



Hilltop News

February & March 2023



Twenty-one years – the key to carry on...

As we enter our twenty-first year of publication, the Hilltop News team is still very much the same as in those early days. Just as important are the regular contributors, still reporting activities of their respective clubs and societies. How lucky are we to have so much to interest residents of the Hilltops?

After all these years, Chris Brown is still sending reports for the Local History Group, plus Nature Notes. Lulu Stephen serves up a constant supply of recipes. Lindsay Griffin is the voice of the Commons Preservation Society and Bill Ingram reports the ever-changing fortunes of our local pubs. More recently, Liz Firth (Hort Soc), James Morris (Cricket Club), Hillary Sheppard (WI), Sallie Bright and Brigid Farmer (100 Club), Erin Thwaites (Neighbourhood Watch) and Rob Scott (H&C School) have stepped in to continue what their predecessors began.

The Hilltop Villages are well-served by the Parish and County Councils, with Hayley Farrelly and Tricia Birchley keeping us informed. Regular contributions from Janet Hopkinson, David Dennis, Eva Thorarinsdottir and all those associated with our churches are no less valued.

On the back of production, our advertiser's support enables us to deliver *Hilltop News* to over 600 households in the Hilltop Villages free of charge. Our distributors voluntarily deliver to your homes, six times a year.

On behalf of the *Hilltop News* team, grateful thanks to all those mentioned and to the many others who have supported us in various ways and, of course, all you readers...Ed



Will someone lower the mike? Braving the cold at the St Leonards carol service.

In this issue...

- Francis Sanger and David Dowson remembered
- Memories rekindled of early years in the village
- Hilltops inspire another artist in our midst
- Funding for local ponds
- In his Nature Notes, Chris Brown looks at carnivores with an alien family name
- Our **Curvaceous Cook** serves up a nutty Scandinavian loaf

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

Front cover

The sun is getting stronger – spring is around the corner.

THE PARISH COUNCIL

Parish Council precept

Each November the Parish Council sets the budget to calculate the cost for running the Council for the following financial year. To meet this cost, a precept is set which makes up a very small proportion of the council tax charge set for each household. Like the financial pressures we are all experiencing, the Council is also expecting to be subject to increased costs in the year from April. Recognising the increased financial pressures faced by residents, instead of setting a higher precept to meet these costs, Councillors decided to keep the precept the same as the current year and draw down from reserves the additional funds required to meet next financial year's expenditure.

Coronation of The King

Buckingham Palace has announced that the Coronation of His Majesty The King will take place on Saturday 6 May 2023. The Coronation Ceremony will take place at Westminster Abbey and will be conducted by the Archbishop of Canterbury. The Ceremony will see King Charles III crowned alongside The Queen Consort. More information will be posted through the following link: <https://www.royal.uk/coronation-his-majesty-king>. The Parish Council would be interested to hear from any groups/businesses/organisations that are planning events for the Coronation as some support may be available.

Cholesbury Fibre update

The scope of the Cholesbury fibre project was originally planned to bring Ultrafast Fibre Broadband connections to 374 addresses, which have been grouped into ten geographic segments. By November last year, once eight of the segments were delivered, fibre was made available to 264 addresses. One of the remaining two segments was promised to be delivered in

December and the final one in January.

From October to mid-January, Openreach did an insignificant amount of work. They failed to complete critical work needed to connect the remaining 110 addresses. It was planned to be carried out during a permitted road closure of Cholesbury Lane during the second week of January. However, that work was not done. When this report went to press, Openreach had refused to respond to questions raised about their amended delivery timetable.

The delayed segments comprising the 110 addresses are:

1. From Parrotts Farm along Parrotts Lane to Cholesbury Lane and down to Dorriens Farm.
2. From the top of Springall Hill and Dundridge Manor all the way up Jenkins Lane and along Swan Lane as far as and including Arrewig Lane.

For all other parts of the parish where the 264 addresses mentioned are located, residents should have received notification from their broadband provider that

Ultrafast Fibre is available..

For residents wanting to check on the availability of Ultrafast Fibre, the Broadband Update page on the Council website: <https://www.cholesburyparishcouncil.org.uk/> has a link to the Openreach Broadband availability checker.

Vacancies on the Parish Council

We are actively seeking members of the community to join the parish council. Could you volunteer some time, energy and expertise to find practical solutions and get things done for your community? Parish councillors represent residents' views and press for improvements to Buckinghamshire Council's services, such as roads, planning decisions and enforcement, refuse collection and protection of our environment. Meetings are also held with police, health and fire services and voluntary organisations. If you are interested, please contact the Parish Clerk or come along to a Parish Council meeting.

Allotments

The parish council manages the allotments at Buckland Common. From time-to-time vacant plots become available. If you would like more details on renting an allotment, please get in contact with me.

Fix My Street

With winter very definitely in full swing, roads can often start to deteriorate due to water and frost. Residents are encouraged to report problems in the parish on a street/road and track the progress of the reported issue. Issues such as potholes, fly-tipping, graffiti, waste bin issues, broken paving slabs or street lighting can all be reported via the website link <https://fixmystreet.buckscc.gov.uk/>. To report a problem through the site:

- Enter a nearby UK postcode, or street name and area

- Locate the problem on a map of the area
- Enter details of the problem
- Fix My Street send it to the council on your behalf

Meetings


The Parish Council will be holding their meetings at St Leonards Parish Hall at 6pm. All residents are welcome to attend the meetings and the agenda will be posted on noticeboards and on the Parish Council page of the Cholesbury-cum-St Leonards Parish Council website.

The next meeting dates are...

- Tuesday 28 February 2023
- Tuesday 28 March 2023

Please contact me if you have any questions or need to report anything.

*Hayley Farrelly, Parish Clerk 07704 909324
parishclerk.ccsipc@gmail.com*



*Ambrosial....
by Annabel*

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*Annabel Elsdon
01494 758836
07542 759614
ambrosialannabel@gmail.com*

Your Parish Councillors are:

Chris Brown (Chairman) -758890
Bill Ingram (Vice-Chairman) -758258
Philip Matthews - 758205
Graham Kersting - 758319
Oliver Maury – 758015

Buckinghamshire Councillors:

Patricia Birchley - 07714 704017
Jane MacBean - 07812 177794
Mohammad Fayyaz – 0777 202 7829

Buckinghamshire Council:

Contact number: 0300 131 6000

THE COUNTY COUNCIL

Whilst some local Councils view 2023 with apprehension, Buckinghamshire has long had a reputation for fiscal prudence and, despite high inflation and a rise in demand for our



services (we must find an extra £63 million to cover our costs), we are working hard to make savings across all departments to balance the books in 2023/24.

Much as the Council would prefer not to raise Council Tax, a rise in the basic rate of 2.99% plus a 2% social care precept will be needed to ensure our services are suitable for people with high needs. There is a significant level of support available for residents facing hardship.

Having received 2000 responses to our residents' budget survey, we propose spending more than £125 million fixing and maintaining roads, £143m on school improvements, £20m on housing and tackling homelessness, £14m on climate change and flood protection, and investing more than £20m on waste and recycling facilities.

Bucks topped a league of 59 local authorities in the Modeshift STARS scheme in having the most schools with a sustainable travel plan. In fact, Chiltern Hills Academy, by virtue of its location, has the highest number of students walking to school in the county at 72%.

The Council has been shortlisted for Keep Britain Tidy's Network Awards. Out

of 100 entries only three local authorities were successful and it amounts to litter, waste and 'space' solutions adopted by our Country Park and Waste teams.

Lead by the Council with £4.5m of planned investment, 'Opportunity Bucks – Succeeding for all' is our approach to addressing disparity in the county. Your local councillors, Jane MacBean and myself, invited the Chief Executive and Chairman of the Council to visit the Ward on 24 January for a tour of community facilities and to raise awareness of the needs of the community. The Community Board has carefully managed the 2022/23 budget, enabling many local organisations to expand their services.

December and January have been busy months with visits to the HS2 North Tunnel Portal, challenging HS2 on road closures, working with the parishes to resolve road problems and attend their meetings.

Please let me know if I can speak to officers on your behalf at County Hall.

*Cllr Patricia Birchley
Chiltern Ridges Division, Buckinghamshire Council
Patricia.Birchley@buckinghamshire.gov.uk
07714 704017*

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HAWRIDGE AND CHOLESBURY C OF E SCHOOL

Christmas is now a distant memory – so I'll set the scene. T'was a bleak midwinter. Snow had come like a thief in the night, turning the Chiltern Hills into an A[of astonishingly]ONB. It was proper chilly - like in the olden days when people skated on the Thames. Everywhere was a winter wonderland, so we didn't have to pay to take the kids to fake ones. Why am I banging on about Noel well into the New Year? Well, I've not done the festive news and so much hard work goes into it, so I want to call out.

For us KS2 parents, it meant a precarious expedition to Christ Church Waterside, Chesham for the Carol Concert. We parked by Moor Gym and stared across the dark expanse of icy road and river between us and our destination. We tottered, we slid, we stuttered. My infant son wanted to run across the icy footbridge. After some debate, I let him – so long as he understood I would not fish him out of the river if he fell in.

My daughter was involved in the service, singing the first verse of Once in Royal David's City and playing We Three Kings on the piano. The irony of these events is that we'd already been treated to many a private performance of these ditties, from the shaky first attempts through to fluent recital. We'd sung with gusto at the dinner table – spilling drinks and flecking each other with spittle. So, by the time I was in the church I was like, 'yeah, and?!' Joke. She didn't miss a beat. I was very proud - not only of her performance, but also of her apparent nonchalance at performing in a packed church.

I was also proud of my three-year-old son because, for a few rows, he stole the show by slurrily singing along to Jingle Bells like the proverbial drunk in a midnight choir, trying in his way to be free. Singing carols in church at Christmas is a lovely thing, no matter what you believe. Thank you to the school for organising.

In other news...

KS1 did their musical nativity play. I miss the nativity play. It's great. Look forward to my son getting involved in a couple of years. Perhaps he'll be the star... literally.

There was the school disco. My wife volunteered me to help. I was put on the glow stick stall. My goodness, kids really love glow sticks. I've never been so busy. It was intense - but fun.

There was also the Christmas Fair, where Karen Hosker and her crack team of parent volunteers sold cakes and gifts to raise an impressive £1000 for the school. All welcome funds.

Speaking of – not iron, but any old Apples? The school's iPads are getting old. So, if anyone has an old iPad lying around at home that they would like to donate, please get in touch with the school.

Rob Scott



HAWRIDGE & CHOLESBURY COMMONS PRESERVATION SOCIETY

Ponds

In a separate article in this magazine, Dr Claudia Bernardini has written about an initiative to try to encourage local people to create ponds on their land. Claudia is the project officer of the Newt Conservation Partnership (NCP) and is monitoring existing ponds in Bucks and part of Oxfordshire and creating ponds and habitats particularly suited to great crested newts. Where suitable sites can be established the creation of ponds will be fully funded. This area is particularly well suited for great crested newts as they have been known to live here in the past and may well still be around. This scheme is an ideal opportunity for landowners who wish to take part since NCP not only covers 100% of all costs for pond creation/restoration and for terrestrial habitats but there is also an annual payment to the landowner for each pond created and also a sum per hectare of terrestrial habitat created to help with the management and to compensate for the lost income.

Pallett's Pond

We were fortunate to have Claudia and her associates here to survey Pallett's Pond in April 2022 and although they found no evidence of this species then, Claudia was fairly confident that, under better

conditions, they would still be found here. Much of the vegetation in and around Pallett's Pond is perfect habitat for these newts and other amphibians. Claudia points out that suitable vegetation both in and around the ponds is significant since newts need a pond for breeding but they spend most of their adult life on dry land.

In 2003, when I edited the Local Heritage Study, Hawridge and Cholesbury Commons, (available on hawridgeandcholesburycommons.org) the Environmental Records Office had recordings of great crested newts in Pallett's Pond but, as they were (and still are) heavily protected I was not allowed to mention them in the Study. Another local siting that I was told of but do not know further details was that, when work was undertaken at Chapel House, Buckland Common, a great crested newt was found in the immersion pool which had been used for baptisms when it was a Baptist Chapel. We would be interested to hear more if anyone has further information.

The dewpond

This little pond to the east of the Cricket Pitch was clearly manmade but when it was created and for what purpose we haven't been able to establish. Barry Tompson, who grew up in Cholesbury at the Old Manor House, told me that James Pallett, who ran a carrier's business from The Bury, used to drive through the dewpond to wet the wooden wheels of his carts to expand them in their metal rims.

Frank Brown, who grew up at Baldwins at the top of Rays Hill, says that when he was young the pond was known as Elsebere or Elsemere Pond. According to Frank, "it never held very much water but in winter this was just deep enough to slide on the ice with only the socks at risk of getting wet if you broke through. At that time the Common side of Rays hill was free of scrub and made a perfect toboggan slope as it



Claudia (Right) with Charlie and Emma checking Pallett's Pond

was steep and you could continue up the path on the other side to stop safely. Once Uncle George (Brown) stopped grazing his cows (in the mid 1960s) and myxomatosis killed off the rabbits, the Common side of Rays hill commenced growing brush and hawthorn and it was not long before sledging was impossible. I remember Pallett's Pond was much cleaner and clearer but we never ventured very far in as it was thought to go deep at the back. It was a good source of sticklebacks, many of which we caught using a worm on a bent pin suspended from 3 or 4 feet of cane or a straight twig".

About 25 years ago HCCPS tried to repair the base of the dewpond so that it would hold water all year long. However, this failed and to date it continues to dry out from time to time. Pond experts tell us that this periodic drying out can in fact be a good thing and that it is good to have different types of ponds which complement each other in an area. Such ponds as the

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David Dennis and DofE volunteer, Toby Grieff-King clearing the dewpond

dewpond can harbour unusual plants such as water purslane which grows prolifically here but is rare in Bucks.

Garden ponds

Though they might not qualify for a grant from the Newt Conservation Partnership, creating even a small garden wildlife pond brings a lot of pleasure and it is astonishing how quickly they become home to small creatures, like frogs, toads, newts, dragonflies, damsel flies and water boatmen. Although I originally opted for a membrane base, after numerous repairs to holes made by visiting deer, ducks and other creatures, I replaced it with an uglier, though sturdier, preformed plastic base. This is now pretty much obscured by vegetation and remains undamaged several years later. Remember that amphibians need to be able to climb out of your pond, so a pile of rocks by the edge makes this possible and Claudia advised me to put in water mint which she says newts particularly like.

Prehistory Day

In 2020, the Chiltern Conservation Board were planning to hold a Prehistory Day on our Commons. However, due to the pandemic, this had to be postponed. Plans are currently afoot to hold a similar event on Cholesbury Common on 18 March 2023. Further information about the event will be posted on Grapevine when the plans are finalised but Dr Wendy Morrison, who is organising the event, hopes to have "exhibitors who will demonstrate various prehistoric crafts such as flint knapping, cordage-making from nettle fibres, cloth dyeing using native plants, prehistoric cookery and prehistoric metal smelting. We would also have displays offering more information about the project, heritage in the Chess Valley and in the wider Chilterns, and would run short, guided walks around the hillfort." It sounds like a very interesting event.

Financial Report

The financial report to the year end October 2022 is now available on our website hawridgeandcholesburycommons.org. Our thanks to our treasurer Philip Prettejohn for preparing the report and to Mike Fletcher, our honorary Examiner, for his careful scrutiny of the figures. Our thanks too to everyone who continues to keep the bank balance healthy by contributing in any way. See the financial report for further details.

At present, Philip is currently updating our membership records and we hope that you will not mind if you receive a reminder about subs if your membership has lapsed. It is very easy to do! Philip points out that by completing a Standing Order form means you won't have to remember to pay your subs each year and we won't have to pay anything as we do with PayPal, who take a percentage for each transaction.

Subscriptions

If you do not pay your subscription by direct debit or PayPal your annual subscriptions are due now. Family membership remains £20 and for an individual £10.

It is easy to make payments to HCCPS via our website hawridgeandcholesburycommons.org under HCCPS Membership. Here you can...

- complete a **Standing Order** form
 - use **PayPal** without signing up to PayPal.
- Alternatively, you can make a **Bank Transfer** to Hawridge and Cholesbury Commons Preservation Society, Account Number: 50458015, Sort Code: 20 - 02 - 06, Reference: Subs + Payer's name. It would be helpful if you send a confirmatory email to treasurer.hccps@gmail.com

Cash or Cheques made payable to HCCPS may be sent to Philip Prettejohn, Barncroft, Vale Farm, Hawridge, Chesham HP5 2UG.

Tree felling

Most of the winter tree felling for ash dieback for this year has now been done behind the Cycle Café and at Braziers End. In some cases, these areas have not yet been cleared since the ground is simply too wet. Christine has just inspected the trees on the Commons with John Morris to establish which trees will be dealt with next.

Nature notes

Melissa Harrison wrote recently that balls of mistletoe are becoming more common despite the decline in mistle thrushes, which have traditionally spread mistletoe seeds. This is because blackcaps really love mistletoe berries. Blackcaps were once only summer visitors but now overwinter here because of our warmer winter weather. They peck the berries and then wipe their beaks on surrounding twigs ensuring germination of further mistletoe clumps. And did you know that the mainstay of badgers' diet is worms and that in frosty weather they can't forage for them? Although badgers can be far less active in winter and sleep more through harsh winter conditions they do still need to eat. Jonathan Tulloch reports them foraging for acorns when worms are unavailable.

I am sure you are all looking forward to some drier weather but at least the ponds have been filling up nicely!

Lindsay Griffin

LOCAL HISTORY GROUP

This season's programme of talks continues with...

Friday 3 February (7.30 for 7.45pm) – **The history of Berkhamsted**

Venue: St Leonards Parish Hall.

We are lucky to secure this new talk by Julian Hunt, a renowned historian of Buckinghamshire, who is our most regular returning speaker. This talk was given only a few months ago to commemorate the 800th anniversary of St Peter's Church, Berkhamsted, and we now have the opportunity to hear about Julian's recent research.

Friday 3 March (7.30 for 7.45pm) - **Home Fires and Havens: Amersham area during WWII**

Venue: St Leonards Parish Hall.

Alison Bailey is a volunteer at Amersham Museum. Alison's talk last year on arts and crafts buildings went down a storm with our members, so we have quickly welcomed her back. This talk will cover the mid-20th century history of the wider Amersham area.



Friday 7 April (7.30 for 7.45pm) **Country Clothes: Rural Workwear of the 19th century**

Venue: St Leonards Parish Hall.

Will Phillips is curator of the social history archive at Discover Bucks Museum (formerly Bucks County Museum) and returns following his much enjoyed presentation for those who attended his talk last year. The Museum has an extensive collection of fabrics and garments from Buckinghamshire history. Will therefore is best placed to display and explain the history of these artefacts from our recent past.

Membership for this year has been reduced to £8 for the 2022-23 season of talks. Subscriptions can be most easily paid via BACS transfer. Please contact Richard Leat, Treasurer, on 01494 758784 or leatrj@yahoo.co.uk for the Local History Group bank details. Visitors are always welcome and the entrance fee is £4 at the door.

Chris Brown



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CHOLESBURY CUM ST LEONARDS HORT SOC

The New Year came in on a very soggy note and hard to know where to start in the garden. The rain has so impacted the soil that even the first snowdrops are reluctant to appear.

Looking out at the black stems of plants and small shrubs that had been flowering into November and which suffered from the hard frosts before Christmas, I decided on a rare fine day to get out and start cutting these back. It all looks so much better and now I have the front garden to do the same.

If you have excess snowdrops they can be split up and planted 'in the green'. Offer them to friends or plant under hedgerows where they soon establish.

If you have hellebores in the garden check to see if some of the older foliage is suffering from black spot disease and cut these off. Cut back small shrubs to encourage strong growth in the spring.

Another winter job is to check your shed and take any old chemicals to the tip for correct disposal. If you have excess plastic flower pots, I saw that Dobies in Wendover has a large bin to recycle them. However, it is worth checking Grapevine as good pots are often offered and are useful if you have plants to spare to offer for sale at the fetes in the village....please label them!

Some of the garden centres are still selling off discounted stock such as bulbs and it is not too late to plant out summer flowering ones such as alliums and camassias and other delights.

Sweet peas can be sown now. I sow three seeds to a 3" pot and germinate them in the house - under a radiator is good - then keep them on a sunny windowsill or porch. When they have three sets of leaves pinch the tips out to encourage growth and grow

on in a greenhouse to plant out in March.

The Hort Soc. has arranged a programme of events for 2023. The following are the first two...

Sunday 19 February, 11.30 - 1pm: Open Snowdrops at Hawridge Place.

Friday 24 March, 7 - 9pm: 'Some like it hot', by Anne Godfrey of Daisy Roots Nursery, who will bring some of her well grown plants for sale at St Leonards Parish Hall.

To book please contact our Secretary, Diana Garner, and also if you would like to join the society, at montana@cholesbury.net

Good gardening this Spring and hope to see you at our events planned for this year.

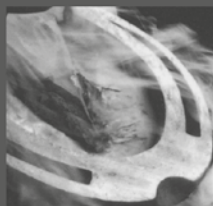
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HAWRIDGE & CHOLESBURY CRICKET CLUB

The Winter months are typically the quietest for cricket clubs and Hawridge & Cholesbury is no different, except for the annual Boxing Day Hunt taking place on the Common. As in previous years the Hunt offered an opportunity for a post-Christmas meet for members as we looked to utilise the Clubhouse as an alternative food and drink stop for all of those that were out and about on a crisp Boxing Day morning. An opportunity to maximise revenues and maintain and support the growth of cricket in the Hilltop Villages is key. So, it was good to see a good turnout of members willing to pour a pint, flip a burger or sell a cup of mulled wine all in aid of the club finances.



Willing Club members ready to cater



The annual Boxing Day Hunt rides by

Thoughts now turn towards the forthcoming season, so the coming months will see the AGM, preparation work beginning on the square and the usual lick of paint here and there to ensure that our Clubhouse is in pristine condition to welcome the influx and visiting senior and junior teams over the summer months. As always, the club is on the lookout for new members who can offer something towards its running, whether from a playing perspective, assisting with coaching our junior section, help with our social media content or being able to assist in running the bar on match days. If anyone feels that they can offer something, be it an hour here or there or something longer, please feel free to contact chairman@hawridgecricket.co.uk or pop up to the Common over the coming weeks when you see activity around the clubhouse as preparations take hold and chat to one of the members.

Ian Hames

Chairman (Interim)

The cricket pitch has been put to bed for the winter season and work, for now, on the square has been completed. We would be grateful if the square boundary could be respected and the square itself not walked on. There are still a few jobs to be done on the ground, covers and within the pavilion and these will be completed over the next month or so.

Organisation for the next cricket season continues. Some Colts rules have been changed and fixtures have been arranged. Bucks CB, alongside the ECB, have offered a grant, which we have been awarded for training of additional coaches, with courses going on throughout the winter season.

James Morris, Colts Manager

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chilternmotorsbc@hotmail.com', and 'website: www.chilternmotorsbc.co.uk'. A phone number 'Tel: 01494 758206' is also listed. The bottom section highlights 'SERVICING AND MECHANICAL REPAIRS' including 'MOTs (Class 4, Petrol and Diesel)', 'Exhausts • Tyres fitted', and 'Outlet for D. Cox Engineering: Mower servicing and repair' with contact details 'Tel: 01494 757234' and 'Mobile: 07841 159724'. The website 'www.chilternmotorsbc.co.uk' is prominently displayed at the bottom."/>

NEIGHBOURHOOD WATCH

Although the nights are getting shorter and the days longer there is still a need to stay vigilant and if you want to protect your home think WIDEN...



WINDOWS, INTERIOR, DOORS, EXTERIOR, NEIGHBOURS to have the best possible protection against burglary.

WINDOWS: Lock your windows

INTERIOR: Put your interior lights on a timer

DOORS: Double or deadlock your doors

EXTERIOR: Put your exterior lights on a sensor

NEIGHBOURS: Keep an eye out for neighbours

As with all types of crime, prevention is much better than cure and taking simple measures such as these can significantly reduce your chances of being burgled.

Some figures for you to see how our police forces have performed over the festive period...

Thames Valley Police and Hampshire Constabulary's Joint Operations Unit made more than 700 arrests across both force areas as part of Operation Holly.

From 1 December to 31 December, officers carried out targeted activity to stop drivers under the influence of drink and drugs.

Across both force areas, 737 arrests were made, with 451 of those being made in the Thames Valley alone. This is an increase of 24% compared to last year.

Of those arrests made, 283 were for drink driving and 168 for drug driving.

There was also a 42% increase in arrests of those aged under 25 on last year with the figure rising to 101.

Share our crime and community survey with 16 – 24-year-olds

Please share the link below with some of the younger members of our community or pass it on to someone who may be interested in this survey.

We want to reach people aged 16-24 years old to find out more about their experiences of crime, safety and engaging with their local community. Please promote this survey by sharing this link <https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/X757SFP> to enable them to get their voice heard. This survey will run until the end of March.

Erin Thwaites (758079)

CHOLESBURY-CUM-ST LEONARDS W.I.

As it is literally the time of new beginnings, why not come and join us for 2023! You don't have to commit to joining straightaway but are very welcome to try us out for a few months. To whet your appetite, we have Terri Baker speaking at our February meeting on her Atlantic Adventure and in March Graham Laurie is talking about the Australian Flying Doctor Service.

It costs just £1 to come, which even includes a cuppa. We would love to see you at 7.30pm at St Leonards Hall on the third Monday of the month.

Hilary Sheppard

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Funding opportunities for ponds

Cholesbury Parish, with its varied natural landscape, offers a good environment for amphibians to live and thrive. The mosaic of wooded and open spaces, heathland, ancient woodland, pasture, grassland and several ponds dotted around the parish, is fantastic habitat for newts.

We are looking for landowners who might be interested in habitat creation or restoration for great crested newts. This could include the creation or restoration of ponds, woodland or meadows. Ideal locations include clay and wet soils and poor arable land. The presence of natural ponds in the parish confirms that the chalky nature of the area does not preclude the opportunity to create clean water ponds.

Breeding ponds are necessary to maintain a healthy great crested newt population. However, adults spend most of their life on land so it is really important that a natural environment can provide forage, shelter, safe movement across the landscape and hibernation in the winter months. The scheme offers the opportunity to create and restore terrestrial habitat, including planting trees or hedges and the creation and restoration of grassland.

The Newt Conservation Partnership (NCP) is a community benefit society whose purpose is to create and manage high quality aquatic and terrestrial habitat for great crested newts. It is the delivery partner for the 'NatureSpace great crested newt District Licencing Scheme', a new Government-approved approach to addressing the impact of development on great crested newts. The Scheme delivers habitat creation and restoration in many local authorities across the country, including Buckinghamshire.

NCP provides 100 percent funding for all costs of capital work and an annual payment to landowners that covers habitat management and compensates for any lost income (eg, on agricultural land). The scheme has an extensive monitoring programme to ensure the habitat created or restored remains beneficial for newts and other wildlife. You can find out about our criteria on our landowner factsheet: <https://tinyurl.com/LandownerFactsheet>

If you know of suitable sites, or landowners who may be interested, please contact Claudia Bernardini at cbernardini@newtpartnership.org.uk or see the website: www.newtpartnership.org.uk

Dr Claudia Bernardini, Project Officer, Newt Conservation Partnership



hilltop disco

No, it isn't a youth club, or a nightclub for that matter! It's not an exercise or dance class either. It isn't even a travelling DJ supplying atmosphere to local parties...

Hilltop disco is simply an invitation to dance in the company of others, in the heart of the Hilltop villages. It's not flashy (although there are disco lights) and it's not expensive (at £3 per one-hour session it costs less than a cup of coffee) but it's fast becoming the hot ticket in town:

'When I first came along to hilltop disco, I had no idea what to expect! Now I look forward to it every week. It's not a class, so there's no pressure, you just do what you want. No one judges, it's just great fun.'
(Claudia)

So why dance for fun? It clearly improves a person's fitness and burns calories galore, but studies featured in Michael Moseley's BBC 'Just One Thing' health podcast also show that more than other forms of exercise, dancing with others ...

- releases feel-good endorphins, triggering positive feelings and boosting mental health
- reduces the risk of heart conditions and dementia
- improves balance, co-ordination, and spatial working memory

The only criteria to make the playlist is a tune and a beat to get people's feet tapping! Think 50s Motown alongside

80s disco greats and today's trance, and everything in between. The sets start with an easy beat, and gradually build the tempo, seamlessly moving between genres as diverse as Latin, hip-hop and funk. The last song each week is a slower number, which some people like to use for stretching and wind-down purposes.

Our venue is lovely St Leonards Parish Hall, which allows for ample parking and enough space for a comfy 'chill-out' zone for anyone who wishes to step out of the disco at any point.

We look forward to welcoming you to this exciting community initiative!

Please email hilltopdisco@gmail.com for more information and to register, or contact Kathryn on 07946 511122



Echor: deadlines on the Met Line

One of the most vital things we have learnt about running a concert series so far is the importance of finding a balance in everything we do. Maintaining varied and interesting programming goes hand in hand with pacing the performances evenly throughout the year. This becomes a challenge when you must dodge clashes with your own professional commitments, not to mention avoiding school holidays and Wimbledon finals!

Things can also get extra complicated when much of our time is taken up working in the north of England where long commutes can certainly take their (M6) toll. I remember driving down after a concert on the Wirral, arriving in Hawridge at 2am, then to complete an arrangement of Rodrigo's Guitar Concerto

that was to be performed the following day in Aldbury. Those of you who also came to see Nosferatu at Dundridge Manor won't be aware that the actual music was still being composed the night before!

There is rarely a moment where our laptops don't make an appearance on the underground on our way to and from a recording session, occasionally inviting curious looks from fellow commuters. It is safe to say that as musicians we thrive on adrenaline, and high-pressure situations come around as often as exercise equipment is up for grabs on Grapevine. Somehow, everything always miraculously comes together with the help of our incredible local musicians and loyal volunteers.

Our jobs as professional orchestral musicians can be demanding. Rehearsal hours are extensive as well as physically challenging as we often prepare two or

three different concert programmes per week (or around 5 hours of music). Our personal positions within the orchestra also mean we have maximum responsibility, as Nick is the leader of the viola section and I am often required to lead the entire orchestra from the first violin chair. Luckily our orchestra, the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic, provides physiotherapists on site to help alleviate muscle tension and avoid long-term damage.

Switching between our positions in Liverpool and our Echor roles in the Chilterns is where the challenge lies. Each one demands a completely different skill set and energy and adjusting quickly between

both roles can be difficult. We are still learning our personal limits and reflecting on mistakes we have made along the way. It is my hope that one day soon we will be able to focus entirely on what we have built here in the Chilterns, because ultimately Echor is where our hearts belong.

We have been plotting many exciting concerts that we can't wait to share with you in the next *Hilltop News*. In the meantime, please sign up to our mailing list at www.echormusic.com if you haven't already done so, to be the first to hear about our plans.

*Eva Thorarinsdottir,
Creative Director of Echor Music*



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**CHOLESBURY VILLAGE HALL'S
CHRISTMAS COMPETITION**
Twelve Days, Twelve Prizes, Twelve Lucky Winners....

AND THE WINNERS WERE.....

A huge thank you to everyone who bought tickets for the Christmas Competition to raise funds for Cholesbury Village Hall

We sold 343 tickets bringing the total amount raised to a splendid **£857.50**

The 12 winners were drawn at our December CVH Committee Meeting on 12th December and were: Jason & Amy Flowers, Frank Haysom, John Farmer, Anne Mills, Stewart Pearce, Anne Johnson, Amanda Bradford, Sue Hall, Lucy Morris, Antonia Savvides, Amanda Lewis and Heather Painter, each choosing their preferred prize. All prizes were duly delivered to the lucky winners.

Special Thanks to all those who kindly provided prizes:
Christmas Tree Farm, Ann Buckley, the Velo Café, Zoe Templeton, Lindsay Griffin and all the Committee

From Revd. Chris Haywood...



It was wonderful to welcome so many of you into the Hilltop Churches for our Christmas services. Each church hosted a Carol Service, which were joyous, and Midnight Mass and the Christmas Day service at St Leonards were celebratory.

I understand that it has been the tradition across the benefices for the Midnight Mass service to be hosted at St Leonards Church. However, I am keen to take feedback on whether the Midnight Mass service might be hosted in rotation around the churches. Please do let me know your thoughts so we can plan accordingly for next year.

At Christmas time and in the post-Christmas period, we recount the heralding of Jesus the Messiah by John the Baptist. It is the Churches job to take a lead from John and make Jesus known for his love and care and offer of salvation and relationship with God. I hope our Christmas services presented such a message of peace and reconciliation.

One of the ways we made our services known, in addition to the *Hilltop News* listings and article, was to mail out a Christmas Card. It depicted a Christingle, as this year we reintroduced Christingle Services as part of our programme at Hawridge. I was pleased with the response to the card.

We are now looking forward to Easter. Lent starts on 22 February with an Ash Wednesday service, incorporating the Imposition of Ashes, at St Mary's Church, Hawridge at 7pm. Lent is of course a time of reflection and repentance in preparation for Easter, which our Lent services will

reflect. The exception is Mothering Sunday on Sunday 19 March, when we will celebrate and remember our mothers at a special service. Do join us for special service at St Leonards at 9am for the Breakfast Service and at Hawridge for a more traditional occasion.

As we look to Easter, we are running groups exploring the Christian faith, which can, but do not necessarily need to culminate in confirmation into the Church of England. If you'd like to explore more about Christianity and want to join a group just let me know and I'll link you into a group. We hope very much that this will culminate with Bishop Alan leading a united Benefice confirmation service, an occasion we have not hosted since the 1990's, I believe.

Also throughout Lent we're looking to reconvene the weekly Lent group, where we will gather at the Vicarage to explore together the Christian faith and how we live it out, encouraging each other in our enquiry, learning and its application. Groups will be weekly through Lent, on Tuesday evenings beginning on Shrove Tuesday, 21 February. If you would like to join the group, to please let Georgie or I know. Last year the Lent group was a very special time of sharing and learning and we look forward to it being so again.

God Bless...

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THE LEE AND HILLTOPS SERVICE ROTA FEBRUARY - MARCH 2023

	Day	St John The Baptist The Lee	St Leonard's St Leonards	St Laurence Cholesbury	St Mary's Hawridge
February 2023					
5th February	3rd before Lent	8.00 AM BCP Holy Communion (Old Church) 11.00 AM Family Service	9.00 AM CW Parish Communion		
12th February	2nd before Lent	11.00 AM CW Parish Communion			9.30 AM BCP Holy Communion
19th February	Next before Lent	8.00 AM BCP Holy Communion (Old Church)	9.00 AM Breakfast Service Lay led		11.00 AM CW Parish Communion
22nd January	Ash Wednesday	5.00 PM Imposition of Ashes and Holy Communion (Old Church)			7.00 PM Imposition of Ashes and Holy Communion
26th February	Lent 1	11.00 AM CW Parish Communion		9.00 AM CW Parish Communion	
March 2023					
5th March	Lent 2	8.00 am BCP Holy Communion (Old Church) 11.00 AM Family Service	9.00 AM Parish Communion		
12th March	Lent 3	11.00 AM CW Parish Communion		9.30 AM BCP Holy Communion	
19th March	Mothering Sunday	8.00 AM BCP Holy Communion (Old Church) 11.00 AM Mothering Sunday Service	9.00 AM Mothering Sunday Breakfast Service Lay Led		11.00 AM CW Parish Communion
26th March	Lent 5	11.00 AM CW Parish Communion		9.00 AM CW Parish Communion	

Vicar and Rector
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 The Vicarage
 The Lee, Great Missenden
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 01494 837566

revchrishaywood@btinternet.com

Churchwarden
The Lee
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Churchwarden
Hawridge
 Elizabeth Tomlin
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CHURCH MATTERS

ST LEONARDS

Christmas was a busy period at St Leonards



Church and we loved seeing so many of you over the season.

We held our outdoor **Family Carol Service** again this year – after last year's success. We were concerned that the 2022 success was only due to Covid and would anyone come this year? We dodged the weather! The bitter cold had stopped – the rain had not started. We had almost 100, from 6 months old to 'very senior' with some visitors sitting in their cars like an American drive-in movie! Interspaced between the Carols we heard the Nativity story from Alanah Donnell and the Rector, Chris Haywood, gave a short sermon. However, the highlight for many was when the children all came to the front to dress up in Nativity clothing and, gently led by Virginia Oldham, they re-enacted the story.

At **Midnight Mass** at 11.30 many villagers braved the late time and cold weather and celebrated the first Communion together in a Church decorated beautifully with lilies and candles flickering. On **Christmas Day**, St Leonards held the morning Communion for the Hilltops and, although attendance was low, it was lovely to see people come together. We also celebrated the life of **Francis Sanger**, a much loved and dedicated member of the Hilltops community.

At the end of the year it is appropriate to say a big Thank You to our Rector, Chris Haywood, and to all the people who make the Church work day in and day out all year round. It's not just the Sunday Services,



Visitors dodge the worst of the weather at the outdoor carol service

weddings and funerals but also the visiting and caring for people on a daily basis. We want to thank everyone involved from the volunteers who arrange the flowers, do the clearing, open the building up, cook at the Breakfast Service and do the numerous jobs that allow the Church to continue.

As we move through January, we continue to host **Holy Communion** on the first Sunday and the family-friendly **Breakfast Service** on the third Sunday. We do hope you can join us on **Sunday 19 February** and **Sunday 19 March**.

We are already looking forward to **Mothering Sunday** and **Easter Celebrations** and will update via Grapevine when we know what the plans are.

CHOLESBURY

It was stated in October's *Hilltop News* that the service rota was established, but this has now changed and on alternate months there will be only one service in



Cholesbury. This is on the fourth Sunday at 9am and all are welcome to share our worship.

The date of our **Candlelit Carol** service would have clashed with the World Cup Final, so the Church of England advised parishes to rearrange their Christmas events and we chose 11 December. Now that Covid and Lockdown are behind us we welcomed a good-sized congregation to hear the Christmas story. Our thanks to Andrew and Maggie for the mulled wine and Richard Charles for a demanding stint playing the organ. We are grateful to many helpers who decorated the church with Advent greenery from gardens and hedgerows and delighted that some red berries were tracked down. The collection of £130 was given to PACT, our children's adoption charity.

Fund raising plans are under way with a **Quiz Night** on **Saturday 18 February** at 7.30pm in St Leonards Parish Hall. This will be another of Peter Green's well-planned events when the questions are both spoken and on screen. Tickets cost £12.50 including a hot supper.

HAWRIDGE

The Christmas season's activity began at Hawridge Church with a **Christingle** service in early December. At least the weather was mild, in contrast to the normal scheduled Parish Communion service on 18 December which was during the cold snap. Church Lane was pretty slippery, so it was a very small congregation in a less than warm Church (ie jolly cold indeed). Happily, the cold weather in December did not last much beyond that.



At Christmas 2021 the restrictions of Covid were relaxing although precautions remained for our **Christmas Eve Carol Service** and masks were worn throughout, including for the singing. That occasion attracted a congregation of nearly 50 people. What a relief then that one year later these doleful precautions had gone and our Christmas Eve carol service was back to normal and attracted a packed church (nearly 120 crowded into every place to sit, of whom about 20 were children) with the Rector presiding from the pulpit and the Church splendidly decorated and many candles glowing.

At some point between Christmas and the early New Year some plaster fell from the ceiling onto a pew inside the Church and the PCC is urgently seeking a professional survey and advice as to cause and remedy as well as advice on safety to anyone in the Church. It is possible that some disruption to planned services may result. Moreover, any repairs may be costly which, added to the pressures from the costs of energy (though we are sparing in using the electric heaters!) means that St Mary's continues to be very grateful to our existing supporters. Any further financial support, whether from existing or new supporters and whether to the Church directly or to the Friends of Hawridge Church, is always welcomed and hugely appreciated.

With **Easter** late in 2023 the details of the Church's programme for that festival will be in the next issue of *Hilltop News*, although the Lent season will of course begin on Ash Wednesday (22 February) and we are hoping that the usual evening Communion Service will be able to be held at Hawridge on that day.

When I was a girl...

Reading John Horn's story, 'When I was a boy', in the October/November 2022 issue of Hilltop News brought back many memories for me, as I lived with my grandparents Bernard and Meri Adams at the cottage in Cherry Tree Lane which John referred to.

I lived there until I was only four years old but I remember the boys in the lane. John was one of them and I still have a photo of him, taken by my mother, Shirley Adams.

Bernard and Meri also had a house in the Kings Road in Chelsea, round the corner from Bernard's artist's studio. I was told that the Rothschilds gave (or rented) the cottage in Buckland Common to him as a thank you for painting portraits of the Rothchild's family.

My grandparents had four children: Jasper, Gillian, Garth and Shirley and spent most of their summers at Buckland Common. Grannie lived there during the war and I believe Garth was born there.

My mother was in the WAAF and met and married my father, then the renowned Battle of Britain fighter pilot W/Cdr Roland Beamont*. Very sadly, my mother died of TB on VE Day at the age of 23. My father was in a German Prisoner of War camp at the time and didn't know the shocking news until he was repatriated a month later. When my mother became ill the previous year, I was taken to live with my grandparents at Buckland Common.

I was very happy there and can remember a lot about my grandparents and Mack and Phill who lived next door and Mrs Brown, who lived up the lane and gave me ginger biscuits. My grandparents are buried in St Leonards churchyard, next to my mother. My aunt Gillian's ashes are also

there with her husband Jan Kurzke.

I was delighted when John Horn, in his article, mentioned the rural scene engraved into the render above the door of our cottage by Bernard Adams. Sadly, the photos I have are too faded to see the picture.

John's memories have filled a gap in my family narrative and I am very grateful that he has written them.

Carol S Walton



My mother and father



With my mother at the cottage



With family and friends, the day I left Buckland Common as a four-year-old. Father (Bee) is on the right



Adams at War! Bernard, Shirley and Jasper

**W/Cdr Roland (Bee) Beamont was a flying ace for the RAF and an experimental test pilot during and after World War II. During the War he was awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross and a bar to his DSO. In the 1950s he became the first pilot to exceed Mach1 in a British aircraft in level flight and the first to fly at Mach2. He also set three Atlantic records, including the first double Atlantic flight within 24 hours, for which he was awarded the Britannia Trophy.*

Mustelids – not such alien creatures

Whenever I hear the name mustelids, almost immediately I think it sounds like alien characters from Dr Who, like The Cybermen or maybe The Chrysalids, from the book of that name written by John Wyndham. The mustelids are, in fact, a very diverse family of carnivorous animals with a worldwide distribution of around seventy species. Some, like weasels, are only eight inches long. Others, like sea otters, grow to five and a half feet.

Mustelids evolved, along with rodents, from primitive mammal ancestors 40 million years ago and the direct ancestors of modern mustelids around 15 million years ago. In the UK our current species migrated across the then intact land bridge from Europe around 12,000 years ago. In the United Kingdom there are eight species, seven wild (six native and an escapee) and one domesticated that is also living as an escapee. Six of these are represented locally.

They might as well be aliens as we rarely see them, though they are never far away. Common to all mustelids is their carnivorous habit. They might rarely be spotted in daylight but more hunt for prey at dusk and dawn or during the night-time. For the smaller examples, body shape is similar with slender short legs designed for short bursts of speed and all frequently sitting up on their haunches to look about them. All this makes them difficult to spot as they scurry from place to place.

Up until the 1950s the **polecat's** UK range had shrunk to the point where it was only to be found in western Wales, because of persecution. Over the past 70 years polecats have gradually made a recovery (or may have been reintroduced unofficially) and may now occasionally be seen caught in the headlights or outside security

lights across the midlands and south-east, including Buckinghamshire. Coloration varies from a creamy-yellow to black with distinctive striped clown-like face-markings. Food varies from voles and mice to frogs and worms.

Ferrets are domesticated polecats. The domestication can be traced back to at least first century BC Iberia, when polecats were bred to catch rats. Typically, they are creamy white in colour, unless they are a throwback or are the result of more recent inter-breeding with their erstwhile cousin the polecat, when they present a brown colouration. For this reason, sightings of polecats can actually be ferrets with the characteristic polecat face-markings.

Stoats and **weasels** are similar in form and colouration. Though the latter is somewhat smaller, they are easily confused. Stoats can be distinguished from weasels by the more ginger or sandy-brown coat and, most diagnostically, a black tip to their tail. Stoats hunt by day and night and are vicious hunters capable of tracking for many miles their prey which may be twice their size and four-times their weight, such as rabbits or rats. But they will happily feed on insects and other invertebrates such as insects and earthworms as well as fruit! Their favourite den is a rock crevice or abandoned rabbit hole. Weasels have a russet-brown coat and are the smallest UK



carnivore. In fact the head of a weasel is so small that, according to 'The Mammal Society', it can fit through a wedding ring! Weasels travel swiftly across the ground by very fast-moving undulating bounds. Voles and mice are their favourite prey, though they are athletic enough to grab ground-feeding birds.

Mink are a non-native species introduced into Britain from America in the 1920s for the purpose of captive breeding on fur farms, 'farmed' for their pelts. Unfortunately, since the 1930s they have progressively escaped and in more recent times the last of the captive-bred minks were released by mink-farm saboteurs. Mink can be distinguished by their chocolate-brown fur, often looking blackish. They are good swimmers and their habitat is typically close to water, such as streams and lakes and though their favoured food is fish, they will also take waterfowl, their chicks or eggs. For this reason, though they have been known to take rabbits and voles, they are an unlikely resident in these parts.

The final representative of the mustelids, the largest UK carnivore, and most probably the most likely ones you will see, or see signs of, are the unmistakable **badgers**, with their black and white striped face mask. Not only the most widespread of the family, badgers have also contributed to the culture of the country. From the Old English name for badger, *brocc*, several placenames have names derived from it: for

example, Brockhall in Northamptonshire; Brockhurst in Wiltshire and Broxsted in Essex.

Like otters, badgers live in extended family groups of up to fifteen members. Their extensive underground accommodation has several compartments, exits and entrances called setts. The main food of badgers is invertebrates, principally earthworms and insects. However, unlike their carnivore relatives they are true omnivores, feasting in autumn on fruit. Though they do not hibernate, unlike other mustelids badgers do build up their fat supplies by 60% and reduce their activity significantly, living off the stored fats.

The remaining UK representatives of the mustelids not found locally are **otters**, similar in size to the badger, and the most colourful, **pine martens**. Perhaps the nearest locations that otters inhabit are the brooks and waterways of Aylesbury or a stretch of the Chess beyond Latimer. Meanwhile pine martens, with their chocolate-brown bodies and yellow throats, are restricted to coniferous forests in remote areas in Wales, Northern England and Scotland. They are much suited to the forests due to their tree-climbing habitat.

Though the mustelids will probably never be chosen as an alien character in Dr Who, at least one of the family has achieved even greater celebrity on the big screen. That mustelid is the Marvel Comics and X-Men character Wolverine!

Chris Brown

David Dowson

1943 - 2022

It is with great pleasure that I am writing this short piece about my brother, David Dowson, who sadly died in October. He knew so many people in the villages near Buckland Common and I think, every inch of the wonderful countryside there.

He loved being outdoors and from a very young age loved hunting. He hunted in many parts of the country and was a fount of knowledge on people and places all over England. He was easily recognisable as he was nearly always smartly dressed and often wore a three-piece suit and, more recently, an akubra hat.

When we were younger we would ride our ponies together and often there were Pony Club events to go to at The Lee. The Pony Club camp was held there for many years. Before that it had been held at Hartwell House outside Aylesbury, which was also a lovely setting. Every year there was a hunter trial held in the fields at the bottom of the lane opposite the Cock and Rabbit at The Lee and David often rode there.

Life was never dull with David and sometimes became a bit too exciting! Later, he married and moved to Chipping Norton and then to Moreton in Marsh. His two children were both born when he lived near Chipping Norton.

David loved being a Chartered Surveyor and was very knowledgeable about buildings and problems in buildings. He was ready to advise on most aspects of building maintenance. He was also ready and willing to help if anyone was in need. More recently he helped to look after our mother at Russet Barn in Buckland Common.

I was known as 'David's little sister' by his friends. There was a gap of six years in



our ages, but this gap seemed to narrow as we got older. How lovely it was to see many local friends at his funeral in St. Leonards Church. Thank you.

Sarah Embleton-Smith

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Hilltops bring out the artist

There must be something in the clean, fresh air and beautiful light of the Hilltops that brings out the artist in residents. As regular readers of Hilltop News will testify, we have many talented painters in our midst.



Jill Try has always had a passion for painting, encouraged at school but since then had little time to pursue her interest while a full-time job in the Leisure Industry and raising a family took precedent. Things changed when she moved to Buckland Common twenty years ago. Chatting to the late Gordon Kew, she was moved to join the Cholesbury Art Group, set up by a group of local painters. Inspired by Keith Richmond, the tutor at the time, Jill's style of painting was recognised and developed. Further watercolour classes were attended with Liz Rogers in Redbourne, along with other local workshops.

As well as watercolour, Jill creates occasional mixed media pictures in collage, gouache and inks. Local landscapes are a favourite subject (see inside cover) and Jill also picks up on local wildlife, like the glis glis and red kite, and local flora. When out and about in her motorhome, Jill packs her sketchbook and paints and records different types of scenery, a favourite being seascapes.

Jill accepts a variety of commissions, typically from friends wanting a unique gift, such as an image of a favourite place. She is not a commercial artist but does display and sell originals, prints and greetings cards at our local fetes and exhibitions, by direct contact and through her Instagram Account (tryjill). The Commons Preservation Society calendar this year is enhanced with some of Jill's work.

Jill encourages local artists, even beginners, to come along to the Thursday Art Group – a friendly and sociable gathering. They meet at Cholesbury Village Hall on Thursday afternoons between 2 and 4pm. Other forms of art and craft are also welcomed here.

We look forward to seeing more of Jill's work – and indeed more from our other local talented artists.



Late winter pub news

You will already know that there has been an abrupt and brutal cost impact across a broad spectrum of the catering industries. Dire forecasts have predicted that half of UK pubs could cease trading imminently. It arises from a confluence of lingering public health threats, inflating employment costs and fast rising costs of energy utilities, food and drinks supplies. Contributing influences are the impact of an abrupt 10% devaluation of sterling against the currencies in which commodities and energy sources are traded in global markets.



The economic impact is evident in the current operations of three pubs near to our Hilltop Villages. The **Old Swan** has not resumed operating a food service and it is only open for drinks about half as many hours each week compared to pre-covid and pre-inflation. The recently refurbished **Cock and Rabbit** is offering cheese boards and Ploughmans, which do not require kitchen staff. They only open from late afternoon three days a week and midday to evening on Saturday and Sunday.

Worst hit of all is The **Black Horse** in The Vale. Although the free house owners had made a big success after buying the pub from a dreaded pubco, they recently said "We now find ourselves facing a new set of challenges with rising supplier and staff costs and an energy bill that has tripled overnight. We have made the very difficult decision to temporarily close the pub from the end of January." After these statements were made public, we

have learned that the **Black Horse** has been quietly put on the market for sale or possibly to be leased. The guide price is £850,000.

And now for the good news from our local perspective. The owner/managements of the **Full Moon** and **White Lion** have not capitulated or compromised in any noticeable way. Even in the darkest days of winter, neither pub has reduced its trading hours nor has either diluted their food service options.

The only way they will survive this storm is for us to go out of our way to support them. They can only continue trading if all of us patronise both pubs on a frequent basis. We can each multiply our personal impact by getting our family, friends and neighbours to join us for drinks and a meal at the pubs regularly.

The enjoyable Quiz Nights will resume at the **Full Moon** on the last Wednesday of each month beginning with February. The

hugely popular **Alvin as Elvis Tribute**, with music and comedy, will return for a third visit on Friday 10 March at 8pm. There will be a £5 charge per person, and only folks over 18 will be admitted.

To keep up with the latest upcoming events and news, it is best to follow the website and Facebook pages of the **White Lion**. In addition to the standard menu, the pub will be serving some Valentine specials from 11th through 14 February. On Valentine's Day itself, they will open all day for food and drinks suited to the occasion. There will be a special Mother's Day menu on Sunday 19 March.

Bill Ingram



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THE FULL MOON - EVENTS

From February - Last Wednesday of the month is **QUIZ NIGHT** in aid of Chiltern & Thames Air Ambulance

10th March **ALVIN AS 'ELVIS'** fabulous evening of comedy and music

19th March **MOTHERS DAY LUNCH** - booking essential full details on website

COMING SOON

Vintage Skittles - Vintage Race Night - Film Nights - Charity Bingo!

DATE FOR THE DIARY: 12 May 'Bella Bezerk' Queen of visual comedy
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Francis Sanger

1945 – 2022

I was very proud to be the wife of such a wise man. When we got engaged in 1971, it was announced to the entire office of over a hundred people one late Friday afternoon. "Miss Paddy Jacques is to marry Francis Sanger". The whole assembly burst into laughter. This was a joke. Two opposites would be hard to find. One loud-mouthed scatty young girl [you could hardly call her a lady] and this tall handsome man. Anyway, this strange arrangement blended and lasted for 50 years.

To quote from a condolence letter I received. "Francis was such a wonderful person, what we would call a proper old-fashioned gentleman in every sense. He was always very articulate and polite, very charming, a lovely sense of humour and, above all, he was a very kind person. His most loved possession was his family, about whom he spoke with pride and love".

Francis was a long-standing parish councillor, serving for 38 years between 1983 and 2021, including two spells as Chairman between 1983 and 1992. Chairman of the Council, Chris Brown recalls how much his many parish council colleagues valued Francis' insights, experience and advice on the widest range of issues. Above all, Francis will always be remembered as a generous friend who made a very significant contribution, not just as a councillor but also when giving generously his time and energy over many years supporting village events and activities.

Francis was also Chairman of the Governors of Chesham High School from



2008 – 2018. He was the voice of the village fete for several years, also helping with several of the village pantomimes.

At his funeral held, at St Leonards Church, his son Mark read the poem: If I Should Go, by Joyce Grenfell...

*If I should go before the rest of you.
Break not a flower nor inscribe a stone.
Nor when I'm gone speak in a Sunday voice,
But be the usual selves that I have known.
Weep if you must,
Parting is hell.
But life goes on,
So sing as well.*

Paddy Sanger



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January 2023

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£15 Hilary Sheppard, Wigginton.

*For membership, please contact
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£15 Mr and Mrs A Langdon,
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£15 Paddy Sanger, St Leonards
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CURVACEOUS COOK

Scandinavian-style bread

I was quietly kneading my weekly loaf and wondering what to do for this recipe with my post-Christmas and post-Covid foggy brain and I realised that I haven't done a bread recipe for a while, so here is the one I follow most weeks. I like my bread to be brown and nutty and I mix and match the ingredients weekly, but this is the base recipe...

100g strong white flour. Not strictly necessary, but it does lighten it a bit.

400g strong wholemeal flour. I like to use one with multigrain.

A good 2 heaped tbs mixed seeds (and nuts if you like, or dried fruit).

2 tbs milk powder

1 tbs olive oil

1 level tbs salt

200 ml cold water mixed with 100ml just boiled water.

25 g fresh yeast or about 9 g dried.

1 tbs malt extract if you can get it, or black treacle, or honey or even sugar.

Mix the waters, stir in the malt extract then drop in the yeast, still frozen if that is how you have it. Stir and leave a while till you hear a gentle popping and bubbles rising. Stir every few minutes if using fresh. Mix all dry ingredients, plus oil, and turn on the mixer with dough hook, or make a well and pour in the yeasty water. Knead until all the water is absorbed. You may need a tiny bit more depending on the weather and the temperature and humidity in your kitchen. It should be able to make a ball and not stick to your fingers, but not dry.

Cover with a bath hat or cling film or damp tea towel and leave until double in size. Again, timings will depend on all the above.

Lightly spray a 2 lb bread tin and shake flour round the inside, tipping excess onto work surface. Turn dough out onto the flour and gently form the shape you want, tucking in the ends. Drop into your tin - I make three cuts across the top.

Cover and leave until a good inch above the top of the tin.

Oven onto 200 fan. I only preheat for about 5 minutes then put the tin in.

Cook for 20 minutes, tip out of the tin and return to the oven for another 20 minutes, turning oven down to 180. The bread is done when the bottom sounds hollow when tapped.

Try and resist cutting into it until cold.

Long recipe, but actually only about 10 minutes work, and so worth it for the flavour and to have no preservatives and other rubbish that is put into so many loaves these days. It will go mouldy after a few days, so I freeze half the loaf as soon as it is cold, either as slices or as a whole.

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David Hawkes

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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 **April/May** edition should be sent to Graham Lincoln or Anne Butterworth (Church Matters) by **10 March** latest. Please note that photos sent online must be at least 2,500 x 1,750 pixels in size.

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Printing

Orbit Press, Chesham 01494 778053
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Hilltop News is entirely non-profit making and is funded by advertising.



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