



THE PRATTLER

The Heyford Village Newspaper

February/March 2021

Issue No. 440



Artwork by Tom Dodd

You may have noticed that this edition looks a bit different than usual. Its thinner and covers the next two months. Unfortunately due to the current lockdown and covid crisis, the Prattler is having to cut back on its publication costs and contents. Therefore we have decided that for the next few months, we will be publishing once every two months instead of monthly. This is so we can conserve our savings until activities restart later in the year.

Thank you to the advertisers and contributors for your continued support.

Sue

Art Exhibition Plans (see cover photo)

Some of you might remember that we had originally planned to have an art exhibition in the village last year, which, along with the Village Hall's celebrations, has had to be put back. Even this year is looking problematic, and with best intentions we hope that everyone will be vaccinated by the autumn. I recently posted a couple of pictures on social media (Facebook) that I had painted which are views from the Green. There was a lovely response from 60 or so people and other pictures began appearing! The Nether Heyford dedicated site was really helpful in gauging interest and getting feedback. People were also interested in some sort of art group once we can meet again, and I think we can be creative about how that might happen.

Planning anything at the moment is quite tough, but the intention is still there to make the exhibition happen at some point. Gives us more time to get those pens and brushes out and have a go! The theme will be about village life and particularly the Green. Maybe we could organise a virtual on-line exhibition in the meantime? If anyone has experience of this sort of thing and would like to help, drop me a line!

Tom Dodd info@heifordearts.com

The Prattler

The Prattler is run by an active voluntary committee comprising of Sue Boutle, Christine Watts, Vicki Hamblin, Jez Wilson, Nick Essex, Richard Musson and Mary Rice. If you would like to submit articles or have any suggestions for future issues, please get in touch.

The Newspaper is supported by donations from the Parish Council, the Parish Church, the Baptist Church, Heyford W.I., Heyford Garden Club, Heyford Singers, the Bowls Club, the Village Hall and Heyford Picturedrome as well as the advertisers.

Thanks are also due to the volunteers who distribute it every month.



Due to government regulations prohibiting public meetings the Jan 7th, 2021 Parish Council meeting was held online, using the Zoom platform. This is in line with national advice. There is no indication of how long these conditions will persist, but it is likely that meetings will take place online for the next 3 months at the very least.

Parishioners wanting to participate in the Public Session should check the Agenda on the Public notice boards, or the Website, for the meeting ID on Zoom.

We have no idea at this stage of how long the present lockdown will continue, but it will be months rather than weeks. The new variant of the virus has made it more widespread and I imagine all of us now know victims personally. There have been a number in the village, and many more in the locality to the point where the General Hospital has struggled to cope.

The Parish Council is now 4 members short of its full quota of 11. There is an election due in May, which we hope will take place (it having already been postponed once). In the meantime, we are able to co-opt new members, subject to them being eligible. The Parish Council really does need active new members, preferably familiar with IT – so if you feel that is you – please contact me or the Chair (details below this article).

Reports from the District and County Councillors.

Cllr Phil Bignell expressed concerns about the spread of COVID-19 and anticipated stricter regulations.

Cllr Adam Brown reported that the LGR was ongoing, that West Northamptonshire (WN) authority would come into being on April 1st. Parish and District elections were still set for May. WN leadership team is now in place and further appointments can now be made. A budget will be set shortly with a “safety first” intention. There will be a full review of all services. It is hoped that a combination of a new Highways contractor and new technology/methods will improve the situation on the roads. Children’s services will be bought in house again.

Cllr David Harries expressed concerns about shadow councillors talking about keeping rates as low as possible. He felt that this was the very attitude that had caused the demise of NCC - not putting up the rates and driving the authority into the ground. Cllr AB said that WN would increase the rates by the maximum allowed without going to referendum.

Reports

Lights Bracket lamp on junction of Weedon Rd and Church Lane reported out. AW/CK to inform Clerk of which other lights were out.

The Green /Play Area – NH reported a bin overflowing. Clerk to check. The bid for New Homes Bonus money towards a new Play Area had been turned down. This would be the last opportunity for this form of funding. CK had identified another possible source of funding.

Allotments Virtual Rent Night to take place on Jan 21st. Rent letters would include Bank details and encourage online payment.

Churchyard In good order, STS to pollard the Limes in the Churchyard shortly.

Joint Burial Board No meeting had been possible. A co-option would enable a meeting on Jan 25th.

Youth Club Still closed and would be until the tier system ends.

Canal Furnace Lane bridge brickwork not yet repaired. Paths boggy.

Yellow Lines around School It was resolved to request that yellow lines be extended along Middle St to the bottleneck on both sides of the road. Form to be filled in and passed to the school for comment.

Grass-cutting Contracts 3 tenders had been received. It was resolved to accept Mr Simons' (the existing contractor) quotation for cutting the village green and verges.

Police Liaison Representative to act as a single point of contact with Northamptonshire Police. It was resolved that Charles Kiloh to take on the role.

Budget and Precept for 2020 -21

Budget set at £91,450.00 as recommended by the Finance Committee.

Precept set at £90,000.00. This represented an increase of 12.4%. Any shortfall to come from the general reserve.

Increased expenditure on maintenance was anticipated on the Green, in the cemetery and churchyard, especially on trees and benches. There would be annual wage increments on salaries for the PCSO, Clerk and Linkman. Election expenses were also anticipated.

Parish Council meetings in 2021 will continue to be on the first Monday of each month, (unless a Bank Holiday) and would start at 19.30. The next ones are on Feb 1st and Mar 1st.

Reporting Highway and Footpath Issues The Clerk will report issues that Council is made aware of, but the Council would encourage residents to use the Fixmystreet service to report issues themselves as there will then be no time lag; and first-hand

reports are almost always better than 2nd or 3rd hand reports. The service can be found here <https://www.fixmystreet.com/>

It is easy to use; you can have your own account and can check up on any issues you have reported.

Streetlights within the village can be reported to the Clerk, who will report them to the maintenance company.

Next Meeting Monday February 1st. Online at 19.30

Councillor list with responsibilities and preferred means of contact.	
C. Kiloh, 3 Church Lane, Nether Heyford. Tel 07779 900860	Chairman, Planning, Finance.
L. Dilkes, 17 Furnace Lane, Nether Heyford, NN7 3JS thedilkesfamily@outlook.com 07967 753216	Village Hall Rep, Youth Club, Vice Chair, Finance
L. Eales, 3 Church Lane, Nether Heyford Tel. 01327 341707 lyndaeales@aol.com	Allotments, Playing Field.
P. Green, 8, South View, Nether Heyford Tel 01327 349072 Mobile. 07763 244065	Joint Burial Board
N. Haynes, 30 Weedon Rd, Nether Heyford Tel 01327 340167	Tree Warden, Planning, Joint Burial Board
D. Musson davemusson073@gmail.com	Footpaths
A.Williams 26 Church St, Nether Heyford, NN7 3LH anthony.k.williams@talk21.com	Chair of Planning and Finance.

Clerk to the Parish Council: Guy Ravine, c/o Old Dairy Farm, Upper Stowe, Weedon. Northampton. NN7 4SH.

Tel:07935 931787. E-mail: netherheyfordparishcouncil@gmail.com



Parish Church of St. Peter and St. Paul

Following discussions with the Benefice Council and PCC's we have decided to keep our church buildings closed during this third national lockdown, as they were for the first two in 2020. We do not take this decision lightly, but with a new strain of Covid19 infecting many more people, our hospitals at capacity, and government ministers urging us to act as if we had the virus and stay at home, we feel it is the right thing to do. It's important that we all demonstrate self-discipline and play our part in preventing the spread of the virus, and closing our church buildings is one way in which we can do that. Our hope is that the roll out of the national vaccination programme will gather pace, and protect the most vulnerable, reassuring us that this lockdown will come to an end, even if we don't yet know the exact date on which it will be lifted.

While our church buildings are closed, the church community will continue to gather virtually, spiritually and intentionally to worship God and bring before him our prayers and concerns for our village communities and their people. During the lockdown the weekly pattern of services will be:

Sunday 10:00AM Service of Holy Communion via the Benefice Facebook Page, which can be found at: <https://www.facebook.com/HS9FB>

Wednesday 9:30AM Service of Morning Prayer via WHYPAY? Telephone Conference Call

Friday 9:00AM Service of Morning Prayer via Zoom

Details of the midweek services are available from the Rector (tel: 344436). Please watch village Facebook Pages and notice-boards for details of any changes to this service pattern, and for news of our Lent Course for 2021.

Although our church buildings are closed, we know that God is with us in all the circumstances of our lives, and he hears our prayers.

During **February** we shall be praying for people living in Hillside Rd and Hillside Crescent here in Heyford, Sutton St, Yew Tree Gardens and Sutton Acre in Flore, The Manor in Church Stowe and the Gate House and the Old Dairy in Brockhall.

During **March** we shall be praying for: Close Rd, The Pound and The Peak in Heyford, The Avenue and The Glebe in Flore, The Old Dairy Farm in Upper Stowe and the outlying farms around Stowe and the Mews Houses in Brockhall.

Dear Friends,

I wonder, when something is worrying you, do you make a note of it, just in case you forget it? No, I don't do that either. In fact, the opposite is true. Unless I focus on other things, whatever I'm anxious about takes over my thoughts. It's like my mind is full of fog, slowing down my thought processes such that things seem to take longer to complete. Anxiety and worry are distracting, and being told not to worry doesn't really help.

In the Bible, the Apostle Paul understands that for us to worry less, we must consciously think of other things. Addressing the church in Philippi, Paul writes *"Do not worry about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. Finally, beloved, whatever is true, whatever is honourable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is pleasing, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence and if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things"* (Phil4:6-8). Paul advises us to focus on the things we are thankful for, and stay alert to the little signs of hope and blessing in our daily lives.

With the miserable weather of late, the shorter, darker days and the ongoing and frustrating impact of the pandemic, we might be forgiven for worrying and thinking that this crisis will never end, that life will never be 'normal' again. When such thoughts invade my mind, when 'lockdown fatigue' strikes, I try to keep a mental list of the good things that are happening in my life, however small they might be, and I thank God for them daily. These positive things are like little seeds of hope, reminding me that whatever my circumstances God is always with me.

Most surprisingly for me, one of the positive things recently has been the little rescue dog, Niamh, that my son adopted five months ago. She has been a great source of laughter, joy and de-stressing and has got us out of the house, regardless of the weather, to take her for regular walks. Walking her around the Rectory garden in recent days, I've noticed little yellow flowers (aconites?) pushing up through the mulch of damp, dead leaves and crocuses, snowdrops and daffodils putting up shoots, despite the frost, rain and snow. These really are little signs of hope, reminding us that after the winter comes the spring, just as the growing number of people who have been vaccinated tell us that this pandemic too, will pass.

Please be assured of my continued fervent prayers for all the communities in the benefice, and especially for those impacted by the coronavirus through illness, isolation, hardship or uncertainty. If there is anything else the Church or I can do to help, please let me know and we'll do what we can.

With prayers and blessings,

Stephen (tel 344436)



Nether Heyford Baptist Church

Regretfully, due to the current pandemic, no services or events are to be held until further notice.

Members and friends were saddened to hear of the recent death of Hugh Adams. Hugh regularly attended services and supported church events until the lockdown. He will be greatly missed for his gentlemanly ways, his singing, and ongoing support. Our thoughts and prayers are with his family at this sad time.

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Mike Read Gas Services

Mike Read
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MOB: 07960037067
Gas Engineer
no: 506717

Food bank

Don't go hungry – if you are in need of help, please contact Towcester Food Bank 07724 832043 (24 hours). www.towcester.foodbank.org.uk

Leave a message and they will phone you back. They can issue vouchers for food as well as a delivery or collection service.

Alternatively if you wish to help, please leave donations for the food banks in the box outside the door of 15 Middle Street where they are delivered to the banks twice a week.

Thank you.



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This month I will concentrate on a significant patch of the winter night sky. Looking to the south west in the mid-evening you will observe two main stars; Sirius [a] (the Dog Star - blue colouration) the brightest star in the night sky, and Betelgeuse [b] a large and luminous red star.

These two distinctive stars take us into mythologically linked constellations. Sirius is found in Canis Major (the great dog) and is a bright blue star some 8.7 light years from us. It appears so bright as it is close to us, actually it is a fairly unremarkable star around 23 times more luminous than our sun, and some 1.8 times larger. This dog constellation has a partner constellation Canis Minor and the pair apparently chase a small constellation Lepus (the Hare).

The Hare nestles under another bright star Rigel [c], which is part of the same constellation as Betelgeuse; to the right of our Hunting dogs is Orion (the Hunter). Orion is a large constellation containing some of the most visible nebula in the sky. Betelgeuse is the star at the top left of the hourglass and is a red giant, forming one shoulder of the Hunter. If this star was in our solar system it would cover the sun, and the orbits of Mercury, Venus, Earth, Mars, Jupiter and part way to Saturn. Luckily for us this giant is some 600 light years distant from us, it is around 100,000 times brighter than the sun and 1000 times its size. This star is near the end of its life, and within the next 100,000 years it will go supernova and explode, when this happens it will be as bright in the sky as a full moon.

Central Orion forms the shape of a tilted hourglass in the night sky, across the waist of the hourglass lie 3 stars forming a belt [d, f]. From that belt hangs a starry sword, and towards the bottom of the sword a fuzzy area can (on a clear night) be seen. This is the Orion Nebula [e], together with a dimmer nebula known as the running man (due to the shape in its centre). Even through a small telescope some detail (not colour) can be seen.

Now we travel back up the sword to the belt, near the first star (left) two less visible objects hide, the famous Horsehead dark nebula [f], and above it the Flame nebula. Our noble Hunter chases the constellation to its right, one of the Zodiac signs, Taurus (the Bull). Taurus is the home of another red giant star Aldebaran [g] (13th brightest) and is the eye of bull, alongside this is a small open cluster (the Hyades [h]) completing the head of the bull. Follow the gaze of the bull up and to the right and you will find the Pleiades [i] a spectacular open cluster of bright blue stars, covered with a mist of nebulously from which they form, these are the Seven Sisters of mythology. Some 440 light years away this is one of the closest clusters to us. We end our brief trip across the sky here, noting that all we have seen is in our local group of stars in our own Galaxy the Milky Way.

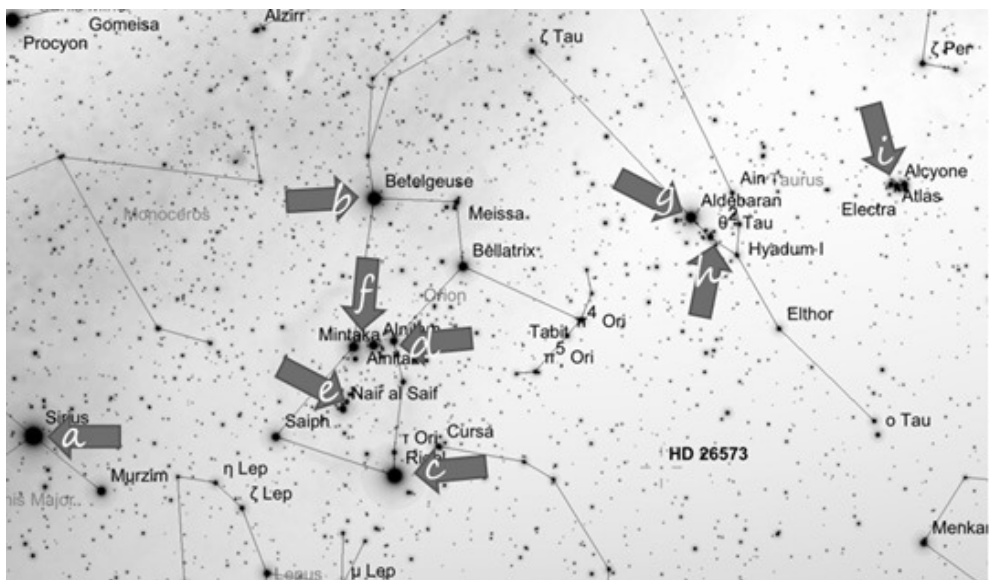
Before I end I want to throw some numbers at you (great huh...).

Our sun is 93 million miles from us, the light it produces travels to us as 186,000 miles a second and it takes 8.3 light minutes to reach us. So now, consider that a light year is $186,000 \times 60 \times 60 \times 24 \times 365$ miles, or (as you are dying to know) - 5,865,696,000,000 miles.

Astronomy therefore makes us into time-travellers we see the seven sisters as they were 440 years ago (so that big number times 440). The closest spiral Galaxy (Andromeda- similar to ours) is 2.5 million light years away.

Hums the tune to Dr Who... Bye.

Tony Boutle



Village Hall News

Although the village hall is not being used again, during this third lock-down, the management committee is still working hard at managing and maintaining the building. In addition to a complete redecoration, the hall is now undergoing its annual checks for Gas Appliances, Electrical Safety and Fire Extinguishers. When, at last, a new normality is restored, the hall will be ready and waiting to welcome back its regular user groups.

In the meantime, we are grateful for all the dedicated voluntary work going on behind the scenes.

The Royal British Legion Nether Heyford Women's Section

As stated in the previous Prattler, here is an update on the Poppy Appeal Fundraising over the last couple of months.

Firstly, my thanks to everyone who has been involved in the fundraising and to all the donors who are listed below. If I have missed anyone, please accept my apologies and thanks on behalf of The Royal British Legion. The support given to such a worthy cause is much appreciated.

I have collected the monies given and have paid these into our Bank. The total collected is £622.37.

Jez Wilson published the names earlier, but I would like to thank those that donated who include:

Gary Richmond, Aly & Rich, Joan & Alex, Trev Clarkey, Marie Hanlon, Sarah Hawkins, Birkett family, Jadine, Simon & Debbie, Heyford Athletic FC, Brian and Maxine Edgington, Stu and Emma, Sue & Tony Boutle, Jez Wilson, Gary McMahon, Lesley Faulkner, Jill Garratt, The Gilkes Family, The Wray's, Lynn Adey, Mark, Sally and Emily Stroman, Ms Patricia Wakeman, Lisa King & many more donors who chose to remain anonymous.

I would also like to thank Claire Green, one of our members, for the donation of £127.30 being the proceeds from the sale of masks and various other items. These were made by the Adult Education Unit which Claire works for. Our heartfelt thanks to these special people who have made a difference.

Our small Branch is always looking for new members so, ladies, if you would like to join and come to our meetings, you would be most welcome. We fund raise and have a meeting on the first Thursday of the month and have some interesting speakers. If you feel that this would interest you, come and join us. Please contact Kath Pancoust, our Branch Secretary, for further details on 01327 340034.

Kind regards

Caroline Elliott
Treasurer

Several years ago, when the Roman Villa was being excavated at the top of the field, this statement was overheard from a passing narrow-boat.

"You can understand why the Romans built a grand house up there, it's got a lovely view of the canal".

Boom boom!



In Nether Heyford

As Covid follows us into yet another year I do hope that you at least managed to enjoy Christmas Day! Although Nether Heyford WI missed out on its 90th Birthday Party every member was given a boxed cup-cake, beautifully made and decorated by Jane Rands. We were also mentioned in the Northampton Federation Newsletter and on the Northants Website. In a WI version of the Secret Santa, each member was given another member's name for whom they then made a Christmas card. We also had our first Zoom meeting in December and so an 'alternative' Christmas was celebrated.

Our January Meeting saw us using Zoom again to listen to an interesting talk given by Julia Doherty who, after building up and selling multiple businesses, went on a 500 mile hike across Spain. The experiences she had and the people she met had a profound effect on her and she told us how they changed her life for the better.

We will be staying with Zoom meetings for the foreseeable future. On February 4th at 7.30pm there will be an 'Italian Cookery Demonstration' by Mariella Bliss. Her website tells of her work with running courses, working with farmers' markets and describes her as a personal chef, caterer, and lover of all things foodie! Sounds like a good evening!!

On March 4th, again at 7.30 & via Zoom, we have a talk on 'Building and Running a School in Sierra Leone' by David Gelsthorpe-Hill. David is a Trustee for the Charity 'Extra Mile' which, by building the school, has helped change the lives of its pupils. It is an ongoing project and Phase 2, building a Library, is now under way. During the evening we will hear how the funds are raised and how we can help.

If any Prattler readers would like to join us on either of the evenings please telephone me to get the code numbers for the Zoom meeting. We hope it won't be too long before we can meet up and start using our Village Hall again. Until then, Take Care.

Mary Rice
Heyford Lodge, Church Lane

Allotment News

New Plots

We currently have three vacant allotment plots available for rent. They have been cleared and covered with tarpaulin so should be in good condition for anyone interested in taking on an allotment this year. We have also tried to reduce the size of vacant plots (and make them more manageable) by halving some larger areas of land. Of course, if a keen gardener wants a bigger plot then these can be doubled up. The vacant plots measure roughly 8m x 8m and cost in the region of £10 per year. That has to be amazingly good value.

In addition, we have several vacant starter plots that are free for the first year and measure just 2m x 8m. They are ideal if you want to try out allotmenting but are unsure about making a big commitment. We even have a few tools available for those completely new to gardening.

If you are interested in taking up any of these offers and joining the enthusiastic band of new allotmenters who took on the challenge in 2020 then contact Lynda Eales on 01327 341707.

Rent Night

That didn't happen, and we all know why!

By the time allotment holders read this article they should have all had notification of their rent for 2021 and the due date. Rent can now be paid by bank transfer (details included on the rent notice) or by cheque, deliverable to Lynda Eales at 3 Church Lane or Guy Ravine at 63 Furnace Lane.

The Memory Tree

We will be planting a flowering tree in the allotment community area during the coming months in memory of allotment holders who have either died in the recent past or have experienced loss, particularly during the current health crisis.

Readers of these articles will be aware that trees have a very special place in our hearts and it was our unanimous decision that there could be no better way of remembering those dearest to us.

Mike Langrish



Heyford Garden Club

www.heyfordgardenclub.com

In February the Garden Club would normally be looking forward to our forthcoming programme of meetings and events, but this year it isn't yet clear when we will be able to resume any sort of activity. Our AGM is due to be held on the 8th February but will have to be a virtual meeting.

The zoom talk given by Philip Aubury in December apparently went well (though for some reason I found myself locked out) and we may have to explore the possibility for further talks in this format.

The late winter is generally not a time for much activity in the garden, as the weather is often too wet or cold for working outside, so it's a good time to review the previous year and think of lessons for the coming year. Despite (or perhaps because of) the hot dry spells we had last year many vegetables did as well as, and sometimes better than, usual in particular brassicas seemed to be of particularly good quality, and my leeks were unfazed by the drought. Courgettes and squashes love hot weather if they have plenty of water, and so do tomatoes. I noticed some phenomenal crops of sweet corn, though not on my plot. Annual flowers seemed to keep on flowering for much longer than I would have expected. We planted some raspberry plants last spring, but the dry weather was too much for them and despite constant watering they all died. We have now replaced them with plants this autumn which should give them time to produce good roots before the dry weather comes. Will this year be a repeat? This is the challenge that gardeners face; you have to be ready for almost anything in the way of weather each year.

Although the weather is cold and wet at the moment, there are already snowdrops in flower and if there is a mild day the Sarcococca or Christmas box, which is already full of flower, will scent the whole garden with a spicy aroma. In a few weeks time as the weather warms the gardens will be full of flowers again, and hopefully full of bees too.

Things to do in February

1. Prune late flowering Clematis down to strong shoots at the base of the plant.
2. Sow broad beans and sweet peas.

Things to do in March

1. plant early potatoes, onion sets and summer bulbs
2. top dress containers and pots with fresh compost

Mark Newstead

Nether Heyford Village Hall



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*If the sky above you
Grows dark and full of clouds
And that old north wind begins to blow
Keep your head together
And call my name out loud
Soon you'll hear me knocking at your door*

From **You've Got a Friend** by Carole King

A belated but heartfelt happy New Year to everyone.

2020 is past, a year to put behind us, but not to forget. It seems that each and everyone of us had our own personal suffering, lost someone very special or experienced difficulties. Kindness, compassion, empathy, love and community have never been so important in our lives. May we take these virtues with us into 2021 and beyond.

As we said "Goodbye to 2020" so we also bade farewell to Hugh Adams, who sadly died just before Christmas. A gentle giant of our community, Hugh touched so many lives in his long and happy life, not least Heyford Singers of which he was a proud and enthusiastic member since it was formed in 2002. He will be sorely missed by everyone who knew him. But like so many friends and family that we have lost recently we dearly hope, in time, to come together, to share memories, and to celebrate the lives of all those special people.

With such positive thoughts in mind the committee of Heyford Singers have begun, albeit tentatively, to plan for rehearsals in September and a programme for a Christmas concert. How joyful an occasion that will be! And maybe something else in the summer... who knows!!

Take care as we weather the cold, dark days of winter, but look for early signs of spring. Stay healthy and content, look after one another, and may music feature somewhere in your life every day.

Jill Langrish

Advertising in The Prattler

Advertising costs per month

£5 for a small business card advert

£10 for a quarter page

£15 for half a page

£30 for a full page

Bio-diversity Demystified

Bio-diversity is a term which describes every living organism within a single ecosystem or habitat, including numbers and diversity of species and all environmental aspects such as temperature, oxygen and carbon dioxide levels and climate. Bio-diversity can be measured globally or in smaller settings, such as ponds. If that sounds complicated it's because it is complicated. Symbiosis is the working together of two organisms to the mutual benefit of both.

Bio-diversity describes all life on Earth working together in an interdependent fragile network. To unpack the term Bio-diversity further - The Sun shines on our Earth's surface drenching it with energy in the form of heat and light. Green plants have evolved to convert this energy into sugars which are really "packaged energy" that plants use to sustain, maintain and increase their own species.

Over many millions of years life on Earth has developed into a complex web of life consisting of Animals, Plants, Bacteria, Fungi etc. All this life is interlinked on many levels to utilise the energy thus captured by plants to sustain, maintain and multiply their own species. This system is very complicated and involves the intake and release of energy whilst in the process, releasing chemicals. These are in turn taken up by plants which utilise them to maintain their own species in a never ending cycle. Each species has a place in this system that can be occupied by no other species. If any one species - however insignificant - is taken away, the whole system suffers or may even crash altogether.

Along with every other species, Mankind has a place in this complex web. We are ultimately dependent on this system to maintain our own species. Without bio-diversity, the health of the planet and ultimate survival of all species including Mankind is at stake.

Right now the diversity of life on this planet is in danger as never before in many thousands of years. The greatest threat to the loss of bio-diversity is human activity. As our population grows, together with our need for food, water and home comforts, it takes over natural ecosystems and replaces them with unnatural ones. Even in these, other organisms can adapt and successfully reproduce, but the levels of bio-diversity as compared to the replaced environment are significantly lower.

The two greatest threats to the bio-diversity of our planet are Climate Change driven by Global warming and Pollution.

Global Warming The burning of Fossil Fuels - Gas, petrol and diesel - releases Carbon Dioxide into our atmosphere which forms a layer around The Earth. This "layer" traps in the Sun's rays causing the earth's atmosphere to heat up. The effects of this Global Warming are well known and established.

Pollution Exists in many ways at many levels, Pollution from plastic is well known as is pollution from fumes released by transport and industry. We also have noise pollution which affects our own well-being as well as affecting wildlife in ways as yet

poorly understood. There is also pollution from chemicals used in agriculture and other industries. In fact the list of pollutants and their effects is much too long for this short article.

The threat from invasive species: Most species have evolved to live in a very narrow ecological niche. In this niche there will be factors that limit their ability to pose a threat to other species' existence. Some species, when moved from their native location, finding this natural limitation removed, go on to pose major threats to native species in their new environment. There are many examples of this. The introduction of the Grey Squirrel in the 19th century is one of the most well known. Since their introduction from North America, Grey Squirrels have all but wiped out our native Red Squirrels in most of the UK. There are too many other examples of this to name here.

Threat from over exploitation: Over Fishing is an example often quoted. Many would class our trend to turn farmland over to intensive arable farming as over exploitation. We have got so good at growing crops that in almost any local cornfield there will be more Bio-diversity in one metre of the hedge border than in the whole of the 50 or so hectares field that the hedge surrounds.

Are we seeing a loss to the bio-diversity in our area? Globally the number of insects has declined by around 80% since the year 2020. This loss is ever present in our area, and in our Parish. When did you last hear a Cuckoo? How many Swallows did you see this year? Both are insectivores. There are very many more examples of loss of Bio-diversity in this parish that I could quote. We all have a part to play in combating the current decline in this loss. Individually or corporately we need to consider our own practises.

In all that we do, we could ask if we are doing our best to reverse the loss of bio-diversity locally or on a wider scale.

In the garden: Do I need to use insecticide? Could I plant flowers that attract insects? Could I cut my lawn less or leave a patch unmown to allow wild flowers to grow there? Are those ants doing any harm? Is there an alternative to using slug pellets, weed killer etc. Are there eco friendly alternatives?

Think about lighting, heating. These are carbon dioxide polluters. Could we be more efficient in their use.

This article is designed to raise awareness of and demystify the term bio-diversity as well as outline some current threats to this bio-diversity. It does not discuss how to measure bio-diversity or provide answers to the question of how to tackle the loss habitat and bio-diversity on a local or wider level.

Dave Musson

Flood Watch

2020 will go down in history not only for Covid but for the extremes of weather that set new records for wettest February, sunniest Spring, heat wave in late July/August. Excessive rainfall in October and December resulted in the annual rainfall total exceeding average levels by 20%. Especially noteworthy was the 35mm that fell on 23rd December resulting in flooding levels not seen since March 2016 when the E-W culvert caused flooding in the middle of the Village. River level rose by 2m resulting in extensive flooding along the Nene. Notable was the evacuation of the Billing Aquadrome caravan site down stream of Northampton. The good news was that the alterations to the E-W culvert outflow prevented a repeat of the devastating event of 2016.

As the year ended the UK was battered by storm Bella followed by a period of excessively cold weather when temperatures barely rose above freezing. This continued into the start of 2021, interrupted by brief periods when temperature rose to more typical winter levels of around 5 to 8 degrees.

As we move further into 2021 the next major storm Christoph (to be followed by Darcy) could cause more flooding whilst the immediate future appears to remain unsettled with longer term forecasts being even more uncertain. However the only certainty is that daylight hours will continue to increase by 3 hours with the end of winter and the spring equinox and the change from GMT to BST on 28th March. As a result lighter evenings will return.

The flooding on 24th December prompted some research into the archives for the River Nene locally dating back to 1945. As increased flow rates are a sure indication of flooding events a rate of 5 cum/sec resulted in 160 events while 10 cum/sec occurred 11 times. These correlated with my own records of flooding over 23 years with the events of March 2016 and December 24th 2020 corresponding to a 10 cum/sec event. Also apparent was the increase of 10 cum/sec events since 2000, a clear consequence of climate change!

A major event in 2001 year event, namely the Saturn/Jupiter alignment in Aquarius on 21st December was a non-event due to cloud cover.

The E/A has still failed to make any progress in securing funding for completion of flood defences in the Village. As a reminder of the continuing risks I have forwarded copies of photographs of the flooding on 24th December and reminded them of the potential impact of climate change to stress the need for action now!

J.Arnold.



Nether Heyford Tennis Club

2020 was the year we can remember for something positive down at the tennis club. After successfully fundraising for many years, we had all the three courts refurbished.

Like all sports our play has stopped, restarted and stopped again over this difficult year and we have had to change our rules and regulations as required. We would like to say thank you to all our members for following all the government and LTA guidelines to enable everyone to play tennis safely. We will continue to offer "Free Fridays" during school holidays. These are for anyone to come along and play – we can also lend kit.

We would like to congratulate Linda Miller – one of our longstanding members - who was given "Volunteer of the Year - 2020" award by Northamptonshire Lawn Tennis Club for many years of contribution to Northants tennis. Well done from us all.

When restrictions allow, we will restart our new "**Walking Tennis**" sessions. This is a slowed down version of the traditional game.

Who is it for? Anyone!

No membership or tennis skills required.

Mondays 10.30 -11.30 am at Nether Heyford Tennis Courts

Benefits – Playing walking tennis can bring real benefits, aside from the physical health gains, players benefit from the boost of being outdoors with the mental health benefits of exercise, interaction with others, and a sense of achievement of developing new skills.

For further information and to book a space please contact
Jo - 01327 349094, 07749 822016 or jodickson@btinternet.com
Or find us on Facebook

Welcome Packs

Welcome packs are available for newcomers to our Village. The information in them helps people feel at home quickly.

If you notice that someone has moved in recently, get a pack for them by calling:

Sue Morris
21 The Green
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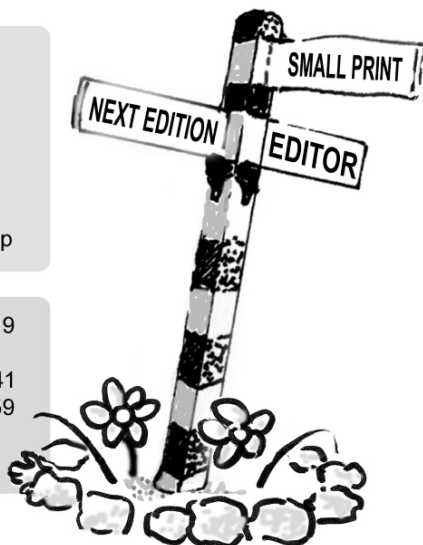
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