

PARISH NEWS

OF

ST WEONARDS, GARWAY, ORCOP,
PENCOYD, TRETIRE, MICHAELCHURCH,
HENTLAND AND HOARWITHY

JULY 2021



PICTURE BY PAT MACRAE

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CONTACTS IN THE ST. WEONARDS GROUP OF PARISHES

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Garway	Vacant	
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	Jeff Goulding	01432 840492
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Local Contact

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Bellringing	Mr Peter Hallowell	01981 580203
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Orcop Evergreens	Gill Bannerman	01981 580685
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Orcop Hall Bookings	Gill Bannerman	01981 580685
St Weonards Hall Booking	Julie Ross	01981 580201
St Weonards Pre-school	Maggie Evans	07855 550108
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Garway Hall Bookings	Hilary Keenan	01600 750243
Garway Pre-school	Julie Jones	01600 750273
@Garway	Graham Bevan.....	01981 580215
Flicks in the Sticks	Claire Adamson.....	01600 750465
Much Dewchurch Gardening Club	Linda Ashton	01981 540804
OWL Good Neighbours	Jane Rigler.....	07940 308696
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St Weonards Group website	www.stw.org.uk

HEREFORDSHIRE COUNCILLORS

Birch Ward:	Toni Fagan (Green)	tonifagan@btinternet.com office hours 01981 540721
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Samaritans	National Helpline	08457 909090
	Hereford	01432 116123 jo@samaritans.org
HOPEline UK (Prevention of Young Suicide).....	0870 1704000	01978 367333

Golden Valley & Hereford Rural South local policing teams

Sgt Emma Freer, PC Kirsty O'Brien, PC Jim Phillips, PCSO Lowri Anderson, PCSO Adam Westlake, PCSO Christina Howard, PCSO Hayley Cohen and PCSO Christopher Yarwood. How to get in touch: 101 to talk to your local SNT or report a crime. herefordsouthside.snt@westmercia.pnn.police.uk
www.westmercia.police.uk

Only call 999 in an emergency, when a crime is in progress or life is in danger.

MAGAZINE CONTACTS

Contributions to the Parish news can be given to your parish representative by the **12th of the month**:

Magazine Editor	Fiona Mynors	01981 580208
Garway:	Mrs Ruth Maskell Windy Ridge, Garway	01600 750454
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Tretire/Pencoyd:	Meg Oubridge Tretire Smithy	01989 580233
St. Weonards:	Mrs P Craig 8 Mount Way St Weonards	01981 580433

Contributions by email to archenfieldmag@btinternet.com
or paper notices to: Miss June Griffiths, Hillside, St Weonards

PARISH COUNCIL CONTACTS

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Orcop:	Parish Clerk Mark Hearne clerk@orcopparishcouncil.org Parish council website www.orcop.wordpress.com	01981251887
St Weonards:	Mrs Kate Hughes Meadow View, St Weonards HR2 8QS Email: clerk@stweonardsparishcouncil.org	01981 580498 07967 352903
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Hentland:	Kath Greenow AILCM Hackford House, Dinedor clerk@yourparishcouncil.co.uk	01432 870874

VILLAGE INFORMATION, PHOTOS AND NEWS www.stw.org.uk

PARISH NEWS

THE ARCHENFIELD GROUP

Revd Frances Phillips
Associate Priest of the St Weonards Group of churches
New House
Garway Hill
Herefordshire
HR2 8EZ
01981 240032
franjpillips@gmail.com

Vicars' Letters

Hi Everyone,

In July and August, we would traditionally be off on our holidays! After last year and COVID-19 the prospects for this year seem somewhat limited and the new variants (now renamed after the Greek alphabet rather than the place they were detected) continue to overshadow the hopes of us jetting off to warmer climes.

However, I think there are actually a couple of upsides to this. Firstly, we are not polluting the world as much by not flying. We know that flying is one of the biggest emitters of CO₂, and so by flying less, we are reducing the strain on God's creation to cope with our profligacy. It is not a solution to global heating, but it is tackling part of the problem.

Secondly, there is a chance to boost home tourism. This is especially useful for our beautiful county, with its grand vistas, lovely hills and towns and beautiful churches. Here is a chance for us to capitalise on those visitors to our county. Not only reminding them of what a great place this is to live, but also of our rural religious heritage. We have a Templar church, an Italianate one, etc. with which to help people explore their spirituality and, perhaps, be touched by the divine presence.

With every blessing, **Revd Mark**

Church services on the third Sunday of the month.

For the last year or more, our third Sunday of the month has just had a Zoomed Communion service. Now, thank goodness, we can start to move back into our churches, so this service will be in one or other of our seven parish churches. By the time you read this, we will have had the first one in Hoarwithy church on 20th June, and hope that people will be willing to travel from other parishes to share it. As a new venture, we are going to try to record the service and then post it on YouTube, just as an audio recording, so that people who are still not comfortable with coming into the churches may be able to share the service later in the day.

If you search on YouTube for St Weonards Churches and Chapels Together, you should find it. Have a look!

Frances



Service in the Woods!

Our Lammas celebration this year - our thanksgiving to God for the first-fruits of the harvest, and blessing of the animals - will again be held in New House Wood on Garway Hill. **It is on Sunday 1st August at 11am.** You are invited to bring a flask of coffee or a picnic to eat in this lovely hillside woodland with its beautiful views over Herefordshire. Pets welcome! There is easy access to the top of Garway Hill from the wood, if you want to walk after the service. Please dress for the weather—wellies are a good idea if there has been rain—and perhaps a brolly. There is plenty of field parking. For any further information, please ring Frances on 01981 240032, or email franjpillips@gmail.com

Access to the wood is up the steep drive at HR2 8EZ, marked Yew Tree Corner: there will be a sign board to direct you.



!!! Magazine News !!!

We are delighted to have a number of general articles from new contributors. We hope they interest and amuse you!

St Weonards Parish magazines are to be found in the church porch.

PRESCRIPTION COLLECTION



20th July Carolyn Trew 01600750227

July Service Rota

For any changes please check the benefice website www.stw.org.uk

4 th July	10.00 am	Holy Communion	Zoom
11 th July	10.00 am	All Age Communion	St Weonards Church
	11.00 am	Iona Lay-led service	The Old Mill Hoarwithy HR2 6QH and on Zoom
	11.00 am	Holy Communion	Orcop Church
18 th July	10.00 am	Holy Communion	Tretire Church
25 th July	9.15 am	Holy Communion	Hentland Church
	6.30 pm	Evening Prayer	Pencoyd Church
1 st August	11.00 am	Lammas Service	New House Wood Garway

Access to the wood is up the steep drive at HR2 8EZ, marked Yew Tree Corner: there will be a sign board to direct you.

For enquiries about baptisms, weddings or funeral services, please contact the relevant churchwarden or Rev Dr Frances Phillips.

If you would like to receive the link to a Zoom service which you have not previously attended, please send a brief email to the contact below:

Holy Communion at 10am on 1st Sunday: franjphillips@gmail.com

All age service at 10am on 4th Sunday: stweonardspcc@gmail.com

Iona-style service on 2nd Sunday: peter@pember.plus.com

Evening prayer at 6.30pm on 4th Sunday: elizabethamalcolm@outlook.com

Garway Hill Methodist Chapel

Services

Sundays 11th and 25th July 3pm
Sundays 8th and 22nd August 3pm

VILLAGE PAGES

ST WEONARDS

As we approach a new chapter in our parish life with the easing of lockdown, and the possibility of even greater co-operation across our benefice and deanery, it seemed right to offer to stand as a churchwarden for a few years until the way forward is clearer. We have greatly valued the way that Frances has encouraged us to become confident with the use of Zoom for our services, and that it has enabled us to share our worship with so many people from our different communities. We are also grateful to Alex and Fiona for leading our All Age Worship which brings together such a range of ages both on Zoom and now in church on the second Sunday of the month. We are also delighted that Anna Williams is joining the PCC.

On 11th July we shall again be welcoming Bishop Dr David Thompson to take our communion service at 10.00 am. Do come and join us.

If this arrives before our Garden Open event at Treago on Sunday 27th at 2.00 pm we hope to see you there in a relaxed setting surrounded by roses! **Richard Mynors**

Perry Pear Trees Part One



Hello All!

My partner Kerry and I are lucky enough to be the new residents of Mival Cottage, Old Farm Treago. After relocating back from Europe in 2019, it has taken a while to find the right place for us but fortunately we have now found it and we are very much enjoying the serenity of Old Farm. Here at the recently and beautifully refurbished Mival Cottage, which emanates a rich local history, held dearly by many people here, we are currently creating an edible ornamental cottage garden. We are using organic and wildlife-friendly methods as well as a couple of other projects including a small makeshift nursery to nurture our collection of young and rare cider apples and perry pear trees.

We took the move back from Europe as an opportunity to move anywhere in the UK we desired and we decided on Herefordshire, initially in the Wye valley, but after exploring the area further, here we are!

In Europe we were living quite differently to most expats. We lived in our little cottage in a forest in a National Park in Italy. Using principles of forest gardening and permaculture we grew over 150 varieties of fruit and vegetable by organic means and incorporated wild food species into our growing systems to ensure there was also plenty to eat for the wildlife. In fact, we managed to significantly increase biodiversity as a result of growing food for ourselves. The general rule of thumb was that if there is plenty of natural food sources for wildlife, they are less likely to become a *pest*, and most birds and mammals actually preferred not to eat human food crops when they had the option of a natural diet.

If something did eat our crops, we would simply try to attract something to predate on, or plant something to distract it, and ultimately we found that the greater the biodiversity, the fewer problems with pests and diseases.

In Italy we grew to understand that true biodiversity includes antique and heritage varieties of fruit, vegetable and cereal, what the Italians call “La Biodiversita Agricola”- agricultural biodiversity. In an area noted for its unique animal and plant life both wild and cultivated- some of the varieties of fruit we grew were as unique as the subspecies of wolf and bear that co-inhabited the forest.

Once back in the UK it did not take long for heritage perry pear trees to grab our attention. We had heard that many old varieties of perry pear originated on and around May Hill in Gloucestershire, but the traditional perry growing areas expanded into Herefordshire, Worcestershire, and Monmouthshire. They say that if you can see May Hill and you have a perry pear tree growing- it could be something very special indeed.

Whilst working on a farm in sight of Mayhill, I stumbled across some very odd-looking pears on a gnarled and half chewed to death tree in a horse paddock. We had heard that the man in the know about perry pears locally was Mike Johnson of Ross -on- Wye Cider & Perry in Peterstow. Mike, who welcomed us with open arms, told us that he believed our pears to be culinary rather than a perry variety, but he could not identify the fruit in any books. He wondered whether we might have a previously undiscovered variety, but the only way to tell would be to have a section of branch from the tree DNA tested. Mike went on to inform us that varieties of perry pear were being discovered and rediscovered quite regularly in the area, and that they were all fascinating and worth protecting. He very kindly gifted us a bottle of his single variety Flakey Bark perry, informing us that there were only three mature Flakey Bark trees in existence. What a wonderful world we had discovered!

We took our bottle of Flakey Bark with us on a picnic by the Wye and had our first taste of craft perry that afternoon and it was love at first sip. It was so subtle and unique; the flavour was certainly pear but with a slight mineral taste not too dissimilar to that of champagne and went very well with mild blue cheese. If I was fascinated by the pear trees, I was doubly fascinated by perry. It seemed to me to be a local, environmentally sound product, with no preservatives or additives- not even yeast as it occurs naturally in the fruit’s skin. But perhaps most fascinating of all, anyone who buys perry made from endangered pear trees is helping their preservation by virtue of drinking their juice.

I knew somehow our future would be connected to perry pear trees.

Jack Worthington

(Editor’s note: the next instalment of Jack’s life with perry pears will be published next month when he explains more about his collection and grafting)

GARWAY

As there is no news yet of the reopening of Garway Community Hall please look out for details in our newsletter or by email which you can receive by logging in to our website.

Garway School and Pre-school

In a letter to parents/ carers from Herefordshire Council an update on the Covid-19 safety measures explained that schools were requested to continue to follow guidelines for the remainder of this term. This matches the announcement from the Prime Minister. When you add into the mix the uncertainties of the British weather, it is proving particularly difficult to plan activities for the remainder of the summer term. We are certain that some of our 'traditional' end of year events will have to take a different form this year and we are currently exploring options about what might be possible within the constraints we are facing. We will, of course, have to be prepared to adapt and amend plans as circumstances dictate. **Julie Jones**

However the pupils have been very busy as usual. Older pupils went on their three-day residential at Longtown and had a wonderful incredibly action-packed time: abseiling, mountain scramble, orienteering, camp fire, stand-up paddle-boarding and high ropes. (All in three days?!!!)

Meanwhile pre-school explored the Jungle and what animals live there as part of the 'Homes' topic for this half term. They have been busy identifying and comparing the types of animals that live in a Jungle.

Fiona Mynors

ORCOP

A busy few week again at the church, starting on 15th May with the installation of a beautiful bench in the churchyard by Nicola Goodwin and the Porter family in memory of John and Betty Porter of Whitehouse Farm. Our thanks go to them for this useful, tasteful and historically significant addition to the churchyard furniture.

The funeral of Mr Frank Turner took place on 20th May, taken by Revd Mark Johnson. Mr Turner had farmed at Poolfield Farm since 1995. He was true farmer all his life. The weather was not kind, as the wind got up and the rain poured down and we were all very wet. Refreshments at the Fountain were very welcome afterwards.

A fortnight later, on 4th June, it was all systems go for the wedding of Katie Brown and Kevin Powell, with Revd Mark Johnson again officiating, on a beautiful sunny day with all five bells at last ringing out and the church beautifully decorated. The Porter Bench was very much in demand. Best wishes go to Kevin and Katie for a very long and happy marriage.

Plans are progressing for the PLC concert on 11th September and we hope you have this date in your diaries. The refurbishment of the war memorial has been completed by Elliot Ryder Conservation, financed by the Parish Council. They have done a splendid job, with the Memorial now resplendent in the original red Hereford sandstone. It stands as a fitting tribute to those Orcopians who fell for our freedom.

What an amazing weekend it was to have for Gardens Open at Garway House on 29th and 31st May. Sincere thanks go to Mr and Mrs Steve Owens for their kind hospitality in opening their gardens and working so hard to put them in top condition. The weather was beautiful and so many people took the opportunity to meet up. Attendance exceeded expectations and it was great to see the Revd. Sam Ashton and his wife Sarah. Sam is our parish priest of long ago. It is good news that we have regular priests for our 2nd Sunday Communion services over the coming months. I would like a readers' rota for those services so please let me know if you would like to read. **Margaret Fletcher** Churchwarden

Date for your diary: Subject to covid restrictions we intend to hold Orcop Fete on Monday 30th August, more details in next month's magazine. We are also working on a quiz sheet which will be available in July.

Peter Morris

It is with deep sadness that I write that our dear Dad (Peter Morris of Belle Vue, Garway Hill) passed away suddenly at QE Hospital on 9th April. He was laid to rest on 30th April at Orcop Church, reunited with our dear Mum. The following is the eulogy that was read by Reverend Mark Johnson at the service.

I only had a few chances to meet with Peter, but in talking with his daughters, Hayley and Joanne, I have a picture of a man who had farming blood running through his veins, was kind, caring, wise and rooted to the Herefordshire soil. He, as you may well remember, suffered with Jo and Hayley, the loss of Hazel in 1995.

Peter was born in January 1941, he was one of four children, but only three survived to adulthood. He was born at the family farm of Belle Vue, high on Garway Hill, a beautiful but sometimes unforgiving landscape that played a major part in his life. Peter went to the local school at Garway until he was about 15, when he left to work on various farms and eventually also to work for the Forestry Commission.

Peter met Hazel via Young Farmer dances. They were introduced by Hazel's sister Marion and her then boyfriend, Douglas, who was also a cousin to Peter. They started courting in 1962 and were married at Tidenham Church, near Chepstow, as that was where Hazel's family lived, in March 1966.

They lived at Old Hall in Orcop for a while and then moved to Dellburn at St Weonards where Hayley, the first of their two children was born. In 1970 the arrival of Jo completed the family and they moved back to Belle Vue and re-established the connection with Garway Hill.

There is no doubt that farming is hard work, but Peter applied himself with all the energy he could muster, and helped by Hazel, a growing Hayley and Jo, when she was not sitting in the field eating fresh cut swede, they would raise calves from the market, sheep and lambs, a bit of veg and, especially for Christmas, chickens, turkeys and geese.

Hayley and Jo followed in Dad's footsteps going to Garway Primary and then to Kingstone before heading out to work, and eventually finding other halves and having children of their own.

Meanwhile, Peter and Hazel had the chance to manage a farm just by Kington Golf Course, so they let the land, converted Belle Vue into a holiday home and moved out to the farm there. It was a chance for Peter to flex his farming muscles and one he enjoyed. Unfortunately, after only a few years there, Hazel was killed in a car crash. It was something that shook the family to the core, as these things do, but they managed to find the strength to pull through, with the help of family and friends. Peter stayed at Kington until he retired at 65, moving back to Belle Vue in 2006.

While up at Kington, he met Mel a few years after Hazel's tragic death. Mel was from Liverpool and on holiday in a local cottage. They hit it off and started to accompany each other to events and on holidays, though Mel bought her own place in Kington. They enjoyed holidays in the UK, Cornwall, Devon, Wales, and loved going to National Trust places, and had a great fondness for Powys Castle.

Mel was diagnosed with cancer and Peter became her main carer, especially over the last 12 months. Mel died in 2018.

After Mel's death, Peter busied himself around the hill at Garway. He would go out pretty much every day to have a look around the common and meet up with farmers and locals, chat away and find out the latest gossip – or farming information as he would classify it.

He had a fall in March on the hill and had to be helped home. This set off a tragic train of events, with chances missed and the reason for the fall going undiagnosed that led to his sudden death. Although the family did have the chance to be with him in those last hours, it was not the way they wanted to say goodbye.

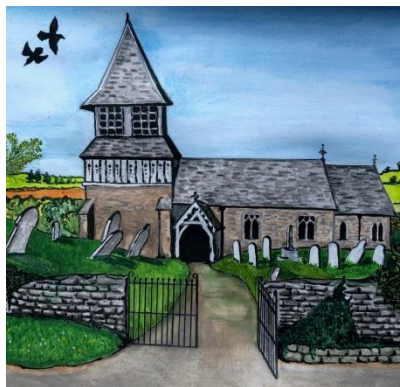
Peter will be remembered by all of us as a kind and gentle man. He never had a harsh word for anyone. He took the adage that if you have not anything good to say, do not say anything at all. He was a much-loved Grampy to Sophie, Hazel, Paige and Yasmin. He loved to see his girls flourish, enjoying their success and, no doubt, worrying over them as any grandfather would. He had that wonderful ability to turn his hand to anything, from putting up fencing to fixing a plough, to restarting a tractor. Farmers become Jack of all trades and Peter was no exception.

He will be greatly missed for his knowledge and his love, for the care he extended to family and to friends, and our community will remember him for years to come.

Hayley, Jo and families would like to thank all family, friends and neighbours for their support and kind messages of sympathy, condolence cards, and generous donations in memory of Peter.

Apologies that this appeared in June's Parish Magazine incomplete.

ORCOP CHURCH LIMITED EDITION PRINTS



An original watercolour painting of Orcop Church was presented to Elizabeth as a retirement gift.

A limited edition of 50 top quality Giclee prints of the painting, on Hahnemuhle German Etching paper are available, signed by the artist, at £25 each (unframed).

ALL SALE PROCEEDS WILL FUND THE MAINTENANCE OF THE CHURCH

If you wish to order, please email garratt_peter@hotmail.com or phone 01981 580418

MUSHROOMS IN MAY

After a mere 12mm of rain in April, we had nearly 170mm in May, possibly the wettest May on record. This had some interesting consequences.

Firstly, it produced a splendid start to the asparagus season, with abundant pickings appearing daily by mid-May. Secondly, and perhaps more surprisingly, it brought on an early crop of horse mushrooms (*Agaricus arvensis*). These are underrated, being regarded by most as inferior to field mushrooms (*Agaricus campestris*). The latter can be extremely frustrating, appearing each year, if at all, at different times and in different places. Rising early for a breakfast picking can be a dispiriting experience, often resulting in an empty basket and requiring resort to Weetabix or Muesli. On the other hand, horse mushrooms can be relied upon to come up in the same place every year, anytime from Easter “until the first carol singers”. Furthermore, a single mushroom can be the size of a dinner plate, so no need for fruitless foraging for another one. They come up every year amongst our pumpkin plants, but not normally until about August. To have them in May is a rare treat, as they are delicious fried in butter with asparagus (the latter poached, not fried).

There is no need to be concerned about their edibility. The horse mushroom has a large and pendulous ring or skirt below the gills and a pleasant aniseed aroma. A further distinctive feature is the “cogwheel” pattern on the underside of the skirt (see sketch below). Hence it is fairly easy to identify with certainty.



However, it must not be confused with *Agaricus xanthodermus*, the yellow stainer, which turns bright yellow when bruised, smells of carbolic acid and is poisonous.

I wonder why they are called horse mushrooms? Is it because horses eat them, or because they flourish on horse manure?

We shall see what other surprises this year of rainfall extremes has in store. **Peter Garratt**

TRETIRE WITH MICHAELCHURCH AND PENCOYD

The easing of Covid restrictions which allowed friends and families to enter each other's homes has also allowed us to go to services in our churches. However, the absence of an incumbent since Elizabeth Cathie's retirement, has meant that our churchwarden has had to step into the breach. So our recent Evening Prayer at Pencoyd church was led for us by Elizabeth Malcolm. (We do still have one Elizabeth left!). Eight of us were pleased to gather, albeit duly sanitised, signed in and masked, but once again not allowed to sing. Elizabeth provided the music for the hymns on her phone, cleverly amplified, and invited us to hum along behind our masks! It was a good occasion.

Our PCC meetings have had to continue being held by Zoom, but we hope to meet in person for our next one. By that time we shall have had the Midsummer service at Michaelchurch and the Barbecue at Michaelchurch Court and hopefully had a chance to meet up with people we haven't seen since the Christmas Carols at Pencoyd Manor.



The work at Tretire Church has now been completed, and both inside and outside have a fresh coat of paint and are transformed! The decorators did a very good job tidying up after themselves, but nevertheless, there is a large quantity of dust to be removed. A work party is getting together in the church on Friday 2nd and Saturday 3rd of July to tackle it. So, if you find yourselves free on either of those dates, please do come along with duster, vacuum cleaner, dustpan and brush etc and join in the Tretire Spring Clean,

so that the church looks at its best for a wedding the following weekend, and for a morning service there on Sunday July 18th. Do come along to that service, and celebrate the re-opening of St Mary's after its makeover, for the first service held in it since 13 December 2020.

We were very saddened with the news that Helen Goodwin, who has been battling with a very long illness, died on the evening of Friday 4th June. Clive and Helen and their dog, Hector, were a familiar sight to many in Pencoyd. For some of us, Helen was a regular companion when putting together the Parish News in St Weonards Hall, which she continued to do until trips to hospital for treatment made it too difficult for her.

We send our condolences and sympathy to Clive, her husband, and to other members of her family.

Margaret Oubridge

HOARWITHY

We have been trying to buy Cedar Rise (the bungalow next to the church) to provide disabled access to the church. At our PCC meeting last evening we agreed to make the purchase so by the time you read this we will have exchanged contracts and completed. Praise the Lord. Now our work begins with help from our supportive community.

Peter and Jeff

7.30pm on Saturday 10th July SUMMER CONCERT AT St Catherine's

Celebrating reopening (or hoping to), our old friends the Musical & Amicable Society are presenting *Fairest Isle*, a selection of songs, concertos and a cantata, with mezzo soprano Nicola Wemyss and their ensemble of period instruments. The programme, all works of the baroque era, consists of Songs and Dances from *The Fairy Queen* and *King Arthur* by Henry Purcell (1658-1695); Recorder concerto in C minor by Antonio Vivaldi (1678-1741) and the first-ever Viola Concerto by Georg Philipp Telemann (1681-1767). We have heard this before and, unless I am very much mistaken it will be played again by Kate Fawcett. It is a delightful piece in four movements, where the left hand stays throughout in the first position, which suggests it might be rather limited. But this is no Grade 3 piece, and with three octaves at his disposal, Telemann has produced one of his most popular virtuoso pieces. Finally we have the Cantata for the Coronation of Mary of Modena by Giovanni Battista Vitali (1632-1692). Mary of Modena, as we all know, was the second wife of our King James II who, it was said when her child was still-born, had a live one smuggled in in a bed pan.

The concert, which has been generously sponsored by the Alan Cadbury Charitable Trust, is at 7.30pm on Saturday 10th July at St Catherine's church Hoarwithy. Tickets are £15, (under 17s free) and with the pandemic at the time of writing rumoured to be making some form of segregation still current, you are asked to telephone Robin on 01989 730439 or email robin.symonds@btinternet.com

Small Ads:

Wanted: secure garaging with electric supply close to main road in St Weonards, Broad Oak area. Reasonable fee offered.

Please contact Les Phillips, 01981 240032 or lesliephillips44@gmail.com

For sale and calling all spinners. Rare breed Portland sheep fleeces for sale. A fine white wool which is sought after by spinners. Fleeces are cleaned and free of vegetation.

Contact Sue Garratt - Tel 01981 580418

Wildlife in our Garden

The past month has seen the appearance of a variety of young birds on the ground in the vicinity of our feeders. Robins, blackbirds and sparrows have been seen being fed by parents, but some appear to be on their own and feeding themselves, such as a greater spotted woodpecker with rather scruffy, off-white feathers and an untidy, spiky, fluffy top-knot, not the red top which is described in the books; but perhaps that will develop later with proper feathers. We have also seen juvenile chaffinches, but no juvenile tits, not that we have recognised anyway.



Along with the vegetation, most animals are at last burgeoning as spring has got going, in spite of the April frosts and May rains. There are a good variety of bees and hover-flies, damsel flies, dragon-flies and butterflies around the garden. A jay often puts in an appearance, and also greenfinches. Margaret even spotted a bullfinch on the cherry blossom once, but sight of the flycatchers have been very sporadic, as has the singing of blackcaps or chiffchaffs. Swallows seem to be a rarity so far this year and, talking to people, I have the impression that numbers of swallows, martins and swifts are down generally round here. I have not yet heard a cuckoo this year and I have not heard a willow warbler for several years. I can't help but worry about the seeming decline in numbers of our summer visitors.

We believe the robin family which nested in our potting shed was predated again. It is hard to be sure as there were no obvious signs of disturbance apart from a rather misshapen, empty nest. We never saw any baby robins near the nest in the day or two after it was emptied, but we did see plenty elsewhere and it is hard to know which nest they came from. Fortunately, the garden as a whole is by no means short of robins. One adult in particular has become very bold and swoops down to within two feet of me as soon as I put out some seeds each morning. I believe it would not be difficult to train him (or her) to eat out of my hand, but I do not have the patience to try.

The almost resident cock pheasant has become very bold too. He visits nearly every day and sometimes brings his mate. They are not much trouble. One warm day they spent a happy hour or two dust bathing in the runner bean patch. They did not sit on or peck at the young bean plants; they only seem interested in seeds. The cock takes less and less notice of us working really close by him, but just goes on feeding. I wondered why he is apparently so fearless, whether he had been hand-reared and got used to humans as a chick. But I am assured on good authority that keepers only provide food and minimal protection for chick pheasants, and avoid as far as possible letting them have any inter-reaction with humans.



The relative "tameness" of the pheasant started me thinking about what we actually mean by the word "wild", and whether pheasants were really "wildlife" that I could legitimately include in these articles? Is a wild animal defined as any species that is not a farm animal or household pet? Or should it be defined as one that is free to roam where and when it wills? If so, that would include most domestic cats. Actually, most "wild" animals in this country are not totally free to roam because sooner or later they come up against a fence or a wall, or just the threatening presence and smell of humans, so they are made to retreat or keep away. Even where there is so-called "re-wilding", humans define the limits or borders to the animals' habitat and exert their influence in other ways such as the introduction of pigs or ponies to "manage" the environment. The free-est animals seem to be birds, and perhaps other species which have adapted to tolerate a human environment, such as foxes. I concluded that "wildness" is a relative term and there are all degrees of wildness. It can mean just about whatever the user wants it to, so I think it's OK if I carry on writing about pheasants! **John Oubridge.** 6th June 2021

Book Review

Unorthodox by Deborah Feldman

Young Devoireh is brought up in the Hungarian-Jewish Satmar community in Williamsburg, New York. Wikipedia tells me that 'Satmar is one of the largest Hasidic dynasties in the world. It is characterised by extremely strict religious adherence, complete rejection of modern culture and fierce anti-Zionism.' The structures encompass every aspect of their lives from clothing to arranged marriages; from books to food. No corner of their lives is left unregulated, especially the women's who are regarded for half of their lives, with a special ritual involved in the checking of their cleanliness and who are obliged to shave their heads and wear a wig.

Devoireh is something of an outcast: her father, who appears fleetingly in her life, is said to be mad; and her mother escapes the sect, abandoning Devoireh to the care of her grandparents and a distant aunt, who takes pleasure in controlling the child's life. Devoireh is intelligent and inquisitive; she is puzzled by it all: 'Zeidy (grandpa) comes from a legacy of oppression. I can't comprehend how a person who comes from so much pain and loss can perpetuate his own oppression. In small ways Zeidy cages himself depriving himself of harmless joys, and yet it seems the very deprivation fulfils him...I think pain makes Zeidy feel purified.'

But he is also of the opinion that '...a good Rabbi is one who can find the *heter*, the loophole in the law that allows for flexibility.' No wonder she is puzzled.

Feldman's autobiographical book is itself is puzzling. Full of descriptions of oppression, alongside her disastrous arranged marriage, the book tells how she is able to learn to drive, has a car at her disposal, is enabled to enrol on a college course and to find childcare for her small son. And it is through these channels that she eventually makes her escape- these are her loopholes.

The book was made into a highly successful Netflix series, which drew refutations and objections from the Satmar community, who claimed the author misrepresented them. Where the truth lies I do not know; but it is good to know that this independent eventually achieved the freedom she desired, in practical terms, if not emotionally. **Hilary Smallwood**

Curious Pets?

Lord Lionel Walter Rothschild (1868 – 1937) loved animals. His father, the first Baron Rothschild and the first Jewish peer in England, was an immensely wealthy banker and politician. Walter first showed an interest in zoology at the age of seven and declared then that he would have a museum dedicated to animals. At his home in Tring Park, he had a number of exotic creatures including birds and kangaroos. It was with reluctance that he went to work in his father's bank at the age of twenty-one, dreaming of his museum. He was shy, and showed no ability in finance, but he persevered. As encouragement and compensation, his forward-thinking father set up the zoological museum he so dearly wanted.

Baron Rothschild sent an expedition across the world to find exhibits. By the time of his death in 1937 he had collected 300,000 bird skins, 200,000 eggs, 2,250,000 butterflies, 30,000 beetles, and thousands of fish, reptiles, and mammals, owning the largest private collection of zoological specimens ever seen. The museum was open to the public. Despite his shyness Rothschild was headstrong. He was intent on dispelling many of the myths about animals commonly held at the time. One of these was the idea that zebras were untameable.



*Rothschild with his famed zebra (*Equus burchelli*) carriage, which he drove to Buckingham Palace to demonstrate the tame character of zebras to the public*

He harnessed a team of zebras to a carriage and drove them to Buckingham Palace to prove this idea wrong, and he was often seen in the streets of London in a cart drawn by a single zebra. In 1932, most of his bird collection was sold to the American Museum of Natural History to satisfy the blackmail demands of a former mistress. He left the rest of the collection to the British Museum in his will. The donation was the largest ever received by the museum. The collection was however kept intact at Tring, and the Walter Rothschild Zoological Museum is officially a division of the Natural History Museum.

!!! BEWARE SCAMS !!!

Census scam

This is a text message scam that tells you there's a problem with the census details you filled in back in March. It tells you to follow a link to "review" the information, or risk a £1000 fine.

If you tap on the link, it takes you to a very convincing copy of the official census page, and asks you to answer a couple of fairly innocuous-sounding questions. Then right at the end, you need to pay a small administration fee. Of course, if you give them your card details to take the £1.25 (or whatever they tell you it is) they can actually charge you whatever they like!

If you get a text message, email or phone call like this, it's a scam. You can report it, see how later, The only ways the census team might contact you are in writing or with a personal visit – if in doubt, you can [check their website here](#).

Royal Mail scams

There are a quite frightening number of these around, and people have lost a lot of money to them, so it's definitely one to be on your guard with.

Most Royal Mail and other delivery firm scams are either text messages or emails. They tell you that an item is waiting to be delivered or collected, and all you need to do is pay a release charge of some small amount – £2.99 is fairly typical. Again, if you give them your payment details, they can actually take as much as they like from your account.

If you really *do* have excess postage or customs fees to pay, Royal Mail will contact you with a reference code. They'll give you a Royal Mail web address to type into your web browser, then you type in the code they've given you to see how much you owe. *They will never ask you to click on a link.*

HMRC scams

There's been a rise lately in scam calls, messages and emails pretending to be from HMRC. They might offer a tax rebate or inform you of a penalty – either way, they'll ask for your payment details and often other details like your National Insurance number.

Never click or tap any links if you get a message like this. HMRC have helpfully put together a list of genuine calls, emails and letters that they've sent recently to help you judge whether yours was real or a scam. You can [read it here](#).

Reporting scams

You can report any fraud attempt to Action Fraud – if you're worried that you might have fallen victim to one of these scams, that's definitely the place to go and report it. You should also contact your bank or credit card company straight away if you think your payment details might have been compromised.

If you've received a scam text message, you can report it to your phone network by forwarding the message to 7726 (it spells "SPAM" on your number keypad). To do that, open the conversation (being careful not to tap on any links) and tap and hold the message to select it. Then tap either the three dots in the top right or the word "More" and choose "Forward". Type in 7726 as the number to forward it to – it doesn't cost you anything.

BT scams

These suggest accessing your account by clicking on a link, but check the email address which is always peculiar eg catpadkeeper@live... . Forward these to phishing@bt.com.

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The Haven Green sinkhole

While riding around Haven Green on 29 June 2020 we had to swerve on our tandem to avoid a depression in the road.

Peter reported it as a possible sink hole. Within a few hours the road was cordoned off. The hole turned out to be quite large – an estimated 20 metres long, 8 metres wide and 5 metres deep, according to one workman's estimate. He said it extended beneath the bus lane and that Peter "must have been sent by God" for having reported it just in time to prevent a disaster.

The council's contractor filled the hole with several loads of concrete. Much of this entered the main sewer beneath the road and blocked it. The tape or pole used to measure the 20 metres had presumably been pushed along inside the sewer and not the sinkhole.



By 14 August (below) Thames Water had been trying to remove the concrete inside their sewer for several weeks, by jetting. Work continued for another two months and eventually only one lane of traffic remained open.

The final picture shows the road on 18 October, just before remedial works were completed after nearly four months of work.



This sink hole was discovered by some Mynors cousins when cycling in their local area of London.

Fiona Mynors

Chuckle Corner

Answers to last month's surprising facts to be found in the bible

Which king in the bible was hard to stab as he was so obese, and what did his servants think he was doing in his closet? Eglon was stabbed by Ehud and his servants thought he was relieving himself in his closet so did not look for him for a while...

What happened to the small boys who jeered at Elisha for being bald? Wild bears came and mauled them....

Law of Random Numbers -

If you dial a wrong number, you never get a busy signal; someone always answers.

Law of Close Encounters -

The probability of meeting someone you know INCREASES dramatically when you are with someone you don't want to be seen with.

A confusing road sign seen in Greece!?



From *Peter Garratt*

Qantas Airlines: Repair Division

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After every flight, Qantas pilots fill out a form, called a 'Gripe Sheet' which tells mechanics about problems with the aircraft.

The mechanics correct the problems; document their repairs on the form, and then pilots review the Gripe Sheets before the next flight.

Never let it be said that ground crews lack a sense of humour.

Here are some actual maintenance complaints submitted by Qantas' pilots (marked with a P) and the solutions recorded (marked with an S) by maintenance engineers.

P: Left inside main tyre almost needs replacement.

S: Almost replaced left inside main tyre.

P: Test flight OK, except auto-land very rough.

S: Auto-land not installed on this aircraft.

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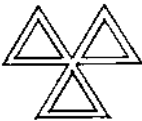
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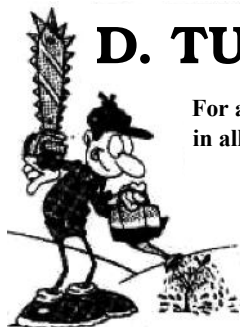
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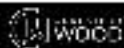
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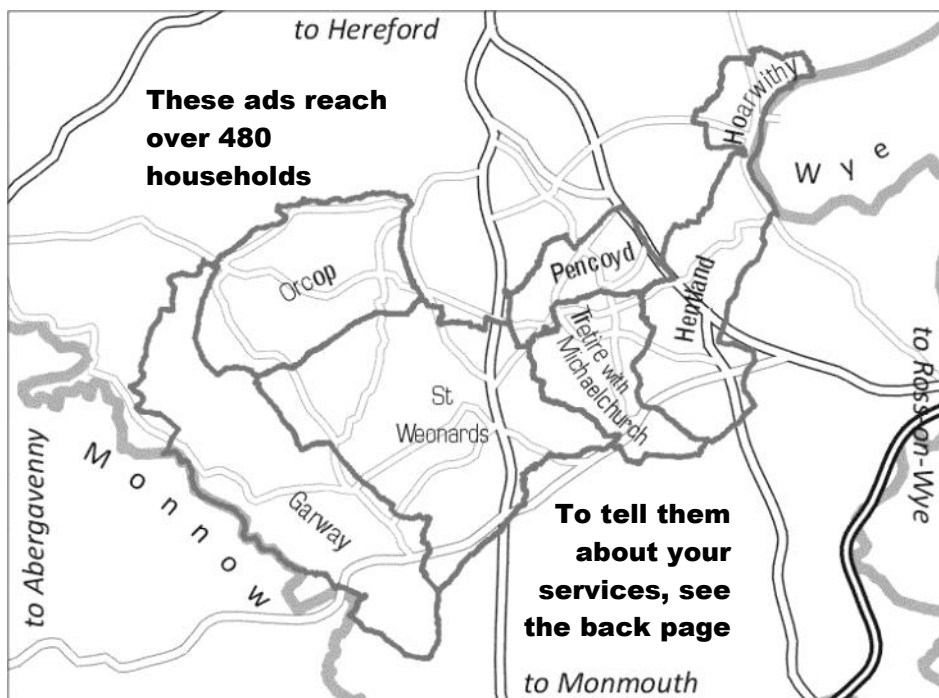


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