



Snowdrops by Doug Joyce

Feb  
2021  
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News and views from Great Bardfield and Little Bardfield

# Bardfield Times



Ten editions of Bardfield Times are published each year by volunteers from Great Bardfield and Little Bardfield parishes. Articles, letters, etc. for inclusion need to be received by the editors by the **14<sup>th</sup> of the month prior to publication**. The management team reserve the right to refuse, postpone or to edit any material received for publication. Views expressed in this magazine are not necessarily those of the management team.

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**Front cover:** Snowy Bardfield 2017 by Barry Jones

**Above:** Yellow winter aconite by Doug Joyce

## Editorial

I woke up early to a cold, snowy scene this morning. The village was silent. Few cars had passed along the High Street but the footprints in the snow showed that intrepid Jane from Finchingfield Post Office had delivered my paper. A huge thank you is due to all the people in our communities who continue to look after us. I know that the kindness of the team of volunteers who for nearly a year now have shopped and collected and delivered prescriptions for the most vulnerable, is hugely appreciated. On the letters page gratitude is expressed to the Headteacher and staff of our school who continue to come to work every day to support the children of Key Workers and others. Despite the failure of some to observe social distancing, putting staff and customers at risk, and sometimes facing abuse, the Co-op staff have been there to serve us, cheerfully. And, hopefully, we have good neighbours who look out for each other too. As Fr Robert says on page 12, there are indeed some truly remarkable people in our midst.

Thanks to all our contributors to the B.T. Even with a lack of village events to report we have some interesting articles this month, several on aspects of local history and others on nature and gardening, topics we've had more time to engage with lately. I'm sad to report that this will be the final Country File as Tony Hayward has decided it's time to retire. He has written in every edition of the BT since it began, quite an achievement, and I know his articles will be missed by our readers (see page 28). We welcome articles, letters and photographs so please keep them coming. This month we have two evocative snowy scenes from Barry Jones, and snowdrops and aconites - welcome signs of spring from Doug Joyce.

**Janet Dyson**

## Featuring in this month's *Bardfield Times*

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## Letters

*It's great to receive your letters but remember we cannot publish letters that are libelous or offensive in any way; name and address must be supplied, with name preferably on the letter.*

*Editor*

### Hi it's Tommy,

First of all I would like to wish everyone a very Happy and SAFE 2021 and hope that you are well and staying safe.

Wow!! What fantastic and generous people we have around us. Thanks to your generosity the Poppy Appeal raised a staggering £2,242.91p which exceeded all our expectations. Your continuous support is very much appreciated.

Thank you so much

Keep well and most importantly stay safe.

**Tommy**



### Dear Editor,

I would like to say a word in praise of our lovely Great Bardfield School. As a semi involved Grandparent, I have been so impressed with the level of teaching that the school continues to offer the small people in our community. There is a 'zoom' call to the class three times per day. This is not compulsory... it cannot be in these times of Mums and Dads trying to juggle their day working from home, often with other children in the background. Those that are fortunate enough to be part of this get to see their classmates. This is such an important part of the confidence building and stability that Education is all about. The schoolwork is plentiful, broken into small 'bites' that my Grandchild can absorb in the core subjects. Some is on line, some written and some just fun learning games. We should not underestimate the work that goes into preparing this new type of teaching and thank goodness we have the benefit of it on our doorstep.

**Chris Maidman**

## The Bardfield Players

As you may have noticed, the 'Players', have been very quiet recently. However, we are still here, and ready to begin a new production as soon as it is safe to do so. In the meantime you may like to see recordings of some of our previous productions, which our genius techy Paul has put onto YouTube for us. There are over twenty productions to view at your leisure, including 'Seasons Greetings', 'Treasure Island' and 'Move Over Mrs Markham' (which I am told has had 245 views already!).



*Move Over Mrs Markham*

Please search 'The Bardfield Players' in YouTube, or 'Paul at TecCentric' (also in YouTube), where the Players play list can be found. As always the bar will be open, although this time you will have to provide your own glasses (and liquid), and if you would like to indulge in the raffle, you will have to sort that



*Treasure Island*

out for your self as well! However, we can still provide some entertainment, so I hope that you enjoy watching. Take care, and we will be back soon I hope.  
**Ian R**

## Great Bardfield Parish Council report

### Will 2021 Bring a Brave New World?

Despite the vaccine programme bringing hope that there is an end in sight for our 'social distancing' and isolation, we are seeing dark days at the beginning of 2021 with the rate of infection very high in Essex and the Braintree District. We urge all to follow the rules, work from home if you can and restrict your contact with others outside your household. This is not easy for anyone but we need to do all we can to protect our family, friends, the person in front of us in the supermarket queue and, of course, to reduce the pressure on our NHS.

At the time of writing we know that a vaccination centre is established in Earls Colne, some residents have had their first jabs, and other venues will come on stream as the programme proceeds. Please do not phone your surgery to enquire about vaccinations as this clogs up their phone system and prevents those with urgent need from getting through. You will be contacted when a date is fixed for you and this will depend on age and your medical condition.

In the meantime if you need/would like a test, even without any symptoms, these are available to collect (for Braintree District residents) from Braintree District Council offices, Causeway House, Braintree. See their website <https://www.braintree.gov.uk/advice-environment/coronavirus>

### Your Village, You Can Help

#### Footpaths

We know many of you are enjoying your walks around the footpath network. The recent wet weather means that many rural footpaths are very muddy, so please take care when walking.

We also ask that you take a plastic bag with you and take the opportunity to collect any litter you see when out and about. If possible, wear disposable gloves and wash your hands thoroughly on getting home.

#### Dog Poo

Is it the case that when some people get a dog it is a complete surprise to them that the dog goes to the toilet? These people are obviously not prepared to clear this up when walking their dogs around footpaths and pavements, where the rest of us have to avoid what they have left behind. The doggie bins around the village fill up quickly so most people

are doing their bit, but there is often significant mess in some areas of the village, left by phantom dog walkers who creep out to walk their dogs in the dark and then can't see when they've done a whoopsie. Who do you think will clear up after you?

A reminder that FREE DOGGIE BAGS are available from the Community Information Point, near the Town Hall, open for an hour on Thursday and Saturday mornings currently (10am to 11am). NO EXCUSES!!

### Flooding Issues

There has been considerable flooding in the village recently with water running off the sodden fields and into overload ditches. We are in communication with Essex Council Council about these issues and received a visit from a Flood Engineer on a suitably wet day in mid-January. Having seen the issues at first hand the engineer will be considering and advising on potential solutions to reduce the quantity of water over-flow when we get significant rain, as recently. We are also discussing necessary repairs to culverts and pavements caused by the flooding. Thanks to one resident who successfully unblocked one of the tunnels taking the Brook under Brook Street. Residents should be aware of their own responsibilities for watercourses that border or run through their own properties. The following link is useful:

<https://flood.essex.gov.uk/media/1289/essex-county-council-ordinary-watercourse-maintenance-guide.pdf>



### Tree Planting

Many thanks to Julia & Andrew Collins for donating some trees for the green adjacent to Mill Close, with additional trees funded by the Parish Council as part of our ongoing objective of providing more trees in the village. Andrew and Julia, ably assisted by Louisa Ruthven, very kindly planted all 9 trees so thank you all. There are various native varieties, and they look great.

### Planning Applications (December & January meetings)

**1 Little Lodge Farm:** single storey extension – no objections

**3-5 Bardfield Centre:** conversion of commercial units. No objections though some concerns were raised regarding over-development of this site and proximity of this building to the Grade 2\* listed High Barn.

**2 The Corniche:** single storey extension – no objections if the Historic Buildings Officer and BDC planners are satisfied that these plans are now suitable for a property in the conservation area.

### Treeworks

There were no objections to proposed works at 1 St John's Terrace; Gobions, Dunmow Road; Beam Cottage, Bridge Street; 9 & 10 Rutland Place, Bridge Street.

**Park Hall, Braintree Road:** an extensive list of works to trees in a park setting. Deferred to BDC's Landscape Officer for consideration.

### Pavement defects

We are following up many issues relating to the state of pavements in the village with Essex Highways. Some of these were reported many months ago.

**Parish Council Meetings** continue to be held by video call. These meetings are open to the public so please contact the Clerk at least 24 hours before the meeting if you wish to attend, on 810111 or by email at [clerk@greatbardfield-pc.gov.uk](mailto:clerk@greatbardfield-pc.gov.uk). An invitation and link to the meeting will be sent to you.

The next meeting will be held on Wednesday 10<sup>th</sup> February at 7pm.

**Carolynne Ruffle**  
Chair

## Town Hall Hiatus

**W**e are still not able to use our Town Hall as gatherings are banned. I am very much hoping we can get in there again with friends later this year, when restrictions are lifted, we are all vaccinated and feel safe to meet people again in close proximity. The clubs can restart and parties will be welcome.

The Town Hall Committee continues to meet, albeit by Zoom, though we had two separate teams putting up and decorating the Christmas tree outside the Hall, and then the reverse in early January. I think it was the best tree yet. Thank you to the Parish Council, Bardfield Charities, The Bardfield Times and the Town Hall committee for funding this tree. We hope it brought some cheer for those passing by.

We are starting to look at necessary repairs and works to the range of cottages along the left-hand side of the Town Hall (looking towards the Hall), which includes the Community Information Point. This is all part of the Town Hall site and under our responsibility. Considered to be a very historic range of buildings, they will need to be treated with respect and care. It is not easy, of course, to investigate and undertake works currently but it is on our agenda.

**Carolynne Ruffle, Town Hall Committee**



Town Hall Yard: Edward Bawden



## Cauliflower, Egg and Celery Cheese

As we are all staying in more at the moment, I thought I would suggest a recipe that is comforting and familiar but with a bit of a twist.

### Cauliflower, Egg and Celery Cheese

For 2 people, but can easily be made for more.

#### Ingredients

1 Cauliflower  
75gm Strong Cheddar Cheese grated  
3 Sticks of Celery  
1 tsp English Mustard  
2 Hard Boiled Eggs  
1 tbsp Dried Breadcrumbs  
1 Large Onion  
1 Bay leaf  
50gm Butter  
Nutmeg  
50gm Plain Flour  
Salt and Black Pepper  
1/2 pint Milk  
Chopped Parsley

#### Method

- Pre-heat your oven to 200 deg.C
- Trim and wash the cauliflower and and put into 1/4 pt of boiling salted water with the bay leaf.
- Cover and cook for about 10 mins. It should still be a little firm. Drain it keeping the cooking water, break into pieces when a bit cooler and place in a buttered dish suitable for the oven.
- Wash and chop the celery and place in the saucepan with a little of the butter and cook until slightly softened but not coloured. Add the rest of the butter and cook the chopped onion gently with the celery for about 8 minutes. Then stir in the flour to soak up the butter and

cook it for a couple of minutes before adding the milk a little at a time, stirring all the time.

- Add the mustard and then some of the cooking water from the cauliflower until you have a sauce that will coat the cauliflower, not too thin. Add about 25gm Cheddar to the sauce and season well with salt and pepper and a good grating of nutmeg or a good pinch of ground nutmeg if you don't have the whole nutmeg. Taste to check the seasoning. Stir in the parsley.
- Cut the eggs into quarters and place in the dish with the cauliflower. Pour the sauce over the cauliflower and eggs. Sprinkle over the rest of the cheese, then the breadcrumbs.
- Add a few extra flecks of butter and bake on a high shelf until the cheese has browned and melted and it is all piping hot.



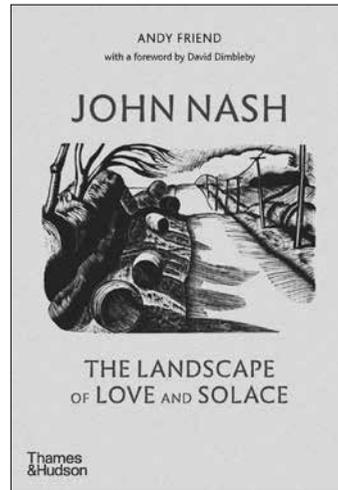
For another twist you could add some chopped cooked bacon to the cauliflower before pouring over the sauce. You could also add sliced tomatoes to the top or even anchovies if you like them.

A warming dish for these cold February days.

**Sheila Keynton**

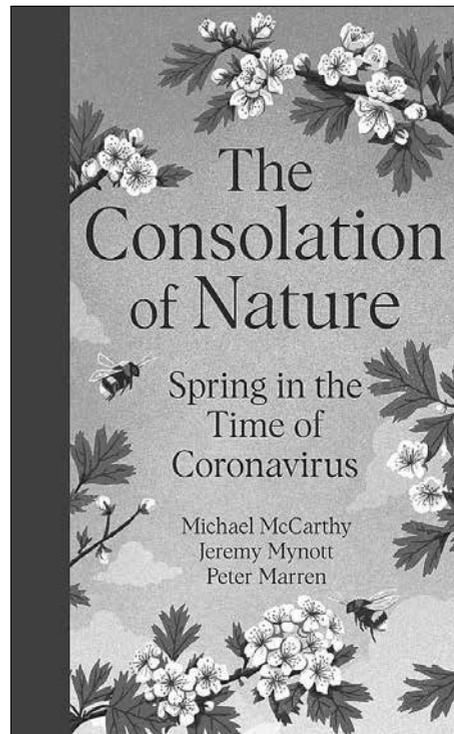
## Page Turners

**M**y Lockdown January read has been Andy Friend's beautiful new book, *John Nash: The Landscape of Love and Solace*. Nash, noted for his evocative representations of the English landscape and for his work as a war artist, described himself as an 'artist-plantsman'. He spent much of his life in East Anglia, in the village of Wormingford, Suffolk and was a friend of Edward Bawden and a visitor to Brick House. The book explores Nash's personal and professional relationships and the unconventional life he shared with his wife Christine and their 'outside loves'. Beautifully illustrated with Nash's work, this is a book to treasure.



*The Consolation of Nature: Spring in the time of Coronavirus*: Michael McCarthy, Jeremy Mynott, Peter Marren

Nature has become very significant for us over the last year, providing solace in a time of great anxiety. Many people have discovered the wonderful footpath network that criss-crosses our village and we have had the time to watch the seasons unfold. Last spring when the pandemic began three close friends living in different parts of the country agreed to record their experiences of the spring in minute detail, sharing their wonder and delight at the natural world. This lovely book is what they discovered by literally walking out of their front doors



and writing about what they saw.

*A Pinch of Nom, 100 delicious slimming recipes*: Kay Allinson and Kay Featherstone.

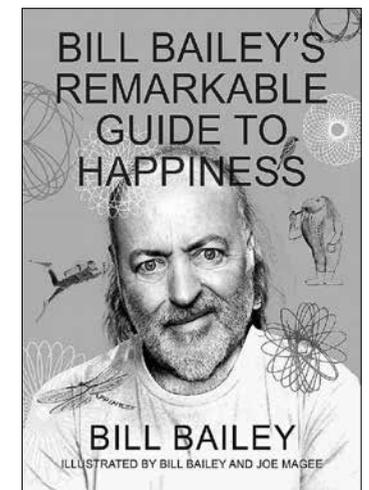
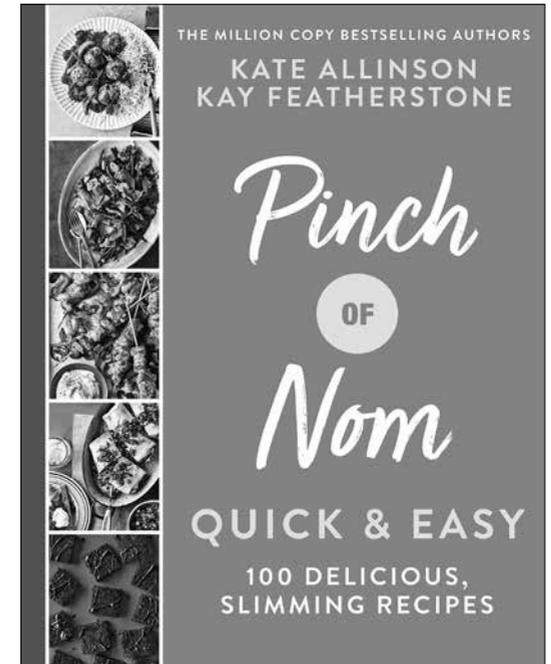
If you're a cookery book addict here's a new one that you might actually use! The recipes are quick, easy, low in calories and flexible for the current situation when some ingredients may be hard to get hold of. They cater for vegans and vegetarians as well as carnivores. There's a section on batch cooking, ideal for families, and great ideas for everyday recipes and dishes for special occasions

- ready for future dinner parties! The brightly coloured photographs on each page positively tempt you to try them for yourselves. Squashage Fingers anyone?

*Bill Bailey's Remarkable Guide to Happiness*.

Bill Bailey has already cheered everyone up by winning *Strictly* and showing that men of a certain age can dance, and now his book, *Bill Bailey's Remarkable Guide to Happiness*, has been described as 'The Feelgood Book of the Year!' He asks the question, 'What makes us happy?' and sets out to discover the answer. The book is thoughtful and written in a gently humorous style, illustrated with his own drawings. Something to cheer your February evenings and make you smile. And remember, spring is coming!

**'Bibliophile'**



## From the Reverend Dr Robert Beaken

My dear friends,

After a few last minute hiccups, Christmas 2020 proved to be surprisingly moving. In December 2020, the Government introduced a system of 'tiers' to try to combat the spread of Covid-19. Great Bardfield found itself in tier 4, whilst Little Bardfield was in tier 2. With 24 hours notice we took the decision to transfer the Midnight Mass from St Katharine's to St Mary's, to make it easier for more people to attend. At the last minute our flower ladies worked wonders and transformed the interior of St Mary's. On Christmas Day a small choir sang carols during the service, and we had many appreciative comments over the next few days.

On Boxing Day, Little Bardfield was transferred to tier 4, which meant that movement between the parishes was possible again, and for a while we found ourselves back to normal, or at least what passes for normal in the present Coronavirus pandemic.

On 8 January 2021, because of the deteriorating national medical situation, the Diocese of Chelmsford asked us temporarily to suspend public worship. Both our churches remain open for individual private prayer and food for Braintree Food Bank may still be left in the basket at the back of St Mary's.

I continue to celebrate the Eucharist on Sundays. Some of these services have been filmed and can be found on YouTube under 'The Benefice of Great and Little Bardfield.' Several parishioners have telephoned to ask me to pray for people, and I am always very happy to receive such requests. Let us hope we shall be able to resume public worship before too long.

I should like to draw to a close by expressing my condolences and sincere sympathy to everyone who has lost a loved one to Covid-19; and I should also like to express warm admiration and appreciation to NHS staff, members of the emergency services, St John Ambulance, and everyone else who have lost loved ones and yet have carried on caring for other people. There are some truly remarkable people in our midst.

With my love, prayers and blessing,

**Father Robert**

## Darker Nights – Home Security

*Can you spot an empty house? The burglar will.*

During winter, houses are more likely to be burgled in the early evening. Put lights on timers in the rooms you use most to make it look like you're in. Below are a few more tips:



1. Close and lock all windows and doors every time you leave the house or go to bed. Make sure that the door is locked properly i.e. lift the handle, turn the key and then remove the key ensuring that it is available for you to exit in case of emergency but out of sight from prying eyes.
2. If you have a burglar alarm use it at all times, even if just popping out for a moment, or zone off areas before going to bed.
3. Leave lights on timers or radios on in the rooms you use the most, invest in a TV simulator such as 'Fake TV' to make it look like you are in. Fit external lighting using energy saving bulbs or LED's which are activated by a dawn to dusk sensor. If burglars see your house has security lighting they are less likely to approach for fear of being seen.
4. Secure your boundaries and ensure access to your back garden is not easily obtained, lock gates and consider some spiky plants. Look out for climbing aids such as wheelie bins that may make it easier for the burglar to get in. Keep sheds, garage and other outbuildings locked securely, as they may contain valuable items or tools that may be used to break into your house.
5. Use forensic marking or other property marking methods to identify your property and display any product signage/labels. Keep an inventory of your property including serial numbers and photographs. This can be done in a paper version or on an online asset recording product. Make sure you include details such as identifying marks, value, and purchase date.

Information on security products including property marking products and, asset recording products can be found at: [www.securedbydesign.com](http://www.securedbydesign.com). For further crime prevention information visit: [www.essex.police.uk/cp/crimeprevention](http://www.essex.police.uk/cp/crimeprevention)

## Village People – Belinda Savill

**A**lthough Belinda was born in Great Dunmow, she really belongs in Great Bardfield. Both parents were from established Bardfield families. Her father, Norman Barker, was born in a cottage at Bridge End, although he moved to Great Dunmow when he was ten because his father had a job driving steam lorries for Haslers Corn Merchants. Several years later, at a dance in Foakes Hall, he met a Bardfield girl, and they began courting. They married in 1951 after Norman had returned from a four year National Service tour of duty in India with the Royal Tank Regiment. He went to work at Smith's Garage, next to The Foakes Hall, and eventually they moved in above the garage, so that when Belinda, their only child, was growing up, she could look out her bedroom window and see the place where her parents first met.



Norman ended up managing both the original Smith's Garage and a second branch, also in Dunmow (one was a Ford dealership, the other British Motor Company or BMC). Belinda, to her mother's disappointment, grew up something of a tomboy, and from the age of five, loved to go water-skiing with her father in Brightlingsea. In an attempt to civilise her, her mother enrolled her in dance lessons. She did not become more ladylike, nor did she take to ballet, but her imagination was captured by the pageantry of dance shows and theatre productions. She found herself participating in the Dunmow Pantomime at the age of nine and she was hooked.

Belinda's strong family ties to Great Bardfield were also an important part of her childhood. Her father's sisters, Aunt Win and Aunt Marge, lived next door to each other in numbers 1 and 2 Vine Street respectively, and she would spend most of her school holidays staying with Aunt

Marge. She loved it, in spite of the spartan accommodation. Electricity had not yet been installed upstairs and neither had flushing toilets: she remembers "gazundas" (chamber pots) which were emptied into a tank in the garden to be collected later by the "Lavender Men." She was constantly pestering her aunts to be allowed to visit Pipers, the shop on Bridge Street – a treasure trove of toys and goodies for a small child.

There were three apple trees at the bottom of Aunt Marge's garden and nowhere except the bath to store the apples, so, the bath at No.2 being out of commission due to apples, she would pop next door to Aunt Win for her bath. Aunt Win was a glovemaker for Harrods, hand-crafting the gloves, which would then be taken to London in a horse-drawn vehicle.

When she left school, Belinda got a job in the Advertising Sales department of a local newspaper She carried on appearing in, and helping with, the Dunmow Pantomime as she grew up – and one day she realised that she and a fellow panto enthusiast, John Savill, were rather keen on each other. John ran a fruit and vegetable shop, and when he and Belinda married, she left her newspaper job so she could help with the family business. It was hard work; and then when the supermarkets arrived in Dunmow, the shop couldn't compete, and the family, which by then included two daughters, Emma and Katie, moved from their cottage in Dunmow to a house on Stortford Road and John and Belinda ran the business from home, often driving through the night to sell at the London markets first thing in the morning.

Then when Katie was 8 and Emma 10, disaster struck. John had a brain haemorrhage. He survived, but was unable to work. Belinda carried on with the business for as long as she could, but after a couple of exhausting years, it became clear that a lifestyle which had been hard enough for two was nearly impossible for one, and Belinda was forced to close the business down. Her father suggested that she move to Great Bardfield and live in Aunt Marge's old house. It was the perfect solution. "It felt as though I was supposed to be there," remembers Belinda. She started working for Tesco and of course, stayed involved with the Dunmow Panto group.

Life in Great Bardfield was not plain sailing because of John's health issues, but Belinda loved being in the village where she had spent so many happy days as a child. Then in 2014 John passed away. Emma and Katie, who were 13 and 11 when they moved to Great Bardfield,

had grown up and left home. Katie, who stayed local, is an estate agent and Emma lives in Manchester and works as a chef. Belinda retained her involvement with the Dunmow Pantomime and by now had a key organisational role. Each year, her winter was completely taken over by rehearsals, publicity and costume creation and the Vine Street attic is crammed with colourful props and equipment.

In recent years Belinda's Bardfield life has been enriched by the arrival of Katie and son-in-law Rob's children, Stanley and Joseph. Katie, Rob, and now Stanley are all involved in the pantomime, and another of the trusty Panto crew, Terry, is now Belinda's partner. All of them are bitterly disappointed that the Panto couldn't go ahead this year – but are not looking behind them (sorry!) but ahead to the festivities next year!

**Anna Bass**

## The Tapestry of History

History is so much more interesting now than in my childhood when learning the dates of the Kings and Queens of England was the height of ambition. Today the internet and easier access to the vast vaults of documents in our repositories of knowledge ensure that it is a much richer tapestry. Visits to the Essex Record Office and the London Metropolitan Archive are anticipated as a result of tantalising references found in online searches.

Our museum is also part of this repository and items kept there stimulated some memories in the more ordinary aspects of life.

I well remember accompanying my parents to the shops, where purchases were recorded in the book to be paid for at the end of the month. Today this cashflow is managed by credit card and contactless payment – no paper trail for future generations to peruse. Fortunately the museum has two such ledgers, generously donated by locals, in their collection. One for 1917 and the other for 1939 from which I have picked out some items to compare prices with the modern day.

First 1917,		2020
Loaf of bread	6d	18s 0d
Butter	6d	£1 13s 7d
Suet	1s 5d	£1 15s 0d
Lyles Golden Syrup	1s 2d	£1 5s 10d
Sugar	3d	14s 10d

Candles	1s 9d	£2 12s 0d
Lifebuoy soap	6d	18s 0d
Cherry Blossom shoe polish	2d	£2 18s 0d
	6s 3d	£12 15s 3d

Interestingly, prices had not increased much by 1939.

1939		2020
Kellogg's Flakes	5d	£2 4s 0d
Rice Krispies	8d	£2 11s 0d
All Bran	8d	£2 14s 3d
Quaker Oats	8d	£1 10s 0d
Ryvita	10d	£1 0s 0d
Marmite	2s 6d	£2 18s 5d
Tin of Sardines	10d	11s 0d
	6s 7d	£13 8s 8d

Whilst the above items might be expected of a grocer's shop in a village, the breadth of their stock is illustrated by this shopping list recorded one day in 1939.

Toothbrush	1s 0d
4 Coat hangers	1s 0d
3 Stockings	3s 9d
Pair of slippers	3s 6d
6 Dusters	2s 0d
2yds Elastic	9d
	12s 0d

Our excellent local "Grocer" still stocks many of the items mentioned above.

To put these prices into perspective.

For a 54 hour week, an agricultural worker would earn about

- 30 shillings in 1917
  - 38 shillings in 1939
- and no allowance for walking time to the fields.

The minimum wage today for a 37 hour week is approximately £330.

How much richer this tapestry would be with access to the same information for a local greengrocer and butcher.

**'The History Puzzler'**

## GREENFINGERS

**H**ands up those with a Pampas grass. Not many affirmatives I guess but a snippet from the press:

### 'Pampas plumes plundered from gardens for Christmas decorations!'

These stolen items sold at £25 a stem because they're in fashion again. Quite the norm for fashion, furniture and plants to be in vogue after an elapse of 4 or 5 decades, hence - re-enter the garden stage conifers and heathers! Popular as easy maintenance, changing colour throughout the year, but that dwarf conifer was often a giant in disguise. Rockeries may be next.



Loving flowers, my preference would be trendy grasses mixed with verbena and gaura. A stunning combination either side of a path, an idea 'pinched' from the glorious Ulting Wick garden near Maldon. Oh to be able to visit beautiful places again, say I wistfully.

### Back down to earth, here is a guide to tasks for February:

- Dig up, split and replant in smaller clumps of your snowdrops to make a colony for 2020.
- Cut down the dead and decayed plants in your borders including those clematis that flower late summer with the abundance of small flowers, although these should be cut 12 ins up from the ground.
- Prune your roses.
- Sow sweet peas indoors then at the end of the month stand the pots outside but against the house wall or in a cold frame until March.
- Garden centres are open, or catalogues and the internet are a source of bulbs. Lilies and the overlooked beauties, Dutch irises. Send for some and think of summer.

Happy gardening. 🌱

## Winters in Great Bardfield

*In her little book Bardfield Memories the late Elsie James, recalls skating on the River Pant, illustrated with her delightful sketch.*

Editor



*A moonlight skating party*

**H**ow many of you have a pair of skates hanging in a shed? At the beginning of this century and during the First World War and into the 1920s, winters were severe enough for the River Pant to be frozen over frequently. What fun we had as crowds of people were able to skate or slide from the bridge to the water-mill. I have a very early recollection of being taken to see a moonlight skating party with the Brunwins, Adsheads, my father Edgar Piper, and others. Gangs of boys went sliding on Blue Gate Hall pond whilst Little Bardfield children enjoyed themselves on the Rectory pond or moat.

**Elsie James**

## Great Bardfield Horticultural Society

The Banksian Medal is one of a number of medals awarded by the Royal Horticultural Society, and is named after the great scientist Sir Joseph Banks (1743-1820).

We normally award the Banksian Medal at our Summer Show each year to the person who gets the most prize money in the flowers and vegetables sections. However since the show did not take place in 2020 the Committee decided to give the award to Tansey Bolsom in recognition of her enthusiastic, good humoured and invaluable help to the Society with our Spring and Summer Shows over many years—thank you so much Tansey.

We were also delighted to read that Lawrence Rawlinson, one of our longstanding members from Rayne, has been presented with one of the Pride of Essex Awards 2020. Very well deserved.

Last September, we sent a letter round to all our members cancelling our meetings for the rest of 2020 but being somewhat optimistic that we may be able to hold our already postponed AGM and talk "A Year in the Cut Flower Garden" on Saturday, February 27th-Government regulations permitting. Sadly that will not be taking place but keeping fingers crossed for later in the year.



### Quiz for you - by way of a change!

1. The love apple is the original name for what?
  2. How can you tell the age of a tree?
  3. Which plant takes its name from the Italian phrase for beautiful women?
  4. Which grain is used to make semolina?
  5. Which television presenter and gardener owns a garden in Herefordshire called Longmeadow?
  6. Which garden in the Cotswolds is notable for its miles of sculptured hedges?
  7. Which plant, widespread in Britain, if touched causes a serious chemical reaction which makes skin hypersensitive to ultraviolet light?
  8. Which kings lived at Kew Palace at Kew Gardens?
  9. Which garden plant in the 17th century was exchanged as a form of currency?
  10. What is the art of cutting shrubs into ornamental shapes called?
  11. Often called England's greatest gardener, what is Capability Brown's given first name?
  12. The spice, saffron, comes from which flower?
  13. On which continent did broccoli originate?
  14. What herb beginning with 'A' has soothing properties?
  15. Roughly, how many varieties of avocado are there? 5, 50, 500 or 5,000?
  16. What vitamin is most prevalent in a lime?
  17. True or false? Chelsea is Britain's largest flower show.
  18. What type of goldfish are often found in decorative garden ponds?
  19. How long does it take to produce asparagus the first time you plant it?
  20. What is another more common name for an Alligator Pear?
- Answers next month.

### Best Wishes for 2021.

**For any information about the Society please contact Linda Prior 811641**

## Nature Notes Water Voles

**W**e seem to hear water voles mentioned quite a lot by conservation groups and experts all saying they are in decline and what a disaster it is. But we are never told why they are in decline or why they are considered so important, so let's take a look at the facts.

The water vole is a semi aquatic rodent often mistakenly called a water rat. They do somewhat resemble a small rat in appearance although they have a blunt round face with small black eyes much different to the pointed face of a rat. They are in fact members of the vole family but much bigger than the common vole, weighing 200 to 350 grams. They have a life expectancy of six months to one and a half years.



On average a female will give birth to 5 litters per year. They become sexually mature at 5 weeks of age. A female can give birth to a litter 22 days after the last one with 2 to 8 in a litter so we may wonder why their numbers are in decline!

The main predator is the mink. A female mink can get inside a water vole burrow and wipe-out a whole colony in one swoop. Mink have been on the increase for several reasons. A lot of mink were released from mink farms by animal liberation activists, others just escaped and some were released when the demand for skins fell away. They have caused havoc in lots of ways to wildlife in general not least to water voles. I think mink is a subject for another set of nature notes!

Other predators include birds of prey, foxes, stoats, cats and even pike have been known to take water vole. The water vole's main habitat is in the banks of waterways and ponds but they can be found away from water and even in gardens. They live in family groups: several females

with a dominant male in a series of burrows with several chambers at different heights. Depending on water levels some chambers are individual nesting places, some communal and some for storing food for lean times. They use one chamber for waste food and excrement which is packed tight and as it rots creates heat so they even have central heating in winter! They don't hibernate but become less active to conserve energy. In very cold weather they seal the entrance to their burrows from the inside with earth and coarse grass stalks. Their diet consists of green coarse vegetation, roots, rhizomes, and tubers. A farmer once found a burrow which contained one hundred weight of small potatoes which they had collected from his field! The coarse vegetation is neatly cut into lengths. Like all rodents their teeth keep growing all their lives and chewing through tough stalks and shoots wears them down and keeps them healthy.

It is their diet that makes them so useful since they destroy a lot of coarse unwanted vegetation. They need to eat 80 percent of their body weight each day and as food gets less plentiful they move to a new patch to set up a new territory. This encourages growth of finer plants and wild flowers so improving the environment along our water courses. Other small mammals often move into their old burrows.

On warm sunny days they like to sunbathe! They build platforms on the riverbank with lengths of vegetation to lay on. This is when they are most vulnerable to birds of prey. These neat platforms are real giveaways of water vole activity to people involved in counts. When disturbed they dive into the water with a distinct plop. They are good swimmers both above and below the surface.

Statistics tell us that water vole numbers are in decline and they were put on the endangered species list a few years ago but the decline has slowed due mostly to limited control of mink. There is a lot of work being done but progress is slow. In this difficult time of Covid 19 many more people are taking walks in rural areas. Why not use these walks to see if you can find evidence of water voles? Now is a good time because they become active from the end of January through to the end of November. If you become very interested you can become part of the National Monitoring program by contacting the People's Trust for Endangered Species web site. Have fun.

**Mac Beanland**

## THE HUNDRED PARISHES SOCIETY

www.hundredparishes.org.uk

The local pub has long been a focal point of the community. Samuel Pepys in his diary described the pub as “the heart of England”. Beer was once much safer to drink than contaminated water.

Many of our local pubs are centuries old, built when most of the population were illiterate. They had distinctive names and simple signs to identify them. As early as 1393 Richard II required landlords to erect signs so that ale houses were clearly visible to his inspectors, who judged the quality of the ale. Nowadays, not all have signs but there are many interesting names.

The Saracen's Head in Great Dunmow, opposite the market place, is a 16th-century coaching inn. A Saracen was an Arab Muslim who in the Middle Ages fought against Christians for control of The Holy Land.



The Blind Fiddler in Anstey takes its name from a tale of George the blind fiddler who for a bet entered a tunnel said to run from a pit to the castle mound a mile away. He was accompanied by his dog. A scream was heard, the dog reappeared singed from head to tail, but George was never seen again!

In Bartlow, The Three Hills dates from around 1800 AD and is named after the parish's giant Roman burial mounds which also feature on the village sign.

The Sword in Hand in Westmill takes its name from the coat of arms of the Greg family who once lived in the parish and were generous benefactors. It has an unusual and distinctive new sign.

Let's hope that we can soon all return to fully enjoying the hospitality of our local hostelries. Each of those mentioned here can be found on one of the walks described on the Society's website.

**Ken McDonald, Secretary**

*Editor: Ken's 100 Parishes article prompted me to think about the history of our village pubs and to seek further information from Jenny Rooney.*

## Watering holes of Great and Little Bardfield

The earliest date we have of a tavern somewhere in Great Bardfield is 1265 thanks to an account of a gruesome murder. An inquisition found that two men quarrelled on their way home to Little Bardfield after leaving the tavern where they had been drinking. Michael Aboveton struck Arnold le Knyth between the shoulders with a scythe and Arnold, in self defence, hit Michael on the head with a hatchet, killing him. The account of the inquisition used the word tavern which, in the 13th century meant a place where people gathered to drink alcohol, be served food and travellers would receive lodging. This might suggest a reasonably large building with stabling attached. Sadly, we have no way of knowing where in Great Bardfield this tavern might have been.

Bardfield Fair Day – June 22<sup>nd</sup> – was held as early as 1262. This important event was held annually until well into the 20th century. Many village folk will remember Bardfield Fair Day, especially the fun fair. In its hey-day the fair attracted visitors from around the country to trade horses, sheep, cattle and farm produce and enjoy a well-deserved day off work. The village taverns and inns would have been full to the rafters and no doubt The Cage would have several inebriated overnight occupants. On Bardfield Fair Day, Ale-wives would have been permitted to sell their home-brewed ale by displaying an alewand or branch cut from a tree and hung from a window. Since Roman times beer was brewed on a domestic scale in most households and commonly drunk with all meals. This was 'small beer' which had a very low alcohol content of around 1% and was drunk by all members of the household, children and servants included.

Fresh water would have been available too, but ale, brewed from yeast, malt and water, and later beer, which included hops, would have been equally available and perhaps preferred for its flavour and calorific content. Before the industrial revolution all pubs and inns would have brewed their beer on the



*The Gate Great Bardfield*

premises. We know from the old field names that hops were grown in several locations around the village to flavour the ale.

So what do we know about the pubs of Great and Little Bardfield? Great Bardfield had seven, two of which still thrive – The Bell and The Vine. Many residents will remember with affection The Three Horseshoes and The White Hart. I'm not sure when The Crown (formerly The Saracen's Head, now Crown House), The Gate, or The Boot (now Cottesbrook) closed – can anyone help?



*The Spread Eagle Great Bardfield*



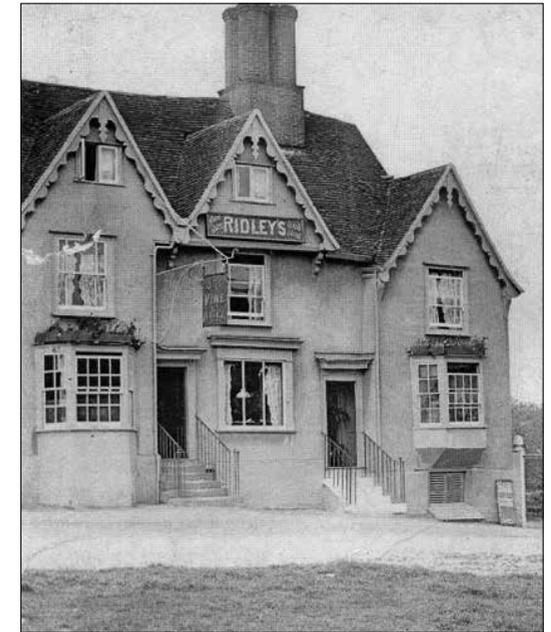
*The Crown Great Bardfield*

There was also the off-licence at Oxen End, which burnt down, and the Kicking Dickey near Petches Bridge which closed some time in the 1970s? Little Bardfield had The Spread Eagle which closed in the late 1970s.

The White Hart and The Vine were the largest of Great Bardfield's pubs and both had stabling for horses and provided lodging. They were used for meetings of village groups and societies (the Town Hall was not built until 1850) and frequently used for auctions of land and property. The White Hart was an important coaching inn and could provide stabling for over 20 horses. The stagecoach stopped there and later it was where local bus and coach services stopped en route to London. The smallest of the pubs was The Boot which was probably not much more than a taproom.

Seven pubs for one small village? Well, without further research to find out exactly when they were in business it is hard to be sure all seven were operating at the same time, or indeed how many we once had but have absolutely no record of. Either way I think we can agree we've been very well provided for over the centuries!

**Jenny Rooney**



*The Spread Eagle Great Bardfield*



*Edward Bawden's sketch of The Bell – artist John Aldridge leans on the bar*



# Countryfile

Sadly, I feel it is time to hang up my hat, take off my boots and have a well-earned rest from writing Countryfile on a regular basis.

My friend George Hervey-Murray, who lived at Sergeant Bendlowes Cottage, started the *Bardfield Times* 39 years ago and for the first copy he suggested I did an article on farming. In those days I wrote under the name 'Nonnymouse' and it was a few years later that I revealed my identity!! Since then, I would like to thank a number of readers who have complimented me on my writing and have found the subject very interesting.

I would like to congratulate Michael Hitchcock on his article in last month's magazine. It reminded me of how farming operated 70 years ago and when I was starting out on my farming career. The industry has come such a long way in that comparatively short time. From 12 men on the farm to just 2 full time employees at the present moment.

With Brexit sorted, or so we thought, with a new deal for exports and imports of fresh food we are now faced with too much red tape, and disruptions are going to happen for a while. The outlook for agriculture is changing with the emphasis on the environment but with hold ups at the ports in the last few weeks it proves we must be as self sufficient as we possibly can be in maintaining our own food supply.

So, I would like to wish all our readers a better 2021 and before too long you will be able to get out and enjoy the countryside in the spring.

**Tony Hayward**

*What an achievement – almost 40 years of articles about the changing scene of farming and the impact of the policies of various governments on how our food is produced. Tony's articles have always been interesting, sometimes controversial, and have improved our understanding of life in the countryside, providing a valuable record of the history of farming. Tony has given many years of service to this and other rural communities through his involvement in Parish Councils, not just locally but nationally. His contribution was recognized when he was awarded the OBE for his work as Chair of the National Association of Local Councils. He will be a hard act to follow. Editor.*

## THE OLD DAYS with Michael Hitchcock

I found the Iron picture puzzle answers in your last edition very interesting. During the war the Government came round to help themselves to anything in the way of metal to turn into tanks etc.



*Chapman's workforce*

You will see evidence of this round some of the graves in the Churchyard. My Father pleaded with them to spare the iron fence in front of Tanners on the grounds of historic and sentimental interest as it was made on the premises by iron founder William Young. He always left his name on items that he had made, so you could come across an old water tank or something similar!

Either after or during his time the very large firm of E.W. Chapman came into existence. This occupied what is now Durham Close and the open thatched building in Gobions garden is the remains of the establishment, the first item on your left when you entered the works.

This was a farriers and there were always quite a few horses waiting in a queue for their turn to get new shoes fitted. Lots of other sheds were devoted to different branches of the trade and a lot of men were employed. Waste ground at the top of the establishment was used to park large steam traction engines to be dumped or await their turn for repair. That just suited us boys, who spent many happy hours playing on them.

**Michael Hitchcock**

# Looking back: Our year of Lockdown



Great Bardfield Primary School



Phoenix class pupils social distancing in class



Edie learning about Christopher Columbus



Great Bardfield Memorial VE Day by Will Edwards

Bardfield's own Banksy? The stones appear, as if by magic



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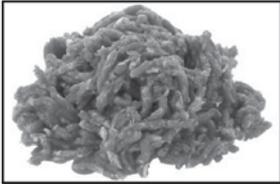
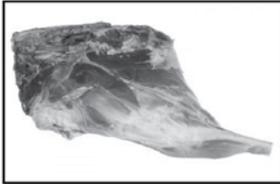
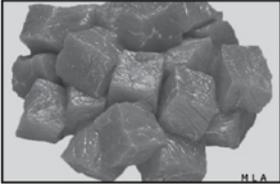
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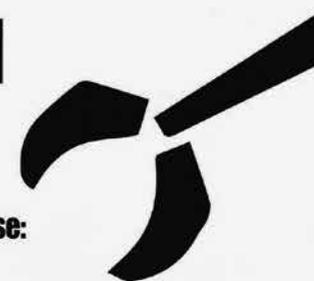
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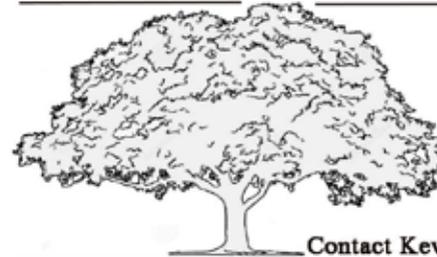
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## DO YOU NEED CHILCARE HELP BEFORE OR AFTER SCHOOL?



From September, we will have spaces for our Breakfast and Afternoon School Clubs, based in a warm, safe building behind Great Bardfield Primary School and please note your child doesn't have to go to the school. We also offer a wraparound service with the Preschool.

So, let us tell you some information about us and please note that children must be registered with us before any bookings can be taken. This is a quick process and will confidentially cover preferences, allergies and any medical info we need to know. All staff have First Aid and Safeguarding qualifications and our Managers are qualified in Early Years Foundation Stage.

Mary is the Manager of our Breakfast Club which is open 7.30-8.45am and we will drop them off at the top playground with their teacher. We offer a delicious Breakfast between 7.30-8am only (due to our ratios of qualified staff to children being affected when someone is needed to cook). This can be a hot cooked plate including; Sausage, Bacon, Eggs (scrambled, boiled or fried), Beans or Spaghetti or Hash Browns or Toast, Pancakes or Waffles. There is always cereal too and they will be asked on arrival what they prefer.

We cater for Gluten Free, Vegetarian and Pescatarian morning and afternoon.

Pat is the Manager of our After School Club and children can be picked up from their classrooms or from the School's Clubs and brought back to us. Children from other schools can be dropped off directly at ours. Tea is served at ours 4.15-4.30.

A Hot Tea is provided every day and alternatives are available, such as hot soup, salads, sandwiches or fruit. There is always a pudding after the meal and a snack when they arrive.

We have Playstations, 'Monitored' Internet, X Box, Crafts, Board Games, a Football Table and Themed Days (see below) - everything is monitored to be age appropriate.

Here is an example of what we have running for kids to join in if they wish:

- Monday - Group Games/Board Games
- Tuesday - Crafts
- Wednesday - Story Times for Early Years
- Thursday - Art Club
- Friday - Film & Chill

There are limited spaces available so please book up block bookings, as soon as possible. Odd days/adhoc bookings are available and can only be made 1 week in advance and will depend on space being available. All bookings are payable and there are no monies returned.

You are welcome to come and visit us for a look around with your children on Mon-Fri 3-5.30pm. We look forward to seeing you and making your child feel really at home.

Great Bardfield After School Club, Great Bardfield Primary School, CM7 4RN  
 Tel: 01371 811580      Email: [afterschoolclub@outlook.com](mailto:afterschoolclub@outlook.com)  
 Facebook: [www.facebook.com/GBASC](http://www.facebook.com/GBASC)      Website: [www.greatbardfieldasc.btck.co.uk](http://www.greatbardfieldasc.btck.co.uk)

## Great Bardfield Parish

**Clerk to the Parish Council** clerk@greatbardfield-pc.gov.uk 810111

**Councillors** Carolynne Ruffle (Chair) 810986

Paul Kennedy 810540

Darren Hockley 810836

Simon Walsh 810451

Lynsi Hayward-Smith 07515 398402

Janet Dyson 07957 483207

Iain Graham 07831 595555

**Braintree District Council** 01376 552525

**Councillors** Cllr Peter Tattersley Cllr.ptattersley@braintree.gov.uk 07938 930003

Cllr Vanessa Santomauro Cllr.vsantomauro@braintree.gov.uk 07740 348528

**Police** for non-emergency enquiries dial 101

for emergency enquiries dial 999

## Little Bardfield Parish

**Chairman of the Parish Council** Andrew Davies davies@farmline.com

**Clerk to the Parish Council** Liz Williamson 07866 400607

LittleBardfieldParishClerk@gmail.com

**Uttlesford District Council** Saffron Walden 01799 510510

**Councillor** Cllr Sandi Merifield

cllrmerifield@uttlesford.gov.uk 07958 389 059

**Bardfield After School & Holiday Club** Pat Moore 811580

**Bardfield Carpet Bowls Club** Clifford Richardson 810782

**Bardfield Charities** Brenda Poston 810519

**Bardfield Players** Ian Ruffle 810986

**1st Finchingfield Scout Group** Mark Wells 810447

mark.2millside@btinternet.com

**Muddogs Youth Football** Tony Clarke-Holland 07710 506007

www.muddogs.co.uk/tch@thebcf.co.uk

**Gt Bardfield Primary School** admin@greatbardfield.essex.sch.uk 810252

**Gt Bardfield Pre-School** Kathy King 811580

**Gt Bardfield Historical Society** Marilyn Edwards 810555

**Gt Bardfield Horticultural Society** Linda Prior 811641

**Parish Priest Great & Little Bardfield** Fr. Robert Beaken 810267

**Catholic Priest** Fr. Richard Rowe 830808

**Town Hall Bookings** sarah.hymas@yahoo.com

**Tuesday Club** adriennepoulson@btinternet.com 811401

**Children's Clinic** (Finchingfield Freshwell Health Centre) 810328

**Refuse Collections** Gt. Bardfield Tuesdays from 7am,

L. Bardfield Thursdays from 7am.

**Mobile Library** Little Bardfield, Styles,

Thursday 10am fortnightly

Gt Bardfield Town Hall,

Thursday 11.15am fortnightly

**Museum and Cage** Every Saturday, Sunday & Bank Holiday from

Easter to the last Sunday in

September 2.-5.30pm.

**Community Information Point (CIP)** Thurs and Sat 10am – 11.00am 811327

**The Samaritans** 01245 357357



*Frosty morning by Barry Jones*