



NEWSLETTER

For The Lee, Lee Common, Hunts Green, Kings Ash and Swan Bottom

From the Editor

By Liz Macann

Theoretically, by the time we go to print, we should be feeling the benefits of relaxed rules as we enter our 15th month since the first Covid lockdown.

In that time, we have said sad farewells to some much-loved local people and also warm welcomes to a good few new ones. Property prices in our area have been rising dramatically as people seek to escape city life, now that working from home becomes the norm and our proximity to London provides a great balance for those in that situation.

Without the social punctuation marks throughout the year, our villages have seemed like different places. I hear people talking ruefully about once again having no Flower Show to look forward to but, with enthusiasm, about the return of the Roving Supper where many of us met each other for the first time. Also, many regular activities are beginning to move from Zoom back to village halls and houses. All we need now is some sunshine.

Meanwhile, next month's edition of the Newsletter will be edited by Philip Harrison who will be pleased to receive email material by 12th June at theleenewsletter@gmail.com

Your letters

A big 'Thank You' from the Chiltern Food Bank

To the Editor

It is now over eight months since the management committee of the Shop at The Lee agreed to have a food collection point in the shop, to support the Chiltern Food Bank situated in Chesham.

The Chiltern Food Bank was set up in 2011 and is part of a network of food banks supported by the Trussell Trust, working to combat poverty and hunger across the UK.

In order for people to access help from the food bank they have to obtain a voucher from one of the food bank's referral agencies. These referral agencies are Citizens Advice Bureau, Job Centre, schools, churches, Social Services, etc. These agencies also ensure that people referred are getting additional help and advice they may need as well as food.

The food bank is run by some 25 volunteers together with a paid coordinator. Since the start of the pandemic the food bank had to find and train new volunteers to replace three quarters of their original volunteers who were isolating. In addition, drivers and delivery volunteers had to be found as clients were no longer able to go to the food bank to collect their food parcels. Demand for help during the pandemic

has doubled and in the last year the Chiltern Food Bank has responded by providing food for over 57,800 meals.

The collection point in the Shop at The Lee has been a great success. The Chiltern Food Bank and its clients would like to say a big 'Thank You' to all customers of the Shop at The Lee for their generous weekly donations. Each week the shop collection box has been at least three quarters full and has often been overflowing with donations. Those of you who have donated have all played a part in enabling the food bank to get food to those in the Chilterns that needed it.

That need of course hasn't stopped and the food bank expects that demand may once again increase, when the current furlough scheme comes to an end later in the year. So if you are able to, please continue to support the food bank with your donations. If you

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haven't previously been able to donate but would like to do so, it's very easy.

Within the shop is a list, which is regularly updated, of items which are urgently needed. Those items, together with any other non-perishable items, may be left in the collection box. These donated items are then taken weekly to the food bank.

Please note that it is perfectly acceptable for any items not purchased in the Shop at The Lee to be left in the food bank collection box.

Thank you all once again from the Chiltern Food Bank and its clients for your generous donations.

Terry Bottle
Lee Common

We never stood a chance

Many local people have dedicated, and still do, time, effort, passion and commitment to fighting the very idea of a highspeed train carving up this AONB for debateable benefits. Here is the view of one of those who thinks it might have been done differently.

What do you think?

By Tony Brignull

Like you I have signed every petition and contributed to every fund fighting HS2, but quite early on I knew our efforts were futile.

This dawned on me when I was asked to write some advertisements protesting against this shameful project. I spent my career as a copywriter and creative director, writing and judging advertisements for large clients, and had gained some reputation at it.



I approached the task at hand professionally. I read up on HS2, both for and against. I examined all the efforts so far. I worked at this pro-bono task as if I were employed by a client with a £40 million budget.

I met excellent, dedicated people giving their spare time and often their full time to the cause. I came to see them as heroic, deserving of honours. But they were united only in their distress at this appalling folly. In other respects they were at odds: they were all fighting slightly different wars, each concentrating on their particular anxiety.

Some wanted to protect the countryside, some wildlife, some woodlands. Others wanted the money wasted on HS2 to go to the NHS or to education or to infrastructure in the north. There was no cohesion, no central body and importantly, no single fund of money.

Instead, there was the equivalent of an army of volunteers armed with pitchforks ready to march on parliament but, frankly, easy pickings for well-drilled government troops. After I'd done all my homework, I made my recommendations.

1. We needed to harness what resources we had into one national campaign and to work single-mindedly to support it.
2. We needed a central fund and one governing committee, not dozens and dozens of them.
3. We needed every MP up the line, and every single Tory councillor, to threaten to resign – and mean it – if the project went ahead.
4. We needed a simple, powerful message which would force Westminster to reconsider.

I thought long and hard over what to say. I looked at all the campaigns and posters done so far. Clever though



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many were, none of them cut deeply enough in my opinion.

Then I remembered something Bernard Levin once wrote in *The Times*: “There is no scream louder than a Tory MP in fear of losing his seat”. If we were to stand any chance at all, the Conservatives had to believe HS2 would cost them votes and even an election.

I recall presenting my strategy: “*If you go ahead with HS2 we will never vote Tory again.*” I suggested we put it on every car rear window, on every coffee mug, apron, roadside poster, everywhere we could, up and down the proposed line.

HS2? We won't vote for you.

The room went icily quiet. I gathered that even to think of not voting Tory was heretical, out of the question, close to treason. As for our MPs and councillors resigning, “come now,” they said, “surely it was far better for them to work from the inside and register their constituents’ opposition to HS2 within the party, not outside it? Yes, yes, that was a far better idea.”

And a central fund? “Where was the money to come from? Taxpayers? Ratepayers? What if they didn’t vote Tory in the next Council elections?”

All our elected representatives were sincere in challenging HS2. To a man and a woman, they thought it a bad idea but there was only so far they’d go to oppose it. For them, the line in the sand was the Conservative party. This was a line they couldn’t cross.

In effect they put the party, their love of it, their careers in it and their eventual honours before the Chilterns, before the countryside, woodlands and wildlife, and before the people who’d elected them.

At this point I knew all other protests, petitions and legal challenges were futile. The government was well schooled in handling such fragmented campaigns. They would consult (or at least appear to consult), mitigate where possible, sweeten with small hand-outs, then they’d press on regardless. Our goose was not only cooked but carved.

Would my campaign have worked? I think it was our best shot but, truly, I have no idea. Others, just as professional as I am, might come to different conclusions. But they too, I am sure would agree that without a central committee led by a dynamic chair, a fund of money and a single-minded, hard-hitting strategy, nothing they came up with could possibly work.

To the protesters today who camp out in our woods or join early morning groups against the felling of ancient trees, I say, “Well done! Keep going! If you save one tree or one animal, you have done well”.

But getting the government to cancel HS2? That train left long ago. And on board, I’m afraid, are the very people we elected to oppose it.

Prepared-Lee

By Enzo D’Allesandro

Undaunted by the unsettled weather, the Scouts have been meeting outdoors since Easter – we have a tough troop! We have gone back to basics, focusing on skills and techniques such as knots and fire-making – ‘Scouting 101’, as it were. Or maybe without the ‘101’; it might give the impression of a ‘course’, and Scouting is most definitely not that. Recently there were articles reporting on the concerns by education experts and child psychologists about the ‘scholarisation of childhood’ – the

concern being that free play is being lost to structured activities. Scouting has always strived to balance structured and free aspects, and that is a precious quality. The learning component is often peer-to-peer, and always focused on learning-by-doing, without forgetting the fun side. Importantly, the aim of the learning process is not the technique in itself: Scouting really is a laboratory for character-building and self-expression.

In this 'back-to-basics' vein, we've been making fires, tying knots and lashing poles together, as you can see from the pictures. We are going to do some in-depth navigation skills soon, although tempting as it might be to drop them off at random points to walk their way back to the hut, the risk assessment would be a nightmare...



And it's not just the Scouts – the Beavers (6 to 8 yrs) and Cubs (8 to 10½ yrs) are also meeting again, which is great news.

You can help! I am looking for ideas to get the Scouts more active in



the community; if you have activities in mind which you think are suitable, I would be very interested in hearing about them. Of course, we are always welcoming people to help us, occasionally or more regularly; the contact details are at the back of the Newsletter and on The Lee website.



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HS2 update

By Colin Sully, The Lee Parish Council
Forward programme

HS2 contractors continue with a wide range of works in the Chilterns, including in the immediate area:

- archaeological digs at Grims Ditch / Leather Lane
- crossings for the Internal Access Road (IAR), with temporary closures, on Leather Lane, Bowood Lane and Rocky Lane (further closure dates to be confirmed)
- tree removal and tree planting at and near Jones Hill Wood
- construction of the IAR (from South Heath to Rocky Lane).

A413 / A355 traffic plans

In April, Buckinghamshire Council (BC) refused approvals for various works along the A413, after HS2 Ltd were unable to demonstrate that there are no significant unmitigated adverse impacts from the increase in planned traffic. HS2 Ltd appealed this decision to the Secretary of State, who passed the matter to the Planning Inspectorate to resolve. BC have submitted their evidence to the Inspectorate, with support from local parishes. We await the outcome.

This restriction on HS2 traffic appears to have had little immediate impact on their work but it is believed it will become more critical towards the end of the summer if the impasse is not resolved.

BC also continues in discussions with HS2 Ltd on how best to construct an access off the A413 into the Little Missenden Ventilation Shaft site.

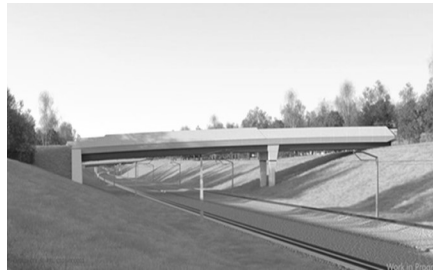
Wendover Dean Viaduct

HS2 Ltd have submitted their

detailed plans to BC for the construction of the Wendover Dean viaduct. TLPC has submitted formal comments on the design of the noise barriers and the access during construction.

Leather Lane trees

We still await the outcome of the review by HS2 Ltd of the extent of tree felling necessary at Leather Lane to accommodate HS2 works in the area. It is believed there is scope to save many of the trees originally earmarked by the contractors for felling.



*The Leather Lane over-bridge:
 the HS2 project design*

An alternative proposal has also been developed by local residents / campaigners, based on a realignment of Leather Lane, which has the potential to save even more trees. However, TLPC understands that such a plan presents HS2 Ltd with other significant difficulties, not least of which is that some of the land proposed to be used is not included in the Act nor is it currently owned by HS2 Ltd.

Footpath closures

TLPC councillors and footpath representatives from the Chiltern Society have had detailed discussions (including an on-site visit to Kings Lane) with EKFB regarding the proposed footpath closures between Leather Lane and Rocky Lane. Notices and signage issued by EKFB have so

far been misleading, confusing and in some cases simply wrong.

The 'facts' now appear to be established and EKFB and the Chiltern Society are working together to ensure that correct and appropriate signage and notices are put in place. The actual closure plans appear to be in line with those published in The Lee Newsletter in April, although some of the dates have been put back.

Cement lorries

A number of residents (including councillors) reported frequent cement lorry movements on Leather Lane in early May, during the period Rocky Lane was closed. Complaints about these vehicles, which were apparently carrying HS2 signage, were lodged with HS2 Ltd and the contractors. So far there has been no acceptance by the contractors that this traffic was anything to do with HS2!

Kings Lane

The state of the surface and verges on Kings Lane has been reported to BC, who have accepted that remedial work is needed; dates to be confirmed.

HS2 engagement

TLPC councillors continue to meet the HS2 Community Engagement Managers on a fortnightly basis.

1-2-1 virtual sessions with HS2 are available at www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/hs2-and-ekfb-north-chilterns-area-virtual-one-to-one-meetings-tickets-149192836791?aff=ebdsoporgprofile

Public engagement events are also being planned by HS2 Ltd and the contractors for later in the year.

If you have any local HS2 queries for the Parish Council, please send them to HS2@thelee.org.uk.

If you have questions or complaints for HS2 Ltd or their contractors, please go to www.hs2.org.uk/in-your-area

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Lee Common School



By Claire Gresswell, Headteacher

Learning and growing

This month marks the first anniversary of my headship and I can't help but look back on all that has happened in school over the last 12 months. There have been highs and lows for sure and it is fair to say that, along with the rest of the nation, working through a global pandemic has meant that not everything has gone the way we might have hoped! However, it is important to celebrate all that we have achieved not just in spite of but also because of the challenges we have faced.

This year has taught us to be creative, to be flexible, to adapt and above all to be brave. We learned a new approach to teaching and learning which prioritised emotional well-being and promoted learning through play and social interaction. We worked hard to maintain a sense of normality for our children and endeavoured to shield them from the negative narrative arising from school closures. We moved to remote learning at a moment's notice, teaching children at home and at school simultaneously. And Lee Common CE School has not yet had to close due to a case of Coronavirus. My colleagues should look back on this year with pride.

As teachers, we know the importance of celebrating our pupils' successes, however, acknowledging our own achievements rarely comes easily. In order to meet the

Department for Education standards, we are required and trained to be 'reflective' practitioners, meaning we must continually evaluate our teaching in order to understand what is working well and what can be improved. This is important in order to bring about continuous improvement in pedagogy and ensure we never stop learning. However, it can easily lead to self-criticism and eventually self-doubt which can become a barrier to creativity and innovation. For many, myself included, fear of failure can result in us shying away from trying new things or taking on challenges. When I questioned whether or not I could succeed as a Headteacher, a dear friend of mine told me to feel the fear and do it anyway! But self-doubt can creep in: can I lead with kindness and keep staff morale high in these scary times; can I maintain high standards, offering our children the first-class education they deserve; can I learn all I need to know about site management and health and safety legislation? There have been moments when the enormity of the task has felt overwhelming, and I certainly don't have all the answers... yet.

Perseverance and growth

Ah, the power of yet! These days, we try to teach children to overcome fear of failure by promoting the idea of a Growth Mindset. We encourage children to take risks, have a go and not give up, because it is only when we are finding things challenging and making mistakes that the brain is exercised, and true learning takes place. And when children claim they can't do it, we reply, it's ok, you just can't do it YET! The sense of satisfaction, pride and self-worth that a child experiences from finally 'getting' something they were finding

difficult but persevered with is a joy to behold and far outweighs any praise or encouraging words we can offer them.

In witnessing these moments, I am reminded to practise what I preach. Of course, this is hard, of course I don't know everything there is to know about running a school and of course I can't achieve everything at once... I just need to keep trying my best. A school is of course a place of learning for children and adults alike. This past year my colleagues and I have certainly learnt and grown alongside the children. Lee Common School is truly a community of learners and I, for one, feel privileged to be one of its members.

Meet and greet

By Bryony Benwell

One of several new families to move into the area this year is someone who grew up here, moved away and is now back. Bryony and John introduce themselves.

Q. When did you move in?

A. We finally moved in at the beginning of April this year after renting a friend's house in Little Chalfont for eight months

Q. Where did you move from and why did you choose to come to Lee Common?

A. We moved down from Chester where I had lived for twenty years or so and where John was born. We came to Lee Common because we wanted to be near (pester!) mum who we now live next door to. We also wanted to see more of my brother and sister-in-law and my nephews who live in London.

I was bought up in Ballinger so still have school friends living nearby.

John has spent a lot of time down here and knows and loves the area and so we discussed, with mum, the possibility of us selling our house and building on to mum's so we could all live together but independently.

Q. Who makes up your family and what do you do for a living?

A. Our family members in Lee Common are John and I and mum next door, our two grown up kids live in Chester and Manchester. John has an engineering business in Chester which he has scaled down and runs remotely. Being a handy sort of chap, he has also started mowing lawns and cutting hedges and doing other odd jobs for locals.

I have a glass business where I design, make new and restore old stained glass and leaded lights from front and interior door panels to churches. I have been in the trade for

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30 years and trained at York Minster. I have also qualified as a remedial massage therapist so hoping to set up somewhere locally when I can.

Q. What were the biggest changes you had to get used to?

A. The biggest changes for John and I were leaving family, friends and our businesses and less access to shops and bars! (probably easier on the wallet!). Also, none of us had ever taken on a build before. A BIG learning curve!

Q. Arriving in Covid year you missed some of the regular high spots of the social calendar, how easy was it to put down roots?

A. It obviously has made it more difficult to settle without things like The Lee Flower Show or any clubs or sporting activities to join. We are really looking forward to being able to meet more local folk and make new friends when we are all freed up a bit more!

Q. What do you like best about Lee living?

A. We love being closer to our Southern family and friends and spending less time on the motorway!

We love the woodlands and the countryside, and we love the fact that everyone has been so friendly and welcoming. We are very grateful for that.

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What's my line?

Every now and then we feature the occupation of one of our residents whose work may be unusual, interesting or both. This month we highlight the artwork of Claudia D'Allessandro.

Introduction by Mary Godfrey

If you've ever been unlucky enough to spend time in the Spinal Injuries Unit at Stoke, you will, hopefully, have been welcomed and distracted by the wonderful glass panels in the reception area. 'Day by Day' is a glass installation created by local resident and glass artist Claudia D'Allessandro in 2014.

Claudia was born in St Leonards, where her Dad still lives and she tends the allotments inherited from her Mum, who died in 2018.

Claudia is a Fellow of the Guild of Glass Engravers with installations in Eton School, the Holy Spirit Church in Warrington and Kingston Library in Milton Keynes. She completed a major series of glass art pieces for The Rosie Hospital at Addenbrookes in 2011 and created a window for St Leonards Church where she was married. Claudia is artist in residence and teaches at Wycombe Abbey, who have several of her pieces including a four metre chandelier. She is also my neighbour and we sat down for a chat about her work with glass.

At the time of writing we are tentatively (fingers, toes and everything in between crossed) emerging out of lockdown, hoping nothing else breaks. In what feels like a time of collective healing, we decided to hone-in on 'Day by Day' which was a year in the making and explore Claudia's inspiration for her



'Day by day' at Stoke Mandeville Hospital

work and the collaborative processes that are essential for creating good art for public spaces.

Art for public spaces

By Claudia D'Allesandro

The idea for that piece was to create a link with the playground space behind the windows, the landscape of the Chilterns, in particular the beech woods, and less tangible ideas about journeys of rehabilitation after injury, emotions and a sense of spirituality. A piece that would speak to many people on different levels.

As a glass artist making work for public spaces, it is important to me to engage with users of a space and to talk to people about their experiences. Talking to patients and staff began to inform the germ of an idea for the artwork. Experiences of time, simple steps towards the future, the huge challenges that people with spinal injuries face and how they approach rebuilding their lives were all part of the discussion. We also talked a lot about art and the part it plays in lives especially when confined to hospital for long periods of time.

Working with the patients was very humbling. As an artist, manually creating work is a vital part of idea development. Without the ability to move a great deal, many participants

were able to direct helpers and explain what they wanted to achieve. Many made a huge effort to use especially adapted scissors, tear paper, draw shapes and peel and stick vinyl to glass. This work formed the basis of the ideas that I went on to develop in my own sketchbooks.

Chiltern colours

The colours came from workshops using collage and tissue paper. I tried to use colours that I found in the woodlands and hills. The colours of the early spring, the rich colours of the beech in autumn and the qualities of light over the woods which make the Chilterns special.

We explored impressions in clay, using leaves and branches from plants and trees. I then decided to limit the impressions to the beech leaves which are particularly special in Bucks.

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Colour can play an important part in how we feel. Arriving in the foyer, the window is the first thing visitors and patients see. It aims to welcome them into the space. It is important for me that this should be uplifting. Soft lines and organic forms contrast with the dark brick of the building. I was very aware of the part that the gym plays in patients' lives, and the Guttman Centre and swimming pool behind the hospital which has been so important in the lives of many here. I did drawings in the swimming pool experimenting with the images of ripples in the water. I felt that the ripples were a good metaphor for the events which shape our lives and the consequences of each decision we make.

Step by step recovery

I explored the idea of leaves drifting downstream, being drawn by the current without control of their journey. One patient described recovering from a serious injury as a journey of building blocks. Each small step forward is another block. I liked the idea of building blocks or rungs of a ladder. Another man talked about the idea of skiing – a long hard journey up, flying down the other side. Someone else talked about feeling like a boxer in a ring. Each time one is knocked over, it is an effort to get back up, but one must keep trying.

The role of artwork in hospitals has become recognised as being beneficial to all users of the space. People's experiences in hospitals are often emotional, complex, intense and at the same time can be incredibly boring. Art can become significant in people's experiences and can help to create an atmosphere which is conducive to positivity and the journey towards the future.

People come from all sorts of backgrounds to the spinal injuries centre but share a common goal. The themes of this piece can be interpreted as that of a journey, simple steps, diversity, reference to the Buckinghamshire countryside and ripples in water – the idea that one action has a consequence that leads to another.

Journeys through art

My aim was to create a feature that welcomes people into the foyer. It is important for me that a piece of art can be interpreted in many ways. Making a piece of art is a journey. Discovering a route to express an idea, exploring ideas and communicating with people are all part of the development of a piece of art. I hope that people will continue to find new things within the art, and to interpret it in a personal and individual way.

Studies have shown that exposure to art and nature can have positive outcomes on health, with patients in hospitals who were exposed to art or those with a view onto nature, experiencing less postoperative anxiety, more likely to switch from strong analgesics to weaker painkillers and spend less time in hospital.*

We've been lucky enough to have been exposed to nature's therapy all through lockdown. Now as we plan our next steps and decide what engagements should fill our once desolate diaries make sure you get some art in there. And hopefully you will have a new appreciation of how that art comes to be.

*Ref: L. Lankston, P. Cusack, C. Freemantle & C. Ives. *Visual art in hospitals: case studies and review of the evidence*. *J R Soc. Med* 2010 Dec 1; 103(12): 490–499.

Oh, what a different year it's been

By Diana Taylor

Oh, what a different year it's been
With friends and family
barely seen
And masks that kept us in disguise
And Perspex screens before our eyes

Stacks of loo roll, piling high
And other things we went to buy
For fear of lacking basic need
As feelings turned our fear to greed

But then, soon came the Nation's pride
In NHS and folk who tried
To keep us going through the crisis
With PPE and strange devices

Sewing sheets to give protection,
People worked in each direction
Some came forth to volunteer
Helping others far and near

On Thursdays out we came to clap
And every house upon the map
Had someone who knew someone who
Could help or knew just what to do

But it was not all full of gladness
Plenty knew of dreadful sadness

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Socially distanced chats, a pleasure
Walks and talks and gratitude
Were valued just as much as food

Now we are out – and all our yearning
Is satisfied – but what of learning?
Will we remember how to care
And how to help and how to share?

Will we value every walk
And sweet exchanges as we talk?
Will we remain now as we grew
The kindness of many, including you?

Yes, you who now may read this rhyme
Who survived the pandemic's most
dreadful time
Yet found how important it was to be
A villager living in The Lee.

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Services for June

At the time of going to press, the plans for services remain subject to Government guidelines. Please keep an eye on The Lee Forum for up-to-date news.

St John the Baptist, The Lee



By Revd Chris Haywood

The occasion of my Institution and Collation service as Vicar of the Lee and Rector of Hawridge, with Cholesbury and St Leonards on Thursday 29th April 2021 was a moving and joyous occasion for me. The service was wonderfully led by Bishop Alan and compered by Area Dean Deiniol Heywood. I was also delighted that Georgie could play an active part in the service acting as the Bishop's Commissioner on the night. She, like me, is looking forward to engaging in ministry here with you and discerning her role in the life of the church and community. Bishop Alan spoke especially well about the nature of a true, inquisitive and curious faith, a faith that continues to be active and ask questions and engage with the reality with which we are confronted. I had a real sense that

this was in no short measure a prophetic insight for the life of the church and my own time serving the church and community over the coming years. I hope and pray that this will characterise how the church is in our community and that curiosity in what it means to be a Christian will be a defining feature of our life together.

Even though the service was a virtual affair on Zoom, I was delighted that so many of you from the parishes, as well as family, friends, colleagues and 'supporters' from my previous parish, from the church and community alike, were able to be a part of the service and join in the proceedings. It was such a delight, support and encouragement to be so warmly greeted by the parishes and supported by those who have journey with us and been such a big part of our lives from way back. In many ways the service on Zoom was not unlike one of the most memorable moments for me on our Wedding day, at St. John the Baptist Church, The Lee back in 2002.

When we emerged from signing the registers in the vestry and faced the congregation for the first time I remember being really moved by the sea of beaming faces of all our family and friends wishing us all the best. The Zoom screen full of the faces of all those who had signed in and joined the service was a very similar experience for me. In many ways Zoom allowed a more diverse gathering with friends from overseas also able to join the proceedings, who wouldn't normally have been able to join, which was a delight.

I was especially delighted by the warm welcome via video message from the churches and the community on the night and the joyous messages from the schools which we were able

to catch up with after via the circulated link. We were touched by the warm welcome we received on the night alongside the generous greetings and well wishes we've received from the community since we moved in. We already feel a part of this community (you'll find me in the pubs on a reasonably frequent basis...) and look forward to becoming increasingly so as community life starts to find new impetus with the easing of lockdown.

Thank you all of you who have gone out of your way to help us settle in and feel at home. The best wishes cards, flowers, wine and even a hamper have been very gratefully received.

As we emerge from lockdown, services are starting to resume in all the churches – in the Hilltops and at The Lee – keep your eye on Grapevine and The Lee Forum for details. We're looking to put in place an initial pattern of services across the parishes over the summer which will allow worship to resume in the Churches as well as being accessible for the communities we serve. As we approach Autumn we hope the service pattern will settle down and become more established. I hope very much the pattern we establish will enable me to get round the churches and lead worship as your new Vicar / Rector to get to know you and get a sense of our worship life in this place. Please do come and join us and inquisitively investigate what we're all about. We'd love to welcome you and encourage you to join this journey with us.

Contacts: *Vicar:* Revd Chris Haywood. *Parish Administrator:* Joanne Evans (07811 094416). *Churchwardens:* Trevor Pearce (01494 837601) and Mike Sherratt (07597 158269). *Vergers:* Bill Pearce. *Treasurer:* David Stephenson (01494 867617).

The Lee Old Church

6th 8:00am HC

Lee Common Methodist

Services will be conducted in accordance with the government guidelines at the time.

Contacts: Graham and Susan Evans 01494 580016.

St Marys, Ballinger

6th 9:30am Morning Prayer (tbc)

We will notify everyone as soon as we get the go ahead for services. In the meantime, our garden is open for private prayer and quiet reflection

Anne and I will be around to answer any questions.

Contacts: Associate Church Wardens: Maggi Cameron 01494 864790 and Anne Ellis 01494 837247.



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Laura Doggett Remembered

By Rupert Doggett

Laura Doggett – a loving wife, mother, friend, and member of our community



As many people now know, Laura very sadly died on 15th March this year at Stoke Mandeville Hospital Intensive Care Unit, a victim of this dreadful virus that is causing such havoc and destruction to people's lives all around the world. Little did we ever dare to think Covid would also hit our family so severely. It is so unbearable to think that she was only weeks away from being able to be protected by the vaccines which are now so widely available to us all.

We held Laura's funeral on 16th April at St John Baptist Church in The Lee. This is the church we would go to as a family on occasions, and it was also where our youngest daughter Mirabelle was christened. Due to Covid restrictions we were not able to invite the many friends and family

members we wanted to, so instead we invited people who wanted to say goodbye to come up to the village green where we had arranged for the funeral directors to do a pass of the green with her. We were deeply touched by the many people who came, both from the village and further afield. I would like to thank everyone who managed to make it down there as it was a great comfort for us to know you were all there.

I've been reading a book about grief and sorrow which has been helping me these past few weeks. In it the author Francis Keller says "Grief and love are sisters woven together from the beginning. Their kinship reminds us that there is no love that does not contain loss, and no loss that is not a reminder of our love. To love is to accept the rites of grief". How very true this feels to me and no doubt to many of you too who have experienced the loss of a loved one.

Laura loved this village and the countryside that surrounds it. She grew up nearby in Hyde Heath and Amersham so she knew the area well. We moved here in August 2010 just before our youngest daughter was born and we both quickly realised how very lucky we were to have chosen to make this place our home. The community spirit in particular struck us as being a unique aspect to living here and she soon found herself immersed in different parts of village life, from working as a member of the Parish Hall committee to running the Lee Flower Show Dance with her good friend Neeta Norton. But mainly she simply enjoyed meeting the people here, making new friends around the village, walking our dog Herbie around the fields and woods, and participating in all the village events like the Roving Supper, parties in the

Parish Hall, the Church Fête and of course the Flower Show.

I have been touched by the many cards, letters and messages we have received since Laura died. It's clear that Laura meant a lot to a lot of people and that is not surprising. She had an incredible ability to connect with people from all backgrounds, from builders to bankers, mums and dads, and all ages, from little ones to older ones. It's easy to take this ability to connect with people that she had for granted, but now she is not with us, we can see more clearly how very special it was. How very special she was. I wanted to share with you a few examples of what people have been saying about Laura in their letters and cards as hearing other people's perspectives on her has been wonderful for me. Here are just a few extracts from the cards we've had:

Her soulfulness and sensitivity were always visible and I loved talking to her about books, design and animals and the garden.

Her first love was for her family. She fretted like all loving mothers over making the right choices and wanted nothing but the best. She loved her home and being part of the family mattered passionately to her.


Laura was a sanctuary for so many. Her capacity for kindness and deep loyalty is something I shall always, always treasure.

But it's not just cards that we have had, we've also had countless generous offers of help from so many people here, and many lovely food deliveries too which are still ongoing today and will be for some time to come. It's when the really tough times like these hit that you really appreciate the fact you live in a place where there

is a strong community around you and your family who can provide that layer of support to help keep everything going and make the unbearable slightly more bearable.

I also want to mention Laura and her business 'Home(ing)'. She was a talented interior designer who had a natural ability to visualise in her mind how to transform a home for her clients. She built up her business from scratch starting it back in 2001 and had clocked up numerous projects over the years building an impressive portfolio of properties in London, the home counties, Italy and Greece. She was great at what she did and had a fantastic charm about her that enabled her to engage effortlessly with everyone from her clients through to builders and plumbers. The world of interior design has lost a true talent.

Laura expressly asked to be laid to rest here at our village church. I was



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tortured over whether or not to do this as I felt somehow having her so close to our home would be too much for me to bear. But I know now that this is the right place. With Laura being laid to rest here she is close to us, close to many of her friends and family and close to nature in this lovely, peaceful church yard which she loved. This will be a place that we can come back to whenever we want to feel close to her. I want to thank Trevor and the team at the Church for allowing Laura's wishes to be fulfilled.

It goes without saying that losing Laura like this has come as a huge shock to us and our wider family and friends. We are all devastated at losing her at this very young age and she leaves a massive void in our lives which can never be replaced. We will always cherish the deep love she gave us and hold onto that tightly as we continue with our new lives without her by our side.

Laura and the Flower Show

By Neeta Norton

It was a happy accident that led Laura and me to help with the evening Flower Show dance, a passing comment at a dinner party made to the lovely Pippa Hart. I'd mentioned that I thought 'Laura would be great at organising the Flower Show'

Little did we realise the amount of work that was needed but Laura took it all in her stride and she eventually forgave me for putting our names forward.... I think after the 3rd year!!! Laura did so much behind the scenes that I couldn't have done and I was always so grateful that it was someone like Laura who I was doing this event with. I have so many fond and wonderful memories of Laura during our time together on the Flower Show and in my mind's eye I



can still see Laura standing with her clipboard in the middle of the marquee smiling, everyone running around, whilst she remained calm and serene! It always came together beautifully in the end, it was always worth the hard work and we would always have the BEST night.

I can't believe that Laura and I managed five years of organising the event, it seems to have gone far too quickly. We had hung up our clipboards after the last show in 2019.

It's been such a weird time with all that has happened with the pandemic but of course the passing of Laura is beyond words and for me personally something that is still hard to come to terms with, having enjoyed her friendship since I moved to The Lee over 10 years ago.

We'd both just moved into the village and with newborns too, our friendship grew over pram walks and all things children related. Laura had a great eye for interiors, so I was always asking for her valued opinion. She was a great lover of books and was always recommending a brilliant read. Over the years the friendship grew, we even went camping together, which if anyone knows me will know I hate with a passion and try to avoid at any

cost, but she had a way of convincing me that it would be fun!

I was very lucky to have been Lauras partner in crime – it’s just still so hard to believe that we have lost such an incredible soul.

Our lovely neighbour, Laura

By Olivia Blake

We first met Laura and her family when we moved to Princes Lane in 2016. It was an easy friendship from the off, and with us both having two daughters of similar ages we spent many ‘kids teas’ and afternoons in the garden mulling over life in general. She was an integral part of the Princes Lane community, and we all enjoyed her company at happy events hosted by us all on the lane such as the Royal Wedding, the Queen’s Jubilee, and many fun planning meetings and drinks parties in all of our houses.

Laura was always a willing hand and a fun comrade to have around when there was any event going on. She hosted an annual Halloween party for lots of children in the village, always outdoing us all in fabulous decorations and all the necessary accessories. Her most notable credit to village life is obviously The Lee Flower Show Dance, which she organised with flair alongside her partner, Neeta Norton. I’m sure anyone who attended the event would agree with what a success they made of their time as the planners, and how fun it was made for us all.

Her home was always warm and welcoming, and she always had time, for anyone, for a chat. We will miss seeing her walking Herbie up and down the lane, and cycling past with her girls. What I will personally miss most about Laura is her ready sense of fun and her incredibly dry and quick witted humour, she was extremely funny.

There is no sense to be made of losing a friend so young, in such a way, and it’s a heart breaking reality for everyone who knew her and was part of her life, be it through school, her family, her work or the village. She will shine on brightly, wherever she may be.

Family day out

By Emily Reddy

Join us for a wonderful family day out with activities for all ages and stages to celebrate sustainable British Farming at our Open Farm Sunday event on 27th June.

Enjoy our beautiful farm and the surrounding Chilterns countryside! Meet our mixed farm animals, stroke a goat, enjoy an equine, see a sheepdog herding, chat with a chicken or

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perhaps admire the arable crops or the machinery, or wander amongst the wildlife! Learn about how our farm works to include and encourage wildlife and marvel at biodiversity.

There will be crafts for children and other activities for all, a BBQ and even fresh pizza from our new Farm to Fork outdoor oven.

Other demonstrations include our farrier trimming donkey hooves, goat hand-milking and woodturning.

To find out more and to book, visit www.roadfarmcountryways/openfarmsunday/



To ensure our visitors' safety, we will be managing visitor numbers so please book in advance using our online booking system www.trybooking.co.uk/BBRS or call us on 01494 862413. For those with limited mobility, we do have an all-terrain wheelchair and accessible toilets including a changing places facility.

About our farm

We are a 100Ha family run farm with arable, sheep, cattle and hens. Wildlife includes skylark, barn owl, harvest mice and pyramidal orchids. We are proud members of the Chalk, Cherries and Chairs Farm Cluster group, encouraging responsible and sustainable eco-friendly farming.

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www.roadfarmcountryways.com

Address: Road Farm Countryways, Aylesbury Road, Great Missenden HP16 9LS Tel: 07402 200947.

A year in the life of our Parish Hall

By Tony Lea and Pippa Hart

As we come close to 14 months of lockdowns and Covid restrictions, we look forward to some sort of normality returning to the use of our Parish Hall. Steve Moody marked a return to a more normal way of life with his upholstery classes on Monday 17th May, after nearly six months away. He is now using the hall three to four times a week and his classes were the only bookings we were legally able to hold during the short window of relative normality in the Autumn. Let's hope that after 21st June we will once again be able to host parties and fitness classes and open it up for more general use to the community again.

In the interim the hall car park has become the most sociable place in the village!! – even with social distancing and the most draconian lockdown restrictions, it was still possible to have a legitimate chat with a friend or neighbour whilst queuing to go into the shop, or waiting for your turn on the tennis court (which has seen the best bookings in its history!) and this has been a massive bonus. Needless to say, the SHOP has been the biggest draw and essential service for us all – it would have been a much harder lockdown in the village without it – what an incredible team has kept this lifeline going for us all to benefit from.

Maintaining the fabric

Regardless of lockdowns, life has to go on with maintaining our hall buildings and grounds. The Scouts have vastly improved the look of the grounds with the newly paved driveway to their hut – and the shop and hall have taken advantage of getting the passage at the back of the building paved and a safety railing added. The roof and gutters of the building were cleaned in the new year and about 20 years' worth of leaf detritus jet-washed and cleared away. With no bookings in the hall, the committee took the opportunity to redecorate the entire interior of the hall, and then extended the brief to the exterior too. We have replaced the doors to our storeroom as well as few new door handles and signs to make it look a bit smarter and the hall floor has been revarnished and is sparkling again.

At the beginning of the lockdown a year ago Phil Easeman did some essential repairs on the septic tank – we are always so grateful when local trades give up their time freely to help us out in an emergency.

And of course, Barnaby's legacy lives on – it's only in the past week that we have realised he was the only

member of our committee who actually understood how the night storage heaters worked in the hall – how we wish we had paid more attention when he had painstakingly tried to explain to us how the controls and timers worked on so many occasions in the past...

We hope that we can hold the Roving Supper in November but that will depend on the situation at the time and how people feel about large indoor gatherings. Preceding that we would hope to have the annual Bonfire and Fireworks display on 5th November. It is hard to plan ahead with the virus situation changing week to week but by then we should all have received two jabs and possibly three for the most vulnerable.

A dose of positivity is what we all need in the hope we can get back to a more normal way of life



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The Lee Parish Council News

By Hayley Farrelly, Clerk

New Parish Council

As mentioned in the May newsletter, no parish council seat was contested and therefore no election was held.

At the Parish Council's Annual Meeting on 11th May Cllr Colin Sully stepped down as Chair, with Cllr Ruth Fowler being elected as the new Chair. Cllr Carol Perry was re-elected as Vice-Chair.

On behalf of both the council and residents I'd like to offer my thanks to Colin for his sterling efforts over the past five years, and wish Ruth good luck in her new role.

Parking at the allotments

The consultation on turning unused space at the allotments into a car park generated a great deal of interest. Many people responded to the consultation, for which the Parish Council is very grateful, and a number took the trouble to attend the meeting on 11th May to voice their concerns. Although some people were in favour, those against outnumbered them 5:1, and therefore this proposal will not be taken forward.

Your council needs you!

You may not be aware, but the council has a small group of volunteers who undertake minor maintenance tasks under the guidance of Cllr Dick Chinnery. In recent weeks you may have seen the results of their efforts, with the benches at both Swan Bottom and Field End having been repaired and fresh paint and preservative applied. Examples of

other jobs undertaken by the volunteers include repairs to the playground equipment and occasional plant clearance which does not require professional work.

If you are practically minded and would be interested in becoming a volunteer, please email me at clerk@thelee.org.uk or phone 07704 909324 for further details. No commitment to a specific amount of time is needed, just enthusiasm.

Annual Parish Meeting

The Lee Parish Council normally holds an annual Parish Meeting in May; this was not held in 2020 due to Covid restrictions. Ongoing restrictions mean it has not been possible to arrange a meeting so far this year either. We are currently investigating both requirements and constraints, with a view to holding a meeting in September.

The Lee War Memorial

You may have seen remedial works being undertaken at the War Memorial; this is to repoint the paved surround with lime mortar, and it has been necessary to keep the area covered while the mortar cured.

Buckinghamshire Council

Following the recent local elections, we now have three councillors representing the Chiltern Ridges area on Buckinghamshire (Unitary Authority) Council: Tricia Birchley (who has represented The Lee for many years), Jane MacBean and Mohammed Fayyaz.

Planning applications

Finally, a reminder that the Parish Council continues to post notices to The Lee Forum, as we receive them, of all planning applications within the parish, with a reminder to residents

that if they have specific comments to make, they should respond directly to the planning authority.

If a resident wishes to make planning-related comments to the Parish Council, please send them to clerk@thelee.org.uk. Such comments will be taken into account by the Parish Council when forming its own view and will be unattributed.

Bridge too far?

By Rita Sully et al

The bidding on this hand was straightforward enough, but was it so easy to play?

♠ K 8 5
♥ 10 9 5 2
♦ 6 5 4
♣ A K 10

♠ A 6 4	♠ Q J 9 3
♥ J 7 3	♥ A K
♦ A Q 10 7	♦ J 9 8
♣ 7 6 4	♣ Q J 8 5

♠ 10 7 2
♥ Q 8 6 4
♦ K 3 2
♣ 9 3 2

Dealer: East
Vulnerability: N-S

Our bidding went:

E	S	W	N
1NT	pass	2♠*	pass
3NT	pass	pass	pass

* We play 2♠ meaning exactly 11 pts and a balanced hand,

How would you play this hand with an opening lead of 4♥? See page 26.



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Jones Hill Wood and Roald Dahl

By Colin Sully

The felling of trees to build HS2 has become an increasingly emotive issue, no more so locally than at Jones Hill Wood, which is often referred to, by protesters and the media, as the woods in which Roald Dahl was inspired to write *Fantastic Mr Fox*. But is this actually true? Paul Bigland's blog on HS2 has recently challenged my thinking.

Fantastic... or fake facts?

Paul Bigland writes: "Was Jones Hill woods really the inspiration for Roald Dahl to write *Fantastic Mr Fox*? Who to trust? Well, how about we start with the Roald Dahl museum? If anyone should know about this they should, surely?"

This is what they say about the inspiration for Dahl's story: "Roald Dahl lived with his family in Great Missenden. Their house was surrounded by fields and woods. As a passionate lover of the countryside, there was one particular tree – known locally as 'the witches' tree' – that sat on the lane near the Dahl home and came to inspire one of Roald's favourite stories: *Fantastic Mr Fox*. When his children were growing up Roald always used to tell them that it was where Mr Fox and his family lived, in a hole beneath the trunk, just as the Fox family do in the story."

This explanation was further detailed in a report called '*Finding Fantastic Mr Fox*' by the BBC's 'Countryfile' which claims that:

"Beloved children's author Roald Dahl once lived and worked in



rambling Gipsy House, on the edge of the sleepy Chilterns village of Great Missenden, and when stumped for inspiration he would walk in nearby Angling Spring and Hobshill woods. It was among these ancient beeches and carpets of bluebells that Dahl set some of his best-loved stories, including my favourite, the tale of *Fantastic Mr Fox*. Dahl had a favourite tree, an enormous, gnarled specimen in the heart of the wood, which he called 'The Witches' Tree'.

Yet again, no mention of Jones Hill Wood.

The Bucks geology website also has an illustrated guide to walks around Great Missenden published by the Chilterns Conservation Board which, in relation to Angling Spring Woods, says: "This was Roald Dahl's local wood... the Witches' Tree, which inspired the story of *Fantastic Mr Fox* was blown down in 2003."

Paul Bigland goes on to point out that, distance-wise, Jones Hill Wood is over three miles walk from Great Missenden High Street. In contrast, Angling Spring woods are right next to Dahl's home! He says: "Now, if you're going walking with young children, which woods would you chose to take them to – a local one

near home or one that's more than a six-mile round trek where you have to walk past loads of other woodland just to get to it?"

So... fact or fiction?

Concluding his blog, Bigland points out that if he can fact-check this claim (that Jones Hill Wood was the setting and inspiration for *Fantastic Mr Fox*) by spending just a few minutes on Google, why can't others do the same?

He answers his own question: "As the old adage goes, never let the facts get in the way of a good story..."

I will leave the reader to ponder whether their thinking has been challenged by Mr Bigland.

Farewell to the woods

By the Editor

Whatever the reality versus the make believe, locals were encouraged to visit the woods on Sunday 9th May to say goodbye to the trees, which have been such an attractive part of the area around the A413, before they were chopped down to make way for HS2.

While HS2 security workers looked on, families reported that the activist hosts made the visit fun and informative and prompted this quote from Benjamin aged eight: "It was a fun camp to visit, and I loved running up the hills and banks. They taught us how to climb trees, which will be useful because I want to be a protector too!"

Benjamin's dad, Matthew, said "It's great that they are taking a stand. It's not going to change HS2, but I believe, like the abolitionists and



suffragettes before them, they are helping to change the conversation, forcing the country to ensure future development is sustainable".

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Bridge too far?

To make the contract wasn't straightforward and relied on finding two more tricks through finessing diamonds and opponents spades breaking 3-3.

East started with Q♠ which loses to North's K♠. East subsequently led 8♦, let it run and was successful, so followed with the J♦. South's K♦ was captured by the Ace and, with the spades breaking favourably, nine tricks were made.

Dear Diary

The fastest way to let everyone in the parish know about an event you are arranging is to publish it right here in the Newsletter. Contact the Editor by the 12th of the previous month (see contact details on page 1).

June

Thursday 3rd. The Arts Society Ballinger. Online via Zoom. Fakes and Fortunes Lecture by Sarah Cove. Contact Suzanne Baker for details on 01494 864893.

Tuesday 8th. Ballinger WI. Climbing Kilimanjaro at 67 by Ken Brazier.

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Thursday 17th. Parliamentary By-election.

Thursday 17th. The Arts Society Ballinger. Online via Zoom.

Treasures of the Liveries Lecture by Paul Jagger. Contact Suzanne Baker for details 01494 864893.

Sunday 27th. Open Farm event. See page 19.

Coming soon

Thursday 22nd July. The Lee Parish Council Meeting. (Hopefully) in the Parish Hall at 7:30 pm.

Ballinger Horticultural Society will not be holding any physical meetings at present. Please check the website at ballingerhort.co.uk for up to date details of online talks.

BATS – Ballinger Babies and Toddler group will resume again in September. Watch this space.

Directory of local contacts

Ballinger Horticultural Society

Chairperson: Katherine Hersee
07801 948650, kjhersee@gmail.com

Membership Secretary:
jennywooding@btconnect.com

Ballinger War Memorial Hall

Bookings: Jane Ogden, 837379

Ballinger Evening WI

Contact: Jo Laurie, 863492
watercolours@kitty4.co.uk

Lee Common C of E School

School office, 837267
office@leecommon.bucks.sch.uk

Lee Common Methodist Church

Graham and Susan Evans, 580016

Lee Common Scouts**Group Scout Leader**, Chris Nevill. 864881

gsl@1stleecommon.co.uk

Scouts, Enzo D'Alessandro; scouts@1stleecommon.co.uk**Beavers**, Karen Bruton; beavers@1stleecommon.co.uk**Cubs**, James Bruton;

cubs@1stleecommon.co.uk

Shop at The Lee

Symeon Economou, 837195

shop@thelee.org.uk

St John the Baptist Church

See centre pages

St Mary's Ballinger

Contact: Anne Ellis, 837247

anne.ellis1004@gmail.com

Tennis Court @ Parish Hall

Bookings: Pippa Hart 07785 323232 (ideally WhatsApp)

The Arts Society Ballinger

Chair: Lesley Wickham, 865480

ballinger@theartssociety.org

The Lee Cricket Club

www.theleecc.org.uk

Secretary: Mike Harris

07788 345555

The Lee Flower Show

Chairman: Jonathan Batten, 837450

The Lee Newsletter

theleenewsletter@gmail.com

The Lee Old Church Trust

Secretary: Pam Garner 837501

The Lee Parish Council

Clerk: Hayley Farrelly, 07704 909324

clerk@thelee.org.uk

www.thelee.org.uk/pc

Allotments: Alison Weir, 837529

The Lee Parish Hall Committee

Bookings: Anne Barnett, 837796

Pippa Hart, 837340

Chairman: Tony Lea, 837237

The LeeWay

Contact: 07845 029500

The Newsletter

The Lee Newsletter is published 10 times a year and distributed free to all households in the parish... and a little beyond. The views expressed in it are not necessarily those of the Editor.

We welcome letters and articles of interest and relevance to The Lee. Copy should be sent to the Editor of the month (see page 1) by the 12th of the month before publication.

Letters should ideally run to no more than 200 words and articles to no more than 700 words; material may be edited and may appear on the village website www.thelee.org.uk unless consent is specifically withheld. Anonymous contributions are not accepted.

To advertise or place an insert, please contact Paul Apicella on 837377 by the 12th of the previous month.

If you have photographs for publication please contact Jonathan Batten on 837450 or email battenjonathan@hotmail.com.

For queries regarding distribution contact Colin Sully on 837760.

Other members of the Editorial team: Zoe Berkeley, Ruth Fowler, Mary Godfrey, Phil Harrison, Liz Macann, Jen Ogle and Adam Speller.

Printed by Orbit Press: Chesham. 01494 778053.

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