



LITTLE HADHAM PARISH NEWS

MAY 2024

If You Go Down To The Woods Today...

Have you discovered the Woodland Rangers yet? A new and exciting Forest school experience based in our very own Millennium Wood. See p.9

Letter from our Assistant Area Dean

Father Simon Vivian



I'm hoping to go on retreat for a few days soon. Priests are encouraged to go on a retreat each year to spend some time in a place of calm and stillness to reconnect with God.

Of course, retreats and quiet time aren't the preserve of priests and ministers. Many people - whether religious or not - enjoy spending a few days in peaceful surroundings away from the literal and metaphorical noise of the world we live in, where most of us, through our phones, are - for good or bad - continually on call, and where we're frequently surrounded by computers, TVs, radios, and background hubbub.

But silence isn't just about getting away from the never-ending noise that accompanies life. St Benedict of Nursia in Italy (AD 480-547) founded the Benedictine monasteries. To help his monks live together in community, he wrote a 'Rule'. In it, he states: 'So important is silence, that permission to speak should seldom be granted even to mature disciples, no matter how good or holy or constructive their talk, because it is written: "in a flood of words you will not avoid sin." (Proverbs 10:19)'

Our tongues are the hardest part of us to manage. I'm sure we've all experienced that desire to speak our mind or tittle-tattle. And then there are those times when our tongues run ahead of us before our thoughts have caught up, leading sometimes to something being said which is unintentionally tactless

or hurtful. And those wounds can be slow to heal; while harsh words can be forgiven, they can never be taken back.



It's true that imposing silence on someone can be just as harsh as a physical attack. In a democratic society, the freedom of speech and thought are fundamental, with the imposition of silence being just as harmful as hurtful words. It's also true that many get nervous if things go unexpectedly quiet; many of us are no longer used to silence.

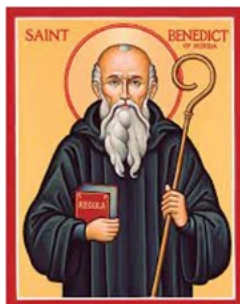
But it's also in the silence that we find God. The former Archbishop of Canterbury Dr Rowan Williams once described prayer as like sunbathing in the presence and radiance of God. We need to create space and silence in our hearts and minds, taking the time to wait and listen for God to speak to us.

And we don't necessarily need to get away to do that. Our church buildings have been steeped with prayer over the centuries. So it's no surprise to me that many people - whether they're regular members of our congregations or not - pop into our churches to spend a little time in silence during their busy days, lighting a candle perhaps, and reconnecting with themselves and maybe also with God.

As people continue to try to find a little peace and quiet in their lives, I pray that our churches will be places in which people continue to find refreshment for their soul for many centuries to come.

Yours in Christ,

Fr Simon



LITTLE HADHAM PARISH NEWS

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To find out more about the life of our Church, please visit our website:

www.riverashchurches.org.uk

EDITORIAL DEADLINE

All articles for inclusion and payment for advertising in the next issue **must** be received by the **15th** of the month.

(BACS preferred, email the editor for details.)

Editor reserves the right to edit copy received, and add or omit pictures where necessary.

View the Parish News Online including back issues: www.littlehadham-pc.gov.uk/parish_news.html

ADVERTISING ENQUIRIES

If you would like to advertise in our magazine, please contact the editor at: littlehadhampn@gmail.com for more details.

The Parish News is funded and distributed freely by St Cecilia's Church. We really appreciate the support of all our advertisers to help cover our overheads and keep the Parish News in print. Please support them and shop local.

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We offer ads at 4 different sizes and prices from a full page to an eighth of a page, with discounts for taking a year at a time. We can also insert flyers for a small fee.

You can also offer support by making a donation to the magazine, contact the editor for details.

The magazine is written by many contributors who report for themselves or for a club or organisation they represent. The church and production team does not necessarily agree with the opinions aired in any article printed here.

Little Hadham Parish Council

Carole Page

www.littlehadham-pc.gov.uk

Little Hadham Parish Council meets the first Tuesday of each month in the Village Hall. There is no meeting in August or January. All residents and press are welcome to attend the meetings.

Meeting dates – all meetings commence at 7.30pm

	7th May	4th June	2nd July
3rd September	1st October	5th November	3rd December

Agendas are posted on noticeboards and the Little Hadham Parish Council website.

SAVE THE DATE – TUESDAY 7th MAY. LITTLE HADHAM PARISH ASSEMBLY

- Which will be in the Village Hall with stalls from local groups and external agencies. With presentations on what has been happening in the village and what is coming up. Come along for a catch up with people you may not have seen for a while, whilst enjoying some refreshments.



Community Shelters

A project which reviewed bus shelters in Hertfordshire has identified our shelter at Hadham Ford opposite the Nags Head public house as an ideal location and to make this bus stop more attractive and enjoyable for use by our

residents, and the local community. The main aim of this project is to create a more attractive environment for both passengers and residents, to make the bus shelter something more than just a shelter or a place to wait for a bus.

Update on Village Improvements:

Item	
Refurb of the Village Sign, originally installed 2000	Village sign is currently being restored, is with the restorer and will be reinstated before the end of April
Village Pump	Work is underway on the village pump and should be finished by the end of April
Memorial reflective signs	In discussion with Highways
Gateway boxes / picket fences at the 4 entrances to the village	Are looking at bespoke planters for the gateways. Proposing they are self-watering to enable the plants to survive during the hot weather
Pudding Stone information board	Information is being researched
Points of interest and information boards around the 8 hamlets	Information for boards is being gathered
Community Orchard	A new bench and also a picnic bench have been purchased. Will be installed once the contractor confirms dates
Wilding of the orchard with biodiverse planting is being explored	
Communal seating on village green spaces and at points of interest	Proposed new seating in: Bury Green, the Ford, Westland Green

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New Interim Minister for the Parish

Karin Green

The Revd Ibitayo (Tayo) Wale-Falope

We are pleased to announce that Tayo has accepted the post of Interim Minister for 1 year, to support the ministry in our three Parishes.

Tayo started work on Monday 15th April. He is also providing support to Braughing, Furneux Pelham and Stocking Pelham. This is a part-time appointment. He will be taking services on a Sunday with an additional 2 days a week covering all 6 Parishes.



Together with the other Churchwardens I am currently preparing a "modus operandi" for Tayo. The most significant step

so far is that our Sunday service time is now 9:15am. I will keep you informed of any other developments.



From the Registers of St. Cecilia's Church, Little Hadham

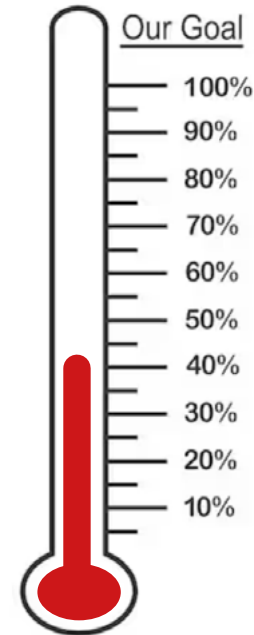
We commended into God's care

Alan John Carter (82) of Albury Road, whose funeral took place on Thursday 28th March.

Brenda Hamilton Lennox (90) of The Ash, whose funeral took place on Monday 8th April.

Church Roof Fund – Update

Helen Walker



This month we are delighted to be able to report that the Church

Roof Fund is now nearly halfway to the target of £10,000. A hugely successful cake sale in March added £202.78 and with £690 Gift Aid now claimed the total stands at £4,208.88.

The 10p tower is a long way short of reaching the roof, standing only slightly over 11cm but there's still plenty of time so have a look between the sofa cushions and in the pockets of all those coats before you put them away until the Autumn... if every home receiving the PN added just one 10p coin, our tower would be over 2m tall!

The Tesco Stronger Starts application is now in so keep a look out when shopping at Bishop's Park in the coming months and if the St Cecilia's Church Roof Fund is selected, please do support it with a blue token as often as you can.

Church Cleaning

Can you spare 1 hour a month, on the first Friday of the month?

If yes, the little band of cleaners, who help keep St. Cecilia's spick and span, would be pleased to welcome you.

For further details please contact Karin on 771 532



We are also hoping to have some good news about a grant from the Stansted Airport Community Fund...more on that next month...

Donations continue to be welcome – not just financial but also fund-raising ideas or offers of help with up-coming events. In the pipeline we have a Parish Ramble, photo/picture competition and a Music Festival.

And as you will have noticed, Gift Aid has a significant part to play so if you are a UK taxpayer, please do contact Karin Green (Church Warden) for a declaration form (churchwardenstcecilias@gmail.com or tel. 01279 771532) to add 25% of whatever you contribute, at no extra cost.

Please keep the fundraising ideas coming...

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Louise Battle
www.woodlandrangers.co.uk

Woodland Rangers had a very successful launch in April with our Easter Holiday Club. We had a fantastic group of children who excelled in a range of new skills such as fire lighting, den building, campfire cooking and using tools.

We are now busy during term time running sessions with parents and children across various age groups. Starting from our babies group, Mini Muntjacs, where parents can come along for a cup of tea and a chat while the babies enjoy the new experiences and sensory stimulation of being outdoors in the woods.

Our Woodland Squirrels group is aimed at children under 5 who like to explore, play in the mud kitchen and learn new skills. Sessions include free play, craft, stories, songs, bubbles, using tools, flora and fauna identification and much more.

We are also very excited the have started our sessions for home educated children, Exploring Rabbits, who are very keen to learn outdoor survival skills and campfire safety over the next few weeks.

We are looking forward to welcoming more children in May half term at our next Holiday Club on **30th – 31st May** in Millennium Woods.

For more information, please visit www.woodlandrangers.co.uk or find us on Facebook @woodlandrangersuk



Little Hadham Primary School

Sinead Connolly, Head Teacher



Little Hadham
Primary School



It has been an eventful month at Little Hadham Primary as our children have enthusiastically participated in a range of activities, such as special assemblies, a science workshop, educational outings, art workshops, poetry performances, and an abundance of learning experiences throughout the school. We're proud to share that our children have continued to flourish and make remarkable progress across all domains.

Poetry by Heart: A Symphony of Words

Our school resonated with the beautiful verses of poetry as every class participated in a Poetry by Heart whole-school performance. Each class showcased their interpretation of a chosen poem, demonstrating not only their memorisation skills but also their understanding and appreciation of language and literature. It was truly a delightful experience witnessing our young poets bring words to life. When you learn a poem by heart,

it becomes part of you; anytime, anywhere, you can breathe it into being again. Speaking a poem with others demands cooperation, trust and coordination – and to do it well involves breathing together, being in the moment together and becoming part of something special. Performing a poem requires many different skills including how to manage pace and timing to powerful effect; how to hold a silence; eye contact, body language and gesture.

Each 'Poetry by Heart' event is always special and this term our children did not disappoint. Each class performed their poem with such confidence and enthusiasm. The poems shared moved us, informed us and made us laugh out loud. Words really are powerful!

Golden Morning: Cultivating Skills, Nurturing Talents

In our pursuit of holistic development, we organised the Infamous Golden



Morning event, providing our pupils with a platform to explore and enhance various skills. From artistic endeavours to scientific explorations. The children had a plethora of options to choose from, including sports, cooking, hat making, willow crafting, terracotta pots and planting, watercolours, basket making, and even delving into the realm of foresting.

The atmosphere was filled with energy and enthusiasm as they engaged in a myriad of activities, each one contributing to their personal growth and self-discovery.

Humanities Table Quiz: A Test of Knowledge and Collaboration

Our older pupils had a chance to showcase their intellectual prowess as they participated in the Humanities Table Quiz- they do love this! Through rounds of thought-provoking questions spanning history, geography, literature, and more, they put their knowledge to the test. Moreover, the quiz served as a platform for collaboration and teamwork, fostering camaraderie among the participants. It was indeed a testament to their dedication to learning and their passion for exploration.



As we reflect back on the events of last month, we are reminded of the importance of nurturing not only academic excellence but also creativity, collaboration, and character development. Therefore, if you feel you would like to join us for a Golden Morning session or have a talent to lend us, please do not hesitate to call us on 01279 771 285.



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Down At North Weald Airfield

SQ LEADER P. HAIMES DFC (Retired)

Many of you have been asking me if I've done the Spitfire flight yet.

Well, on Sunday 14th April at 11:30am and in perfect flying conditions, I did and it was a fantastic experience. Thank you to all who contributed.



My pilot was an experienced ex-RAF instructor called Charlie Brown (really!) and the Spitfire was almost 80 years old, having been produced in Castle Bromwich, Birmingham, in 1944. After taking off from North Weald airfield we banked left and headed towards Chelmsford at 240mph. Needless to say, I spotted a couple of golf courses en-route which will need checking out in due course! From Chelmsford we headed towards Colchester where the airspace was free and allowed for some aerobatics, with looping the loop & barrel roll paramount. I then got to fly the Spitfire myself for a couple of minutes, albeit in a straight(ish) line with a few gentle turns, which was awesome. This was also when the London skyline was visible out of the left side of my canopy. We then headed back to the airfield where the soft landing would put most commercial pilots to shame.



experience. Thank goodness Rosey Leas tearoom was next door!!

Many thanks once again to all who made this flight possible.

With best wishes

Paul Haimes

My wife, daughter, son in law & 2 grandkids (Toby & Annabel) were there to witness this amazing life

Christopher
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Little Hadham Gardening Club

Anne Willett

Our next meeting is on the **14th May** when Ed Fairey from the National Garden Scheme (NGS), will give us a talk about the history and work of the NGS including their gardens. Doors open at 7:45pm with a start at 8:00pm. Members free, non-members £3. Refreshments available.



Hosta

Our annual plant sale is on **18th May at 9:30am** in the Village Hall. Besides a wide selection of plants for sale there will be a bric-a-brac stall, book stall and refreshments including home made cakes. Please come along, there is always a gap that needs filling. Also if you have any spare plants please bring these along for sale.

5 Ways to hide a fence:-

Garden fences and other boundaries are essential for providing shelter and privacy in a garden, but as one of the largest single elements in a plot, they can set the tone of the whole garden, so don't let their functionality prevent them from being an element of beauty.

Bear in mind that all garden boundaries will require some form of maintenance so it's vital to allow access to do this.

1. Grow climbers up your fence/wall - these can be easily upgraded by adding climbing plants, such as roses, clematis, jasmine and honeysuckle. Simply fix wires or trellis to the fence, which climbing plants can use for support, and which you can tie stems into as they grow. Annual climbers like morning glory and sweet peas can be grown to fill gaps while the perennials grow.

2. Paint your fence - fences can look quite bedraggled if they have not been maintained in a while, but upgrades are fast and inexpensive. A lick of paint or wood stain visually revives a fence in a flash. Pale hues make a space feel larger, whilst bright colours add excitement. But if you want your fence to disappear, go dark.

3. Plant a hedge in front of your fence - this is a long term option, but a thin hedge planted in front of your fence will add depth to your boundary, offering additional protection from noise and wind, while looking more pleasing and providing a valuable habitat for wildlife too. Bear in mind that once established, you will need to trim your hedge at least once a year.

4. Add hanging planters to your fence - adding hanging pots or other planters from your fence can be an inexpensive way of hiding it.

5. Plant a border- a well planted border comprising small trees and shrubs, tall herbaceous plants and low growing perennials, will create depth and interest in your garden. Choose plants of different heights, that flower at different times of the year and include a few evergreens for winter interest.



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Much Hadham Based



Cristina Harrison
hadham.museum@btinternet.com



What's been happening? The museum has been awarded a Places of Science grant from The Royal Society. We will be producing a school and family friendly activity to show the links between our collection and science. It also funds a blacksmith taster weekend with Rich Maynard where you can have the chance to have a go and make a small item to take home. Stay peeled to our social media for updates!

TREASURE! Post-medieval silver seal matrix found! Donations welcomed!

We hope to acquire this for the collection so that it can be researched further and displayed alongside our other important finds. Together they weave the history of our village and the people who have lived and worked here across thousands of years.

The face is engraved with a skull with two pairs of crossed bones beneath and a sand timer above. On each side of the sand timer are two nails pointing towards the skull.

The imagery is an example of 'memento mori', fashionable between the mid-16th and mid-18th centuries, reminding the wearer of the fragility of time and the inevitability of death. The four nails refer to the crucifixion of Jesus Christ, which could suggest recusant use.

Free Exhibition "The People of The Palace" Apr 5th - Dec 15th

This exhibition explores the stories and experiences of the people who have lived at The Palace from Royal guests to confined lunatics and wartime evacuees.

hadham.museum@btinternet.com | 01279 843 301 | 07483 113 345

www.hadhammuseum.org.uk | @HadhamMuseum

Little Hadham Village Hall News

Jan Williamson

www.littlehadhamvillagehall.com



Open Showcase – Celebrating Village Halls’ Week 2024

Thank you to all the hall user groups and volunteers who took part in our free to attend Open Showcase in support of Village Halls Week on Saturday 23rd March. Prior to any event our volunteers put in a great deal of effort, often over many months to ensure that the event is well organised, costed, publicised and has the co-operation of those involved. Unfortunately, on the day access to the Open Showcase was severely hindered by an unknown local road closure blocking access to the village hall. However, well done to those of you who did manage to get to us early enough before the road closure came into effect and enjoyed engaging with the groups represented.

The Open Showcase gave many of our hall users the opportunity to talk about their group and what they have to offer.

The Carpet Bowls Group demonstrated how to bowl and let children and adults have a go, Little Hadham Pantomime Group put on a great display of theatre props and the kitchen as usual, provided a range of tasty lunchtime snacks.

The Open Showcase welcomed; Little Hadham Pantomime Group, Brownies, Gardening Club, Bowls, Scrabble, Red Chair Community Cinema, Digital Inclusion, Bereavement Group, Community Breakfast, Welcome Café, Village Hall Hire & Streaming Services, Parish Council, Chair Yoga, Forever Cycling, Tai Chi, local Police, Citizens Advice and Clarion Housing. Due to a ‘shout’ the Fire Service were unable to be with us this time. While many of our hall user groups are thriving, some can welcome new members or participants, so if you are interested in more information, please visit: www.littlehadhamvillagehall.com.

Neighbourhood Policing Team at Welcome Café

On Wednesday 15th May, a Liaison Officer from Neighbourhood Policing Team will be at our Welcome Café from 10am to talk about Neighbourhood Watch (OWL) and how it has changed to Herts Connected a brand-new platform. Herts Connected has gone live and Neighbourhood Watch members should have been contacted with guidance on how to register to the new system. However, if you have not been contacted, would like to register, or are interested in finding out more about Herts Connected, please come along to our Welcome Café.

Red Chair Community Cinema – Relaxed Afternoon Screenings

Our next film screening will be **Mrs Harris Goes to Paris (2022)** on **Monday 17th June**. Doors open 2.30pm with film starting promptly at 3pm. Entry £5 including tea/coffee. This is the last screening until September, when we hope to be able to bring you a new programme of relaxed film screenings. We are very grateful to Home Instead Charities, who awarded us grant funding for hall hire and film licencing costs in 2023/2024.

New events to look out for

We have a new class coming to the hall which is pregnancy yoga on a Thursday 7pm – 8pm

Bishops Stortford Theatre Company presenting The Killer Auditions Friday 17th and Saturday 18th May

Little Hadham Antiques Fair Sunday 12th

See our what’s on page for details.



If you would like to know more about anything in this article please phone Jan Williamson on: 01279 771 272 or email: chairvillagehall@littlehadham.org.uk

What's On in May @ LH Village Hall

See website www.littlehadhamvillagehall.com for latest details

WEEKLY ACTIVITIES

MONDAY'S

Mum's Matter (Mother & Baby Group) 10 – 11:30am

TUESDAY'S

Brownies 5:45 – 7pm **Term Time Only**
Bereavement Group Meeting Every THIRD Tuesday of the month (1-1 every other Tuesday from 10am - 12:15 **BY APPOINTMENT ONLY** ring Jan 01279 771 272)

WEDNESDAY'S

Welcome Cafe 10am – 2pm No need to book just drop in and enjoy!
Chair Yoga 11am – 11:45 Mark Druman 07368 293 062
Digital Improvers drop in 2 – 3:30pm Jan 01279 771 272
Fitsteps 6 – 7pm Jacqui: 07731 454 228

THURSDAY'S

Mike's Bowls Club 2 – 4pm
Pregnancy Yoga Class 7-8pm Kirsty Smith 07903 035 180 | km.rabs@gmail.com

FRIDAY'S

Fancy Feet children's dance class 4 – 5:30pm **Term Time Only** Hannah 07538 262 835
Indoor Bowls 7:30 – 10pm **except 2nd Friday**

FORTNIGHTLY

Tuesday 7th & 21th 2 – 4pm Turn up & Play Scrabble (£3 per session) Annette: 07926 088 202
Wednesday 1st & 15th & 29th 12:30 – 1:30pm Tai Chi (Sarah Baker 07740 701 102)
Wednesday 8th & 22nd 12:30 – 1:30pm Virtual Cycle Studio Adam Howard 07538 706 560)

MONTHLY

7th 7:30pm Parish Council Meeting
13th 7 - 9pm Air Fryer Demonstration (2nd Monday in the month) **BOOKING ESSENTIAL** through Jan 07710 325 363 or email: vice-chair@littlehadhamvillagehall.com
9th 10 – 12 noon Community Breakfast morning **BOOKING ESSENTIAL** on website: littlehadhamvillagehall.com or email vice-chair@littlehadhamvillagehall.com

NOTICEBOARD

EXTRA EVENTS AT THE VILLAGE HALL

Tuesday 14th May

Little Hadham Gardening club presents a talk with ED Fairley on NGS gardens with speaker 7.30pm – 9pm

17th & 18th May

Bishops Stortford Musical Theatre Company presents The Killer Auditions @ Little Hadham Village Hall on 17th and 18th May curtain up at 7.30pm. Visit BSMTC website for booking details.

Sunday 12th May

Little Hadham Antiques Fair doors open 9am

RED CHAIR CINEMA CLUB

Friday 10th May
7pm

Membership Required. For information email: redchaircinema@littlehadhamvillagehall.com

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St Cecilia's Church Bells

Quasi

Last month I reported a bell ringing competition was to take place in our own church. It was held on a beautiful, but cold spring day and although suffering mild frost bite the judges sat in the churchyard to listen and note any faults in the bell ringing. As predicted Bishop's Stortford Lion came first from 7 teams from the local area, they rung Grandsire Doubles with only 23 faults.

As we know from St Cecilia's own Roof Fund, churches are generally old structures requiring considerable up keep. As bell ringers we have a bell restoration fund (The Hertford County Association of Change Ringiers Bell Restoration Fund) dedicated to the up keep of our churches' bell towers. The fund was set up in 1972 and has supplied grants totalling almost a

quarter of a million pounds, with local churches benefiting from the fund including: Bishop's Stortford in 2022 - retuned and rehung all of their bells, Furneux Pelham in 2020 - lowered the ringing room to the ground floor, Much Hadham in 2018 - refurbished the bells and tower, and Thorley in 2017 - repairs to the wooden wheels that allow the bells to ring. In all of these cases the grant only covered a fraction of the costs so each church would have had to do further fundraising and apply for other grants to help with the essential work. So behind the scenes of the beautiful sound of church bells is a team of volunteers working tirelessly to maintain the tradition of bell ringing.



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The Hadhams' History Society met in March to hear a talk by Sarah Kerrison on "Land Girls, Brocket Babes and Beyond" and this was a very interesting talk enjoyed by all.

Our next meeting will be on **23rd May**, in the Green Room Much Hadham Village Hall. Cristina Harrison will be coming along to

give a talk on "Hadham Towers and The Doll Family". I am sure everyone will find this very interesting.

Do come along and join us, if you want to see what we are about just come as a visitor you will be very welcome.

For further information please contact me at katieh69@btinternet.com.

Hadham Cross Congregational Church

PREACHERS FOR APRIL SERVICES AT 11am

5th May	Roger Amos	Sawbridgeworth Congregational Church
12th May	Mike Hillyer	Oakwood Chapel Harlow
19th May	John Fosker	Therfield Congregational Church
26th May	Sam Pakala	Oakwood Chapel Harlow

Our next Coffee Morning will be on **Wednesday 8th May** 10am - 12 noon. Please do come and join us for coffee/tea cake and a chat.

All are welcome to join us each Sunday at our 11am Service

Two important announcements:

Firstly we shall be starting a **Bible Study Group** at the Congregational Church on **Wednesday 15th May**, 2pm - 3:30pm. Please do come and join us - all are welcome.

Secondly we shall be having an **Afternoon Tea meeting once a month**. The first one will be on **Friday 31st May** at

the Congregational Church 2pm - 4pm. Please do come and join us - all are welcome.

Urgent help is still required to play the organ at our 11am Sunday morning service.

Can you help us - we would love to hear from you. Further details from Kathy Hamilton 01279 843 756

Church Deacons: Brenda Coleshill 01279 842 800 | Kathy Hamilton 01279 843 756

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Nature Notes

Jono Forgham

jonoforgham@gmail.com

As it is now migration season, many new birds are arriving in the UK and occasionally, some rarer species can turn up. Consequently, I have been out and about, both locally and further afield to see what I can come across.

The highlight bird for me was finding 5 Little Gulls at the lagoons near Stansted Airport. A rarity for Herts and west Essex. Sadly, the light that morning was dreadful, so my photos were not as sharp as I would have liked. They were, however, good enough to guarantee the record for the Essex Bird Club. My first local sighting of this bird.

Another rarity was a Long-billed Dowitcher. This is a bird from the USA and has been seen on and off at Cley Reserve on the Norfolk coast. In early April, I managed to get some pleasing shots of this wader feeding with Black tailed Godwits.

Local migratory birds have included a Little Ringed Plover at the lagoons, Swallows at Hatfield Forest lake and the lagoons, Willow warbler, Chiffchaff and Blackcap in Millennium Wood and a little further away, a pair of Stone curlews in The Brecks in Norfolk.

A trip to Lakenheath RSPB reserve gave great views of Reed buntings and very distant views through the telescope of both Garganey, (a summer visiting duck species) and a Bittern.

I am writing this piece earlier than usual as I am off for a week's bird watching and photography in The Gambia in mid April. A country I have wanted to visit for many years.

I managed to get a good deal on the return flight from Gatwick and have booked a room on the beach in Sanyang. I have also booked a local bird guide for a couple of days. Yankoba will drive me to some of the top sites in the country, one of the best countries in the world for birds. I anticipate seeing more than 200 species in the time I am there.

Photos and report next month.



Avocet in evening light in Norfolk



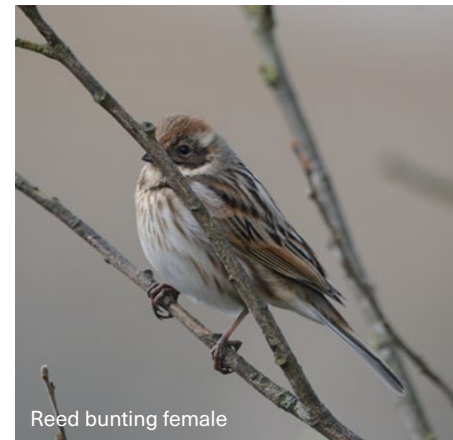
Snipe



Greenshank at Morston Harbour, N. Norfolk



Long billed dowitcher, a real rarity with Black tailed godwit behind



Reed bunting female



Curlew in Norfolk



Little Egret in wonderful evening light at Titchwell Reserve



Little gull at Stansted Airport Lagoons



Reed bunting male



Stonechat female

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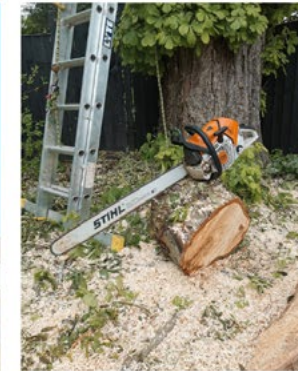
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The Hundred Parishes Society

Ken McDonald



As day length increases and the air becomes warmer, plants put out new shoots. Many insects emerge and birds pair up, preparing to breed. Since the 1960's the average minimum winter temperatures have been rising. Snow fall is now a rarity, and frosty days are much less frequent. The current growing season is almost a month longer than 50 years ago. Primroses and bluebells are opening earlier. Researchers recorded that the first flowering of some 406 plant species has advanced by almost a month since 1986! This has a knock-on effect for the time of emergence of pollinating insects such as bees and butterflies; some are adapting to the warmer climate.

Hedgerow shrubs and trees are leafing and flowering earlier too, providing food for so many hungry caterpillars which are ideal food for nestlings. Hedgerows are a valuable wildlife habitat, often providing a living framework to the landscape and our rural heritage. Long-established hedges grow in soil that is rich in stored carbon and older trees within the hedgerow also hold large stores of carbon.

A recent planning application to fell an ancient hedgerow oak close to Clavering led to a vigorous and successful campaign by residents to save it. This tree is now registered on the Ancient Tree Inventory, a record similar to the one for listed buildings. There are more trees in local hedgerows that could be recorded - details of how to do this can be found on <https://ati.woodlandtrust.org.uk/how-to-record>.

National Hedgerow Week

organised by the Tree Council runs from 6th May to 12th May and is timed to showcase hedgerows resplendent with fresh new growth and full of wildlife. Please enjoy one or more of the many walks listed on the Society's website - and consider recording some of our wonderful old trees.



Quendon



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Pleshey



Littlebury – bluebells in Howe Wood



Much Hadham – Hertfordshire Way

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Talking Bowls...or Something

Jack Much Hadham Bowling Club: Recreation Ground, Much Hadham SG10 6DL

Our St. Patricks Day celebration was probably the Club's most successful social event since long before covid. Ticket demand exceeded expectations but more importantly everyone enjoyed the afternoon with the Irish themed lunch, Irish folk music sing-a-long and some jig dancing got people (but must be said not many) on their feet. It seems pretty certain that event will be repeated next year.

So too will Grand National day which we celebrated on Saturday 13 April.

Even more people attended with 'bubbly', sweepstake, and an afternoon tea before gathering round the screen for the excitement of the race. I can think of worse ways of spending a Saturday afternoon.

In addition to our Wednesday evening Club Nights we hope to have an extra

social event each month to which non-members are also welcome. Next up is something quite different – a trip down memory lane with a fantasy 'coach trip to Southend' – without going anywhere!

Saturday 18 May is the date for your diary and the evening will include a sing-a-long and an imaginary coach ride with a number of those old songs, live keyboard music, food typical of the time and place, and oh – the regulatory stop at 'Halfway House' on the way back. It should be fun.

By the time you read this the Green should be open for both Bowls and Croquet. We welcome new members for both and are holding an OPEN DAY on **Sunday, 19 May** from 2pm to 5pm to which we hope many of you will come. No charge, all equipment supplied – just wear flat soled shoes.

Hope to see you sometime. Jack

Croquet in Much Hadham

If croquet interests you, we would love you to join us - everyone is welcome. Come by yourself or with a friend/friends. Age is no barrier - there is no upper age limit but anyone under 16 years must be accompanied an adult.

If you are already a group of 4 or 6, you can of course request a day and time preferred. It is necessary to book - minimum of 24 hours beforehand.

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We managed to open on the last two Thursdays in March, setting us up well for the new season starting in April. It was lovely to see visitors again, after that miserable wet snowdrop season!

May is a lovely month in the Gardens. It is when the cowparsley and foxgloves take over. Other highlights at the beginning of the month are the camassia in the mini orchard in the kitchen garden, the blossom on the ornamental cherries and the fresh leaves of the acers. At the end of the month the laburnum walk bears gold, the handkerchiefs waft on their branches in the breeze and the wild orchids start to bloom on the bank to the Glade.

For our **Sunday 19 May Open Day** we are delighted that Jane Frederick is showing her Garden Seekers exhibition. Jane's artistic lens was focused on six historic gardens in Essex, including Easton Lodge. We will be displaying the relevant history from our archives and Jane's inspirations as well as her art works. It is also our Nature Day at the Gardens, and we will be joined again by an expert biologist for pond dipping and other nature activities and stalls for all the family.

The Gardens are also open every Thursday, with our produce stall



selling fresh vegetables from the walled kitchen garden – perhaps rhubarb and asparagus?

The Gardens are open from 11am and our volunteers provide refreshments. Tickets can be bought in advance for Sundays. There is no charge for children under 16 years old. Visitors can bring picnics and dogs on leads are welcome. For more information about tickets, times, activities and refreshments go to www.eastonlodge.co.uk/whats-on

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Rural Ramblings

Cherry Mardell

As a long standing shopaholic, there's not much I miss when doing the weekly buy up. But here's a thing...

To those of you who regularly buy from one of the three main supermarkets in town, may I suggest you make changes? For each store is brilliant in certain areas, and not so hot in others. Why not visit a different one this week, and find all the things you have been missing!

It can be expensive, because the unknown is more fun than filling your basket with the same-old, same-old!

But a new look meal and maybe a different pud now and then, will put a smile of the faces of those you feed.

For instance, I have found chicken and steaks are much cheaper in Aldi than in either Tesco or Sainsbury, and usually much tastier, and their range of yogurts is more interesting. OK, the selection is not so great but money counts...

In Aldi, you have to be prepared to be jostled by the sheer number of shoppers in a relatively small space.

But it isn't always plain sailing in the other two stores either. Tesco is now so busy that it feels more Aldi like than before, while Sainsbury seems less of a bun-fight if you pick the right time of day to shop.

I suppose I shouldn't grumble, a choice of three well stocked stores

within a three miles radius can't be bad... especially when you read with horror at what some countries are going through!

Some girls were born to be Girl Guides or other such female institutions. I was one of those who wasn't! It has always been obvious that I am cack-handed at the best of times and downright stupid at all the others.

Just today, I had the simple job of removing an empty bottle tied with string to a fixture, and replacing said bottle with a new, full one. Easy, you may say.... a child could do that without a problem. Five tries, and copious amounts of string later, I completed the job. OK, I was outside and it was raining hard and I was not dressed for the job! Within a couple of minutes my lightweight cotton top had become see-through and my temper was up! I kept cutting the wrong piece of string, sometimes it was that which was attached to the bottle, at others, it was the string which had been happily awaiting being joined to the fixture I laughed at myself for starters, but my inability to get it right soon turned my smile into a frown! Am I really such a dunce or are there others among you who, like me, regrettably would be no use as a side-kick to Robison Crusoe!

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St Cecilia's Little Hadham				9:15am Benefice Holy Communion Tayo	
St Mary's Albury	9:15am Benefice Holy Communion Tayo				9:15am Benefice Holy Communion Tayo

OTHER SERVICES:

Sat 18th **4:30pm** Messy Church at St Andrew's Church
Thur 23th **10am** Little Hadham Communion (Tayo)

***please note that service times have changed**

All are welcome to join our services