

Great Gaddesden Parish Newsletter

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Delivered to the villages of Great Gaddesden and Gaddesden Row and the hamlets of Bridens Camp, Water End, Noake Mill and St Margarets

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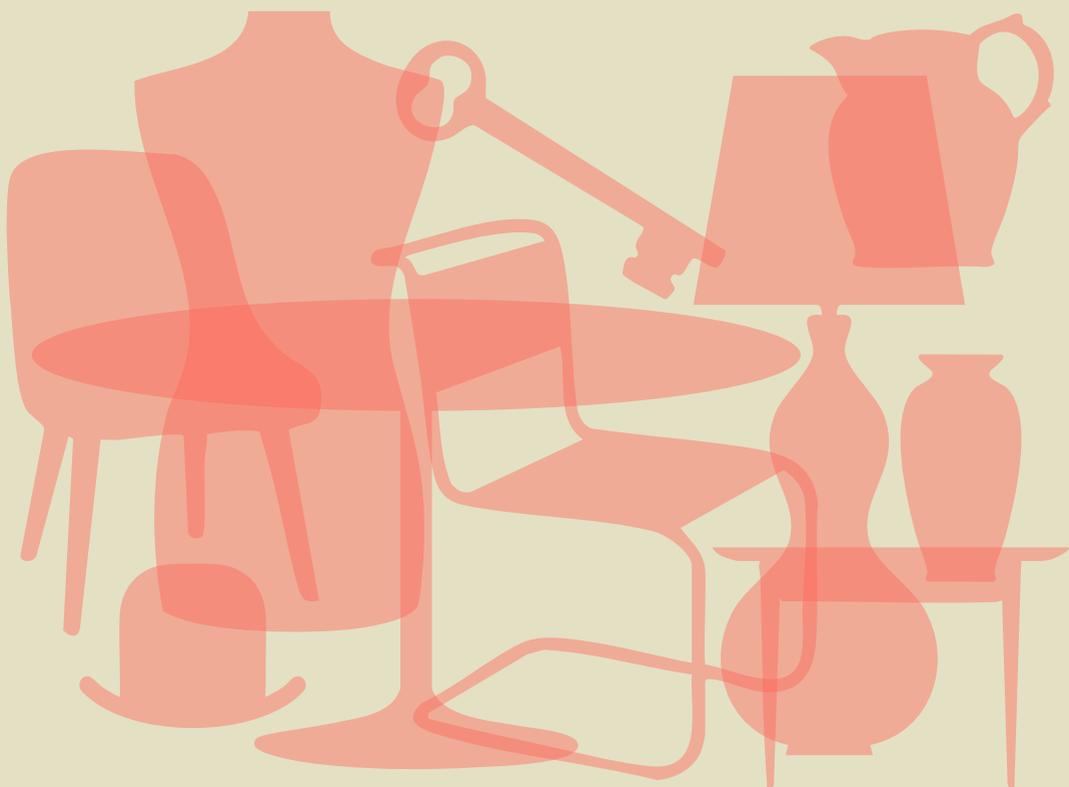
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March 2025

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From the Glamorous Assistant

I'm really excited about this month's issue. I told the wife that the magazine won the Leslie Nielsen prize for best magazine. She asked 'What's that?' I explained that it's a periodical publication containing articles and illustrations, often on a particular subject or aimed at a particular readership. But that's not important right now. So much content, we've had to put an index in and my bit has got smaller. Which is probably a bonus too. We've got FIVE new contributors which I'm excited about. They include one from America. Yes, it's a local story. We've got a story about train crash which I'm chuffed with, and someone from Gaddesden Row being attacked by an elephant. We've even got articles about frogs and plants. Did I tell you that I had a pet frog once. I did a DNA test

on him and found he was part English, part French and a tad Pole. What more can you ask for from a parish magazine run by two blokes in a shed. Well, you could ask for updates about the Gade and from the MP, yep, we've got them as well. All this dropping on your doorstep each month for free. What do we ask of you? Actually, we could do with some cash to pay for it all. Check out our 'Just Giving' page or bank details below

John Lowrie

What an amazing issue, our largest yet! We're going to take a short break next month. In the meantime I'd like to thank all our readers, our amazing network of deliverers, our fabulous contributors and especially John who's hard work makes the magazine possible.

Richard Collis

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We're a small, free, local newsletter and sometimes the volunteers who put it together will make mistakes.

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Great Gaddesden Parish Newsletter is read by over 1000 people in and around the parish. Funded by the parish council, the church, advertising, and voluntary contributions from our readers.

The opinions expressed in the publication are those of the authors. They do not purport to reflect the opinions of the publishers.

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Full Year Advertising Rates for 2025 remain unchanged:
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Community events advertised free of charge

Deadline for the next issue:

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From the Vicar

Dear Friends,

You may have noticed that Easter falls on the 20th April, very nearly the latest it can be in the Western Church calendar; so this year, we may rightly say Easter is 'late'. (Incidentally, the very latest it can be is the 25th April).

It means we have several weeks between the season of Epiphany and the start of Lent which is a period of 'Ordinary Time' in the church, during which we switch from the white or gold vestments of Christmas and before the Lenten colour of purple, to green. It's an in between time not particularly looking forward to Lent, nor back to Epiphany

In St Paul's letter to the Galatians, in the fourth chapter, Paul has a real go at the crowd accusing them of looking back all the time.

It reminds of my dog, who often looks behind him in case he's missing out on something, I tell him he'll be like Lot's wife – but he doesn't take any notice! (cf Genesis 19).

Paul preaches with real passion to the people of Galatia, he's grief-stricken, about the way the church in Galatia seems to be throwing away the new life they have discovered. He is passionate about trying to help them to move into the fullness of that life.

It's what we tend to do, don't we? It seems to be part of the human condition, to discover a better view of reality, perhaps experience something that brings us happiness and fulfilment and establishes good practice, helping us to live better, that it slips for whatever reason, and we lose it. Who hasn't made a New Year resolution that's barely lasted a couple of weeks into January, our intentions turned back to the flawed, but familiar.

Paul's crowd, these Galatians, were pagans who had found their way into the Jewish understanding of the world, but Paul had been teaching them that Judaism was meant to morph into following Jesus, the Messiah, in other words, God's plan was that all would become 'Christians'.

But seemingly the people couldn't let go; they felt they needed to keep the law, the Torah. The pull of the old way was too strong, and they kept looking back.

Paul was angry because he felt they were throwing their lives away and merely using scripture to hide behind instead of facing the reality that the Kingdom of God was not as they had come to believe. Paul calls these people, brothers and sisters because they are family to him and they seemed to be no longer listening to him, turning back to the past, the familiar. That really mattered to him, because of their potential; he has a passion for them, because he sees, in these people, the possibilities of Christ at work in their lives.

We are all aware that the Church of England is going through what must be the greatest existential crisis for centuries, in terms of its leadership, its identity and indeed its very survival. The Church really does need to look back, but it will not be turned into a pillar of salt, because it must truly learn from the mistakes of the past and to properly listen and HEAR those, who have suffered at the hands of the church. There is no place for mere lip service; words are cheap. The Church of England as we know it, may well have to be more or less broken, in order that it made be rebuilt into the church which God calls His church to be.

What is that calling?

It is laid out quite simply in some of the

Great Gaddesden

Parish Church Contacts

Our parishes have a Prayer Group and if you would like to be prayed for or know of someone who would appreciate a pastoral visit, please contact any of the Ministry Team:

Revd. John Russell (Vicar) 01442 214898

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Peter King (Churchwarden)

01442 256556

peter_king@btinternet.com

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writings of St Paul, in his letters to the early churches, including Galatians chapter 4...

Formerly, when you did not know God, you were enslaved to beings that by nature are not gods. Now, however, that you have come to know God, or rather to be known by God, how can you turn back again to the weak and beggarly elemental spirits?

How can you want to be enslaved to them again?...

Have I now become your enemy by telling you the truth?...

My little children, for whom I am again in the pain of childbirth until Christ is formed in you, I wish I were present with you now and could change my tone, for I am perplexed about you.

Paul is filled with the passion of exasperation; I have seen what life could be like, he says. I have seen God's love in action, and he longs

for new birth, a new way of being, amongst the people. (I struggle rather to understand how he as a man knows about labour pain!).

Could we discover that same passion for our Church? Is our church a place of piety, observance, rituals and practices, and conformity, or is it a labour ward? A place in which even the conflicts and difficulties are used positively to come to know the joyful news that, once again, here among us, Jesus is born?

Yes, we need to look back; to listen and learn, but we need to look forward as well. I pray by God's grace, we may look forward with hope and with faith in God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, never covering up or forgetting the past.

I am yours in Christ, John.



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Dydd Gwyl Dewi Sant hapus or Happy St David's Day

Growing up in South Wales from welsh stock this is the one saint's day I always remember. In primary school our 4 houses were the Patron saints of the British Isles – and I was in St David's house. For a number of years I proudly declared the house colour of daffodil yellow as my favourite, (Andrew being Blue; George – red; and Patrick as Green of course).

St David (Dewi Sant) is the one national patron saint within UK that was born and lived in the place he is held as patron for. (Patrick is a close second as thought to be born in Britian – and taken to Ireland as a slave, and something about snakes. Andrew and George being busy saints from the middle east / Turkey and patron saints of many places.)

Like most historic saints there are many stories of David doing impressive things, one attributed miracle is that when a crowd was gathered to hear him preach the ground rose up beneath him so he could be better seen and heard. You might have thought Wales had enough hills already!

It is a saying attributed to him that I want to tell you about. On his deathbed on March 1, 587 CE, David is reported to have said these

last words to his monks: "Be joyful, brothers and sisters. Keep your faith, and do the little things that you have seen and heard with me."

Like many I can feel overwhelmed and useless in the face of big issues around the world (the ones that have always been there, and the stuff that is breaking news day by day) and big issues facing individuals we know and love, maybe ourselves.

That overwhelm can leave us feeling that there is nothing we can do. St David's request to those he led in faith to 'do the little things' has long been interpreted as a plea to do what we can. Our personal actions and choices may feel small in the face of the issues, but we can dare to do them anyway. If we all commit to the small things, together the small becomes less small. The same theme is found in the story of the starfish on the shore, en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Star_Thrower

So your Welsh class for March -

Gwnewch y pethau bychain – do the little things

Rev Helen Roberts

Revhelen2015@gmail.com



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I wonder how many of us know about “The Ides of March” I only heard of that fact recently and thought what does it represent? The Ides of March is the day on the Roman calendar marked as the Idus, roughly the midpoint of a month corresponding to the 15th of March.

In ancient Rome the Ides of March was a festive day dedicated to Mars, the god of war, after whom the month of March is named. Two events happened on the Ides of March, it is associated with the assassination of Julius Caesar in 44 BC and the feast of Anna Perenna who was known as the goddess of the year (Latin annus). The day after Caesar’s assassination became known and famous as the Ides of March.

Is the Ides of March good or bad? In fact it signifies the new year, which meant celebration and rejoicing because calendar months and lunar months were different length. They quickly became out of step. Yet when heroes in movies, books and television showers are faced with the Ides of March it is always bad omen i.e. days of bad luck. Shakespeare created the play “Julius Caesar” so we would not forget that moment from history. In his play Caesar is being warned by a prophet to be aware of the Ides of March, but he ignored the advice and the leader of Rome was killed by a group of his own senators.

Here are some quotes from Shakespeare’s play Julius Caesar:

** ‘It was Greek to me’ meaning I didn’t understand it’ (act 1, scene 2)*

** ‘Beware the Ides of March’ (Soothsayer, act 1 scene 2)*



** ‘Let’s carve him as a dish fit for the gods (Brutus, act 2 scene1)*

and many more.

While the Ides of March are remembered as a tumultuous time during the Roman Republic and Empire it is also time of the year for rebirth and renewal. In early Roman times March was actually the first month of the year and Ides fell on a full moon and was the official ‘New Year’s day of ancient Rome’.

So the 15th of March is considered an unlucky date for people who believe in superstitions but as we know that bad luck on such occasions is in the eye of the beholder.

Gerti Evans

Tower Report

Spring seems so very late this year and I wake each morning hoping that the sun will shine and the garden will soon begin to show all the early signs of growth and renewal, but the snowdrops, primroses and witch-hazel are doing their best to cheer and the profusion of birds on the feeder give us endless enjoyment. We did have one morning with early sunshine on the field sloping up from our back garden and were delighted to see a herd of deer sunning themselves. They numbered around 24 and must have been enjoying the sun as much as we were as they stayed around some time. They had 3 white 'Judas' deer among them - called Judas deer because they betray the position of the herd.

Our District has been hosting a visiting band of Devon bellringers and on Friday 14th at lunchtime I let them into Great Gaddesden tower and was able to stay and watch them ring. Devon, Cornwall (and a few places in Yorkshire) ring bells in much the same way we do, but with differences. We all ring rounds and call changes but our ringing is referred to as 'Method' or 'Scientific' Ringing, whereas Devon ringing is called 'Devon Call Change' ringing and has a specific form and discipline.

As our visitors started to ring, I was amazed at the speed with which they raised the bells, the accuracy of their striking, and the fluency of sound as they responded to the conductor's fast calls to change places. When we ring we have an extra gap between the sound of the last bell's backstroke and the sound of the leading bell's handstroke, but Devon call change ringing does not have this break in the sound, and the rhythm continues uninterrupted - sometimes referred to as 'cartwheel' ringing.

The effect of continuous ringing is that you have to ring the bells more quickly - and therefore they are not rung to the top of their swing as we do and hands are going up and down a lot quicker than when we ring. Another difference is that we only ring our



bells up at the beginning of the evening's ringing and only ring them down at the end, Devon ringers ring the bells up and down between every single piece of ringing, and they frequently ring with a coil of spare rope: they can't shorten the ropes as they would not be able to set them 'up' at the end of each piece of ringing.

I was very impressed at hearing our bells rung so fast, so smoothly and so accurately - it certainly validates tower captain Val's insistence that we need to concentrate on our striking to ring better. Indeed one of our closest neighbours commented that 'It was the best ringing-up I've heard' (and he's married to one of our ringers!!)

I hope some of you may have heard the ringing on the 14th February and if this article has tickled your interest a little - follow the link below to see an example of a young band of (method) ringers learning how to ring Devon style.

Sue Collyer

<https://callchanges.cccbr.org.uk/docs/050-call-changes>





Great Gaddesden C of E (V.A.) Nursery + Primary School

Over recent weeks, we have had a very exciting project take place at Great Gaddesden as our Early Years outdoor area has been completely refurbished! The children have been very excited to see the space being redeveloped and especially like the huge sandpit and the tunnel!

Our vision was to provide an inspiring space where our children can experience the outdoors, develop their gross motor skills, provide opportunities for imaginative play, gardening, storytelling in nature as well as developing construction skills. We aim to inspire our youngest children as they start their learning journey with us and believe that outdoor learning in the early years also helps children develop a lifelong connection to nature and fosters a sense of environmental responsibility.

We hope you will agree the end result has been brilliant:

We also pleased to share from January 2025, we now offer both 15 and 30 hour Nursery provision. We also offer the option for families to top-up Nursery hours through

self-funding and we are currently growing our wrap around offer. Our Nursery is for children aged 3 and they can join us the term after their third birthday. It is a brilliant way for the children to become part of our small school community earlier and supports their transition to Reception well as we teach Nursery and Reception together in a mixed aged class.

Our Early Years class is taught by two experienced qualified teachers and we have a high adult-to-child ratio which enables us to provide a warm, nurturing and supportive environment. Our children have a broad range of learning opportunities from frequent Forest School sessions which are led by our qualified Forest School Leader as well as cooking and shared reading with the older children.

We are warmly welcoming families to come and look around our school looking for a Nursery place in September 2025. If you would like to find out more or come for a tour, please get in touch: 01442 255734 or admin@greatgaddesden.herts.sch.uk

Matt Beach- Headteacher





Gaddesden Row JMI School

We have come to the end of a very busy half term at Gaddesden Row. The children

have enjoyed exploring the world of superheroes, intrepid explorers and the Vikings through their current topics.

During Children's Mental Health Week, whilst exploring the theme Know Yourself, Grow Yourself, the children have enjoyed having the opportunity to take moments out of the day to reflect, to help get to know themselves and to perform acts of kindness to help grow themselves. We have all had great success in our mental health activities. The children especially enjoyed the non-uniform day and having the opportunity to wear something that makes them feel good about themselves.

As part of Safer Internet Day, the children looked at what is meant by a scam - where someone tries to trick somebody else to get something from them. They then looked at different scenarios and discussed what clues they could find that tell us it is a scam and how to respond in each situation. They explored how being scammed might make you feel and the emotions you could experience. The children in Y2, 3, 4, 5 and 6 participated in the BBC Safer Internet Day live lesson. They learned about the importance of keeping personal information private, how to keep safe online, where and how to report concerns and understand that people sometimes behave differently online. The children also participated in some follow-up activities, including looking at emails and deciding whether

they are likely to be phishing emails or not, and creating the strongest possible passwords.

Our PTA organised a very successful non-uniform and crazy hair day to celebrate Valentine's Day. The children thoroughly enjoyed wearing the clothes that they love and showing off their crazy hairstyles.

Next month, we will be celebrating 'World Book Day.' This year's theme is 'Read Your Way', encouraging children and young people to discover reading on their terms. Children sometimes feel like reading is something they have to do, rather than something they want to do. We will be exploring lots of different ways to make reading fun.

For any more information or to discuss spaces within the school, visit our website <https://www.gaddesdenrow.herts.sch.uk> or call the School on 01582 840376. Miss Smith, the headteacher, and her team will be delighted to help.

Miriam Barrow - Co-Chair Governor, Gaddesden Row JMI School



POTTEN END FROG AND TOAD GROUP

Volunteers urgently needed

The frogs, toads and newts from our village pond are having a harder and harder time each year.

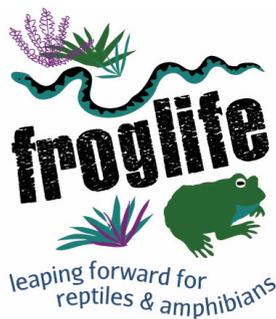
They need to live for most of the year in our gardens, churchyard and woodland, feeding mostly on slugs, but then return to the pond during February and March to breed.

Many years ago that journey was pretty simple but, now that the pond is surrounded by three busy roads, a lot of creatures are hit by traffic and are injured or die.

We patrol in groups of two and three on mild, wet evenings from mid-February to end March, with hi vis, gloves, a bucket and a torch, and transport across the road as many as we can. Numbers are crucial- basically the more volunteers we have the more amphibians we can save.

Could you spare any time to help us? Training is provided and you will be paired up with an experienced volunteer at first to show you the ropes. You can help as many or as few times as you like and start can each session anytime between dusk and around 9pm.

Please contact pollymercer4@gmail.com.



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Who doesn't love an amphibian- frog, toad or newt?

You may have spotted one or two recently as they come out of their semi hibernation to make their way to still water- ponds, lakes, canals, sometimes even puddles- for breeding. Most of the year they spend their time on land, in gardens, allotments, field edges, woodland margins looking for food.

They are best seen at night with a hand torch; frogs and toads are most active at a pond edge February/March and newts under the water from February until May. They may also be seen moving about and feeding on warmer evenings in our gardens.

Sadly many of the larger habitats in which frogs, toads and newts thrive have disappeared, as we build on more and more of 'their spaces' and get rid of areas of scrubland, hedgerows, heathland, grassland and ponds. They are highly vulnerable to even small-scale damage to their habitats, and consequently their populations in the UK are getting smaller and smaller. As with many of our native wild animals if we don't actively intervene, eventually, they will be gone forever.

But what can we do about it?

Making small changes to our gardens can encourage frogs, toads and newts to seek refuge there.

Dig a pond. Amphibians need ponds in which to lay their eggs- if you can make a

pond that would make a huge difference. Choose a sunny spot, away from overhanging trees and include a shallow area so that frogs and froglets can get out easily. Fill with rainwater and stock the pond with a mixture of native aquatic plants, including floating oxygenators, to help the water stay clear and to provide food for resident pond creatures.

If you don't have much space no problem, a sunken washing up bowl or child's outgrown rigid paddling pool/sandpit, filled with rainwater and a few pond plants would do nicely.

Make a log pile. Placing logs in piles around your garden can provide excellent daytime refuges for foraging amphibians.

Don't be too tidy. Leave some wilder areas in your garden to provide cover for wintering amphibians and the insects they eat.

Volunteer for an amphibian conservation organisation. A fantastic way to meet like-minded people, get some outdoor exercise and help to restore habitats for local wildlife.

Join a local amphibian patrol. Amphibians have a strong migration instinct and often need to cross busy roads to get to a pond to breed. Potten End Frog and Toad Group would love you to join them on one or two evenings in March and help us to assist these splendid creatures get back safely to the village pond. Under 18s are welcome under supervision of an adult.



Polly Squire

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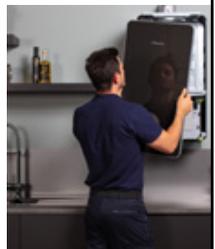
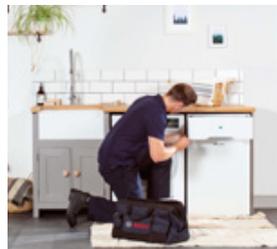


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March

Lucy Chappell	4 th	16
Riley Florido	9 th	16
Joseph Hollick	27 th	10

We try to keep an up to date list of birthdays. If anyone wants to add names to our list or knows of people who have moved away and could perhaps have their names removed please contact The Editor.

richard@richardcollis.com

Names are normally removed when the person becomes 18, but we can include 'special' birthdays for any age.



Join us for Open Farm Sunday at Gaddesden Home Farm (HP2 6EZ) on 8th June 2025

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Walter Nind

An amazing story of a Gaddesden Row man who was forced to build the Thailand-Burma railway and survived an attack by an elephant, as well as other medical misfortunes.

Walter Nind was born in Brackley, Northamptonshire on 29th May 1921. He was one of seven sons and one daughter to Ernest and Margaret Nind. At some point in time the family moved to Gaddesden Row with an address recorded in 1939 as 5 Ballingdon Cottages, Gaddesden Row. (I'm not sure where this address is) Shortly after the outbreak of the war, he enlisted and became Walter Nind No. 885131 of the 5th Battalion Beds and Herts Regiment, known to his mates as Wally.

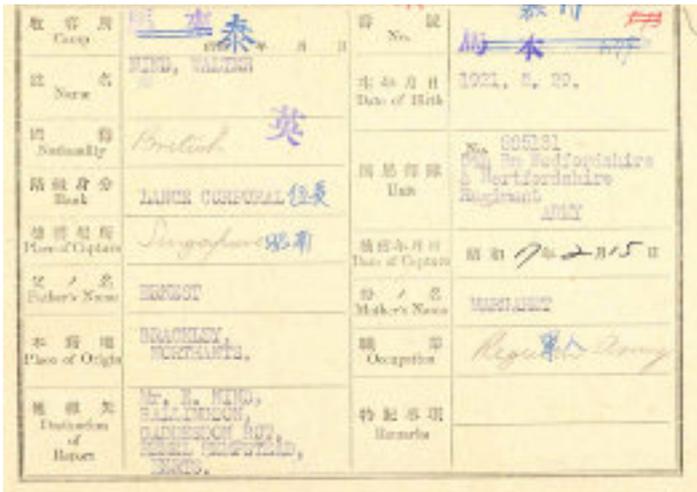
After a few months of training for fighting in desert conditions, his battalion received orders to proceed to Liverpool, where they were to embark on a ship heading for North Africa. Due to the presence of enemy submarines in the Mediterranean, the voyage would be via Cape Town and the Red Sea. Plans changed after the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbour and the ship was diverted to Singapore, arriving there on 29th Jan 1942. They had little opportunity to engage in any action as the Allied Forces surrendered two weeks later on 15th Feb 1942. Churchill described the fall of Singapore as "the worst disaster and largest capitulation in British history." Walter was one of about 80,000 British, Indian, Australian, and local troops becoming prisoners of war, joining the 50,000 taken in Malaya. But this was only just the beginning of their ordeal.

Walter and many of the captured men were



detained in the large Changi POW camp in Singapore and from here many were sent to work on the infamous Thailand-Burma railway. Australian surgeon Edward 'Weary' Dunlop was also amongst the captured and mentioned Walter in his war diaries, so I can describe the medical problems that he developed. Walter suffered encephalitis in Changi in May 1942. This is an uncommon but serious condition in which the brain becomes swollen, sometimes due to an infection. It can be life threatening and requires urgent treatment in hospital. Wally, however, wasn't in the modern NHS and conditions in the camp hospital were extremely poor. Nevertheless, Walter survived!

He then left Changi on 1st November 1942 to arrive at a POW camp in Tarsau in December 1942. Tarsau is now known as Nam Tok. This was used by the Japanese as both a staging camp for POWs moving north to work on railway construction and as a base hospital. 15,000 sick passed through the hospital. 806 died there. Walter was one of those sick when he caught diphtheria in December 1942. Diphtheria is a highly contagious infection that affects the nose and throat, sometimes obstructing the airways, and also the skin. It is a very serious condition and has a significant mortality even with current treatments. However, Wally wasn't in a modern NHS hospital getting



Walters Japanese prisoner record showing his Gaddesden Row address.

current treatments. He was treated as best they could in open sided tent full of insects and limited medication. Despite this, he survived!

The following month, January 1943, Walter also caught malaria. Malaria is a serious infection spread by mosquitoes. If it's not diagnosed and treated quickly, you can die from it. However, treatment and medication were hard to get, but still, Walter survived!

Having beaten these deadly tropical diseases, what could possibly go wrong next.

On the 9th March 1943, Wally was now back working on the railway. He had just finished a meal of rice and jungle stew and was returning to the camp cookhouse to wash his mess tin. He suddenly heard a crashing sound coming from the jungle. He looked to see a large bull elephant rushing towards him. He ran, trying to escape but tripped on a root. The elephant picked him up with his trunk and pulled him onto his sawn-off tusks and threw him to the floor. Other soldiers rushed towards the elephant banging their mess tins and shouting. They managed to frighten the elephant away. However, Walter had suffered large tusk-inflicted wounds in the left thigh, his lower back at the base of his spine, but

worse of all, a deep penetrating tusk wound on his bottom. The injuries were bleeding badly, drenching the other soldiers who carried him to the hospital. Wally saw a lump of his flesh sticking to his blood-soaked shorts as they cut them off. They operated on his leg injury but could only clean up his missing part of his buttock. Nine months later, in Nov. 1943, the surgeon, Weary Dunlop operated and packed the large wound cavity with gauze and by mid February 1944, the wound was starting to heal. A few months later, it had almost completely healed. Despite all this, Walter survived the war and now had the nickname of 'Sabu' after the actor in the 1937 film Elephant boy.

Japan signed the surrender agreement on 2nd September 1945 and Walter was sent to Rangoon for repatriation and finally arrived in Liverpool on 9th October 1945. We lose track of Walter then, but it's believed he moved to Surrey after the war and died in 1999. They make them tough in Gaddesden Row.

Our thanks to Bernard Lamb for the story and to Malcolm Stodell for the medical information.

In Search for a Childhood Home

The World Wide Web is an amazing thing. As you know, I live in Water End. My next door neighbour was away in Barbados on his holidays when he received an email from his cousin in Australia. The email described a lady in America. Are you still with me? She had put a posting on the Hemel Hempstead Facebook page about my house!

Madelyn Pruitt Manning , was trying to trace where she lived when she was little. She now lives in New Market, Madison County, Alabama, which according to the modern day internet, is not much bigger than Great Gaddesden. Here is her story.

John Lowrie

I have a really neat story to tell of my search for a home my family lived in when I was a small child. When I was 4 years old my family lived in England for a couple of years. My dad (Art Pruitt) was in the United States Air Force and was stationed at Bovington in Bushey in the late 1950's. Initially we lived in a house in Bushey but I have no memory of that house. However, with the help of a postcard I have that my Mom sent to my Grandma in Alabama, some wonderful people on the Bushey Memories & History Facebook group helped me to locate this house based on the address on the postcard. My brother Steve who is 4 years older than me confirmed the house they found was in fact the house we lived in. We didn't live there for long because my Mom was convinced the house was haunted. My family consisted of



my Dad, Mom, older brothers Steve and Glenn and my younger sister Heather. My siblings and I were all under the age of 8. Mom told us stories of seeing the apparition of a man in the doorway of her bedroom on more than one occasion. This was a 2 story house and Mom also said she would find things from the kitchen in a pantry on the upper floor on the top shelf.

Frequently a paring knife would be there and once she found a mug of beer. She knew us kids were all too small to even reach the top shelf of the pantry so we couldn't have put things in there. She had a local vicar bless the house but strange things continued to happen. So Mom and Dad made the decision to move. So we moved to Hemel Hempstead to Oak Cottage at Water End. Oak Cottage was a very old house. I have since learned the original part of the house dates back to 1640. I remember my parents saying the walls were insulated with hay and the doorframes were very low throughout the house. My brother told me the refrigerator would not fit through the back door and had to be brought into the house through French doors in the living room and had to stay there because it was too tall to go through the kitchen doorway. I don't remember this fact but I do remember



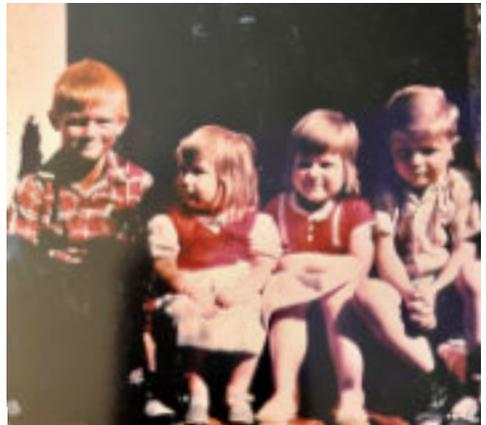
Madelyn and Jack Manning (my husband) at our farm in New Market, AL current day. We own 40 acres and a 100 year old house where my husband grew up.



Madelyn and Glenn in the backyard garden at Oak Cottage where we spent most of our time. I am not sure whose house is in the background. The backside of the picture my mom wrote Oak Cottage garden.



This was in the living room at Oak Cottage taken at Christmas 1958 - Glenn Pruitt (6 yrs old - he died in 2014 from glioblastoma - he was born in England during dad's first tour) - Madelyn Pruitt (4 yrs old) - Steve Pruitt (8 yrs old)



This picture was taken right before we shipped back to the United States to Tampa, FL McDill Air Force Base in late 1958. Steve, Heather, Madelyn and Glenn

the garden in the back yard. We played in that back yard as much as possible when it wasn't raining. And I remember our next door neighbors Mr. & Mrs. Penney. They were an elderly English couple and had a goldfish pond in their back yard. I remember

them inviting us to tea frequently. For us kids this was a real treat. We don't have any pictures of the actual outside of the house but we do have some in the garden and a few in the living room at Christmas. Before we came back to the states my Mom painted a picture

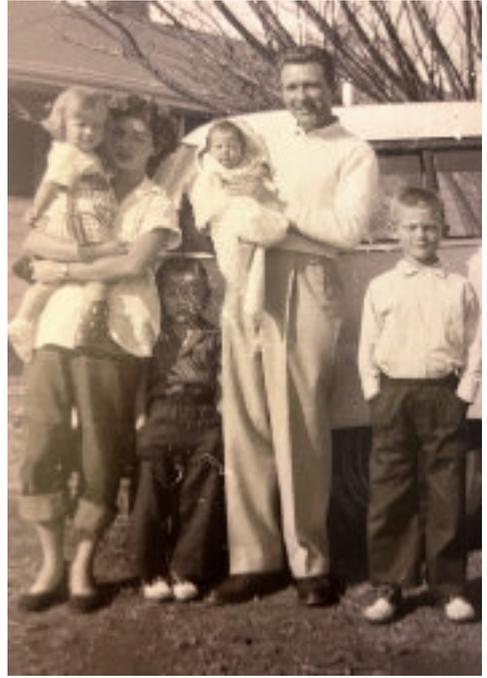


Madelyn in the backyard of Oak Cottage

of the back of the house. So one day recently I decided I wanted to see if I could find this house by using the internet. We lived there in 1958 so 67 years had gone by since we were tenants there. But I figured if it

was already several hundred years old when we lived there, it might still exist.

So of course I went back to Facebook and at the suggestion of several on the Bushey group I joined Hemel Hempstead Remembered posting my story and the picture my Mom painted. I also had the address of the house from medical records I got from the Air Force. And much to my surprise I got a response from a wonderful lady who knew exactly where the house is because her best friend lived in it in 1950. In her post she mentioned the next door neighbors Mr & Mrs. Penney (in my post I did not mention their names). As soon as I read her post I knew it was genuine because I remembered their names when I saw them and my brother confirmed they were in fact the Penney's. I had so many people trying to help me find this house. Then I got a post from someone who knew the current owners and notified them I was trying to find this house. Next thing I know I am messaging back and forth with the current owner. And may I say she has been so gracious by sending me current



This picture was taken right before we sailed to England. We were living in Montgomery, AL at the time. My dad was stationed at Maxwell Air Force Base. In the picture is my mom Dottie and she is holding me. My Brother Glenn is standing beside her, my dad Art is holding my little sister Heather and my brother Steve is standing by my dad. A 5th child (Dawn - she died in 2012 of cirrhosis) was born in 1960 in Summerville, SC.

pictures of her home and telling me some of the history. My brother and I were just thrilled to be able to reconnect with some of our childhood past. Through the years I have been able to visit many of the places we lived during my Dad's time in the military and found several of the houses we lived in. You can't imagine how much pleasure this has given me to relive a piece of my childhood. I doubt I will ever get to visit this home but at least I know Oak Cottage is still there and loved by its' current owners.

Madelyn Pruitt Manning.

Learn Laugh, Live



2025 has started with wealth of activities for our U3A. Our monthly meetings

have been very popular, January's 'Introduction to AI' was really informative whilst February saw us wander down memory lane as we listened to music by a number of artists as we followed the history of the Beatles. In March we have a talk about the events surrounding the death of PC Yvonne Fletcher. Such a diverse range of subjects, each captivating and thought provoking.

At the very end of January the Railway Group were treated to a talk about the Railways in the Stirling area of Scotland and in February we looked at photographs of trains in the USA as we followed the holiday adventures of one of our members.

Poetry Writing group wrote about a Key and each member explored a different aspect.

Creative writing thought about a Storm and once again demonstrated their individuality.

The Industrial History Groups January talk followed a journey down the Grand Union Canal and was illustrated with a range of photographs and details about the history. February's meeting was

entitled ...The first radio transmitter and receiver, and the part they played in rescuing those that survived the Titanic disaster". A fascinating talk which kept the group enthralled for two hours.

Rug making continues and we have welcomed some new members keen to learn the old craft of rag ragging which some of us remember from our childhood.

Bus trippers travelled to Potters Bar where we visited the museum which has an interesting display on Potters Bar in WWII. It is an easy journey from Hemel only requiring one change at St Albans. Our March trip is to the Trenchard Museum at RAF Halton which once again can be reached with one change of buses, this time at Aylesbury.

All our other groups are continuing, a huge range from Badminton to Sewing Bee and Mathematics to Latin and many more beside. Certainly something for everyone retired or semi retired.

New members are always welcome to join us. More details on our website at u3adacorum.org

Jane Campbell

Gaddesden Row boys restore Bus Shelter

Barbara Colm sent us this clipping from the Hemel Gazette from 2006. The photo shows Clifford Parkes and Ricky Maunders who's

parents still live in the village. One of the other boys, Ben Lambert is no longer in the area.

1981 25 years ago

THE Cold War hit Hemel Hempstead this week after an ice cream seller "froposed" on a rival's patch.

A report read: "Trafic residents of Burnhams Road, Hemel Hempstead, had to turn up the volume on their TV sets to drown the noise of three ice cream salesmen battling it out."

It added: "The chilly atmosphere was whipped up by two salesmen taking exception to a third van arriving on their patch, explained Edward Lewis, who was trying to watch Cransmade when the battle started."

Mr Lewis said: "The chimes were blaring out and making a horrible noise, and so I went up to him and told him to shut it off."

The driver refused to get out of his van which had been hemmed in by his own opponents and urged Mr Lewis to call the police.

Mr Lewis said: "This chap was obviously a leech of some kind of arrangement between ice cream sellers, and started the chimes going as a kind of distress signal."

By the time the police arrived the



GIMME SHELTER: The friends from Little Gaddesden in front of the restored bus shelter "ambushing" vans had disappeared.

A YOUTH Shelter was on the horizon for a group of civic minded Gaddesden Row boys this week.

The lads had taken on the responsibility of restoring a vandalised bus shelter to a better than new state.

In recognition of this Great Gaddesden Parish Council said it was now willing to help locate a hall as a village for conversion into a youth centre.

The youths, Clifford Parkes and David Thomas and a group of friends spent an entire day fixing the shelter.

Cliff Collis Thomas said: "Everybody is absolutely delighted with the marvellous job they did."




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These 10mins can change your whole day and thus your whole life if you do it consistently.

2) **Diet** - Fuelling your body with nutritious food that makes you feel good - built around lean protein, fruit & veg.

Less focus on trying to eat as little as possible, more on what can I eat to help me thrive physically and mentally.

Rather than always focusing on what you can take out of your diet, more on what you can add in to make you feel your best.

& bonus - when you focus on fuelling yourself not restricting yourself, you'll make better choices, feel fuller and be less likely to turn to junk food. Simply doing this, will put most people into a calorie deficit without even having to think about it.

3) **Social connection, laughter & purpose** - This is often missed out but is so important! Most people leave this to chance but if you

work from home or train at home and don't see many people day to day you often miss these important things.

You may have to adjust your life to get more social connection, laughter and purpose!

You'll feel a lot better for it.

4) **Movement outside** - Ideally in the daylight, but just simply getting out for a walk has such a huge benefit to your mood.

5) **Sleep** - I know this can be hard and most people who struggle with sleep are doing their best. Be as consistent as you can with bed time & wake times.

6) **Exercise** - the ultimate mood booster! There are many reasons I exercise, but right up there is the benefit to my mood! it never fails.

Focus on how you can get these elements into your life consistently.

Fat loss is a lot easier when you have this foundation.

Most people jump in with no foundation and just try to create, usually, a HUGE deficit and wonder why they keep 'failing'

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February Parkrun Update



Now that I've completed another parkrun challenge, this time the Obsessive Challenge (complete 50 parkrun events in a calendar year), there has been time to turn to another resolution, to volunteer at parkrun more. So



together with the wife, we recently volunteered at the Gadebridge parkrun helping to support the community that provides these free running events for adults & juniors. While the wife was handing out finish tokens, I was barcode-scanning.

After the Run Director's briefing, all the participants set off & we watched their progress as they completed the first lap of Gadebridge Park, encouraging everyone through, before taking up our positions ready to meet everyone at the finish after their second lap.

I was a bit surprised to see the first finisher come in at a very rapid 18:31, crazy-fast for the conditions at this time of year, just ahead of a visiting 17-yr old tourist from Australia, then we progressed through all 140 runners, 'jeffers' (run/walkers) & walkers right up to a family finishing in 68 minutes. However, they didn't finish last, as that is always the role of the tail-walker, another volunteer whose function it is to stay right at the back

of the field & will always be the last to go through the finish funnel, & as is commonly heard around the parkrun community, everyone finished ahead of those who stayed at



home on their couch!

The best bit about barcode scanning for me was being able to chat to all the runners & fellow volunteers (including some DofE participants). This reminded me of my own running journey, remembering that running had never appealed when I was still working, even for the annual police fitness test - as I had much preferred cycling, right up until my accident that left me with a broken collarbone, but that's another story. On retirement the wife had been completing the 'Couch-to-5K' program, so she wanted to complete this with a timed 5-km run, parkrun is ideally set up for this & for anyone else out there on the 'Couch-to-5K', I can only encourage you to give parkrun a go - I've now completed 88 different parkrun events & without exception, all of these have been welcoming & inclusive, there is always a 'first-timers briefing' & you won't regret it.

Saturday 9am is now the fixed point of my weekly schedule & parkrun events have provided me with added motivation, accountability & some fun challenges that have led to so many other encounters & events. February's parkrun tourism has taken in events at Oaklands College, Maidenhead, Bedfont Lakes, Crane Park & Sixfields Upton (Northampton), all helping me building up to the Berko Half-Marathon on 2nd March, where I'm looking forward to hopefully finishing ahead of my former colleague, the Berkhamsted Neighbourhood Team Sergeant.

Next month I will hopefully be running at altitude in Colorado, ideal training preparation for the Norfolk Marathon! Lastly, thank you to all fellow passing runners who have been warmly waving (or gesticulating) at me in Gaddesden Row.

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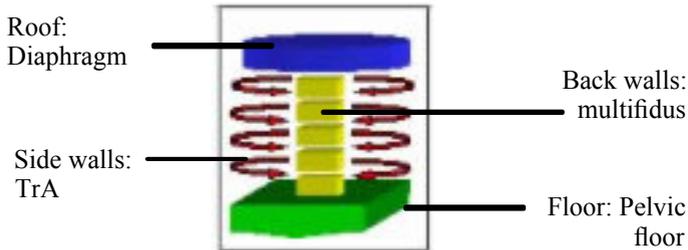
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Are You Clued Into Your Core?

Core stability is basically a measure of how well you can control the postural muscles surrounding your spine. These muscles make up your 'natural corset' and are situated quite deep in the body.

on track, Pilates is also focused around training your core stability and posture. This is an important part of your rehabilitation following a back injury.

As a Chartered Physiotherapist of 39 years



The muscles which make up this corset are:

- Transversus Abdominus
- Pelvic floor
- Multifidus

The Transversus Abdominus stretches across the lower abdomen to the spine and the Multifidus are attached between the vertebra (back bones). The Pelvic Floor attaches from your pubic bone to your tail bone, like an underneath sling. Your diaphragm is your big breathing muscle. Together they work to give you your Core Stability.

Following a back injury, the ability of your core muscles to function effectively can be reduced or inhibited by pain. Therefore, it is essential to retrain your core stability muscles thoroughly to help reduce the chances of a reoccurrence of pain. Whilst restoring mobility and embarking on a Rehab programme with your Physio/ Osteopath or Chiropractor, is often Step 1 to getting back

and a Rehab Pilates Teacher of 14 years, I am well placed to guide your rehab onward. Rehab after Rehab if you like. Guided and prescriptive exercises for you, either in a local class, or 1:1 setting, can help you further REGAIN your core stability and mobility and RESTORE your confidence in being able to get moving again.

If you have had or suffer from back pain and want to stop yourself from becoming, or being, one of the statistics of re occurring back pain, why not consider Pilates as part of your commitment to a healthier you.

For more information, or to contact me, visit www.stjudesclinic.com, or email me at moira@stjudesclinic.com

Moira D'Arcy Chartered Physiotherapist and Rehab Pilates Teacher.

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Cultivating with Clive

Spring is in the air. The soil is warming up, the days are getting longer and Spring officially starts on the 20th of this month. So March is a time to get cracking.

With the warmer weather the garden pests will be on the increase. The general thinking on garden pests is to leave them alone to help biodiversity. I am all for this, however, if you have nurtured some young seedlings or your favourite rose is covered in green or black fly you might want to eradicate them. I use crunched garlic and black pepper boiled up, liquidised, sieved and then when cool, spray on the affected plants. Or you could spray on diluted washing up liquid, or just remove them manually. Slugs are also starting to get active so you might want to leave them as

food for the frogs, birds or hedgehogs. Alternatively I tend to use copper tape wrapped around the rim of my pots. This deters the slimy little blighters from a free meal on my beloved hostas.



I leave my biennials and perennials over the winter but now is the time to cut them back to encourage new growth. You can also take



cuttings later in the month. I increase my dahlia stock by cutting the new shoots with a sharp knife and placing the cuttings in a mixture of peat free compost and perlite or vermiculite as a



50/50 mix then cover them with a plastic bag.

Now is a good time to prepare the runner bean beds. I dig a trench roughly a spade's depth or a

foot in old money and 30 cm in new. I then place old newspaper in the bottom of the trench (this will keep the roots moist throughout the growing season). I then back fill the trench with a mixture of well rotted farmyard manure and compost from my compost bins. Talking of compost bins now is the time to empty the well rotted vegetation you have been composting and spread it on your borders. This will act as a mulch and the

worms will drag it down into the soil so improving it.

Clive Hill



THINGS TO DO IN THE GARDEN

IN MARCH

- Thoroughly clean the greenhouse and cold frames.
- Pick off dead or browning daffodil heads.
- Plant early potatoes.
- Sow cabbages and broad beans.
- Plant onion sets.
- Repair lawns or reseed if necessary.



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National Animal Welfare Trust

Hi everyone! Been a long time since I've contributed to our little magazine, but I thought I could share some nice stories about the animals I work with at NAWT.



Hobbs and Bobbie are an inseparable pair, they are both very shy cats, preferring each other's company to the company of people. They've been in our care for over 3 months now, and

have been very scared the whole time. Recently I've been making an effort to spend time with them - sitting with them and talking to them during my lunch breaks, and slowly but surely they are getting more used to me being around (well, Bobbie is anyway), and you can tell this through the photos I take! Bobbie's eyes aren't as wide in more recent photos, and she chose to move closer to me when a member of the public walked past her kennel! Unfortunately Hobbs is still very nervous, but I'm making it my mission to make them comfortable in my presence!



Bernie is an elderly chap, he may always have a very grumpy face - but in reality he's a sweetheart! He loves to have a cuddle, especially after he's eaten one of his favourite fishy dinners! I was

thinking of fostering him at one point - but I don't think I would have been able to part with him! He's truly the perfect man!



Echo is a cheeky boy, he's an ex racing greyhound, he currently has a small muscle injury, and keeping him calm proves very difficult! He's such an excitable boy, when you enter his kennel he playbaws and has a quick zoomie, before begging for a quick snack! He's recently had to say goodbye to his best friend Duncan, and he will soon be saying goodbye to his other friends Alma & Malu!



Alma is little old lady greyhound who came to us a few weeks before Christmas, and her story is quite sad, she came in with her partner, Lenny, but unfortunately after our vets checked him over

we realised that he had an inoperable tumour, so Alma had to say goodbye to her Friend. Despite her sad start, she has a fosterer lined up to care for her whilst we sort out her medical issues, and she will even have her own foster brother (who she already adores!) She's such a sweetheart, although; she can be very cheeky when you try to give her her medication! She's currently on a very strict exercise plan, to try and build up the muscles in her legs and she gets stronger every day!

There's been a lot of animals going home recently, and whilst it's always lovely to send them off to their new homes, it's always a little sad to see them go! However, there's always more animals that need us, and at the moment there's a lot of new faces at NAWT that I'm sure everyone will fall in love with.

Emma Badcock

Birds of Great Gaddesden

Ducks. There are over 130 species in the world, 40 of which have been recorded in the UK and 10 of those species have made it to Great Gaddesden. Ducks vary massively, some live on freshwater, some on the sea. Some Quack, others whistle. Some nest in holes in trees, others on the ground or even down a burrow. Migratory species of duck can travel thousands of miles each year at elevations of 20,000ft, whilst others may spend all their life on the same village pond.

My month started with a trip to see a very special duck, on the Island of Texel off of the north coast of Holland. News had broken earlier in the week that a Spectacled Eider had been sighted. An absolute mega rarity anywhere away from Alaska and its wintering grounds in the Bering Sea, it was a species I just had to see.



Mandarin Duck

I departed Gaddesden Row just before 3am, Tawny owls were calling distantly as I loaded the car. I was soon headed to the Eurotunnel and before the sun had risen, I'd driven through France and into Belgium. A couple of Barns owls and Woodcock the only birds seen during these first few hours. By midday, I'd covered several hundred miles and I'd arrived at a ferry terminal on the north coast of Holland. After a short and tense wait, I boarded the boat and it was a swift sail across

to the island where I had everything crossed the bird would remain.

After alighting the ferry, it was a ten-minute high-speed blast in the car along the east coast of the Island to where the bird been seen the previous day. I ditched the car at the side of the road and climbed a steep bank to view the sea, after a quick scan with my telescope, I picked up the bird. It was a massive relief to see it and boy was it worth the journey (much easier than going to Alaska). I had crippling views, it would often disappear under water for a short time, before returning to the surface with a huge crab in its bill. Thousands of birders from all over Europe had travelled to see this magnificent bird and at the time of writing it still remains.

The journey home gave me a chance to think about what rare ducks could turn up in the Parish. A Garganey on the Gade? A Pochard on the ponds? Who knows what could turn up, I'll keep on looking!

The end of next month should see the arrival of our first spring migrants if the weather conditions are right. In recent years Swallows and Wheatears have been recorded towards the end of the month when a southerly airflow arrived, whilst Oystercatcher and Shelduck have dropped in after periods of heavy rain.

At the water meadows a small flock of meadow pipit remain as do the 3 wintering Stonechats. A Barn Owl is also seen most mornings as are the Kingfishers of which I have seen 3 separate birds on occasions. A few Yellowhammers have also returned from their wintering grounds as have a pair of Reed Bunting. A couple of pairs of Canada Geese have also returned to breed as have a few pairs of Mandarin Duck, hopefully they will return to Richard's nest boxes.



Stonechat

As the weather improves over the next few weeks, so should the birding. Keep your eyes peeled for anything unusual and as always send any questions or photos to georgemoreton92@gmail.com or alternatively join the WhatsApp group for all the latest sightings!

George Moreton



Spectacled Eider



Pochard

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Goodbye Winter, Welcome Spring

Looking ahead as I write this, the weather map predicts slightly warmer days but with still more rain to come, we are not out of the winter woods yet. We seem to have spent a great deal of time discussing whether it was the warmest, wettest, windiest day, month or year on record. Whatever the answer, it currently feels now, in mid-February that we have had enough of all this winter weather and could do with a bit more spring.



There is the beginning of a new growing year all around us. The snowdrops are well up and the daffodils are very nearly blooming. When you read this, I'm sure they will be looking wonderful. It turns out that there are around 20 different species of snowdrops and between 1,000 -2,500 different named varieties depending upon who you read! We have seen a fair number of them this year by visiting some excellent displays not too far away, we saw the gardens at Wimpole Estate near Cambridge, Eythrope House near Waddesden, and Bennington Lordship by Stevenage – this one is in the Herts edition of the National Garden Scheme which I'm sure most of you know. Carpets of snowdrops present a wonderful introduction of the spring to come.

We're not seeing much growth in the grass yet and the sheep are needing supplementary feeding most days. When there has been a sharp frost and the fields are white, the sheep are particularly vocal in their need for a proper breakfast to start the day.

The last few years we have been building up the flock and only sending the males to market. This has meant that a number of family groups have evolved. It is quite

remarkable to see the attachment of daughters to their mums as the flock grows. Although when settled, the sheep are quite independent and graze happily across the fields, when there is any indication of danger, intrusion or possibly, breakfast on offer, they quickly come together, and the family groups re-establish themselves. If they get separated, which happens occasionally when we can't get them all into the right field at the right time, all hell breaks loose if family groups get split up. We have just lost one of the oldest sheep, one of the Wiltshire Horns. These are the ones with the very short coat that moult all over the fields and don't need shearing. Her daughter has stayed alongside her during her decline and remained with her right until the end.

On the domestic side we are raring to go. We have just dug out a dozen troughs of old unproductive strawberries and chitted the potatoes. We are also finishing the hedge cutting from last year and apart from the vegetables ready to go in, we are adding a number of rose bushes to the beds. Its amazing how much can get done that we have been putting off, when we have one good day.

We have had many rodent friends joining us this winter. Mice have searched out every small opening into the barn and this had needed a great deal of silicone filler around the old beams to stop- their entry. A very large and glossy squirrel has taken up residence in the apex of the bottom barn and watches out to see when the bird feeder is refilled. There is then a wild flurry between the pigeons who are too large and heavy for the feeders but hang around underneath for any droppings; the sparrows who flock down and fight off any interlopers; and the squirrel who is currently chewing through anything that gets in its way. It is particularly skilled at widening the access hole in the hanging feeders and working its way into the large storage jar that holds the winter feed. We are on our third jar so far. As soon as the temperature rises, we will use expanding foam filler to block up the hole on the face of the barn where the squirrel gets in. And finally,

we also have rats. They have dug many tunnels under the chicken run and get into their feed. They do seem to coexist quite happily with the chickens as long as they get fed. But, there has been some real damage in the Barn. A rat got into the walls, decided that it needed a drink and chewed into the blue plastic water pipes. Perhaps sadly for them they opened up not the drinking water but the water heater pipes and so put the central heating out of order. However, it didn't get the best drinking water as there are lots of various chemicals in the system. No sign of the rats since the walls were opened up and the work done.

Perhaps a lesson or two here? We don't leave food about and will stick to this but if we do hear any noises in the walls we may react a little faster next time.

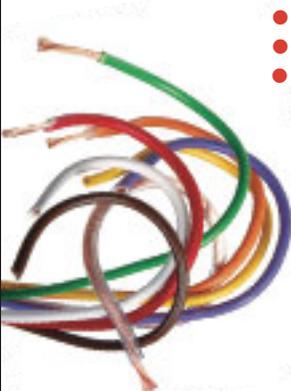
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March 29th

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HP1 3BY**

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Peter Rudelforth – Trumpet

He is a mainstay of the London jazz scene, playing with the Pasadena Roof Orchestra, Palm Court Theatre Orchestra, Temperance Seven, Charleston Chasers and the Piccadilly Dance Orchestra at London's Savoy Hotel. He was a member of Kenny Ball and his Jazzmen for twelve years and played many times with Mr. Acker Bilk and his Paramount Jazz Band and Chris Barber.

Ewan Bleach – Tenor Sax / Clarinet

Ewan Bleach is a clarinetist, saxophonist, pianist, singer, bandleader, composer, teacher and session musician based in London and specialising in the early styles of jazz, ragtime, blues and swing. Ewan leads the Cable Street

Rag Band and The Fleeting Paradise Orchestra.

Wesley Gibbens – Drums

Always in high demand on the UK jazz Scene, Wesley has toured with TJ for almost 15 years now and is known as one of the most swinging drummers around. He also plays all over the world with the Darius Brubeck Quartet.

Graham Hughes – Double Bass

Graham Hughes is a freelance jazz musician living in North London, playing the trombone, sousaphone, double bass, singing and on occasions also chromatic harmonica.

He has built a reputation internationally, most notably as a performer of the many styles of jazz that come under the umbrella of "Traditional Jazz" - the early New Orleans music of Louis Armstrong and Jelly Roll Morton and Duke Ellington.

John Watts

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Dates for your diary:

Mini First Aid
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Wed 5 March

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£30 per person, free parking

To book your place:

Email: Fran@minifirstaid.co.uk
Mobile: 07967 228986

If you can't make this session, then Fran will be holding identical sessions on Wed 30 April 2025 & Wed 28 May 2025

GG Parish Hall AGM
8pm - 9.30pm
Mon 7 April

Please join us for
Tea, Coffee, Biscuits
or a glass of wine or two



Anne: 07954 600234

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If you are looking for a venue to host a party, a regular club or something else, the Gaddesden Row Village Hall is a great space available for hire. The cost is only £15 per hour and has the capacity to stand 70 people and with the use of the fully fitted kitchen, garden and side room with quick Wi Fi too. Full terms & conditions can be found on our website or alternatively call Chris Hurt on 07738 106344.

<https://gaddesdenrow.square.site>

Gaddesden Row Village Hall
Easter/ Mother's Day Craft
Fair



Saturday 22 March 11 - 1pm at the Village
Hall

Hot cross buns and tea / coffee too

GADDESSEN ROW VILLAGE HALL COFFEE
MORNINGS
10 - 12 pm

Saturday 8 February 2025

Saturday 8 March 2025

Saturday 12 April 2025

Saturday 10 May 2025



Gaddesden Diary

Weekly Events

Mondays

7:45pm Chip Van Gaddesden Row Green

Tuesdays

9:00am Holy Communion Great Gaddesden Church

Wednesdays

9:30am Toddler and Baby Group / Coffee Gaddesden Row Village Hall

8:00pm Bellringing Great Gaddesden Church

Thursdays

10:00am Baby Sensory Great Gaddesden Parish Hall

Fridays

9:00am Walk and Talk Great Gaddesden Churchyard

10:00am Pilates Moira's Medicine in Movement Great Gaddesden Parish Hall

Saturdays

2:00pm Meditation Workshop in Temple Amaravati Buddhist Monastery

Sundays

10:30am Christian Spiritualists Church Group Great Gaddesden Parish Hall

11:00am Parish Communion (9th Cafe Church, 30th Family Service) Great Gaddesden Church

March Events

Sunday 2nd

9:30 - 3:30pm Berkhamsted Antique and Vintage Market Berkhamsted (see page 2)

Wednesday 5th

7:15pm Mini First Aid - First aid classes - see p36 Great Gaddesden Parish Hall

Thursday 6th

8:00pm Thursday Murder a Pint Club Crown & Sceptre

Saturday 8th

10:00am Coffee Morning Gaddesden Row Village Hall

Saturday 15th

9:15am County and Borough Councillor's Surgery Hemel Hempstead Garden Centre, Piper's Hill (check Facebook to confirm)

Thursday 20th

7:30pm HertsLynx service presentation Church Room, Potten End

Sunday 22nd

11:00 am - 1:00 pm Easter / Mother's Day Craft Fair Gaddesden Row Village Hall

Saturday 29th

7:30pm TJ's Dixieland Five Great Gaddesden Church

Save the Date

Saturday 5th April Quiz Night Gaddesden Row Village Hall

Saturday 12th April Coffee Morning Gaddesden Row Village Hall

Saturday 10th May Coffee Morning Gaddesden Row Village Hall

Bourne End Rail Crash

With the nights drawing out inexorably it surely won't be long before we have days when that reluctant yellow orb in the sky becomes visibly more consistent, and we start to wish for balmy late spring nights when we can again sit out in the garden and sip our lime-juice and gin, while listening to the six-o'clock news (with apologies to John Betjeman, *A Subaltern's Love-Song*). Of course, other cocktails are available, but on those still nights our idle thoughts might be interrupted by a kind of rushing, mechanical noise of an Avanti or London Northwestern train hitting the crossovers between the fast and slow lines at Bourne End junction.

Just checked on an internet source that tracks trains every inch of the way, and the 12:02 London Euston to Chester, operated by an Avanti 5-coach Evero will be averaging 100 mph between Apsley and Tring over these very crossovers.

In actual use, do not expect a change from slow to fast lines or vice versa to be taken at anything over 60 mph, but on the night of 30th September 1945 – just 28 days after the end of WW2 – for an overnight Perth to London sleeping car train, the crossover limit was just 15 miles an hour. This express was due to be crossed from the fast to the slow lines at Bourne End due to engineering work being carried out in the Watford tunnels. Inexplicably, on this fine and sunny day, the experienced engine driver kept his locomotive's speed up to 60 mph, with disastrous results. Derailment occurred with the first six carriages falling down the embankment, with 43 deaths and a further 124 injured, about half of these seriously, all out of the 700 passengers packed onto the train.

The alarm was perversely raised by a USAAF



pilot who had just taken off from RAF Bovington and saw the accident unfold from the air. American airmen stationed at Bovington were summoned to the scene and were joined by ambulance crews from St. John's Ambulance. So rapid the response, inside half-an-hour, that first casualties were admitted to the West Hertfordshire Hospital just over 1 hour since the time of the crash.

Survivors were sustained by sandwiches and sausage rolls that the residents of Bourne End were consuming as part of a VJ (Victory over Japan) party they were holding that very night, supported by the Berkhamsted WVS with copious amounts of tea (as ever in a British disaster).

The above photograph, which is attributed to the Dacorum Heritage Trust Ltd, shows the wreckage in the aftermath of the crash, with a US marked truck in attendance.

So, whether it is a lime-juice and gin (a la Betjeman) or a tonic and gin (after Billy Joel) that you are sipping and you hear those modern-day trains rushing between London and the Midlands and North West, give a thought to those poor souls who lost their opportunity to participate in a world without war some 80 years' ago this coming September, and raise your glass in a toast to the freedom of today that they fought for, but succumbed in the first month after peace was declared.

James Milne

Update from Victoria Collins MP

I've now reached just over six months as the MP for the brand new seat of Harpenden & Berkhamsted - with Great Gaddesden right at the heart of the constituency. I've learnt a lot along the way and built a great team to help work for local people and campaign on the issues that matter.

The proposed expansion of Luton Airport continues to be a major concern for local residents with the decision extended until April. I have consistently opposed this expansion due to its environmental impact as well as the lack of clear evidence supporting economic growth claims.

Areas like Great Gaddesden would face increased aircraft noise and disruption from Luton Airport's expansion. Additionally, the extra 13 million passengers per year wouldn't just mean more noise—it would also put immense pressure on our already overstretched transport infrastructure. Recently, I took the opportunity in Parliament to challenge the Government on this issue. I pressed Ministers to ensure that any future airport expansion decisions take into account the advice of the Climate Change Committee, which has warned of significant environmental consequences. I also emphasised the need for a UK-wide capacity management framework before any further expansion plans proceed. This remains a fight I will not give up on, and I will continue pushing for our local communities to be heard.

Our local chalk streams, including the River Gade, are some of the most precious natural habitats in the country. These rare ecosystems are under severe threat due to pollution, mismanagement, and sewage discharges.

Recently, I submitted a question to the Department for Environment, Food and

Rural Affairs about Thames Water's continued sewage discharges into our chalk streams. Disappointingly, I am still awaiting a response, but I will not stop pushing for accountability and action.

Furthermore, I joined my fellow Liberal Democrat MPs in supporting the Zero Hour campaign for the Climate and Nature Bill, which seeks to address the full scale of the climate crisis. I also secured a Presentation Bill calling for a blue flag status to protect our rivers and chalk streams.

The protection of our local chalk streams is an issue close to my heart, and it's something I will never stop fighting for, as these unique ecosystems are vital to both our environment and community in Great Gaddesden.

In other issues, the Government's refusal to offer fair compensation to WASPI women is nothing short of a disgrace. The findings of the Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman were clear—there was a serious failure in communication about changes to the state pension age, leaving millions of women struggling with financial uncertainty through no fault of their own.

Since the Government announced their refusal to pay compensation, I have co-signed a letter from my party's Work and Pensions spokesperson urging them to reconsider.

I have also signed an Early Day Motion pushing for fair compensation and have personally questioned Ministers in Parliament about this issue. Local women have written to me about this, and I'm sure there are many more suffering in silence, feeling the impact of the changes to the state pension age. WASPI women have waited long enough, and I will continue to hold the Government to account for their shameful inaction.

From Terry Douris - your County Councillor

Herts Lynx service

A quick reminder that the manager of the HertsLynx service will be at Potten End Parish Council on 20th March. Do get along if you have any questions. Details are on page 38.

All change in local government – Part 2

We have now heard from the government minister setting out the deadlines and details for the re-organisation of Local Government. Hertfordshire which includes the County Council, the 10 districts and boroughs and the Police and Crime Commissioner has created a task force to co-ordinate our response to the Minister and we now know that he expects our initial proposals to be submitted to him by 21st March 2025 with the full proposals submitted by 28th November. This is an incredibly short time frame for such a major undertaking especially when you consider the complexity of services which are provided by the various bodies across the county. Whatever proposals we put forward the final decision will be taken by the Secretary of State for Housing Communities and Local Government.

A unitary must cover a population of at least 500,000 residents and Hertfordshire has 1.2m residents which means that the county could be split into 2 authorities, or it could remain as one. Whatever the outcome there will still need to be local services that our residents rely upon and how these are delivered will need careful planning. Hertfordshire County Council is committed to providing the best possible services for all our

residents. Parish and Town Councils are not included in this re-organisation.

Supporting the community

You will have seen my requests for local groups to apply for funding for projects and looking back over the year I am pleased to have provided funding to the Berkhamsted Choral Society, Gaddesden Row Village Hall to purchase a cupboard for the Playgroup to store their equipment in, Great Gaddesden Primary school to help re-furbish the early years outdoor play area and funding a coach to take veterans to the Royal Anglian Reunion among others.

Preventing Potholes

The County Council has been experimenting with a new piece of kit which is mounted on the roof of a vehicle and surveys the road looking for any weaknesses which could give rise to a future pothole. It then returns some time later to re-survey to ascertain if there has been any deterioration in the road below the surface. The plan is to pick us faults before they become visible.

Staying in Touch

I normally hold a 'surgery' on the third Saturday of the month normally accompanied by a Dacorum Councillor, Jane or Ed but please do look out for my alerts on Social Media. In the meanwhile if you want to raise any aspect of Hertfordshire County Council, please do not hesitate to contact me on 07818 580087 or by email at terry.douris@hertfordshire.gov.uk.

Update from your Borough Councillors

At last spring is on the way, let's hope that we see some sunshine and fewer muddy, wet dog walking footpaths. And that leads me to a reminder, if you walk a dog please pick up your dog poo, it is your responsibility!

Garden waste subscriptions open soon



Garden waste subscriptions will open from Monday 24 February. If you would like to receive garden waste collections in 2025, you will need to purchase a garden waste subscription for the seasonal fee of £55.

This year as we will use our digital system to identify properties subscribed to the service, not stickers. Please make sure your house number or house name is clearly marked on your green-lidded bin to help our collection crews easily identify which bin belongs to each property. This will avoid delays in collections once subscriptions have been purchased and you will no longer need to replace stickers on your bins each year.

Get your free ticket to this year's Dacorum Climate Action Network annual event

The theme of this year's Dacorum Climate Action Network Annual Event is "Nature on the Brink", where we will be exploring biodiversity, climate resilience, and community-led climate action in Dacorum.

The event will be taking place at the Forum, Hemel Hempstead on Monday 10 March from 6.30pm to 9.30pm, with doors opening at 6pm.

At the event, you will be given the opportunity to:

- ✔ Discover local projects that are helping to tackle the Climate & Ecological Emergency.
- ✔ Learn how you can make a difference in your community.
- ✔ Connect with like-minded people who are passionate about protecting our local and global environment

The Great British Spring Clean and Great Big School Clean 2025 return from 21 March - 6 April 2025. Why not get the dates in your diary and consider what you could do during this year's campaign.

Policing – we now have a Police Community Support Officer (PCSO) Parisa Peiro, assigned to our villages as well as a Police Constable (PC) Dean Sanderson

If you need to contact Parisa, you can email: parisa.peiro@herts.police.uk, or Dean at dean.sanderson@herts.police.uk

Please keep a look out for the monthly 'surgeries' with Terry Douris (County Councillor), when you can come and see us too. These are held at the Garden Cent at 9.15 am usually on the third Saturday of the month. Alternatively, you can contact either of us on the numbers/emails below.

Questions about planning applications, bins, parking, council housing etc, ask us. We will do our best to help you.

Jane Timmis – 07712 050363 Email: jane.timmis@dacorum.gov.uk

Ed Barradell – 07928 692862 Email: edward.barradell@dacorum.gov.uk

Dacorum Borough Councillors

Jane Timmis – 07712 050363

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Hertfordshire County Councillor

Terry Douris

01442 402273

email terry.douris@hertfordshire.gov.uk

Harpenden and Berkhamsted MP Victoria Collins MP

victoria.collins.mp@parliament.uk

Great Gaddesden Parish Council

Next Parish Council Meeting 18th March 2025 at Gaddesden Row Village Hall, 7:30 pm

Chair:	Ben Cosbie Ross	07813 842 229		
Members:	Corran Griffin	07368 201 866	William Ristoff	07801 042 594
	Rosie Hamilton	07786 651696	Guy Halsey	07811 317 177
	Chris Turner	07905 742 178	Mark Griffin	07931 900 000
Clerk:	Andrew Farrow	07512 192 188	clerk@greatgaddesden-pc.gov.uk	

The Parish Council's website is available at
greatgaddesden-pc.gov.uk

Local Community Social Media - search facebook for:

“Great Gaddesden Parish Council”, “Great Gaddesden Community Group”
“Gaddesden Row the Village”

If you're worried about anything from dog-fouling, fly-tipping, litter, issues with pavements, pot holes etc. please contact one of the Parish Councillors or report it online. Search online for:

“Dacorum report it” and look for the Dacorum website,

or for highways issues search for:

“Herts report it” and look for the Hertfordshire website.

Defibrillator Sites

Bridens Camp: The cricket club pavilion

Gaddesden Row: In the old phone box at junction of Bradden Lane

Great Gaddesden: In the old phone box next to the school

St Margaret's: Within the Monastery grounds

Water End: The Red Lion Pub, on the perimeter wall by the front entrance

Parish Council News

The Parish Council was delighted to confirm a small increase in its grant to the magazine for 2025 in recognition of the extraordinary work undertaken by Richard and John, all of the contributors and everyone who helps distribute it. Thank you so much for bringing our communities together and once a month making life just a little more interesting.



There's been something of a lull in **smaller planning applications**, with just one for a hydroponics farm at Cupid Green Lane. The Council is strongly opposed to all development at this site, but government policy allows the construction of buildings for agricultural purposes on the green belt and this application was written in a way which made it difficult to object to.

The Council was delighted to see that what is called an "Article 4" restriction on the **land to the south of Pipers Hill** has been finalised after the land was advertised for sale in a series of plots, many of which looked suspiciously house sized. The Article 4 makes it harder to erect gates, fences and walls, to construct ways of accessing the road, and to change the use of the land. Dacorum acted with exemplary speed in issuing a temporary order; this is confirmation that it has been made permanent.

Residents near **Hillier Garden Centre** have received notification of a proposal to close the centre; Hilliers say that the site's capacity for further expansion is limited. The proposal is

to build a storage warehouse and yard space scheme. A formal planning application is expected shortly.

The Crown Estates held a two-day workshop on the **proposal to build 5,000 homes over the next 25 years in what is called East Hemel**. This is the sister development to North Hemel which will lie in our parish to the north of Piccotts End with another 5,000 new houses - the two collectively sometimes being referred to as Hemel Garden Communities, although technically that term relates to proposals to improve all of Hemel. If you want to see a larger version of this map search for "Hemel Garden Communities Delivery Statement".

East Hemel is the strip of land between Hemel and the M1 which will include shops, schools and other facilities. It's difficult to envisage the scale of what's proposed from the map but when you're next driving along the M1 make a mental note of how long it takes to get from the A4147 bridge in the south to Redbourn in the north.

The existing industrial estate along the A414 will be extended to the M1 so East Hemel will have two residential areas, one in the north and one in the south. Both developments assume that the number of trips made by car can be reduced by 60% in the new development areas and 40% in the existing town. Key to reducing car journey's in the new development will be what is called the "Sustainable Transport Corridor" (STC) that will run south-north through the middle of East Hemel before looping round through North Hemel and probably joining the Leighton Buzzard Road. The STC will be a road that prioritises public transport and active travel like cycling. It's not yet clear how it will be possible to reduce trips by car in the existing town. Concern was expressed about the impact on the Leighton Buzzard Rd, the A4251 through Apsley and the A4147 through Leverstock Green. Expect a (big!) planning application later this year.

Not unrelated Dacorum are holding a **consultation on its "Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan"** which will be open for comments until 23 March. It doesn't directly impact the parish but there is an interesting suggestion that the speed limit on the Leighton Buzzard Rd as it leaves Hemel should be reduced sometime in the future.

Dacorum are also consulting on the "**Dog Control Public Spaces Protection Order**" which will be open until 26 March. This has been the subject of some comment in the past about the extent to which Dacorum enforces it in rural areas. If you feel strongly about it, now is the time to make your voice heard!

The Government has told Hertfordshire County Council and all the district authorities in Hertfordshire including Dacorum that they need to present a draft outline for a **re-organisation of local government** by 21 March 2025 and more detailed proposals by 28 November. The

letter accepts that there may be "different views on the best structures for an area, and indeed there may be merits to a variety of approaches" and then says that irrespective what must be implemented is called a 'Unitary Authority', i.e. where the roles of counties and districts are combined. Whether this will result in one or more Unitary Authorities in Hertfordshire will emerge over the year. In the meantime there will still be elections for County Councillors in May.

On a slightly depressing note, the **Tommy silhouette** which the Parish Council has installed in recent years over the Festival of Remembrance on Pipers Hill has been stolen. This is the second time a silhouette has been removed and the Council can't justify replacing it.

If you're **struggling to cope or need advice about care and carers, living healthier, transport, home services and equipment and cost of living support** look at the HertsHelp website or ring 0300 123 4044.

If you want to **report a problem**, whether it's fly-tipping, flooding, anti-social behaviour, public footpaths, highways or anything else, search for Dacorum Report It. **Dacorum recently fined a man £2,000 for fly-tipping near Potten End**, so apart from getting it removed, reporting it can sometime lead to prosecutions.

Dates for your diary:

18 March – Great Gaddesden Parish Council at Gaddesden Row Village Hall

20 March – there will be a presentation from the HertsLynx team about their experience with the service to date at the Church Room, Potten End, HP4 2QY at 7:30pm as part of the Potten End Parish Council meeting.

*Andrew Farrow
Parish Clerk*

Gaddesden Estate News



Farming

Spring has not yet sprung, but there have been glimpses. The sun, when we see it, now has some warmth to it, and our minds have turned to the land work that will be needed to establish this year's spring crops. As I have mentioned before, by a quirk of the crop rotations we have a relatively large area to sow this year, compared to the area of autumn or winter sown crops.

Some drier weather this week has enabled us to make a start on some of the organic ground. These fields had spring oats in last year, which were combined in mid August. Immediately after harvest we lightly cultivated the very top layer of soil to encourage both the shed seed (known as volunteers) and weed seeds to grow. This proved successful, and meant that the ground had a nice green cover of living plants to sustain it through the winter. This is important on a number of fronts, and healthy soils have plants growing in them for as much of the year as possible. The living roots feed the soil microbiome, and the green cover above ground helps to protect the soil from the extremes of winter rainfall, preserving soil structure and reducing the potential for erosion.

There comes a time, though, when this green cover needs to be terminated, and the soil prepared for spring planting. With organic farming, the only realistic option is mechanical control, and of this ploughing is the only reliable solution. This year has seen the arrival of a new plough on the farm. At the risk of getting technical, it is worth exploring ploughing a little, as it has received something of a bad name in recent years. For many years, and to this day, ploughing was mostly done "in the furrow", which means

that one side of the tractor ran in the last furrow of the previous pass. Our new plough, however, runs "on land", which means that rather than compact the furrow bottom, the tractor runs on untouched ground, which is then immediately inverted. You can spot the difference in the two pictures below...



The former is better for grip in wet conditions, but risks creating compaction in the soil, whereas on land ploughing does not have this problem, but is technically harder to achieve good consistent inversion. However, with a skilled operator and lots of adjustment we have managed to do it well so far.

A wider question though is the role of ploughing as opposed to planting crops with minimal soil disturbance. The latter has potentially many advantages; using less diesel,

wearing less metal, releasing less carbon from the soil and being faster than ploughing. However, it is wholly reliant on the control of weeds through chemical means. Organic farming does not rely on chemicals, but does rely on the plough in its place, and replenishes and increases the soil carbon through the inclusion of years in the rotation where the land is not cropped but grows a diverse mix of species to regenerate the soil ready for cropping. Where ploughing is done sensibly, for example a short time before the new crop is planted, the risks of soil erosion are minimised and it can also provide the best possible conditions for the new plants to grow.

I'm hopeful that our first crop to be planted will be our organic malting barley, which will follow the ploughing. This will be under-sown with a mixture of grasses, clovers and herbs, once the barley is growing strongly. This will mean that after harvest of the barley there will be an existing green stand which will be much stronger going into the winter than if it were planted after harvest. It'll need careful management though to ensure that the barley crop is not compromised, and I will keep you posted as the season progresses.

Next to be planted will be conventional spring oats. Like the organic land, these fields along Gaddesden Row have had a "cover crop" growing in them to keep the soil alive over winter. This was a mixture of linseed, buckwheat and berseem clover which we planted straight after the wheat harvest in august. We will be growing these oats for the gluten free market. Oats themselves are naturally gluten free, but growing them with zero contamination from gluten-containing weeds and volunteers is hard, and will require great attention to detail. It'll be another first for us, but something that I'm very keen to do.

Next to be planted will be the spring linseed. I have decided to abandon the Oilseed rape on account of it not being strong enough,

and will be planting linseed in its place. Linseed, which goes for crushing into oil, is an excellent soil conditioner, as well as being beautiful when in flower. The plan will be to plant this in early April.

Finally, once the soil temperatures have warmed up enough we will be planting our organic herbal leys, probably in late April. I am hopeful that we will be able to increase our area of this, as one field of conventional wheat has not come through the winter looking well, and may be abandoned. If so, we will have three separate blocks going through organic conversion which will be very exciting. I will know more in the coming weeks, as at the moment it is rather difficult to make the judgement whilst we wait on DEFRA to decide whether it is something they will support.

Open Farm Sunday

Booking for our Open Farm Sunday Event (8th June 2025) is now open via <https://www.trybooking.com/uk/EJUR> , or use the QR link below. Tickets are free, though donations are encouraged in lieu of entry to the RDA and Great Gaddesden Church (donations can be made at point of booking). Plans for the day are still being finalised, but we expect to run tractor and trailer tours, machinery and animal demonstrations and will be providing a number of family-friendly activities, including a straw bale castle. There will also be food and drink from local producers on sale.

GFJH



School of Soft Furnishing

After recently upgrading my sewing machines and then letting go of three out of thirteen it took me to thinking of us creatives and the bonds we create with our machines and our love for sewing. Whether we are repairing, clothes making, soft furnishing or just creating, sewing is an important part of our lives.

Those that do not yet sew are generally intrigued by the craft and hopefully get the chance to introduce themselves to this magical art.

If we are lucky enough to have that extra space to retreat to, or that time to take our machines from its cover we are lucky bunnies indeed.

Interestingly, like the Palaeolithic era we are still sewing animal skins together for clothing but not so much for shelter, like many I prefer to live in a brick-built house.

We've come a long way from hand sewing with needles made of bone to now using electric machines which enable us to be even more creative – quickly

Sewing does so many things, it can be a great cost saving exercise, a destressing tool, it builds confidence and probably a really important one today has less environmental impact on this planet if we are repairing, reusing and not just dumping our textiles as often.



a bone sewing needle possibly 12000 years old

The one thing sewing highlights – which I am told often by my students – is the need to get your eyes tested! Threading those tiny eyes are as good as reading the opticians test board

These days you can buy self-threading needles so once everyone knows about those, we might lose that alarm bell to see the optician!

Hand operated sewing machines were a game changer, allowing the operator to sew quicker, neater and stronger. The most recognisable machine our parents and grandparents used is the Singer. Often ornate and sturdily built these machines were used in the main by women.

My mother taught me to use a treadle singer sewing machine which I thought at the time was a huge beast, but then I was probably only about eight.



Singer treadle machine from around 1890

Today our machines are much more complicated, some are even computerised which is great until – they go wrong. I prefer the mechanical type that have less of a 'motherboard' and more of a motorised inner.

Unfortunately, you can buy machines with the Singer label on, but they are no longer the craft pieces we once knew.

These days Bernina is the queen of the domestic machine to my mind and Juki the King of industrials. But that's my opinion.

But I always say to my students – if it works you can make money or create. There's no need to spend thousands on a machine to start with you just need to start.

If you haven't yet tried it, give it a go. It will



Bernina 1008 mechanical machine

soon become your happy place.

All of my machines have their own personality, and I am connected to them all. I know when the bobbin is about to end, I can hear a blunt needle. I like to keep them clean, oiled and in good working order although specialist service outlets are becoming few and far between.

Happy sewing all.

Maggi Loughran

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Helping our pollinators

Gardens cover about 1.6 million acres in England, five times the area of England's national nature reserves. While individual gardens are mostly small, collectively they can help to redress the huge loss of biodiversity in the country in the last 50 years.

This article considers insects which visit flowers seeking nectar and pollen, known as pollinators. They carry pollen between flowers triggering fertilization and seed, fruit and vegetable development. Insects pollinate 80% of European plant species, including fruit, vegetables and wildflowers. Around 70 UK food crops rely on pollinators, especially bees, and also butterflies, moths, flies, hoverflies, wasps and beetles.

Many of our pollinators are in decline due to pesticides, habitat loss and fragmentation, and weather impacts. Gardeners have taken a greater interest in helping pollinators in recent years, spurred on by initiatives such as Plantlife's No Mow May campaign. Helping insects isn't just about pollination of food crops. They are food for other wildlife including bats, birds, amphibians, reptiles and mammals. Avoiding all pesticides is vital.

Recently-published research by the University of Bristol shows that gardens can make a difference to the fate of pollinators, due to the timing of flowering of garden plants. The study found that gardens provide 15% of the overall annual nectar in farmland landscapes, but between 50% and 90% during early spring and late summer when farmland supplies are low. Gardens can reduce seasonal nectar gaps experienced by farmland bumblebees: bumblebee activity was found to increase in gardens relative to farmland in early spring and late summer.

We can support pollinators by having nectar-rich flowers in our gardens all year. Nectar is

essentially sugar, providing energy for adult insects. Gardeners have always known, and recent research has shown, that non-native as well as native plant species are useful sources of nectar for pollinators like bees and butterflies. Plentiful pollen is also important as bees feed on pollen as well as on nectar. Rich in protein and oils, pollen nourishes both adult bees and their larvae.

Habitat for all stages of an insect's lifecycle is vital. Butterflies and moths have four stages, three of them spent among vegetation. Eggs are laid on one or several specific plant species where the larvae or caterpillars hatch and feed. They turn into a pupa or chrysalis, often attached to a plant stem, before the adult flying butterfly or moth emerges. Butterflies and moths mostly overwinter as one of these three stages.

The UK has 57 resident species of butterflies and over 2,500 species of moths. I've so far recorded 20 butterfly species in my garden in Nettleden. Butterflies prefer to feed in the sun, and often can't get into the flowers of doubles, instead resting on flat or open flowerheads. Five species, all common in gardens, survive the winter as adults, either in unheated buildings or tucked away in vegetation. These are comma, peacock, small tortoiseshell, brimstone and increasingly red admiral. Red admirals used to be unable to survive our winters and migrated here each summer from southern Europe; many still do.

Mild weather in winter and early spring encourages adult butterflies as well as honeybees and bumblebees to emerge in search of nectar. Nectar-rich plants in flower at this time include the winter-flowering honeysuckle (*Lonicera x purpusii* 'Winter Beauty') and *Clematis cirrhosa*. Very early flowering bulbs such as snowdrops, winter



aconites and crocuses are sources of both pollen and nectar. Other useful species for pollinators include early flowering fruit trees, such as plum, and bright yellow mahonias. The native goat willow catkins provide pollen.

One of the first native wildflowers to bloom is lesser celandine, often regarded as a weed in gardens and dug up. Producing masses of pollen it is an important plant for early bumblebees. Native coltsfoot and dandelion provide both pollen and nectar for bees – cut off the seedheads to stop them spreading too much.

Other early flowering nectar-rich plants which support early spring pollinators include aubretia, English bluebell, flowering currant, grape hyacinth, lungwort, primrose, sweet violet, rosemary and winter flowering heathers.

The earliest butterfly record for my garden (admittedly I only started recording properly in 2020) is of a brimstone on 17th February. I have records for small tortoiseshell, peacock and comma butterflies from mid-March onwards. Two other early butterflies overwinter as a chrysalis: for holly blue my earliest record is April 20th and for orange tip it is 2nd April. Orange tip eggs are laid on five closely-related species including garlic mustard and lady's smock, where the caterpillars feed. The chrysalis over-winters from July until the adult emerges, attached to a plant stem, not usually of the foodplant. Clearing or cutting the vegetation needed by these non-adult stages can be damaging and

permanent patches of long grass are especially useful.

Honeybees and eight of the UK's 24 species of bumblebee

commonly visit gardens. Honeybees make honey to maintain their offspring over the winter in hives and nests. New bumblebee queens mate in late summer, then hibernate underground through the winter. They don't make honey as all other bumblebees apart from the queens die in autumn. In March and April bumblebee queens might be searching your garden for a nest site.

Guides to identifying bumblebees can be found at the website using the QR code on the left below.

Lists of butterfly caterpillar foodplants can be found using the QR code on the right below.

Elizabeth Hamilton on behalf of the Upper Gade Valley Conservation Society



A Pocket Full of Happiness - Hello Monty!



Hello lovely readers,

Not the greatest of photos but what you see before you is how I spent a lovely evening in February.

Now I've always been a fan of gardening and the outdoors but since moving here I've definitely cranked it up a couple of notches! Experimenting with veggies and flowers, seeing what plants will survive the nightly rabbit invasions and extreme variants of light and shade in my weird little garden, learning how to propagate and grow from seed, all with varying degrees of success. So, it is only natural that to accompany my thirst for all things 'garden' I now find myself consuming more content via social media and online channels and podcasts. An addictive past time I have discovered haha! However, there's one show that in my opinion is head and shoulders above the rest when it comes to a gardening fix- The classic BBC's *Gardeners World*!

There's something so blissful about the gently stories, uncomplicated advice and beautiful imagery that is good for the soul, particularly these last few months and one of my very

favourite things (and I not ashamed to admit it!) So what a treat it was for me to sit in on 'A conversation with Monty Don' at the Royal geographical society.

He was there as part of 'The National Garden Scheme' and spoke of his love of British gardens and the accompanying TV series. How they tell such varying and incredibly unique stories, often with family history, and generations of love and hard work literally weaving through the borders. He talked

of how art and horticulture meet and what he believes 'defines' a garden.

It was absolutely fascinating to hear him talk so expertly and candidly, and his dulcet tones, gardening quips and kind and down to earth nature was infectious. I could have listened to him talk for another 2 hours at least.

When it was time for Q and A's I couldn't think of a question quick enough which will forever be a source of annoyance! In case you hadn't guessed I'm rarely short of something to say! I did at the end however get to say Hi, shake his hand and say thanks for all the inspiration to which he smiled and said "thank you, that's very kind"

You're usually told not to meet your heroes and as it turns out he is fast becoming one of mine. While everyone shoved and hurried to get a selfie, I was perfectly happy to have just said I met Monty and he was as lovely as you would imagine.

Not bad for a Thursday in Feb.

Sian Turner

Update on River Restoration works at Water End



Weir in 2020



Weir in 2025

Those of you who have been following along with the river work at Water End will, I'm sure, have noticed that it's all gone very quiet, and I'm pleased to say that's because we're (nearly) done.

Following my last update in August, we were granted a licence by Natural England to temporarily displace the Water Voles, and we started vegetation clearance for this in September. Once the Water Voles had been displaced, we were able to progress with the rest of the work, starting with dewatering a section of the river and pumping the water through pipes so we had a relatively dry area to work in.

We were then able to start work on removing the weir. As the bridge is listed, we had installed some monitoring equipment on the bridge to keep an eye on the amount of vibration it was experiencing, and whether it was shifting at all. We quickly found that using power tools was triggering the vibration sensors, along with a couple of large lorries passing over the bridge! We raised the trigger levels slightly, but we were still restricted to using hand tools for the work to the weir, and this has meant that we have not been able to

remove it completely. We have however, been able to significantly reduce the height of the weir, and fish have already been spotted swimming up over it which is a great result!

As the weir has not been completely removed, we were able to reduce the footprint of the scour protection and complete the in-channel works before Christmas. The contractors then returned in January to remove the access road and make good the field.

The final step is to return in March to reseed the field, add a small amount of additional gravel to the channel and plant some Black Poplars. These trees are quite rare in the UK but there are four on site already, and I am pleased to be able to increase their population locally.

I can't finish without expressing my gratitude to Gaddesden Estate and the National Trust for supporting the works and for their enduring patience through the delays!

*Sarah Caleb,
Affinity Water*

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Craig's Cocktails

Cheers!

March, yes!!! The days are getting longer, the colours of the world are changing, the snow drops have been and the daffodils are coming. If only the temperature would settle so I know which coat to wear. It is tricky and changes from one moment to the next attempting to catch me out. This thought inspired this month's cocktail. Who needs consistency when you can mix a...

Flim Flamstead



I can't find much history on the Flim Flam as I sit on the 06:49 from Berkhamsted. I have found an entry in the Merriam-Webster dictionary explaining that the term entered the English language in the second half of the 16th century meaning 'deceptive nonsense'. It is listed alongside other greats like 'Bamboozle' and 'hornswoggle'. Great words! Our version is named in honour of Flamstead. The name of the village itself has some deception in it as some historians believe its name is a corruption of the original 'Verulamstead'.

I am revisiting an old friend in the cocktail cabinet this month. Of all the local bottles I have tried, my favourite is Scratch Distillery's Faithful 007 White Rum. Their shop shows that it is sold out but you can still look it up here <https://scratchspirits.co.uk> I managed to find a bottle online from <https://secretbottleshop.co.uk> This rum is truly great and the brand is local (Benington, Herts). On to the mix...

You only need 4 ingredients for this one (5 with ice). Half fill your shaker with ice and then add 45ml Scratch 007 White Rum, 22.5ml triple sec (I used Cointreau), 15ml freshly squeezed lemon juice, 15ml freshly squeezed orange juice. Shake, strain using a hawthorn strainer and a fine mesh sieve. Serve in a coupe glass with a curl of orange peel. Voila!

I am told by some that it reminds them of Orangina. What do you think? Here is a pic of our Glamorous Assistant enjoying a taste.

Shopping List:

45ml Scratch 007 White Rum 180
22.5ml Cointreau 90
15ml Lemon Juice 60
15ml Orange Juice 60
Ice



Please drink responsibly. I hope you enjoy!

Craig

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