

Feb
2024

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Bardfield Times

News and views from Great Bardfield and Little Bardfield



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 **14th 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: Wintery morning

Above: Frosty Hogweed by Barry Jones

Editorial

It's the beginning of February and as the weather runs through a series of dramatic changes from freezing to unseasonal warmth we are all looking forward to signs that spring is coming. Snowdrops and aconites are just beginning pop their heads out in our gardens and on roadside verges. Although, as I write this, Storm Isha is howling though the village wreaking havoc across the country and the whole of the UK is under a Met Office warning! Roll on Spring.

Congratulations to Mac Beanland on the success of his book *From smokestacks to haystacks: my farming life*, which drew a large crowd at the launch before Christmas and required a reprint to meet the demand for copies. Read more on page 20.

It's good to see a new business starting up in the village and we wish John and Julie Hooker every success with their deli and greengrocery shop opening soon in Vine Street. Older residents remember times when Bardfield had a number of shops in the village centre to meet everyday needs. You can read some interesting memories of one of those shops which were shared, shortly before he died, by Michael Hitchcock, on page 25. Curiously, a number of the old shops in Bardfield had names that reflected their purpose: Clinkscapes the grocer, Bone the butcher and Fudges who sold sweets. Just like Happy Families!

In this issue we are pleased to welcome the first contribution from the Society of Friends (Quakers) who meet for worship every Sunday in the Friends Meeting House in Brook Street. Village groups often use the Meeting House for events and it will be interesting to learn more about the beliefs and activities of Quakers who have a long history in Great Bardfield.

You will see from the Parish Council report that volunteers are needed to help with the Community Garden project in the Quiet Space behind the Town Hall. If you have some time to spare to help with this exciting initiative or want to find out more contact the Parish Clerk, Kate Fox at clerk@greatbardfield-pc-gov.uk or by phone on 810111.

Janet Dyson

Great Bardfield Primary School

As we find ourselves dashing towards the end of January, the events of Christmas and the New Year seem like months ago!

In the lead up to Christmas, our younger children did us proud with a fantastic Nativity performance and our KS2 children wowed us with their singing in the Carol Concert at St Mary's



The Nativity

Church. We were delighted to be joined again by Bardfield Brass and by, the wonderfully patient, Father Alex accompanying us on the piano.

We also held a 'Carols and Mince Pies' event for senior members of the community which was thoroughly enjoyed by all. The children of Great Bardfield really do know when to pull out their best singing voices! Our huge appreciation to everyone involved in all of our productions.

Our new Christmas tradition of going to see the pantomime at the Town Hall was a great success. Thank you to our most fantastic PTA who organised everything down to the last detail. The children and staff had a really wonderful time. Our PTA also organised our 'Santa Event' before Christmas where children could visit Father Christmas and take part in lots of seasonal crafts. A total profit of £2259.36 was raised; to be shared between school

and the Pre-school. Well done and a huge thank you to everybody involved...the event was a huge success!

In the Autumn Term, our younger children studied The Great Fire of London and we were so grateful to Darren Hockley and his crew of trusty firefighters who brought in the fire engine to show the children. Garwood and Bawden Class were captivated by our visitors and found out lots about what it is like to be a fire fighter as well as getting a full tour of the fire engine.



Felix ready for action



The Rescue of Archie the Attendance Bear

The Spring Term is always a term in which the children can settle down and really focus on making progress in their learning. As we move through this term, we will hold our usual learning reviews for parents along with providing mid-year reports for each child. It is vital that we ensure each child in our school is treated as an individual and one of the things I am proudest of

is how well we know our children here at Great Bardfield Primary School.

As we move through the winter months and towards Easter, the staff here at school keep their fingers crossed for efficient boilers and a lack of snow! Hopefully it won't be long before we start to see the signs of Spring appearing.

Liz Crow, Headteacher

World Day of Prayer

(Formerly Women's Day of Prayer)

Friday 1st March 2024

at 10.30am

In The Quaker Meeting House

Great Bardfield

This year it is from Palestine

ALL WELCOME
Followed by refreshments



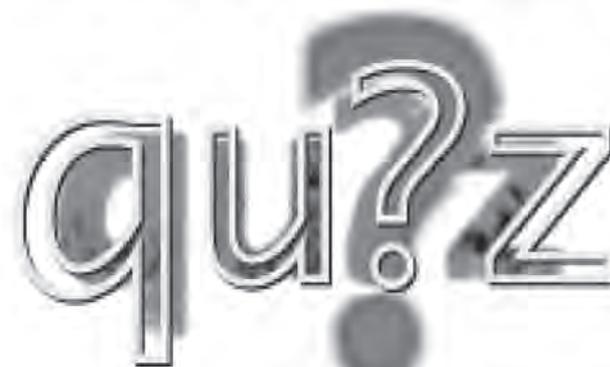
Adult Learning Within Reach

Great Bardfield Branch is pleased to announce that, subject to confirmation, a new course will be running in the Autumn term. Entitled "A taste of culture – the 10 most dynamic cultures of the world", this course explores ten dynamic cultures around the world and provides you with an opportunity to experience the lives of others, who are distant in proximity. Countries span across the five continents of the world! We intend to start on 19th September at 7.30pm in The Friends' Meeting House and run for 10 weeks with each session finishing at 9.30pm.

The anticipated cost is £80 for the course but free for people receiving income assessed benefits. Booking is required so that the venue is not overcrowded but there are sufficient students to run the course. Full refunds are available if cancellation is before the second session. When all details are confirmed we will display posters around the village and on the Community Facebook group.

New members are always welcome. To book on-line, please go to www.wea.org.uk. If you prefer to book by telephone, please call the Central Support Team on 0300 303 3464 or call Margaret Wass on 01371 810498 for more information.

GREAT BARDFIELD TOWN HALL



SATURDAY 16TH MARCH

7pm for 7.30 start

LICENSED BAR

£12 PER PERSON – MAX 8 PER TEAM

INCLUDING SUPPER

PAYABLE IN ADVANCE BY

BACS, CHEQUE OR CASH

To book and for bank account details please contact:

Patricia on mrspwalsh@aol.com or 07971 627407

Please let us know of any dietary requirements

A View from the Quaker Meeting House

The beginning of a new year is a wonderful time, my favourite time of the year when it's possible to relax a little after the busyness of Christmas and look forward with hope and anticipation to what the next 12 months will bring. This new year promises to bring great change: a possible change of government for the UK and for the international community of which we are part, great challenges as ways continue to be sought to bring peaceful solutions to the conflicts in various parts of the world. So, as we begin a new year together, I bring greetings from the Quaker Meeting here in Bardfield and a warm invitation to anyone wishing to come along and investigate what we are all about. We meet weekly at 10.30 on Sunday, sit together in deep silence for a little under an hour after which we depart to the kitchen and make excellent coffee. Quakers are noted for their practice of silent worship but we can and do talk together, frequently passionately and volubly over the coffee pot!



Our simple timber framed building at the top of Brook St. has been the home of Bardfield Quaker Meeting since 1806 when it was erected in part of the garden of Bucks House on Vine St. It has, of course, undergone some changes over the years but still retains a quiet simplicity: the Meeting room contains beautiful listed wood panelling and the walls are painted white and lined with wooden benches. There are no stained-glass windows, Simplicity is a central tenet of Quaker thought and is reflected in our building.

I am sometimes saddened by the presence of the metal gates that separate our Meeting House from the road: they are practical but they also seem to be a barrier, distancing us and our garden from the life of the village. The fact that the garden is a burial ground should not deter visitors from coming in; it is not consecrated ground, simply a quiet, peaceful resting place for Quakers who have died and visitors are always welcome to come in and spend some time sharing that peace.

As I write this the sun is coming through after days of cloud and rain and I am anticipating with great pleasure the emergence of the first snowdrops and aconites. It is a joyous season of hope and transformation from the darkness of winter into the warmth and light of spring. May it be joyful for you too.

JMB

Great Bardfield Parish Council report

New Pavilion

Work is progressing on the new pavilion with the final plumbing works, the flooring and CCTV due to be completed in the next few weeks.

We thank those that have donated so generously to the Pavilion Fund, following a request in recent editions of the Bardfield Times. If you would like to make a donation please contact the Parish Clerk, Kate Fox, at clerk@greatbardfield-pc-gov.uk or if you prefer the bank details are Great Bardfield Parish Council sort code 60-83-01 Account 2045992 and please leave your name as reference.

Playground Maintenance

Repairs to the wooden surround to the playground and replacement bark will be undertaken before the spring.

Planning Applications

Applications Discussed at December meeting:

27 Bardfield Centre, Braintree Road: Changes to permission previously given for the conversion of an office to a dwelling and an additional dwelling to the rear. No objections provided the Historic Buildings Officer's requirements are met.

Springfield House, Braintree Road: Demolition and replacement of existing dwelling. The PC objected to the inappropriate design and proposed materials in this open rural location

Tree works at 8 Smith's Yard, Braintree Road and Rosetta, Bridge End. No objections.

Applications Discussed at January meeting:

2 Mill Close: Weatherboarding to rear single storey extension. No objections provided the Historic Buildings Officer approves the materials to be used. Tree works at Glebe House, Braintree Road. No objections.

Update - Planning Appeal – 56 Houses on Braintree Road

We heard in late December that the planning inspector has rejected the developer's appeal, so this proposed development will not go ahead. Government planning guidelines have also recently been revised, so that land outside of village development line has more protection where a planning authority (in our case, Braintree District Council) has a Local Plan in place.

Community Garden

The Community Garden group will soon begin to develop our proposed Community Garden in the Quiet Space behind the Town Hall. This land is owned by the Parish Council for the use and enjoyment of the community, and we aim to make it an attractive public space with opportunities for residents to become involved in the planting and maintaining of fruit trees and bushes, wildflower areas, raised beds for vegetable planting, birdboxes, bee hotels and other habitats for wildlife.

We would like more people to become involved whether with planning and design or wielding a garden spade or fork. If you can spare even just a little time to this community project please contact the Parish Clerk, Kate Fox at clerk@greatbardfield-pc-gov.uk or by phone on 810111.

Highways/Pavements

Further to our ongoing reminders to Essex Highways about the state of the roads and pavements in and around Great Bardfield, we thank our District Councillor, Mark Ault, for also raising this issue with the County Council and Essex Highways. Despite some indications that work will be undertaken on the dangerous bend at Bridge End and the dreadful potholes in Great Saling this work has been cancelled several times and for no known reason. We understand that weather conditions have a detrimental effect on our road surfaces but some of these potholes have been causing issues for some time and are well overdue for repair.

Refuse Collection and Recycling

We have been asked to publish the dates for collection of our rubbish and recycling. If you have access to the internet the full calendar is available at www.braintree.gov.uk

Thanks to Pam Blackburn for her timely and useful reminders on Facebook. For others here are the dates for the coming month.

Bin Collection Dates - FEBRUARY

Grey Bin & Food Bin

Tuesday 6th
Tuesday 20th

Clear Recycling Bags & Food Bin

Tuesday 13th
Tuesday 27th

Please leave bins etc out by 7am on the collection date.

Note: From 4th March 2024, Green bins (garden waste) will only be emptied for those that have signed up to Braintree District Council's subscription service. For more information or to sign up, go to www.braintree.gov.uk/gardenwastesubscriptions or phone Customer Services on 01376 552525.

Recycling and Dog Waste Bags

The Parish Council provides these free of charge for residents of the village. You can collect them from the Community Information Point, adjacent to the Town Hall, which is open 10 – 12 on Thursdays and Saturdays.

Next Parish Council Meeting

The next meeting will be held on Wednesday 14th February at 7.00pm, in the Committee Room at the Town Hall. Members of the Public are welcome to attend and to raise any issues at the Public Forum which is held at the beginning of the meeting.

Happy 2024 from all on the Parish Council

Carolynne Ruffle
Chairperson

OLD BATTERIES

Don't forget you can deposit old domestic batteries
in the special box in the CIP
(open Thursday and Saturday 10am to 12 noon).

You might come across a few when you dig out the
Christmas decorations and ornaments - and before
you put them back in the loft in January!

Parish Clerk



First of all I would like to thank everyone who came to see our November production, 'Being of Sound Mind', I think that it was enjoyed and appreciated by everybody, one way or another, which is what we are here for!

We have just begun rehearsals and preparations for our next show 'In a Hole', which will take place in the Town Hall on the 2nd, 3rd and 4th of May (election allowing!). However we do find ourselves in need of some new technicians.

Stewart Penny, who has been running the sound and lights for several years is retiring in May, and Paul Boon, who has been an essential and valued part of the Players for many years, is increasingly busy and is taking a back seat. So we badly need two or three people with technical knowledge and ability, to take his place. We do have a young woman (Louise), who operated the lights last time, and did very well, along with Stewart, but we do need more help if anyone in our village (or nearby), is willing and able to provide it? The time involved is mostly around the last week or two of rehearsals, and specifically during the 'Play week', when we rehearse every evening, and tidy up on the Sunday morning after the show.

So (to quote Paul), 'if you know the difference between a phono plug and an XLR, and if you know what dimmer packs are, and what DMX addressing is, and would enjoy lighting a play and/or running the sound and other special effects, please get in touch'.

Regards, Ian
ian.ruffle@gmail.com

LITTLE BARDFIELD PARISH COUNCIL REPORT

Parish Council meeting on 6th September The Council welcomed their new Clerk, Jessica Ashbridge, and thanked Kate Rixon for her service. Parishioners had attended the meeting to raise the poor state of the road surface of Styles. It was determined that it would be chased up with the County and District Councils.

Parish Council meeting on 29th November

It was reported that Styles had been repaired. The budget and precept for 2024-2025 were determined. The precept was set at £3,500. The full minutes can be found at www.littlebardfieldparish.org.uk.

Councillor Vacancies

Little Bardfield Parish covers a large area including Oxen End, Hawkspur Green and Little Bardfield. There are positions for five councillors on the parish council, all volunteers, supported by a clerk (administrator). There are currently two vacancies for councillors. If you are at least 18 years old, live or work in the local area and

- would like to be directly involved in decisions that are made by the parish council
 - feel you could express local views in relation to local services
 - have ideas for projects, large or small
 - could help support the parish council's work
 - would welcome an opportunity to influence lasting change in your area
- we are keen to hear from you. Please contact the clerk on littlebardfieldparishclerk@gmail.com or 07779277647 for more details – without any obligation! Or email one of the current councillors. Their contact details can be found on the Notice Boards and the Little Bardfield website.

Next parish council meeting and a chance to get together

The council will have its next meeting on Wednesday 15th May, combined with the annual assembly of residents of the parish. This will start at 7.30pm, at the Cricket Pavilion at Little Bardfield Cricket Club. Full details will be on www.littlebardfieldparish.org.uk by early May. If you would like to bring anything to the council's attention, either at the meeting on 10 May or beforehand, please contact the clerk on 07779277647 or littlebardfieldparishclerk@gmail.com, or any parish councillor.

Town Hall Happenings

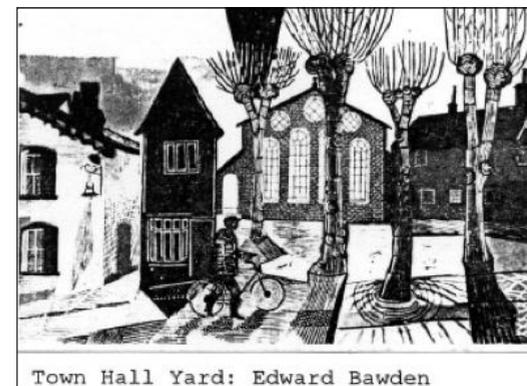
Our new Projector and Electric Screen is now in full use by the Cinema Club and is also available to show presentations and information to back up speakers. The Horticultural Society will be using the facility on 24th February.

In March we have the annual "Town Hall Quiz on Saturday 16th. This is usually a sell out so get your tickets early.

Finally, a reminder that the Town Hall Car Park is for use by people attending events. Recently there have been occasions when disabled visitors have had trouble accessing the hall due to cars parked by non-users. If you are not using the building please don't park, if you are using the building please park considerately.

John Maidman

Chair Great Bardfield Town Hall



Town Hall Yard: Edward Bawden

MOBILE LIBRARY BUS

MOBILE LIBRARY BUS VISITS GREAT BARDFIELD
ON THE FOLLOWING DATES

29 February

21 March

11 April

Between 11.55am and 12.25pm

If there is no room at the Town Hall to park
the bus will be located further along Dunmow Road

The Tuesday Club

At our January meeting we were paid a visit by a representative of the Creamer Fund. Most of us will know a little about the Fund and how it works to support the Freshwell Health Centre, but if anyone wants to know more take a look at their website, www.creamerfund.co.uk. The Creamer Fund was our chosen charity for 2023 and we were pleased to be able to give a cheque to help them continue their work.

We also held our AGM at the meeting, a time to reflect on the speakers we enjoyed during the year (who could forget the afternoon of Burlesque?), the summer outing to Beales Rose Nursery, and the splendid Christmas lunch.

The line-up of speakers for 2024 is looking very interesting and varied. At our next meeting on **13th February** we have Amanda Sutherland telling us about her Creative Journey, from sorting out her granny's button box as a small child, to working as a designer at London's Opera House, creating costumes for the Bond films and well known period dramas, to finally fulfilling her dream of creating individual accessories to sell under her own name. We look forward to seeing some of these after the talk.

We have many more treats in store for later months, including "Everything Strictly" "Through the Green Baize Door" "British Sign Language" and "Wild Life of Tanzania" to name just a few. More details of these and all the other talks nearer the time.

So....did you make some New Year Resolutions which have fallen by the wayside? Why not make one more, which will be much easier to keep, to join us for an afternoon, and if you enjoy the experience perhaps to join up for the year. We meet in the Town Hall on the second Tuesday of the month. Doors open at 2.00 and talk starts at 2.30. Everyone is welcome, visitors pay £5 including refreshments, and if you decide to become a member you will only pay £25 for the whole year.

Cherry Whitby

**For more details please contact the Club Secretary,
Marilyn Edwards on 01371 810555**

GREAT BARDFIELD TUESDAY CLUB

MY CREATIVE JOURNEY



A talk by Amanda Sutherland

"Once upon a time there was a little girl who loved playing with her dolls, making tiny clothes and sorting out her nanny's button box whilst dreaming of one day making grown up accessories and having a shop. Little did she know that one day her dreams would come true."

TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 13, 2024 at 2.30

GREAT BARDFIELD TOWN HALL

Non members of the Tuesday Club are very welcome

Visitors: £5 per talk

Horticultural Society

Despite the very wet winter, signs of spring are now thankfully well underway, the snowdrops have shown themselves to be amazingly weather-proof and the aconites are slowly coming through along with the Hellebores and Iris unguicularis. The crocuses are coming up and many daffodils are in bud, Winter jasmine, Winter Sweet, Cornus mass, Hazel catkins and the winter-flowering cyclamen are either in full bloom or well on their way.

Our Floral Art morning in December held in the Quaker Meeting House 'A Candlelit Christmas', was a great success and enjoyed by 24 participants (and helpers).

There were some lovely arrangements taken home, an excellent raffle, refreshments and homemade cakes. We recruited five new members at the event. We look forward to welcoming them to our 2024 events.

Our first meeting for 2024 is on **Saturday, February 24th** at 2.30pm in the Town Hall. The speaker will be Lucy Skellorn. Title of talk "Revival of a Garden and Plant Collections"

Much has been written about Cedric Morris, both as an artist and also a breeder of bearded irises and many other plants. He was a contemporary of the "Bardfield" artists, several he knew personally and visited. Books about Cedric as both an artist and gardener can be seen/purchased from "Between the Lines".

Less well known but arguably equally important is Sir Michael Foster who must be considered the father of iris breeding in this country. Breeding irises more than half a century before Cedric Morris, he began the "revolution" which was later taken up at Benton End.

Lucy Skellorn is the link between these two icons of the iris world. Lucy holds the National Collection of Irises introduced by her great, great grandfather Sir Michael Foster. Her interest was sparked when she was training to be a gardener and discovered the work of her illustrious ancestor.

She has made it her mission to find as many of Foster's irises as possible, her journey has led her to the Chelsea Flower Show and work with the Garden Museum.

Trained in fine art, she is now a researcher at Benton End House and Garden Trust, the home of the late artist and plantsman Cedric Morris, who developed a range of irises commemorated in his paintings. Cedric's garden was a collector's cabinet of rare and unusual plants, revered by

botanists and known to the iris fraternity for the 90 cultivars of bearded irises that he bred, many of which carry the Benton prefix.

Hear about the history of the garden during Cedric's time and how it inspired artists and gardeners alike, going on to have a profound effect on 20th-century horticulture.

The Garden Museum recently acquired the house and its grounds, intent on turning it back into a place of study once more. Learn more about the history and future plans for this exciting project in Lucy's talk.

Plants will be for sale at this meeting. Tickets for the talk will be £8 each (for members) and £10 for non-members - this will include tea, coffee and homemade cakes. There will be a lucky ticket draw and raffle.

Tickets are available from Linda Prior 811641 and Lynne Joyce 810524.

You can also renew your membership or join BHS at this meeting if you have not already done so.

Spring Show

Our Spring Show will be held on **Saturday March 23rd**
in the Town Hall

The 2024 Show Schedules will be available
at the beginning of February.

We look forward to seeing all the spring flowers and bulbs, floral arrangements' domestic entries and any handicrafts you have been creating during the winter months. There are a range of classes for children to enter and we look forward to a good display from the school.

Entries should be registered before 10.15am, and staged by 10.30 as judging starts at 11am.

The Show will be open at 2.30 pm until 4.30pm.

Refreshments and homemade cakes
will be served for us by The Bell.

Here is the recipe for you to try in advance

Recipe for Mincemeat cake

- 150 gm (5 oz) soft margarine
- 150 gm (5 oz) caster sugar
- 2 eggs
- 250 gm (8 oz) self raising flour
- 85 gm (3 oz) currants
- 500 gm (1 lb) mincemeat)
- 25-30 gm (1 oz) flaked almonds

- Grease and line a 20 cm (8") round cake tin.
- Heat oven to 160°C (Fan 140°C), 325°F, Gas mark 3.
- Place all ingredients (except flaked almonds) together in a bowl and beat for one minute until blended,
- Turn into cake tin and smooth the top.
- Arrange flaked almonds on top and bake for 1¾ hours or until golden brown and shrinking away from the sides of the tin.

Plea for new Chairman for Society

Linda Prior has been our Chairman since 2014. At our last AGM, she gave notice that she would be standing down from this role in October 2024. She is very happy to remain on the Committee.

If you would be interested in volunteering for this role please contact Linda who would be more than happy to tell you what is entailed.

New to Great Bardfield or an established villager? You will find a warm welcome at the Horticultural Society. Why not be a member and enjoy events, talks and visits arranged throughout the year? Amazing Spring and Summer Shows are held where you can exhibit your gardening and baking skills!

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

**REVIVAL OF A GARDEN
AND PLANT COLLECTIONS
BY LUCY SKELLORN**

SATURDAY 24 FEBRUARY 2024
At 2.30 in the Town Hall

Bardfield Horticultural Society hope you will all want to come and hear a fantastic speaker we have booked for our February meeting. Lucy is the curator at Benton End House and Gardens. She is working to revive the gardens that were made famous by Sir Cedric Morris, artist and plantsman.

Plants for sale, raffle, lucky ticket draw and refreshments.

Members tickets are £8 and nonmembers £10.

Call 01371 811641

Launch of From smokestacks to haystacks: My farming life



Between the Lines Bookshop was full for the launch of Mac Beanland's new book about his life in farming. Mac introduced the book explaining that although he was a city boy born and bred in a suburb of Nottingham he knew from a very early age that what he really wanted to do was to be a farmer. His early experience keeping a smallholding led him to agricultural college and, eventually, to Frenches Farm in Great Bardfield. The book tells the story of that journey and of Mac's passionate love of farming. Those who attended were able to chat with Mac over a glass of sherry and by the end of the evening his book had nearly sold out and his hand ached from signing the copies. The book has now been reprinted and copies are available from Between the Lines or from Mac himself.



GREENFINGERS

Yes I know it is February but Happy New Year gardeners all, as this is the month that true enjoyable gardening begins. The word 'new' made me think of New World, always associated with wine but ponder on flowers and thank plant hunters for introducing so many flowers from America: penstemon, echinacea, rudbeckia, just a few that make our gardens so attractive. Do leave your penstemons alone with their straggly and dead stems, after Easter is when they are chopped to the ground and flourish. Now, look over your garden and begin on the these tasks:

1. Prune wisteria again now, cut to leave 3 buds to each side growth off the main stems, this prompts them to flower profusely in May.
2. Cut to the base all unsightly leaves on your wonderful hellebores, then a handful of feed and a heap of new compost, your own or bought.
3. Towards the middle of February start to prune roses, the expert from Peter Beale Roses says 'be brutal,' they will flourish on your savagery. Hybrid Teas can be cut down to leave as little as 25cms.
4. Have you Clematis that flower late summer but not before? They never get the killing Wilt and they beg to be cut down to 50cms now.
5. Take the shears to some ornamental grasses as they start growing early, not stipa and pennisetum, wait till April but molinia, calamagrostis, panicum and miscanthus, chop, chop to the base right now.
6. Sow some sweet peas, 2 or 3 in a narrow but deep pot and let them germinate in the kitchen then out they go to stand in a sheltered place till planting out mid March. Remember they love rich soil so a bag of ready manure from the garden centre or your own compost with the addition of fertiliser where they are to grow.

Had enough of gardening now?

Stop and admire: snowdrops, cyclamen, yellow winter aconites and crocus. Do you have enough? Never! make a note to buy more small bulbs in September they take up little room, super in the grass. Bulbs that one can acquire now are anemones, lilies, gladioli and not often grown, ranunculus.

From the Vicarage...

Every year, the date of Easter shuffles around the calendar, affecting a great many things in my diary. In the Church, it's not just the position of one bank holiday weekend which changes, but a whole collection of other Holy Days, not to mention the effects which come from different Sundays in the month being affected. Sometimes, this throws up interesting coincidences (like the year recently when Easter Day fell on April the First!), and this year, the particularly early date of Easter means that Ash Wednesday (which marks the beginning of Lent – the season of preparation for Easter) falls on 14 February.

Whether Valentine's Day (or perhaps more properly St Valentine's Day, as its name comes from the early Christian martyr who is commemorated on it) is something you observe or ignore, it's relatively unlikely that your plans would involve having your forehead smeared with ash while you are reminded of your mortality. I think it is a vanishingly small number of people who would consider that to be particularly romantic!

The message of Ash Wednesday perhaps seems like something of a 'hard sell' at the best of times, even when it's not competing for attention with the encouragement to enjoy flowers, chocolates, meals out, etc. Being reminded of both our human tendency to mess things up and how each of our lives is but a finite contribution to the human story might appear rather weighty, and not particularly comforting. And yet, Ash Wednesday was traditionally the time when those who were new to the Christian faith would begin their journey of being received into the fellowship of the Church.

The thing is, if we look a little bit deeper at the meaning of Ash Wednesday, we find a great source of comfort. Whatever our flaws and mistakes, both collectively and individually, we acknowledge that we will need help sorting them out. We allow God to take from our shoulders the burden of having to fix everything, and place ourselves in his hands. We express and affirm our trust that, even though we are far from perfect, we are still loved by God, because he has chosen to love us – perhaps not so far away from a Valentine's Day message after all!

So if you would like the space to think about the difficult questions the world poses, and about the place of our own lives within it, why not come and join us on Ash Wednesday, and place your questions in God's hands?

Rev'd/Fr Alex

Services for February 2024

Sunday 4 February – Second Sunday before Lent

8am Holy Communion (traditional language) – Finchingfield
 9.30am Parish Communion Service – Shalford
 10.30am Sung Communion Service – Great Bardfield
 11am Celtic Morning Prayer ('Prayer & Pilgrimage') – Wethersfield
 3pm Children's Church – Wethersfield

Sunday 11 February – Sunday Next before Lent

8am Holy Communion (traditional language) – Shalford
 9.30am Sung Communion Service – Little Bardfield
 10.45am Communion Service – Finchingfield
 11am Family Service – Wethersfield
 4pm Sung Evensong – Shalford

Wednesday 14 February

Ash Wednesday, the beginning of Lent

(All services today will include the opportunity to receive imposition of ashes.)

10.30am Sung Communion Service – Great Bardfield
 5pm Reflective Service for Ash Wednesday – Wethersfield
 8pm Said Communion Service – Finchingfield

Sunday 18 February – First Sunday of Lent

8am Holy Communion (traditional language) – Wethersfield
 9.30am Morning Prayer – Shalford
 10.30am Sung Communion Service – Great Bardfield
 10.45am Family Service – Finchingfield
 4pm Evensong – Cornish Hall End

Sunday 25 February – Second Sunday of Lent

8am Holy Communion (traditional language) – Great Bardfield
 9.30am Morning Prayer – Shalford
 10am Morning Prayer with Sunday Café – Cornish Hall End
 11am Family Communion Service – Wethersfield

Services for February 2024

Regular Services and Events during the week

Monday 8.45am Morning Prayer – Finchingfield

Tuesday 10am Eucharist – Great Bardfield
(preceded by Morning Prayer at 9.30am)

Thursday 8.45am Morning Prayer – Wethersfield
10am Prayer Group (1st, 3rd & 5th weeks)
Coffee Morning (2nd & 4th weeks) – Shalford
Coffee Morning (3rd week) – Cornish Hall End
10.30am Eucharist – Little Bardfield

Friday 8.45am Morning Prayer – Shalford

Saturday 10.30am (3rd weeks) Coffee Morning – Wethersfield

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Sunday Mass - 9.30 am
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All welcome

Hitchcock's Post Office

Anna Bass kindly interviewed Michael Hitchcock about his memories of Great Bardfield shortly before he passed away. The following is an extract which focuses on Michael's father, William, and the early days of Hitchcock's. For those of you new to the village, Hitchcock's was a much-loved general store and Post Office in the High Street run by three generations of Hitchcocks. As Rev Norman Clift said, "To enter there is to put the clock back and to be in a delightfully old village shop where they still cut cheese with wire."



'My father, William Hitchcock, was born in one of four cottages (now two houses) on your right as you leave Bardfield to go to Finchingfield. He had a job when he was still barely a child – he was what they called a Kitchen Boy for Chapmans, the agricultural engineers. The Chapman family lived at Gobions, and owned a big acreage of rough meadowland (where Durham Close now stands). They were a big employer of local men and did everything in the agricultural world. I'm talking farm machinery and the big traction engines, you know – plough engines and threshing machines. They painted up farm machinery and all that sort of



thing. They had blacksmiths there. But anyway, that's beside the point. My father worked down there when he was about ten or so. Maybe less than that. Or maybe a bit more than that. Because in 1908, when he was about 16, he got the job at the shop.

He went to work for Tanner's and there he is outside. This is the shop. Post office, and grocer's. They sold everything. And they did when I had it! Draperies, you see – these were all shirts – this was our grocery window ... people used to come in and get clothes fitted and all that. Hats. Shoes.

A passageway has since been knocked out but then it was all one shop. They lived round the side of it, and above it.

William worked there and after the Great War he went back to work there. He learned how to run the Post Office and helped his guv'nor, Fred Tanner a lot. Mr Tanner would hold a rummage-sale to earn enough to go abroad for holidays. That's how they used to live in those days. He used to go abroad and my father used to manage the Post Office. And everything else. Take it off his hands so Mr Tanner could have his holiday abroad. And you see, that went on until about the 1930s when

Mr Tanner decided to retire. It wasn't quite the marvellous heaven on earth situation for the guv'nor and it wasn't getting all that better, so anyway the long and short of it was, they offered it to my father. At a reasonable price, I suppose, and helped him with it. It was 1935 when we took it over. I was eight then.

Then along came the war. We hadn't had the shop many years. You see, Mr Tanner moved out and that's when we moved down from the Dunmow Road. But it was all up and down in the war, but that's another story. The rationing affected it most. That was pretty bad. They used to have ration books, as you know, and all that sort of thing – but there used to be a bit to spare; people used to come round asking 'have you got anything under the counter?' We didn't do any of that because you got pestered too much if you did. And there was a food officer at Braintree Council who used to be in charge. Very strict rules. I've got all that stuff somewhere – I've got piles of stuff, ration books and things.

Going back a bit, because we used to deliver post around the village for a bit of pocket money, I used to have a post round. About half past seven or eight o'clock in the morning I used to go down Brook Street and round by the school and back again – I would have been about ten. Around half past seven these bikes appeared from everywhere! Builders ... and then of course the eight o'clock bus came, and people went off to work at Rayne and Braintree. There was a bus at half past six in the morning from here to Courtauld's, and all those people used to get on it. My father's working day ... he did it all his life ... started at quarter past six, when the post arrived. It was dumped in sacks from Braintree. I've still got one. We used to have a rack on the counter. Little Bardfield. Vine Street. High Street. Braintree Road and so on. The letters were sorted into streets. And they had a couple of part-time postmen. Will Perry was one. He lost his eye in the Great War. They sorted the post and put it on one of the counters in the shop ready to deliver.

After my father's time, the post went to Finchingfield for sorting and they did away with the delivery here. The women used to bike there in those days – Mrs Stone, was the last one doing it. After those postmen retired – you know – when the old men got old – ladies used to apply for the jobs. That's all been done away with now. But in those days that was very local.

Interview by Anna Bass

Nature Notes - Birds of Prey

Two things I often mention in my Nature Notes: Firstly, farmers are custodians of the countryside, and secondly, they are keeping nature in balance. You must get fed-up with me banging on about these two points but I refuse to apologise if you get fed up with me labouring these points because they are true. I well remember more than twenty years ago saying to a local game keeper in Great Bardfield that I had seen two larger birds of prey about the district and much to my surprise he said, 'Yes they are buzzards, isn't it nice?' I thought he would be horrified at the



Red kite

thought of them taking his baby pheasants but no, he knew there was room for them without upsetting the balance of nature and they would be more interested in carrion (that's anything dead and injured) so helping clean up the district. But fast forward to the present time and we have a lot of buzzards in the district and we now have a lot of red kites which have been reintroduced, plus many more kestrels than we used to have. These birds of prey are all competing for the same food and it is getting a regular thing to witness arial battles between them. They are all thriving, although the buzzards are the bigger bird they are by no means as agile as the red kites and are coming off badly in these fights. They are scavengers not meant to kill things. As food becomes scarce they have got to eat so garden birds and ground game becomes an easy option. We are seeing letters in the Farmers' Weekly written by frustrated farmers who are witnessing the problems each



Buzzard

day wondering when the so called experts are going to wake up. I understand Norfolk has lost all its ground nesting peewits; there used to be thousands of those lovely entertaining farmland birds. The other development which is now beginning to cause concern is the tagged sea eagle which the wildlife trust introduced into the Isle of Wight a few years ago. They have thrived and are breeding very well and have now spread onto the mainland and started to breed there. These are truly magnificent birds the largest of all the birds of prey. They are native to Scandinavia and I have had the privilege of seeing them in their natural surroundings in Norway or I should say I saw one. I was on a trip with a party in a small boat. Our guide pointed it out to us; it was perched in a tall tree. As we looked up at it, it took off and swooped down into the fiord and then took off carrying a very large fish with its feet. This is its normal prey and what a wonderful experience it was for us on that occasion. Some years ago sea eagles settled in the Shetland Isles. They were no problem but sadly they have multiplied and have started to take lambs and have now become a problem. How long will it take for them to become a problem here?

Mac Beanland

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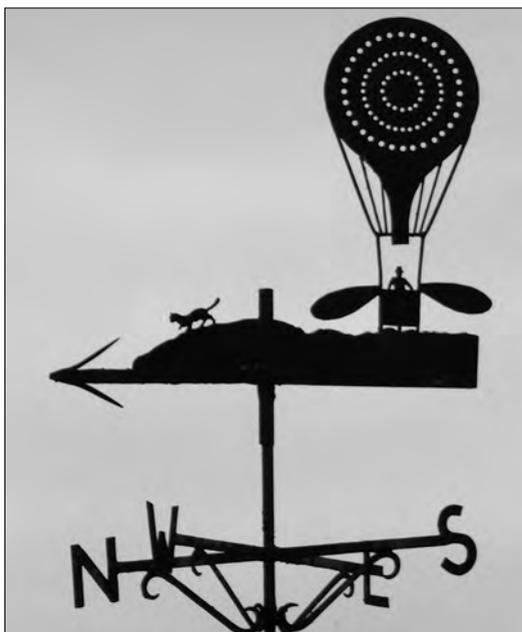
Chilly conditions often greet us as we step outside in the early months of the year. The old saying - "When the wind is out of the East, tis never good for man nor beast" - certainly rings true. Before the advent of broadcast weather forecasts, people had to rely on checking nearby weathervanes for the wind direction. These were usually found on tall buildings such as church spires, while Audley End House has gilded weathervanes mounted on eight corner turrets. Today, a variety of designs can be seen.

Robert McFarlane's books of old words include about fifty that describe winds, storms or clouds. One Essex term he mentions is aigrish, used to describe a sharp cutting wind. The East Anglian word for a strong sudden gust is gussock, or twitchy for an unsteady wind.

Forecasting the weather for those who till the soil is helpful as weeks of westerly



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winds can bring relentless rain causing waterlogging of the ground, while cold easterly winds dry out the soil and retard growth.



Wethersfield

Currently, the UK Meteorological Office operates over 200 official automated sites, each recording accurate measurements of temperature, wind speed and direction, and the amount of precipitation. These readings are processed by powerful computers and the results enable forecasters to make predictions about future weather conditions. Local recording sites include the Cambridge Botanic Gardens and Stansted Airport. By searching the Met Office website <https://www.metoffice.gov.uk> you can check the local weather forecast to help plan your day.

Many individuals or schools are interested in operating a personal weather station and the Met Office is keen to enhance the weather observations network; it asks those who have a personal weather station, manual or automatic, to send data to its Weather Observations Website, WOW, at <https://wow.metoffice.gov.uk>.

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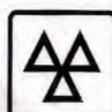
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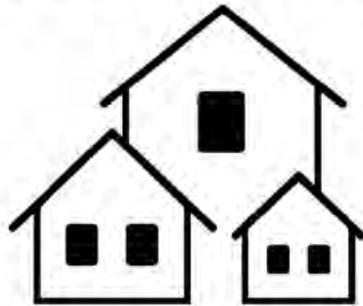
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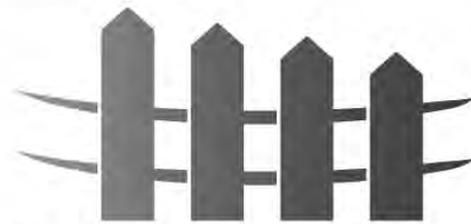
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Rebecca Jordan on 01371 810776 or
Claire Griffiths on 07983 823388
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Mick Gell (01371 810113), Nick Holland (07795 280647)
Annika Woodcock (07900 491636)
Rev Alex Shannon (01371 810309)

Or email GreatBardfieldCharities@gmail.com

TOWN HALL DIARY

February 2024

Thursday 1 st	Bardfield Players	7.00pm
Tuesday 6 th	Dance fit class	9.30am
	Mobility class	10.45am
	Choir	8.00pm
Wednesday 7 th	Badminton	7.00pm
Thursday 8 th	Bardfield Players	7.00pm
Friday 9 th	Cinema club	7.30pm
Saturday 10 th	Private Function	11.00am
Tuesday 13 th	Dance fit class	9.30am
	Mobility class	10.45am
	Tuesday club	2.00pm
	Choir	8.00pm
Wednesday 14 th	Badminton	7.00pm
	Parish Council meeting	7.00pm
Thursday 15 th	Bardfield Players	7.00pm
Tuesday 20 th	Choir	8.00pm
Wednesday 21 st	Badminton	7.00pm
Thursday 22 nd	Bardfield Players	7.00pm
Saturday 24 th	Horticultural society	2.30pm
Tuesday 27 th	Dance fit class	9.30am
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Wednesday 28 th	Badminton	7.00pm
Thursday 29 th	Bardfield Players	7.00pm

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Paul Kennedy 810540
Darren Hockley 810836
Peter Walmsley 07843 498243
Lynsi Hayward-Smith 07515 398402
Janet Dyson 07957 483207

Braintree District Council
Councillors Cllr Michael Staines
Cllr Mark Ault 07922 487666
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for non-emergency enquiries dial 101
for emergency enquiries dial 999

**Little Bardfield Parish
Chairman of the Parish Council
Clerk to the Parish Council**

LittleBardfieldParishClerk@gmail.com
Andrew Davies davies@farmline.com
Kate Rixon 01371 404 321

**Uttlesford District Council
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