rosary beads and clay scallop shells marking pilgrimage in Spain. The final assembly saw children sharing their understanding that Christianity is actively practised across the world today. I am sure Bishop Alan will be very impressed to hear about this and the Key Stage 1 led Mothering Service when he visits at the end

Continued ►

**Sometimes it can be difficult to cope with the challenges that life throws at us so talking to a counsellor may be helpful.**

From my counselling practice near Wendover, I offer a warm, friendly and confidential space for you to talk through any problems you may be facing such as anxiety, stress, sadness, low self-esteem, anger and relationship difficulties.

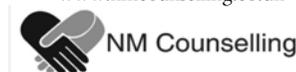
For further information on how I may be able to help or to book an initial appointment, please contact me.

**Natalie McGourty**  
MBACP, BA (Hons) Psychology

**07976 968166**

natalie@nmcounselling.co.uk

www.nmcounselling.co.uk



of March to officially open the new Early Years Foundation Stage garden.

The school choir, and those who play violin and trumpet, are taking part in '2018 In Concert' - the Chilterns Primary Music Festival at the end of March at King's Church, Amersham. Looking further ahead, the parents are starting to organise the float for the Chesham Carnival with a hope to emulate the previous couple of years, which have been a great success. Clarkes of Amersham have again kindly donated the lorry to use as a float for a theme of 'Music', with Hawridge and Cholesbury adopting a Rock and Roll style.

Lastly, the annual school **Spring Fayre** will take place on **Saturday 19 May** between 11am and 2pm. The petting farm and Go-Karts have been booked and we are hoping for another successful day to be able to continue investing in the children. As ever, you are all welcome.

James Morris

## SHORT MAT BOWLS at St Leonards Parish Hall

Whether you play regularly or, wouldn't know a 'Wood' from a 'Fender', all are welcome!

For details please contact



**Bob Wilson**  
on  
**01296 625523**

*Sponsored by St. Leonards Parish Hall  
Management Committee*

## NEIGHBOURHOOD WATCH

In the recent Neighbourhood Watch e-newsletter 'Our News' (Feb/March 2018) there is news that Neighbourhood Watch has teamed up with the national charity Dogs Trust in a campaign to help prevent pets from being stolen. For more information and advice visit [www.dogstrust.org.uk/dogtheft](http://www.dogstrust.org.uk/dogtheft).



Figures released in January 2018 by the Office of National Statistics show that domestic burglary has risen by more than 30% in the year to September 2017, according to the latest police recorded figures, and overall total crime is up 14%. However, these figures are nowhere near levels in the 1990s, when crime peaked.

Fitting good window and door locks and always leaving a light on when out in the evening will help towards preventing burglary.

There is always the need to stay vigilant and report suspicious activity, 999 in an emergency, 101 otherwise.

## CHOLESBURY-CUM-ST LEONARDS W.I.

For our February meeting there was a change of speaker due to illness. Hilary Sheppard, who is on the committee, brought forward her talk scheduled for November and gave us an amusing and entertaining account of her work as a Registrar, which included coping with the unexpected and encounters with animals and birds during wedding ceremonies.

A letter of thanks for our donation had been received from Medical Detection Dogs - our charity for the past year - and

members discussed suggestions for a charity to support for this year. The fundraiser for this will be a Quiz to be held in October.

Our **April meeting (Monday 16th)** is a talk with slides on 'The Ridgeway'.

John Tyler offers a "blister-free walk" along one of the oldest trackways in Europe, with descriptions of its prehistory and the rich wildlife that it supports today. All are welcome to our meetings, which start at 8pm in St Leonards Parish Hall.

May is the month where we discuss Resolutions. More information on these can be found on the NFWI website together with other WI news from around the country. We have been pleased to welcome new members in recent months. If you are interested in coming along to our meetings, either as a visitor or perhaps thinking of joining, please look for more detail on the [cholesbury.com](http://cholesbury.com) website or get in touch with Carol Henry (758435).

Shirley Blomfield (758314)

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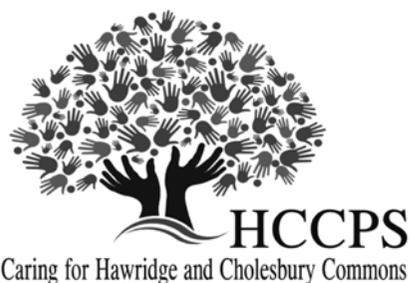
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## HAWRIDGE & CHOLESBURY COMMONS PRESERVATION SOCIETY

### Woodland work

After a very challenging, wet and snowy winter, the woodland work is finished at least until the Autumn and our own Conservation Group sessions finish at the end of March, to allow the birds to nest in peace. There may be an additional session to compensate for cancellations due to rain and snow and the Summer volunteers will soon be doing their work. Our thanks to Christine and all of those involved in this on-going work for their sterling efforts on our behalf.

We are hopeful that the remaining way-marking posts for riders can be installed on the top ride before too long though we are dependent on employing contractors for this work and they will doubtless be busy once the weather conditions improve.

### Litterblitz

This year the much-needed Litterblitz starts on Easter weekend and will continue to cover the following weekend as well (Friday 30 March – Monday 9 April). Any help that you are able to give at this time will be very much appreciated as it is important to clear the rubbish before the growing foliage obscures it. I still have a few litter pickers, which are free to anyone who regularly collects rubbish around the common. If you would like one please contact me

[lindsaygriffin@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:lindsaygriffin@yahoo.co.uk) or 758440.

As usual, we will leave garbage bags by the Commons Regulations signs at the Cricket Pitch, opposite the School and opposite Church Lane. Anything you collect may be left at these points for a Council pick up at the end of the Litterblitz period. Obviously, if you encounter larger items such as car tyres, or the like, which are too heavy to carry to the collection points, please just leave them by the roadside and they can also be collected by the Council.

We are particularly grateful to James Jolliffe for the clear up that he and his workers did recently when a van was torched on the bottom ride, west of Horse Block Lane, after the perpetrators had strewn the contents of the van over the Common. The police and the fire brigade attended the blaze and, I understand, that whilst they were extinguishing the fire, the fire engine became bogged. It was really useful that James used his digger to get the van out to the edge of the road the following day. The police took it away as evidence but they would have had considerable difficulty getting it off the Common without James's welcome intervention.

### Village picnic

This year's picnic will again be a joint venture with the Cricket Club and will be held at the Cricket ground on Sunday 24 June. More details will be provided in the next edition of Hilltop News.

### Surveys of species found on the Commons

We have been fortunate that many people have recorded species that they have observed on our commons over a long period of time and we therefore have good records of the flora and fauna that have been found here. Details of past records may be found in the Local Heritage Study, published in 2003, which can be viewed on our website [www.hawridgeandcholesburycommons.org](http://www.hawridgeandcholesburycommons.org).

There have been subsequent surveys, particularly of the flora, carried out by the former Bucks Recorder, Roy Maycock and of course David Dennis has also been recording the butterflies on the Commons. Many of these records are held by the County Records Office, Halton.

We now feel that it is time to update our records and to gather them all in one place. We are fortunate that David Dennis and Peter Bygate have kindly offered to carry out a survey of moths throughout the year. The last comprehensive study was carried out in 1995.

Peter Bygate and David started their survey by placing moth traps outside Shepherds Cottage and Flint Cottage on 18 February and they intend carrying out further trappings on the Commons throughout the year. On this occasion they trapped four species March Moth, Oak Beauty, Pale Brindled Beauty and Satellite Moth. These were safely released the following morning.

There have also been about 80 species of birds recorded from 1977 – 81 and by keen local resident bird watchers from 1995 – 2002. There were considerable changes in the birds recorded over these times, some of which are due to national drop in numbers of particular species and others to changes in the habitat of the Commons. Clearly, it would be interesting to see what further changes have occurred in the years since 2002.

We have never been able to survey mammals and insects properly. If you are able to help us update any of these records this would be very welcome. Please do get in touch [lindsaygriffin@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:lindsaygriffin@yahoo.co.uk) or phone 758440.

*Lindsay Griffin*

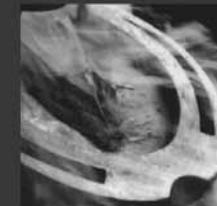


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*Snowdrop Sunday*

## CHOLESBURY CUM ST LEONARDS HORT SOC

*In my usual absence up north in February my husband attended Snowdrop Sunday at Hawridge Place and sent the following report...*

**A**fter two days of bright sunshine, Sunday 18 February dawned cold and grey, but never despair. By late morning hazy sunshine lit up the gardens at Hawridge Place as a steady stream of visitors took advantage of Carys and Eric Gadsden's invitation to see their wonderful

display of snowdrops. From small glistening pearls on the edge of the lawn to large open snowdrops in the borders, it was a galanthophile's paradise. But for your correspondent, who would struggle to name individual varieties, the best part was the large drift of brilliant white snowdrops under the fruit trees in the orchard.

*Many thanks to Carys and Eric for their hospitality and also many thanks to all who contributed to the collection box - £794 was raised for St Mary's Church, Hawridge.*

*In the meantime, the Horticultural Society has also finalised its calendar for the year...*

Thursday 14 June  
6.30 – 8.30  
Evening Open Garden

**MEMBERS ONLY:** Sarah and Stephen Tricks have invited us to revisit their garden at Highcroft House, Cholesbury Road, HP23 6JQ. Come and enjoy a glass of something to keep you cool! All donations for The Sabre Trust which supports education in Ghana through training teachers, and designing and helping the building of schools.

Wednesday 27 June  
8.30 to 18.30  
Coach Trip

A couple of hours journey to Kelmarsh Hall and Gardens and picnic lunch, then on to Cottesbrooke Hall and Gardens where the house will also be open.

Thurs 12 July from  
6.00 to 7.30  
Evening Open Garden

**MEMBERS ONLY:** Kath and John Allen have invited us to their hidden garden at Springwood, Cholesbury Lane, Buckland Common HP23 6NQ. Wine/soft drink and nibbles will be available, and donations collected for Diabetes UK.

Saturday 1 September

Horticultural, Cookery, Handicraft and Flower Show at Hawridge and Cholesbury C of E School. Doors open for setting up entries: 8.30. Show opens at 2.30 for visitors to enjoy home-made teas and a raffle. Schedule and entry form on [www.cholesbury.com](http://www.cholesbury.com).

Friday 23 November  
from 7.30 to 9.30 in  
Cholesbury VH

A very short AGM followed by hot supper and a Quiz. Entry to the supper and quiz, £4.00 per person including first glass of wine.

*Further information about all these events will be sent by email and notices will appear on the village noticeboards.*

*Any queries contact Diana Garner on [montana@cholesbury.net](mailto:montana@cholesbury.net) or 01494 758347. New members always welcome.*

*Sarah Tricks*

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# HAWRIDGE & CHOLESBURY CRICKET CLUB

## AGM

The AGM produced just two changes to the committee - so great continuity in key roles. As he indicated at the previous AGM, Chairman Brian Ralphs stood down after six years at the helm. He was succeeded by Vice Chairman Steve Drane. The other change was the election of Vicky Pudsey as Parents' Representative. Unfortunately, the Social and Fund-Raising post was not filled, so an opportunity for a volunteer to raise a hand? Additionally, someone is needed to help run the bar, the most essential job of all! Steve Drane is waiting for your call.



Club officials for the 2018 season are as follows:

President: Trafford Matthews  
 Chairman: Steve Drane  
 Hon. Treasurer: Nick Richardson  
 Hon. Secretary: Stephanie Hill  
 Cricket Captain: Neil Jones  
 Youth Development Officer: Ian Hames  
 Colts Parents' Representative: Vicky Pudsey  
 Pavilion Manager: Martin Barber  
 Grounds Manager: Phil Wright  
 Social & Fundraising Secretary: Vacant

Honorary Treasurer Nick Richardson reported that the club had been faced with a big challenge in 2017, the result of the club's decision to go ahead with the erection of a new ECB-approved two-lane practice net, at a cost of £23,000. However, a combination of hard-earned grants from four different benefactors and an allocation



*Matt Brown unveils a photographic tribute to his father*

from the Club's own funds allowed this cost to be settled by year end - no small achievement.

A poignant moment at the end of the meeting was the unveiling of a photographic tribute to Alan Brown by his son Matt who had been specially invited. Alan, who died in October 2016, played a huge role in maintaining continuity at the club for the best part of fifty years, in various roles. Even in his last years, when he struggled with his health, he remained engaged as scorer for the Saturday League team.

## Colts

Colts cricket is gearing up for a bumper season. A new development is the introduction of All Stars Cricket, for 5 to 8-year old girls and boys. This will take the form of 45-minute outdoor organised fun practices each Saturday morning in the season. Alexis Shead, one of our leading players, has volunteered to take on the role of 'Activator'. This initiative is aimed at our youngest players and their parents, who are strongly encouraged to join

in. The emphasis will be on developing movement skills. Each child enrolling will be given a backpack full of cricketing goodies, including a bat, ball, water bottle, personalised shirt and cap, as part of the England Cricket Board's drive to engage our youngest players. All this for the price of Colts membership of £50, which also includes social membership for parents.

At the older level, teams have been entered into the Bucks Cricket League for age ranges Under 9 to Under 13. The new team of volunteer coaches is primed and ready for the first practice session, which starts on 19 April at 6pm, and then every following Thursday, weather-permitting.

## Seniors

As a result of a closed season merger between the Chiltern League and the Mid Bucks League, the structure has changed. Five teams have been taken from both leagues to form a new Premier Division. As a result of this, the composition of the lower leagues has changed. Hawridge & Cholesbury will this next season be playing in the Mid Bucks Second Division. This is a league lower than where the club would like to be, so it provides a strong incentive to perform well and earn promotion. Given the emphasis on youth at the club, it is a good development environment for the emerging talent.

## Dates for the diary

Date	Event	Time
April 19th	Colts Signing On	6:00pm
May 5th	First All Stars Practice	10:00am
June 5th	Bucks Duathlon	7.15pm
June 17th	Presidents Day	12.00pm
June 24th	Village Picnic	11:00am onwards

## New Playing Members

New playing members are an important part of any club's ongoing development. This season, more than ever, Hawridge & Cholesbury needs new faces to ensure this

continuity. So whether you are a Dad who stands on the sidelines, a new member of the community or just a lapsed player, 2018 is your year to become engaged. The club offers excellent facilities and great fellowship, at all levels, so please come along. The season has already started, with indoor nets at Dr Challoners School each Sunday in March. Outdoor nets start in early April, on Wednesday evenings from 6pm. Subscriptions remain unchanged for the fourth year - so a real bargain.

All news, photos and more can be found on the club website, which is [hawridgeandcholesbury.hitscricket.com](http://hawridgeandcholesbury.hitscricket.com). The club also has a Facebook Page and Twitter Account.

*Brian Ralphs*

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# CALLING ALL CRICKETERS, YOUNG AND OLD!



*Hawridge & Cholesbury Cricket Club is always looking for new players, of any age or ability. We offer a friendly welcome with excellent facilities on Cholesbury Common.*

**ADULTS:** We have two adult teams, one playing competitive league cricket on Saturday afternoons in the Mid-Bucks League, the other a mixed ability team playing friendly matches on Sunday afternoons, usually followed by a BBQ and a social evening for all the family. Nets practice on Wednesday evenings.

For more information contact Neil Jones, Cricket Manager, on 01494 758495 or 07841 420509 or by email at neiljones04@aol.com

**COLTS:** Boys and girls aged 8 to 14 who are interested in playing in our age-group teams or just coming to training on Thursday evenings. Our ECB-qualified coaches can help to improve youngsters' cricketing skills and above all have fun. The bar is always open on practice evenings for parents to socialise and relax while their children enjoy and exhaust themselves on the cricket ground.

For more information contact Ian Hames, Youth Development Manager, on 07834 349344 or by email at ihames@hotmail.co.uk

**ALL STARS:** A new ECB-backed initiative to introduce boys and girls aged 5 to 8 to cricket through fun sessions of cricket activities and games on Saturday mornings. Signing up gets you a pack with bat, ball, shirt, cap, backpack and water bottle.

For more information contact Alexis Shead, All Stars Cricket Activator by email at alfshead@yahoo.com

We also have a constant need for umpires and scorers for our adult teams and for parents to help out as managers of colts age-group teams and at practice on Thursday evenings and to assist with our All-Stars sessions on Saturday mornings. Contact details as above.

Please also have a look at our Facebook page (search for Hawridge & Cholesbury Cricket Club) for latest news and events, or go to our website at [hawridgeandcholesbury.hitscricket.com](http://hawridgeandcholesbury.hitscricket.com)

For general information contact Steve Drane, Chairman, on 07776 167712 or by email at [steve@drane.co.uk](mailto:steve@drane.co.uk)

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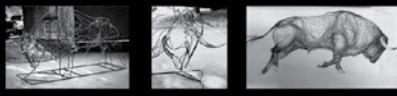
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## HOSPICE NEWS

The Hospice of St Francis supports more than 2,000 people each year affected by life-limiting illnesses both in its 14-bed inpatient unit as well as its health and wellbeing hub, the Spring Centre, which offers groups, therapies and courses to help people live well for longer.

If you, or someone you know, have cancer or another life-limiting illness and feel you might benefit from the Spring Centre's free services, please ask for a referral from your GP, call 01442 869550 or visit [www.stfrancis.org.uk/springcentre](http://www.stfrancis.org.uk/springcentre) where you can see a full calendar of Spring Centre groups and therapies.



### The bubbles are back!

For the third year running the bubbles are coming back to Gadebridge Park, Hemel Hempstead on Sunday 29 April. All ages can enjoy the masses of multi-coloured foamy bubble stations on the 5km fun-run route whilst raising funds for the Hospice.

Book your place at [www.stfrancis.org.uk/bubblerrush](http://www.stfrancis.org.uk/bubblerrush) or visit the Bubble Rush event page on Facebook for more information.

### Other dates for your diaries...

**Berkhamsted Golf Day** – Friday 20 April at Berkhamsted Golf Club. A fun day followed by gala dinner and auction!

**The Hospice of St Francis Garden Party** – Sunday 3 June 1-5pm at Ashridge House.

For further details of all Hospice events visit [www.stfrancis.org.uk/events](http://www.stfrancis.org.uk/events) or call 01442 869555.

## LOCAL HISTORY GROUP

The penultimate meeting of this season is on **Friday 6 April** entitled **Buckinghamshire Spies and Subversives.**

**Denise Beddows** is a Buckinghamshire based author with a background in research and investigation. She is a member of the Society of Authors and writes (as DJ Kelly) biographical fiction and non-fiction and her latest book is also the subject of this talk. The meeting is at **St Leonards Parish Hall** starting at **8.15** sharp with the Hall open from 8pm.



To round off this season of meetings and starting promptly at the earlier time of 7.30pm on **Friday 11 May** at **Cholesbury Village Hall**, we are showing a collection of short films entitled **Britain on Film: Coast and Sea**, which takes audiences around the coast recording the British at work, at rest and at play: from the earliest which was made at the turn of the 20th century. The film will follow on from our brief AGM and the evening continues with a buffet provided by our members.

If you are new to the area, have just not got around to coming along before, or for a while, why not try out one of our meetings. For visitors the entrance fee is just £4 at the door.

**Chris Brown, 758890**  
email: [localhistorygroup@cholesbury.com](mailto:localhistorygroup@cholesbury.com)



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Any instructions taken throughout 2018 will benefit from an additional 20% charitable donation to the charities supported by the Hilltop villages

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## GOOD NEIGHBOURS GROUP

### Gentle Exercise for Older Adults

These classes have become increasingly popular. From mid March classes have switched to Tuesdays and now run from the earlier time of 10am until 11am. They take place at Cholesbury Village Hall and ladies and gentlemen are welcome. The sessions are friendly and good fun and the exercises can be done sitting down if necessary. The courses are run by a qualified instructor provided by GLL who run the leisure and exercise facilities for Chiltern District Council. Cost is £28.50 for each set of six sessions. Contact Elayne Hughes on 07880 975 100 or email elayne.hughes@gll.org

### Severe Weather Car Scheme

Thank you to the severe weather car scheme volunteers who were again available during the bout of heavy snow at the end of February/early March.

### Further information

If you would like to know more about or become a volunteer with the Good Neighbours Group go to [www.cholesbury.com](http://www.cholesbury.com) and follow the link to Good Neighbours Group or contact Chris Brown, email: [goodneighbours@cholesbury.com](mailto:goodneighbours@cholesbury.com) or Phone 01494 758890.

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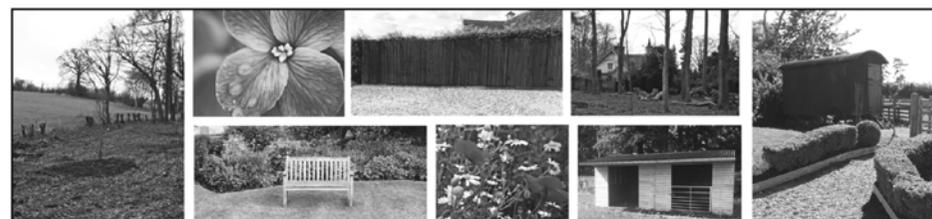
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## LITTLE BEARS PRE-SCHOOL

*Staff and children at Little Bears Pre-School are celebrating after being awarded the top, Outstanding, grade by inspectors Ofsted.*

The cosy pre-school operates out of St Leonards Parish Hall with immediate access to countryside, safely away from the roads. The Ofsted inspector highlighted many aspects about Little Bears...

'Children make excellent progress in their learning. High-quality, timely intervention by staff ensures that any gaps in children's achievements close swiftly. Many children exceed expectations for their age, particularly in their communication and language skills.

Most able children are given extensive opportunities to build on their skills in readiness for starting school. Staff include parents in children's learning. They share home challenges, songs and next steps on a weekly basis with parents.

Real-life experiences, such as visits from local people with hearing dogs, help children to learn about disabilities. This supports children's excellent awareness of the differences between themselves and others.'

Playleader Claire Cox was understandably delighted with the Outstanding judgement. "We have a passion for combining children's learning with having a positive and fun

experience during these vital formative years. We also aim to prepare our children for their next stage: the big move to school. Our children are prepared in the best possible way to ensure they have a smooth transition into school.

"I am also immensely proud of our dedicated committee and highly professional staff team whose work ensures our children have the best starts in their lives."

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# Our old brick-fields

*Inspired by John Horn's childhood memories in recent issues of Hilltop News, former resident of the Hilltop Villages, Geoff James, looks back on his brief time here, with particular memories of the old brick fields.*

I was born in 1952 in one of the tin-clad huts located in Shire Lane – the type of hut John Horn described in a previous issue as being brought to the villages from Halton Camp. I only lived there until I was one year old. I can remember seeing them as a boy but can't remember when they were taken down.

My father was a brickmaker/journeyman and I can only remember him working at S.T. Brown's. So I have memories of working brickfields, abandoned brickfields, walking or cycling to where my dad worked and spending a couple of summers doing some paid work at Brown's.

One place I used to frequent with my pals was Oak Lane. I never remember much work going on, but a gap in a hedge bordering a field was too big an invitation to overlook. The letter-box on the road entrance had a yellow sticker 'The Old Brick Field' but I don't recall any large holes from excavation. Instead there were a number of smaller water-filled holes which were perfect for young minds to explore. This is the place I most remember for finding newts and catching them in a jam jar.

In 1953 I moved into 5 Chiltern Cottages where I lived until 1977. Another brickfield was just down the road and was still working during my childhood. The entrance was opposite the garage on Cholesbury Lane. It was possible to skirt this brickfield by entering through the hedge just below number 10. By making your way through a small wood you could emerge onto Parrotts Lane opposite the Old Chapel. As you went around the brickfield you also passed a huge clay pit, the one I suspect John Horn refers to in the October/November 2015

Hilltop News as "a very deep hole that my father helped to dig".

Such holes tend to hold fascination for young boys and sadly this hole was the scene of a tragedy in the late 50s/early 60s. A boy was exploring here alone when there was a landslide within the pit. The boy was covered and sadly died.

I had my own experience of not respecting the slipperiness of clay when I slipped into a small water-filled hole, but only my dignity suffered, along with having to walk home in wet clothes. On another occasion someone in our group slipped into a similar hole, disappearing for a while. Thankfully the presence of helping hands helped rescue him.

You are probably thinking 'thank goodness all those clay pits have been levelled off' - but for me they were part of my landscape and hold many memories.

I left the Hilltop Villages in 1977 and trawling through Hilltop News has been a treat: forgotten names, old photographs evoking memories. I now live just outside High Wycombe.

*Geoff James*

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# The Easter Mystery...

*This is when we enter into the mystery of Easter. Someone last week asked me why Easter is a movable feast. I know the rough answer – it is to do with the moon. But I'm not sure whether Easter is the first Sunday after the second new moon of the spring equinox, or the second Sunday after the first new moon, or something else entirely. It's a mystery to me, but I know it's early this year.*

That, of course, is not the real mystery of Easter. The mystery is about how it is that death and failure lead to triumph and redemption. In Jesus we see someone who publicly, at least, seems to have taken a great risk and lost. That's certainly how the disciples saw it: for them what we call Good Friday was a day of destruction, the dashing of their hopes, and the end of the road. By dying, Jesus had failed, and they had failed too.

The mystery of Easter is that they were wrong: Good Friday was the start of something amazing, not the end of something. On Easter Sunday it took the disciples a while to grasp the truth of the resurrection. In fact, it took them the rest of their lives to understand what Easter Day really was going to mean to them—this was the start of the church, of their mission to make the Risen Christ known in the world, it was the defining act of the rest of their lives. It is the defining act of our lives too. Christians who do not try to live life in the light of the resurrection are not worthy of the name. The resurrection gives us a hope beyond hope; a life beyond the confines of ordinary life; a wonderful knowledge of both the price and the value of love.

The Easter mystery is one that can be only understood by entering into it.

That means entering into the mysterious journey of Holy Week. Church services from Palm Sunday to Easter Day follow the narrative, take us in the footsteps of the disciples and bring the mystery home to us.

This mystery is not one to be solved—like one of those dinner parties where everyone pretends to be a different character and tries to find out "whodunnit?" This mystery is one that draws us in, because we are really a part of it. Christ's death and resurrection is real, and it makes a real difference to our lives.

The Easter mystery means we have a duty (and a joy) to care about the world as Jesus cares for it. If we are ever to understand the mystery of Easter we too must have a care and love for the world beyond the narrow confines of our own best interest. How else can we understand what led Jesus to sacrifice himself for us so willingly?

There are many parallels here, aren't there, with events in our own lives? What a powerful witness your prayers have been for David and Penny over the last few months. Please continue them as we pray now that David moves into a period of recovery and rehabilitation—new life, new strength, new hope.

I commend the mystery of Easter to you as the key to understanding our faith and the role our faith plays in our lives today.

Deiniol Heywood, Area Dean

**SERVICES AND CONTACT DETAILS FOR THE FOUR PARISHES: AUGUST - SEPTEMBER 2018**

DATE	DAY	St John the Baptist THE LEE		St Leonard's ST LEONARDS		St Laurence CHOLESBURY		St Mary's HAWRIDGE	
5 Aug	Trinity 10	8.00 am 10.00 am	Holy Communion All Age Worship	11.00 am	Parish Communion	9.30 am	BCP Holy Communion	9.30 am	Family Service
12 Aug	Trinity 11	10.00 am	Parish Communion	10.00 am Shared Morning Worship at Cholesbury					
19 Aug	Trinity 12	10.00 am	Matins	10.00 am Shared Parish Communion at St Leonards					
26 Aug	Trinity 13	10.00 am	Parish Communion	11.00 am Shared CW Parish Communion at Hawridge					
2 Sept	Trinity 14	8.00 am 10.00 am	Holy Communion All Age Worship at LCM	11.00 am	Parish Communion With Sunday School	9.30 am	BCP Holy Communion	9.30 am	Family Service
9 Sept	Trinity 15	10.00 am	Parish Communion	10.00 am Shared Morning Worship at Cholesbury					
16 Sept	Trinity 16	10.00 am	Matins	6.00 pm	Harvest Festival	10.00 am Shared Parish Communion at Hawridge			
23 Sept	Trinity 17	10.00 am	Parish Communion	9.00 am Breakfast Service at St Leonards [with Cholesbury]				11.00 am	CW Parish Communion
30 Sept	Trinity 18	10.00 am Fifth Sunday Joint Parish Communion at Cholesbury Speaker from The Church Army							
<p><b>Please note:</b> Rev David Burgess is on sick leave for this period following surgery and will not be available.</p> <p>A number of services on this rota have therefore been changed from the regular worship pattern in the four churches.</p>		<p><b>Parish Secretary</b> Peggy Sear 07804 697948 <a href="mailto:peggysear@icloud.com">peggysear@icloud.com</a></p>		<p><b>Churchwardens</b> <b>The Lee</b> Trevor Pearce 01494 837601 <a href="mailto:trevorm.pearce@hotmail.co.uk">trevorm.pearce@hotmail.co.uk</a></p> <p>Rod Neal 01494 837264 <a href="mailto:rodandjane.neal@googlemail.com">rodandjane.neal@googlemail.com</a></p>		<p><b>Churchwardens (contd.)</b> <b>Hawridge</b> Elizabeth Tomlin 01494 758214</p> <p><b>Cholesbury</b> John Farmer 01494 758715 <a href="mailto:jandb.farmer@btopenworld.com">jandb.farmer@btopenworld.com</a></p>		<p><b>PCC Secretary</b> <b>St Leonards</b> Giles Pemberton 01494 758445 <a href="mailto:giles.pemberton@btinternet.com">giles.pemberton@btinternet.com</a></p>	

## FROM THE REGISTERS

### CHOLESBURY

Baptism

28 February – Mia Louise Hughes

### ST LEONARDS

Funeral and Burial

16 February – Timothy (Tim) David Taylor

16 March – Bonnie Phipps

## CHURCH MATTERS

*Many of you will have heard the most recent news of David – that he is recovering slowly but very surely. He and Penny would still appreciate enormously our continued prayers. They are both very conscious of the impact our prayers have made. We send our love and best wishes to them for a happy Easter.*

*Details of all Services in the Parishes during Easter can be seen in the enclosed Easter Card.*

## HAWRIDGE

Easter services at St Mary's, to which you are all very welcome, are as follows:

Easter Sunday  
– 1st April - Parish  
Communion at 11am

and our Easter Praise at 5pm. This is a family-friendly, light service with readings and hymns celebrating Easter along similar lines to the Christmas Carol Service.

Our fundraising efforts got off to a wonderful start this year courtesy of Eric and Carys Gadsden kindly opening their gardens at Hawridge Place where Carys's amazing collection of snowdrops were much admired - over 100 varieties in total! We were blessed by a dry and not too cold day and extend our thanks to Eric, Carys and the Horticultural Society for staging



and manning the event - particular thanks to the tea team and 'car parkers'. The Rose & Crown kindly allowed use of their car park as an overflow and our thanks goes to Martin Stone. A huge thank you to all who turned out – your support raised over £800 - what a fabulous result!

Our next fundraising effort – **Cream Teas on Sunday 6 May** at Cholesbury Village Hall, between 1.30 and 4.30pm, is back to its traditional slot on the May Bank Holiday. Traditional cream teas with clotted cream and strawberry jam, but this year with a BIG twist - you'll have to come along to find out! A Mini May Market of produce and gifts and the 'Win 12 Months' Supply of Home Baked Cake' raffle is being held at this event in tandem with Cholesbury's teas later in the month, rather than at the Fete this year.

We always need help on the day! - we have a core of loyal supporters but would really welcome some new faces. If you

have recently moved into the village, don't be shy – if you could help for just an hour or the whole session - it is actually good fun! If you can't give your help on the day please would you consider baking a cake, tray bake, biscuits - whatever is your 'go to' bake - we would be very grateful.

If you're wondering where all this money is going, you will be pleased to learn our repairs list is becoming a reality as is the rumoured under-pew heating, so watch this space and we will let you know how it is all helping to keep this important historic building and place of worship open for all to enjoy now and for generations to come.

**Advance Notice – Fete** – The Cholesbury and Hawridge churches traditional Fete is on 27 August (Bank Holiday Monday) - another area where we are looking for some new blood. Over the past 20 years Hawridge parishioners have played important roles on this committee and we are now looking for someone new to represent them. It is not an onerous time commitment - we only have about two meetings - but it is nevertheless vital that Hawridge is represented, so please don't leave it to someone else, we really do need you. If you would like to know more please contact Janet Hopkinson on 757059.

We have had a little flurry of ailing parishioners recently and it is always heart-warming to see people rally to help those in need - this is one of the marvellous things about village life. Our best wishes to all those of you who are recovering and we look forward to seeing you out and about soon. We continue to send our prayers and best wishes to the Burgess and Mitchell families.

## CHOLESBURY

We again thank our visiting ministers

Ivor, David White, Alan Davies, David Holloway and Ian Ogilvie.



We were delighted to welcome Allan and Nicola when they brought Mia to be Baptised on 28 February: Mia was exactly six months old on the day! Her two brothers also attended, both of whom had been baptised at St Laurence on previous occasions. The church was full of family and friends. The ceremony was taken by Revd Alan Davis, one of our visiting ministers, who conducted the service very meaningfully as Mia was welcomed into the family of the Church. The family celebrated in Cholesbury Village Hall after the service. 'Dragonflies, Frogs, Bumblebees' is the name of the latest composition by Will



Mia Hughes Baptism

**McNicoll** who will perform in Cholesbury church on **Saturday 12 May**. Will is a young guitarist and composer and was recently voted UK Acoustic Guitarist of the year by Guitarist Magazine. He will bring technical support to ensure the best sound. Thank you to Clive Carey who will provide the warm-up act. The concert runs from 6pm and tickets are £15 from Maggie (maggie2@waitrose.com).

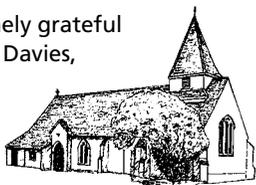
**Easter** – The parishes will record the historic events starting with Palm Sunday on 25 March and onto Maundy Thursday on 29 March when the three churches join together for Parish Communion at St Leonards at 7.30pm, as we remember the Last Supper. At 10am on Good Friday morning the children prepare their Easter Garden at St Leonards and following on at 10.30am the Walk of Witness makes its way to Cholesbury. The Devotional service at St Laurence at 11.45 will be led by David Blackmore.

Our **Annual Parish Church Meeting** (the AGM) is on **Monday 16 April** in the church. We review church activity and welcome views from parishioners.

We are holding our **Cream Teas** in the Village Hall on **Sunday 20 May**. Many people in the village provide simply excellent cakes and sandwiches and we look forward to their generous support again this year.

## ST LEONARDS

We are extremely grateful to Ivor, Alan Davies, Geoffrey Howell and Ian Ogilvie for their unstinting support of St Leonards while



David is absent. Thank you all so much!

More than 230 people came to **Tim Taylor's** funeral on Friday 16 February. The service was conducted by Ivor and both the

Church and the Church Room overflowed with family and friends who came to remember a much loved 'local treasure' - a great tribute to Tim who had been an important part of our villages for so long. A celebration of Tim's life will appear in the next edition of Hilltop News.

Despite the cold weather – or maybe because of it! - we had another great turnout for the **Breakfast Service** in February. The call of hot bacon butties and fresh coffee – not forgetting the pain au chocolat – is surely a great incentive! We have a brilliant team of organisers but would welcome anyone who feels they could stand up and give a short informal talk - it's not difficult once you have given it a try! The next **Breakfast Service** is on **25 March**. The April Breakfast is on Sunday 22nd and in May we meet on Sunday 27th. We'd love to see you!

On **Good Friday, 30 March**, at 10am the children come to create their **Easter Garden**. All children, whether Sunday Schoolers or not, are most welcome to join in. At 10.30 they join us for the short walk to the first station of the Cross before returning to church for an Easter Egg hunt! We then continue our **Walk of Witness** to Cholesbury where there is an hour of quiet reflection at 11.45.

On **Easter Sunday** we have 9am 'said' Communion Service and a short informal Family Service at 11am followed by the traditional Easter Egg hunt - an awful lot of chocolate is consumed!

Sadly, we had to cancel the February Tea Party as the ground was too icy and it was bitterly cold. We welcome everyone again on **Wednesdays 28 March, 25 April and 23 May**.

Our **APCM (Annual Meeting)** is on **24 April at 7.45pm** in the Church Room. Please come along to hear what has been happening and will be happening in the coming year at St Leonards. It would be great to have your support!

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You can buy a ticket for just £1 at either teas or on-line at [www.mydonate.bt.com](http://www.mydonate.bt.com) click on 'donate to charity' and search for Friends of Hawridge Church.

If you don't have access to a computer, simply phone 01494 757059 and we'll let you know how to buy tickets

Don't eat cake? Well, we bet you've got at least 12 friends who do – birthdays, thank you, get well, sorry – the opportunities for sharing cake are endless!

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# Spring pub news



*Not so long ago, I was reporting on four trading pubs in our Parish and two others just on the fringes. This report is reduced to one and a half trading pubs in our Parish and one nearby. That leaves two that may someday resume trading and one whose owners bought a pub with no intention of ever trading as a public house.*

At the **Black Horse Inn**, John Blaylock has settled in as the new head chef after recently moving from the Bell in Stoke Mandeville. He has carried on with the provision of the popular pies that are made fresh on site. To give an example of his preferred style of cuisine, John has said that his ideal restaurant meal would be "venison haunch steak, Dauphinoise potatoes, green beans and red wine jus". The Vegan dinners will continue on the second Wednesday of each month when they regularly sell out several weeks in advance. The next one will fall on the 11 April.

The pub has a comprehensive website at [www.theblackhorsechesham.co.uk](http://www.theblackhorsechesham.co.uk) where all events for the month ahead are promoted. Pub Quiz Nights are every Tuesday except the first one of each month. Easter weekend will see the reopening of the garden season with a DJ's 'Shake Your Booty' music on Saturday 31 March and 26 May. On Easter Sunday, there will be three Easter Egg Hunts in the afternoon and early evening. On all three of the Bank Holiday Mondays in April and May, opening hours will be from noon to 7pm with food service both inside and out from noon to 6pm.

A charity race night will be held in the Barn on Saturday 7 April from 7.30pm to raise funds for Breast Cancer Care.

The **Black Horse** has introduced Coffee Mornings on the last Friday of each month from 10am to noon with guest speakers giving informative talks on matters of local interest. Finally, there will be a football session for the youngsters with Alex Jones on 11 April.

The **Old Swan's** menus are either seasonal or adjusted for special dates such as Easter. There is now a new spring menu that can be viewed on the website at [www.theoldswanpub.co.uk](http://www.theoldswanpub.co.uk). In addition, regular features are 'market specials' every Wednesday and steak nights on Thursdays. Since Jane is chronically short of competent candidates for bar staff, anyone able and interested should contact her at the Old Swan.

Now that the owners of the **Bull** have been granted planning permission for an extended restaurant and kitchen area and a stand-alone children's nursery facility, it remains to be seen when and in what format it will reopen as a public house.

Nothing much is officially forthcoming about the future of the **Rose and Crown** in Hawridge, but there is no currently public marketing effort to find someone to revive it as a public house. It would be reasonable to assume that yet another planning application is in the works.

To quote from the opening paragraph of the latest newsletter from the Save the **White Lion** campaign: "The White Lion is still a long way off being in a state to serve customers, but steady, if slow, progress is being made by new owner

Mandy Grimwood. Over recent weeks a few important milestones in the restoration and refurbishment of the pub have taken place and there is light flickering, if not shining, at the end of the tunnel." To read the full story, go to [www.savethewhitelion.co.uk](http://www.savethewhitelion.co.uk) and click on the link at the top of the home page above the White Lion logo. From time to time, updates are posted to their facebook page: [www.facebook.com/Save-the-White-Lion-St-Leonards-382401318579616](http://www.facebook.com/Save-the-White-Lion-St-Leonards-382401318579616).

When I last reported on the **Full Moon**, I wrote that: "words just about fail me". Now I am speechless when comparing its stark dereliction to the thriving success of the **Black Horse Inn** nearby in the Chesham Vale. There is still only one regular employee, the opening times have been further curtailed and there is no sign of food service being restored.

*Bill Ingram*

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# Harbingers of Spring?

*Though spring is here this does not guarantee that temperatures are going to be rising. Night time temperatures are particularly unreliable. But from March and on into April what triggers some creatures to go into overdrive is the gradual increase in day length.*

Despite barely positive mercury readings, moths are one of the first signs that Spring has sprung. Conveniently, one of the first to emerge from their chrysalis is the March Moth. The females are in fact wingless and attract their drab brown suitors to a tree trunk lair: like most moths, using a chemical attractant or pheromone. Another is the Orange Underwing, which flies by night and day. As is oft the case with moths the name is a succinct descriptor. A largish, grey-black moth that is perfectly drawn to hide out amongst dead leaves or bark. Once disturbed from its daytime siesta it will show a flash of sunset yellow which I have found still causes me an automatic step backwards. These early moths provide a vital source of prey for bats emerging from hibernation and the caterpillars are food for those feisty blue tits we see hanging upside down inspecting the catkins.

As soon as there is a run of warmer, damp nights when temperatures reach 7° C this marks the beginning of the mass migration of one of our most important amphibians. The Common Toad emerges from hibernation in late March and travels to their spawning pond. The same ponds are frequented each year regardless how difficult they are to access, due to roads etc. Compared to frogs they are squat and bulbous in shape. Courtship can be quite ferocious, leading to occasional fatalities. Once pairs have become settled eggs are laid encased in a gelatinous string perhaps 15 feet long with up to 6000 eggs. Two

weeks later the toad spawn hatches and brownish-black tadpoles emerge. As frogs are able to breed in colder conditions than toads, by the time April arrives frog tadpoles are much further advanced. The risk frogs run is that in a particularly cold early spring, like this year, egg development can slow or stop. Once hatched, tadpoles will not survive a prolonged period of cold.

A recent report of research conducted by the RSPB, the British Trust for Ornithology and several of the UK's nature conservation bodies describes the impact of climate change, in particular temperature change and level of rainfall, over the last 50 years. The study looked at the impact on our resident bird populations as well as the dates when migratory birds arrive in the UK each spring. Earlier arrival of migrating species or breeding dates for resident flocks impact on the survival rates of young chicks due to the risk of insufficient supplies of food. This has been most dramatic for four of our most frequent garden visitors: the Robin, Dunnock, Nuthatch and Goldfinch. The report also warns that in a world of changing climatic conditions there is an impact on long-range migrators, notably the Swallow. Compared to 50 years ago swallows are now arriving in the UK fifteen days earlier. If weather conditions are favourable this can boost breeding success but breeding may be delayed if impacted on by unpredictable supplies of their primary food: winged insects. Another consequence of milder winters has been a reduction in UK visiting populations

of waterbirds: ducks, geese, swans and waders. With a warmer climate in northern European lakes and rivers waterfowl are finding new habitats that can sustain larger gatherings over the winter months. By contrast, Mediterranean and North African species, such as the Little Egret, which was unknown in the UK until 1996, is now a frequent site on the Tring Reservoirs and even rivers, such as the Chess.

In April, by which time the first Brimstone butterfly will have already visited your garden, look out for a flash of silver and blue dancing across a lawn or down a flower bed. This is most likely a Holly Blue. If it settles you will see the underwings are a powder blue which is peppered with black spots. The butterfly is dimorphic. In other words the colouration of males and females differs with the former's upperwings uniformly blue whilst the latter have a 'sooty' margin. These early arrivals have overwintered as pupae. No surprise to hear the females lay their eggs on holly which abounds in this area. The annual population of this blue has increased by over 150% in recent years, perhaps benefiting from milder winters and reductions in pesticides. Nevertheless, annual populations can be widely fluctuating. It used to be believed this variation was solely dependent on the severity of the winter. More recently, it was noticed the highs and lows in the population followed approximately a six-year cycle. Such patterns suggest an alternate reason, one that has a biological rather than environmental cause. It turns out this is down to a tiny parasitic wasp that lays a single egg in the body of the caterpillar. Such is the relationship between the caterpillar and the wasp grub that the grub does not cause the caterpillar to wither away and die. Instead it allows the caterpillar to pupate. However, instead of a beautiful blue butterfly emerging in spring, out pops the tiny adult wasp.

**End Note:** With the late flourish of

blizzards at the beginning of March this year, marking the start of the meteorological spring, it was delightful to see the snowdrops in their full glory poking through the blanket of snow. I was reminded by some writings on the Snowdrop by Richard Mabey. Mabey, who lived near Tring until he moved to Norfolk, recounted that snowdrops in the British Isles are a mixture of 'wild' so called native varieties and naturalised imports from the Continent. Until the Middle Ages there were probably just a few isolated populations in upland areas. The widespread distribution we are familiar with today was a result of the snowdrop's importance to religious symbolism. In Medieval Europe the flower was venerated during Candlemas due to its flowering coinciding with the Feast Day. As a consequence it is believed it was brought from the mountainous regions of Europe by monks visiting monasteries across this country. Having planted them in monastery gardens, over time they escaped and gradually became naturalised. Much closer to home, Mabey also recounts that between 1860 and 1883 the vicar of St Mary the Virgin Drayton Beauchamp, who was also a botanist and plantsman, developed a green cultivar of snowdrop, which has since been given official status, and a pink variety which has not been given similar status although it is said to have been seen local to the village. Possibly an interesting excuse for a ramble that way one day - so any news on this would be much appreciated.

*That's all this time comments and questions to [chrisbrown@rayshill.com](mailto:chrisbrown@rayshill.com)*





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# From presenter to painter



during April.

*Four years after re-inventing himself as a professional painter, former TV presenter Tony Francis launches his new collection in Hawridge*

Painting has been a new adventure for Tony, whose previous career was presenting sport for BBC and ITV as well as directing his own countryside series for 25 years.

His most memorable moments were interviewing Seb Coe and Steve Overtt at the 1980 Moscow Olympics, introducing the 1994 World Cup from Dallas and interrupting England's cricket tour of the Caribbean to chase the mercenaries who kidnapped Ronnie Biggs.

Tony also co-hosted ITV snooker when Steve Davis was unbeatable and Alex Higgins uncontrollable. He subsequently wrote the book 'Who was Hurricane Higgins?' after the mysterious Alex died in poverty and isolation.

His best-selling book was 'Clough', a biography the former Derby County and Nottingham Forest manager didn't want

publishing. Further books included 'Salmon Fishing with Jack Charlton', 'The Zen of Cricket' and, more recently, 'Extraordinary Villages'.

In between all of that, most of his time was spent filming in the British landscape. His proudest moment was capturing the rare sight of a newly born cuckoo chick turving a reed warbler's eggs out of the nest.

As Tony says, "there are distinct similarities between filming and painting. Either way, you're looking for that unusual angle, that wonderful splash of light. That's why dawn is such a good time. Catch sight of a stag in the mist as the sun touches the treetops and you know it was worth getting up at 6am."

Tony uses acrylics for his impressionistic landscapes, seascapes and still lifes. Within a year of starting, he was selected for the Royal Academy's Summer Exhibition, where he sold his first work. "A wonderful privilege to be exhibited alongside greats like David Hockney and Grayson Perry." Early morning runs around the Hilltop Villages provide Tony with much of his inspiration.

Tony's exhibition is at his home, Gateways Cottage, Hawridge Common and runs for the whole of April.



£15 per ticket inc bar snacks. (£16 on night) Chiltern Brewery Beer bar open from 6pm

please contact [maggie2@waitrose.com](mailto:maggie2@waitrose.com) All proceeds go to Cholesbury Church funds

*Please see link to hear headline artist Will McNicoll' music:- [www.willmcnicol.co.uk](http://www.willmcnicol.co.uk) ; <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pksFcF0dific> Voted in 2014 by Acoustic Guitar Magazine as one of the "top 30 guitarists, from around the world". He has gigged up and down the UK either solo or supporting artists from Pierre Bensusan and Martin Simpson to Mumford & Sons. Will's music is influenced by styles from all over the world, blending Celtic/World/ Folk. Will will be supported by local guitarist, Clive Carey, who has also played with many big names in the traditional folk scene. We are very lucky to have brought these 2 guitarists to our local church, for this one-off event. It will be an amazing night of music. Please come and support!*



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*St Leonards Parish Hall 100 club is open to new members for the coming year and for the cost of £10 you will be entered in a monthly draw where there are 30 prizes from £15-£50 throughout the year. If you would like to support the hall and be in with a chance of winning please contact Richard Leat on [leatrj@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:leatrj@yahoo.co.uk) or 01494 758784.*



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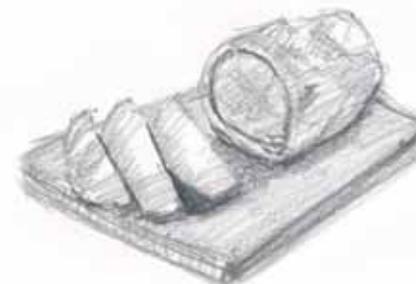
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**Easter Lamb en Crouete**

*I don't know why I always think of lamb at Easter, especially as I prefer the flavour of Hogget, the slightly older lamb, but this is a lovely prepare-ahead party dish...*

*4 lb boned leg of lamb: your butcher will do this, but it is really easy to do, and doesn't need to look pretty!*

1lb puff pastry

1 beaten egg

Salt and pepper

Marinade:

3 tbs oil

2 tsp lemon juice

$\frac{1}{2}$  tsp each of dried thyme, marjoram or any herbs you like with lamb

2 crushed cloves garlic

1 tsp dried oregano

*You can use fresh herbs, but will need at least twice as much of them to get the intense flavour.*

*Make slits on each side of the meat and place in a large bowl or plastic bag.*

*Whisk up the marinade and brush over, or add to the bag and massage from the outside.*

*Roll the meat and marinade into a parcel and leave in the fridge overnight, or for at least 3 hours.*

*When ready, bring meat to room temperature for at least an hour, preferably two.*

*Season well with the salt and pepper.*

*Preheat oven to 180° and bake for 25 mins a pound, in its parcel shape.*

*Tie it with string to keep its shape, it needs to be quite neat!*

*Stand on a rack to cool for at least an hour, then remove string if used. It should hold the shape now.*

*Roll out the pastry to the same length, but twice as wide as your lamb parcel.*

*Place the lamb in the middle and fold up the sides. Place on baking tray with the join side down and brush with egg and decorate as you desire.*

*Bake for 30 minutes on 180° or until the pastry is golden.*

*Leave to rest for 15 minutes, then cut into slices and serve with gravy made from the cooked bones stock and redcurrant jelly.*

**Lulu Stephen: [bellingtonm@hotmail.com](mailto:bellingtonm@hotmail.com)**

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## Dear Diary

### April 2018

- 6th Local History Group – St Leonards Parish Hall – 8pm
- 16th WI – St Leonards Parish Hall – 8pm
- 25th Tea Party – St Leonards Tea Room – 3pm
- 26th Parish Council Meeting – St Leonards Parish Hall – 8pm

### May 2018

- 6th Cream Teas – Cholesbury Village Hall – 1.30pm
- 11th Local History Group – Cholesbury Village Hall – 7.30pm
- 12th Acoustic Guitar Night – Cholesbury Church – 6pm
- 19th Spring Fayre – H&C School – 11am-2pm
- 20th Cream Teas – Cholesbury Village Hall – 1.30pm
- 23rd Tea Party – St Leonards Tea Room – 3pm

### June 2018

- 2nd St Leonards Village Fete – 2pm
- 24th Village Picnic – Cholesbury Common – 11am

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## Hilltop News

We welcome all news, letters and articles which are of general interest and relevance to the Hilltop Villages. Material for inclusion in the June/July edition should be sent to Graham Lincoln or Anne Butterworth (Church Matters) by **6 May latest**. Please note that photos sent online must be at least 2,500 x 1,750 pixels in size.

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