



NEWSLETTER

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

From the Editor

By Liz Macann

As I reflected on life and times in The Lee and beyond, I found myself less chirpy than I usually feel at the onset of spring. To sidestep the negative possibilities of the coming months, this edition has included some warming stories of the range of talents, adventures and kindnesses that are to be found in our community – as well as the usual pleas, requests and invitations that complete the mix.

Let's borrow from ancient Rome as Joe King and his merry band suggest and anticipate good news from around the world and a positive impact nearer to home.

Meanwhile, thank goodness for the daffodils, don't they lift the spirits?

Any thoughts about any of the articles this month, or contributions for April's edition, to the editor (Jonathan Batten) by 12th March please at theleenewsletter@gmail.com

Your Letters

To the Editor

A compote of dates

On a recent visit to a local supermarket for a small shop, I happened to purchase three fresh food items from what I now understand to be the 'ambient' shelf. This is apparently fresh food which doesn't

require refrigeration. Having brought these items home, which included apples, onions and some 'irresistible' tomatoes, I discovered that two of three onions were mouldy, many of the tomatoes in the packet had brown spots on them and two of the six pack of apples were bruised/beginning to rot. On looking for a sell by/use by/best before date I noticed that on the apples and tomatoes there was what appeared to be a new kind of coding. This was neither a sell by date nor a use by date nor a best before date. It simply had the code A30.

Consequently, I took these items back and was informed by the store manager that this system had actually been in operation for a couple of years, that it was partly a change from EU regulations and that the coding was in fact a date after which they should "remove it from the shelves". The 30 on the A30 coding was the day of the month in case anyone was wondering. The A is apparently some sort of batch number and for store reference only.

Apparently, this new coding is aimed to reduce food waste, which of course we heartily support, but in this instance, it didn't seem to be working because some of the items were



Once you've read it, why not return this Newsletter to Shop at The Lee for someone else to enjoy?

inedible even though it was several days before the 30th.

On doing a bit of investigation it seems that the whole complicated area which includes best before dates, use by dates and ambient dates is somewhat past its sell by date (a bit like my fruit and veg). Can anyone clarify this situation? Were you aware of this relatively new ambient shelf/date? Google wasn't much help so I thought I would turn to finer minds.

Answers on a postcard (now that dates me!)

Andrew C Wadsworth
The Lee

PS the store were more than happy to replace the said items.

To the Editor

Postcard from the past

Here is a familiar scene of The Lee Green but without the war memorial. The Manor has a bright white gate and fence, and most of the other houses are heavily covered in ivy. Although the postcard is unused, this photo was

taken some time at the beginning of the last century. This is because The Lee Green was only created by Sir Arthur Lasenby Liberty in 1901 and The Lee War Memorial was not erected until the end of 1920.

Lady Emma Liberty and her companion, Miss Gertrude Lockey, were very protective of our village green. Woe betide anyone, if they were spotted taking a shortcut across it.

Carol Addison
Lee Common

To the Editor

What's bin happenin'

May I, once more, raise an issue that is causing much grief to the Parish Hall Committee – namely the misuse of the large Biffa rubbish bins beside the entrance to the car park.

It seems that some people believe they are council owned and therefore innocently think that they are free to dispose of their – usually larger – pieces of rubbish there. The reality is that they are paid for by the shop and the Parish



Hall and, in fact, are the largest items of expense on both of their accounts.



Privately owned bins

Could we, therefore, make a plea that everyone is made aware that these bins are privately serviced.

The Parish Hall Committee
Lee Common

To the Editor

Happy 70th Anniversary...

... to Brian and Barbara Wilson. They were at school together where they were close friends, became Head Boy and Head Girl respectively, married, had three boys, and celebrated their 70th Wedding Anniversary in January.

When they moved here, Brian, a Licensed Lay Reader, took the majority of services at St Mary's Church, Ballinger and also helped at The Lee and Great Missenden. This in addition to his 'proper' job at the Atomic Energy Research Establishment, while Barbara, an enthusiastic gardener was a stalwart helper at Ballinger Playgroup when my two were small.

They gave not only their time, but also did so much more, very quietly: when St Peter and St Paul Church, Great Missenden needed a large strong table, they donated one; St Mary's Church porch was collapsing, they financed a new one; we needed chairs to replace the old pews, they funded some.

Here they are sitting with friends on the new pew from St Mary's Church, Ballinger as they did every day for their coffee, weather permitting!



A few years ago they 'retired' (?) to the Isle of Wight, but keep in touch with us here, and we still miss them.

Lizzie Benwell

Lee Common

[And many congratulations to others who also enjoyed special wedding anniversaries: Golden (Maggi and John Cameron), Diamond (Pauline and Graham Archer)]



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The Ides of March



By Joe King

15th March is also known as the *Ides of March* in the Roman calendar. It marks such things as the deadline for settling debts in Rome and, most famously, the assassination of Julius Caesar in 44BC.

“Beware the Ides of March” as a phrase entered our language due to Shakespeare’s play *Julius Caesar*.

As Caesar headed towards the senate, he said to the soothsayer who had warned him to beware “Well, the Ides of March are come” implying that nothing had happened and the soothsayer was wrong. The soothsayer’s response was “Aye, they are come, but they are not gone”. Caesar was assassinated later that day.

You must wonder what any of this has to do with The Lee parish, the community or the newsletter. As a group of us sat chewing the fat in the snug one winter’s evening in the New Year, the subject arose in the context of the events going on around the world.

The chat was less about the local goings on or gossip and was more

serious this time due to the chaos, the wars and conflicts, the protests and the significant number of elections taking place around the world this year creating a sense of uncertainty.

The group’s natural cynicism came out as we tried to look on the bright side, after all the *Ides of March* have become associated with betrayal and bad things, yet they represented something very different to the Romans. They were the beginning of a new year in ancient Rome, a time of celebration and rejoicing. Interesting how good things can easily be replaced by bad things and yet are two sides of the same coin.

Hopefully as spring approaches the melancholy of winter will be lifted and the old irreverent, tongue in cheek group will re-emerge.

School report



By Catherine May

The first half of spring term in a school can be relatively quiet compared to the Christmas celebrations of December, but there has still been lots going on at our lovely Lee Common school. During January, Reception children enjoyed lots of jumping, climbing and stretching at a gymnastics festival in Holmer Green, and every child in the school also had the opportunity to take part in a Wild West-themed Perform drama workshop, playing exciting games and learning new acting skills, which they will be able to apply to drama activities in lessons.

The school has also happily welcomed back Loki the Dog, who, after a break, is now visiting the

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school again to hear children read. (For those who may not have heard of reading to dogs before, research suggests it helps children develop literacy skills and build confidence, through both the calming effect of the dog's presence and the fact that the dog will appear to be listening, without judgement, to the reader.)

At the beginning of February we also had an important (though perhaps less exciting) visit from the local Food Safety Officer, who, we are pleased to report, awarded the school a 5-star food hygiene rating (the highest possible standard).



The school always looks tidy, bright and welcoming, with regularly changing, fantastically creative, displays. This term all the pupils and staff have made birds, which are perched proudly on a huge mustard tree in the library area. The display is inspired by our school vision and mission statement, which are rooted in the parable of the mustard seed in Matthew 13. Just as tiny mustard seeds grow into trees with branches strong enough to support the birds, so we want our children to grow into strong citizens of the future, able to support others in the world around them.

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Village walk

By Charlotte Reynolds

Without a single pinch or a punch on the 1st of the month, 10 walkers and seven hounds set off happily in the early spring sunshine for the second village walk of the year. Led by Judy Hart we walked from The Lee Green, through Ballinger to the top of Pednor before looping back to The Lee church where some of us stayed to enjoy coffee and homemade cake.



These first Thursday of the month walks are an excellent and sociable way to explore our local countryside and catch up with new and long standing friends. All abilities and all ages are most welcome, dog ownership not a requirement!

The next walk will be on Thursday 7th March, details will be posted on the forum nearer the date.

And talking of dogs, here we have a new kid on the block.....

Turkish delight

By Rohan Paulo

Henry came into our lives thanks to our friend, villager Kate Patterson. Kate and her family went on holiday to Kalkan in Turkey last May and within a day of

their arrival a stray puppy had taken up residence in their holiday villa. Brendan and I soon started to receive texts from Kate with pictures of a very friendly and affectionate puppy being cuddled and lying in various laps. Leaving him behind at the end of her holiday simply wasn't an option. Kate then asked us whether we would like to adopt him. We had lost our flat coat retriever Lilly in 2022 who was the brother of Kate's dog Dougal so we jumped at her suggestion.

Fortunately, Kate was able to find a local charity in Kalkan to arrange the adoption process. Even better was the fact that a foster home was found so the puppy wouldn't have to wait in kennels until he got his Turkish pet passport and vaccinations in order – a process that took four months. We named the puppy Henry and looked forward to his arrival in October.

Henry was transported by a member of the charity which involved a flight from Turkey to Rotterdam then a ferry to Harwich where we collected him with Kate.



Henry has settled into village life well. He loves his walks in the Chilterns and is very friendly with other dogs and people – a bit too keen to make new friends as some of you may have found when he arrives to greet you with us following some way behind. Being from Turkey he is not keen on the rain but seems to have coped otherwise with the drop in temperature from his homeland. We say he is a Heinz 57 variety and most of all a lucky and much-loved street dog from Turkey.

The buyer for our cellar

By Charles Owen -Conway

When we had to move because of HS2, we had little knowledge of The Lee or Lee Common and even less of the Shop...

With Gill busy at her work, it seemed a good idea to offer my services and become one of the many volunteers who keep the shop going.

It was great fun interacting with such nice folk, but after a month or two it occurred to me that something, very dear to my heart, namely wine, was only to be found in odd dark corners. With some trepidation I spoke to he who must be obeyed, Symeon, who cheerfully said that he bought wine from Booker when it was on special offer!

In for a penny, I asked him if he would like me to take over the wine buying and start our own little cellar with a range of affordable but good value wines. Oddly my hand was bitten off in seconds and so it began.

My love of wine started about 50 years ago when I joined the Wine

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Society, a fantastic organisation, who to this day remain a members' not for profit society.

Initially, for the shop, I bought from well known outlets and generally got a discount from their retail price. It wasn't easy and I was let down on several occasions notably the first Christmas!

From then on, I have sourced and bought from a number of outlets who offer much better prices than the big supermarkets, for example I do still use Majestic and Tesco, when they run their 25% off for six or more bottles. Of course, you can do the same yourselves but many of our customers have told me that they don't need or want to buy six bottles at a time, so I buy and offer you the lower price.

Many of you are aware that much of what we sell comes from Aldi. I make no apology for this as their value for

money on wine is amazing, but as one the two biggest supermarkets in Europe and with incredibly knowledgeable buyers they rarely get it wrong.

The 'onerous' job for me is that I won't stock anything that I haven't tried myself! The younger wines are usually where I do need to be careful, but overall and from the feedback I get it seems that we get it right on most occasions.



Pricing is never easy and for a long time, no matter the quality on offer, I was unable to interest our shoppers in anything over £10. As regular customers know, we still don't sell anything over £9.99 but with costs increasing, we will keep our prices under close scrutiny and accept that to maintain the quality of the wines we may have to charge a little more.

I am always happy to listen to any requests or suggestions and if anyone would like to try some 'even' better wines do let me know.

PS I hope the Crémant du Jura rears its head again this year!



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The rhythm of local life

By the Editorial Team

There's an old cliché about fruit not falling far from the tree... Nevertheless, it is quite astonishing to find there are villagers around The Lee and Lee Common who have been here for nearly 200 years. Not the same individuals of course (!) – but direct descendants. And what's more, some have, almost literally, built the village up.

This description is what you might call the 'prequel' for Jilly Carleton-Smith. Now a Carleton-Smith, she is a fourth generation Humphreys – well known as builders of some of the larger houses in the area. Perhaps it shows confidence in the quality of the craftsmanship that she has lived for the past 40 years with her husband Chris in one of those very houses. So, to sit round a table and listen to her stories as passed down through the family is like feeling the pulse of our village life long gone.

Early years

She can describe her early years living in High Tor (yes, built by Dad, of course) and attending the village school that was then positively throbbing with the young life of all the local kids from the surrounding villages who worked their way through to 11+ before venturing further afield to Grammar, Technical or Secondary Modern senior schools.

One of Jilly's memories of that time is when the Head, in preparation for Sports Day which was held in the Park, would go out and dig up the cow poo so that the deposits didn't interfere with the races. The bases for the football posts are still there among

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the current cowpats if you only know where to look. Her children and now grandchild are all products of Lee Common School though their recollections may vary!

Jilly remembers a childhood in the village of unstructured simple fun playing in the Park and being on the fringes of the annual Pony Club Camp – without her own pony, cleaning tack was her passport to the events! She doesn't recollect wild teenage years but does remember fondly the Youth Club, junior AND senior, held in the now Parish Hall and the source of many a parade through the village.

And somewhere along the line she met husband Chris, in time honoured fashion, a classmate of her older brother – and an outlier from Ballinger! The Bugle helped oil the wheels though as the lively local pub with a pool table and a juke box which

welcomed all ages and made up for the lack of transport to hit the high spots of Aylesbury.

On leaving school Jilly went through a rigorous recruitment process to land a job at Lloyds Bank in Chesham where she worked until she became mum to Alex and Chloe, Alex and his family living in the village still with Chloe not far away. Today, Jilly still enjoys life in her barn with husband Chris (who has his own story to tell) and has developed enviable skills to create a most beautiful garden over the years. A trustee of the Old Church, Jilly has been instrumental in helping to raise funds for the maintenance of the building by organising events and activities which many of us look forward to attending throughout the year.

Does she ever wish she had lived elsewhere, at least for a while? She puzzles over the question for a moment. Why? She says "I love it here; the countryside, the community – and there's so much going on! I feel like I'm on holiday all the time."

There is surely no greater praise for Lee Common.

Get set... go!

By the Editorial Team

Your Newsletter depends critically on two things: firstly income from advertisers and sponsors to finance the printing, and secondly volunteers... lots of them! There are around 30 volunteers who are involved in getting each edition to your door. Many are distributors, spread across the readership area, and of course we have a team of Editors (Jonathan Batten, Mary Godfrey, Phil Harrison, Liz Macann and Louise Wadsworth), one of whose names you will spot on page one each month. But

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there are also other volunteers, who work in the background throughout the year, unseen by the readers. Our lead on advertising, Hannah Lane, continues to break all records for advertisements; Phil Harrison also doubles up as our Distribution Supremo, Jonathan Batten also photo-edits every edition and Adam Speller keeps a careful eye on our finances.



Are you a (trend) setter?

Finally, Jen Ogley, Ruth Fowler and Colin Sully share the setting of the ten editions, which broadly speaking means taking all the letters and articles that the editor has collected and fitting them into a sensible shape and format, alongside the pictures and advertising, ready to be sent to the printer.

It would be really useful if we had another setter in the team, able to set perhaps a couple of editions each year. We use Microsoft Publisher running on Windows to set, so some experience of that would be useful... but rest assured if you have reasonable IT literacy, it's not difficult to pick up... and we have some excellent tutors available.

If you would like to find out more about setting, please get in touch by emailing theleenewsletter@gmail.com

Thanks... in anticipation!

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The Lee Newsletter not only entertains and informs, to paraphrase Lord Reith, but it pays its way...

Our finances

By Adam Speller, Treasurer

Set out below a summary of the Newsletter finances for 2023 (and 2022 for comparison purposes):

	2023	2022
	£	£
INCOME		
Advertising	4,367	3,733
Annual Dinner rcpts	1,642	1,440
Total Income	6,009	5,173
EXPENDITURE		
Printing (10 editions)	3,506	3,118
Annual Dinner costs	1,667	1,473
Indemnity Insurance	360	360
Total Expenditure	5,533	4,951
Surplus in Year	476	222
Reserves as at 31 Dec	1,615	1,139



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Thanks to the support of 36 local sponsors and advertisers, the Newsletter has kept its head above water financially in 2023 and has sufficient reserves to get it through the turbulent and uncertain times ahead.

Hopefully, it provides a useful forum for locals to publicise events and comment upon current and historic issues for the enjoyment and education of everyone at no cost (thanks to volunteers) with more than 450 copies printed every month for local distribution.

Art 4 Lee

Bramley Pottery

By Charlotte Reynolds

With a smile as welcoming and warm as her cheerful studio, Hayley Farrelly greets me as she ushers me into Bramley Pottery. I'm here for the fourth instalment of my series featuring our local artists and makers and Hayley lives and breathes creativity. Button and ephemera collages, intricate crochet blankets, fabulously theatrical cakes, all appear effortlessly from her fingertips, but the skill that shapes her days now is far more elemental, ancient and 'primitive'.

Pottery has a history that reaches back millennia. The basics of taking clay earth, shaping it, adding decoration, and then firing until it hardens are as old as human civilisation. The fundamental process remains the same today, but with the advantages of modern technology and learning offering more thrilling design outcomes.

Hayley first encountered pottery making aged 15 at an afterschool craft club, starting with simple hand building pieces from flat, rolled, 'slab' clay. The small model house that she built, glazed, and fired in this class still stands

today, testament to her future vocation and proudly displayed in her garden. After various careers, including a long stint flying with British Airways as cabin crew, marriage and motherhood to two boys, she threw herself into volunteering for local good causes; many of you might know her as The Lee Parish Clerk, which is one of the many hats she continues to wear.



But six years ago she went back to school at Bucks Adult Learning and, under the encouragement of her tutor, she made the first steps to her new creative life holding, in 2019, her first sale of match pots, jugs, bowls and bud vases at the local village Macmillan coffee morning. This proved to be a great success, encouraging Hayley to establish her pottery business named after her family home.

When Covid struck and lock down began she commandeered the teenager's 'den' and converted it into her garden studio, kitting it out with a Japanese made Shimo Whisper, electric pottery wheel (to which she has recently added a second, portable wheel) and an electric, Rhode Eco Top kiln to allow her to make and fire in

one place. Selling initially via local online site, Metroland, Hayley now sells through her own website, online through 'Not on the High Street' and at the local craft collective shop, Little Wren Collections, in Great Missenden.

Her preferred English Potclay, sourced from Stoke on Trent, is a grogged stoneware clay with a percentage of sand to help with stability when throwing. Looking to nature for her design inspirations, Hayley wheel throws beautifully organic shaped dishes, and hand builds sinuous curved jugs. Larger pieces such as her signature wavy edged and leaf edged bowls are developed from slab clay, where she carefully moulds the form, adding both relief decorations and pressed patterns and shaping them in her own unique style, working by eye rather than to a fixed template. Once a piece has been thrown, or

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moulded, it is left to dry at room temperature which, depending on the weather, can take anything from three to four days to three to four weeks in the cooler damp of winter. When dried, Hayley will refine the edges and smooth any tiny imperfections using a damp sponge. They are then given their first bisque firing for 12 hours, taking a further 12 hours to cool in the kiln. Any further refinement or smoothing is done before the final glaze is added. Hayley uses Amaco celadon glazes from the USA; these give an iridescent translucent finish in natural sea greens, cyan blues and deep turquoises, which are Hayley's beautiful signature colours. Other pieces incorporate layered glazes to create a more fluidly organic, 'drippy' finish. The final kiln firing takes a similar 24-hour time scale and will reach temperatures of 1240°C. At full production Hayley can manage

three or four firings per week. The current increase in energy prices is a concern and her electricity bill is, "a bit spicy" she says ruefully!

Having enjoyably developed her practice to a commercial level, Hayley was keen to share her love of the craft and has started offering workshops, both wheel based, one to one sessions at her studio, or working with larger groups at other venues, using slab clay to mould pieces. She is keen to reassure that anyone, of any ability can create pottery, seeing it as a wonderfully inclusive process. "Taking a moment to be present, to feel the textures and to be able to create something unique, is pure mindfulness" she says. "It's not just art, it's therapy for the soul."

You can contact Hayley by email at hayley.farrelly@btconnect.com, at Instagram @bramleypotteryhf or on 07769 698652. Her website can be found at www.bramleypottery.co.uk

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Mike's bikes

By Michael Addison

You may remember last summer when we read about Mike's adventures motorcycling round Morocco, well look what he's planning now.....

Stuck inside on a very rainy night in November last year I was perusing AutoTrader online looking for a second hand 125cc scooter to use as a runabout in the local area. After the second glass of Shiraz (honest) I began thinking, how far could I go in say, three to four weeks and what would be a suitable ride?

Small bikes bigger adventures

There seems to be a growing trend in the touring motorcycle / adventure collective to downsize from the larger

machines to smaller mid-sized capacity versions (or even smaller). I am one who decided to follow this route when I sold my BMW GS 1200cc for a Yamaha Tenere 700cc. I like many others came to the conclusion that you simply don't need all that power and certainly not the weight that comes with these larger bikes. Point in case – Ewan McGregor and Charley Boorman in the Long Way Round – good film!

Going even smaller



A few years ago I attended a lecture given by a certain Ed March at an adventure and travel event. Ed commenced his talk by wheeling in a very battered Honda C90 Cub (a bag of bolts might be a better description – sorry Ed). His trusty C90 had already taken him from Asia to the UK, to the Bavaria region in Germany in mid-winter (a journey I made on a 250cc Honda to the same event in 2016 where temps never went above -5°C – see picture). From Bavaria he then continued onto and beyond the Arctic Circle also in the depths of winter – brrrr! And if this was not enough, he was about to undertake a challenge going from the northern part of Alaska all the way to Ushuaia, Argentina. For good measure during the trip he threw in the TAT, a trail which runs coast to coast

across the USA, mainly off road. Ed was kind enough to let me sit on 'Ninety' thinking to myself that this thing is practically bullet proof – well it wasn't entirely, as you will see if you watch *Ed March C90 Travels* on YouTube. I should point out that there is some colourful language so some discretion is required for younger viewers.

Going far?

Making some further probes, especially in the sub 250cc category revealed a plethora of riders who have ridden or are presently on the RTW – Round the World. If not the RTW, then taking on some very long distances. A good example of this type of journey would be *Vespa mania: Emma the adventurer* UK to Mongolia on a 125cc scooter, again on YouTube. There are some who have completed the RTW trip on 50cc



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machines, a step too far in my opinion. My point here is that you really don't need a huge machine to undertake some serious journeys, albeit slowly.

To be continued ... Note to self, I really shouldn't drink wine and look at Auto Trader at the same time, it blurs the decision process!

And then there's

E-scooters... and the law

There aren't many places (any?) in The Lee where it would make sense to use an e-scooter, but we thought this article by Thames Valley Police might be of general interest to readers.

Under current UK legislation [Amongst the strictest in the world. Ed], the riding of **privately** owned e-scooters is illegal on roads, pavements, cycle ways and any other public area. E-scooters are covered by the same legislation as motor vehicles and therefore subject to the same requirements of MOT, tax, licensing and specific construction regulations. It is not currently possible to get insurance to ride privately owned e-scooters in public, meaning there is currently no way it can be legal.

Privately owned e-scooters can be legally used on private land providing the landowner has given permission.

In some areas of the UK, including parts of Bucks, there is a trial of government owned e-scooters. These e-scooters are legal to ride on roads and cycle paths, however you do still need a full provisional license to ride them. In the Bucks area, one of the government owned e-scooters brands is Zipp and you can find them in



Zipp e-scooter in Bucks

various places across the towns; these can be ridden legally.

If you use an e-scooter illegally:

- you could face a fine
- you could get penalty points on your licence
- the e-scooter could be seized.

Please see www.zippmobility.com/ and www.thamesvalley.police.uk/advice/advice-and-information/rs/road-safety/advice-escooters for more information.

Prepared-Lee

By Enzo D'Alessandrio

Prepared-Lee is back! It's been a while – I was in deep hibernation, from which I emerged to find myself in 2024. I am now catching up on the events of the past few months, hoping not to go back into hibernation in despair.

Back to Scouts. I recently came across a 'formula' for empowerment, and being an engineer I like formulae,

so I want to share it with you. I saw it attributed to Peter Koestenbaum, and it goes something like this:

*Empowerment =
Direction x Autonomy x Support*

It struck a chord because of its simplicity and clarity. It will come as no surprise that I read it originally in a post on LinkedIn (a work-oriented social network); it can apply to every aspect of leadership, though, and indeed is a brilliant summary of the aim of Scouting.

The young people are provided with Direction (clear instructions, purpose, timeliness etc) for their tasks; they are afforded Autonomy to perform their activities with sufficient trust on the Leaders' part, while within the set boundaries; they are provided Support to ensure that the activities are completed. Any of these missing, and the whole edifice collapses: Direction and Autonomy without Support means that the tasks might not be achieved, leading to lack of confidence; Autonomy and Support without Direction leads to constant dependence, leading to insecurity; Support and Direction without Autonomy leads to lack of development and lack of fulfilment. I like the idea of the multiplication: if any of the components is zero, the whole result becomes zero too; the result is not just a sum of the components – you get great results with small improvements of the individual components.

Empowerment for young people these days is critical: real freedom and agency are often traded for *illusions* of these fundamental aspects of human fulfilment. We do our best to provide the Scouts with the tools to achieve their own empowerment.

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More about the Chilterns
www.theheartofthechilterns.co.uk

Fun, funds and celebrations

Afternoon Tea

By Jill York

Stop off for tea and cake in aid of Rennie Grove Hospice at The Oldham Hall, The Square, Great Missenden on 2nd March at 3:00 pm. Tickets, at £10, are available from the Post Office where you can also make donations and buy raffle tickets.

Contact me on 07846 534301 for more details.

Centenary celebration

1924-2024

By Anne Ellis

Plans are taking shape for celebrating Ballinger Village Hall's 100th anniversary this spring.

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First up is Movie Night on Friday, 22nd March. We will travel back 100 years to England in 1924 as our athletes prepare for the upcoming Olympics in Paris.

Chariots of Fire follows the inspirational stories of two very different competitors – Eric Liddell and Harold Abrahams – in what is considered one of the greatest British films of all time, winning a raft of awards including the 1982 Academy Awards for Best Picture, Best Music for the iconic Vangelis sound track and Best Supporting Actor for Ian Holm.

Tickets are £5 per person. Bring your own drinks, glasses and snacks. Email ballingerhall@gmail.com to book tickets. Doors open at 7:30 pm curtain at 8:00 pm.

To commemorate the official opening of the Hall on Saturday 7th June 1924, two special events will take place on Saturday 8th June 2024.

From 2:00 pm to 4:00 pm the local community are invited to a tea party and exhibition illustrating the history of the Hall from 1924-2024. This will be a unique opportunity to learn all about the Hall's past and present, including opportunities to get involved.

Then on Saturday evening, the Hall reverts to the Roaring Twenties for dinner and dancing. Watch this space for further details but in the meantime be sure to save the date in your diaries for these unique events.

80s night

By Ana Brown

Following the success of our Halloween party at the Cock and Rabbit, the next event will be an 80s night raising money for Scannappeal. The date is Saturday 27th April, please save that in your diaries. Tickets will go on sale next month.

The Lee Bridge Drive

By Rita Sully

The Lee Parish Hall was filled with mutterings and occasional grunts of despair as 20 pairs of bridge players vied to win the bidding and then to make their contracts at The Lee Bridge Drive on Wednesday 31st January.

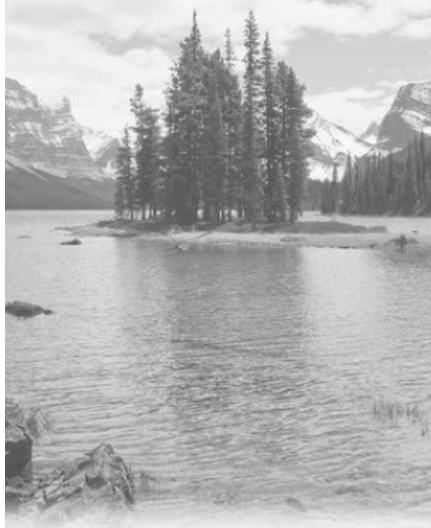


The Drive, organised by Judy Hart and Liz Ford, was ably supported by a team of volunteers who provided the players with a sumptuous tea to sustain them throughout the afternoon. At the end there was a host of prizes won by those with the highest scoring hands, for the pair that made a slam and also awarded for a random score as much of the play depended upon the luck of the cards that were dealt.

There was also a raffle with all proceeds from the event going towards supporting The Lee Parish Church.

For my part it was a most enjoyable afternoon, spent in the company of like-minded bridge players drawn mainly from the local area.

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Bridge too far?

By Kathryn Dickinson et al

On this recent hand, N-S seemed to be in a buoyant position once their bidding took them to a 3NT contact.

♠ Q 5
♥ A K 7 6 2
♦ 10 5 4
♣ J 9 6

♠ 10 9 7 6 4	♠ A J 2
♥ Q 9	♥ 10 5 4 3
♦ Q 9 8 3	♦ J 7 2
♣ A 8	♣ 10 5 4

♠ K 8 3
♥ J 8
♦ A K 6
♣ K Q 7 3 2

Dealer: West
Vulnerability: None

W	N	E	S
pass	pass	pass	1♣
pass	1♥	pass	1NT
pass	3NT	pass	pass
pass			

Did the play go to plan?
See page 25.

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Council Tax...

By Cllr Colin Sully

Chair, The Lee Parish Council

We are fast approaching the time of year when the Council Tax Bill for 2024/25 will drop through our letter boxes. For The Lee residents, around 82% of the Council Tax raised goes to Buckinghamshire Unitary Authority, who are of course responsible for a wide range of local services including social services, highways, planning and schools. Their overall increase this year is capped by Government at 5%.

The county scene

Buckinghamshire Council has announced that the financial pressures it is experiencing will mean some cuts in services. It has also announced the sale of the County Hall building in Aylesbury and the former Chiltern District Council Offices in Amersham.

In future, local residents wanting contact with the council or information will need to go online, to the libraries in Amersham, Great Missenden or Chesham, or to the council offices in Aylesbury or Wycombe.

Around 12% of the Council Tax goes to the Police and Crime Commission and a further 3.5% goes to the Bucks and MK Fire Authority. The remainder (around 2.5% in our case) goes to The Lee Parish Council.

Local pressures

Like all local authorities The Lee Parish Council is facing significant financial pressures. We are by any standard a small parish and simply do not have the scope for economies and efficiencies that might be available in a larger local authority. We also have very limited opportunities for revenue generation. As well as general inflation in costs – including a scale point review

for the Clerk – we have this year, for the first time, passed the threshold at which we need to make pension contributions for the Clerk.

As a result, the council decided at its January meeting that it needed to request an 18% increase in its precept (charges) for the next financial year in order to continue to balance the books. This looks a big increase in percentage terms; however it represents, on average, an increase of less than 30p per week per household in the parish.

In total the precept will provide £25,500 next year to be spent in the parish maintaining the playground, allotments, playing fields, memorials, benches, etc., with smaller amounts spent on the website and forum, and on professional services including audit, payroll and legal. The balance goes to pay our (part-time) Clerk.

None of it goes to the parish councillors and you can rest assured, we are as careful with the council's money as we are with our own... indeed some of it is our own!

Summary accounts are available on the website at www.thelee.org.uk/pc/ Further breakdowns and details of financial expenditure may also be obtained from the Clerk.

Next meeting

The next meeting of the Parish Council will be held on Tuesday 12th March at 7:30 pm at the Parish Hall. Do come along to raise any issues relating to parish council activities.

HS2: high and low tech

By Cllr Colin Sully

With HS2 work trundling on remorselessly through the winter, a reader suggested it

might be interesting to say something about the engineering of the project.

Love it or loathe it (and let's face it most readers loathe it) we have to admit that there are some pretty impressive bits of engineering on the HS2 project... and many of them are local.



Colne Valley Viaduct (HS2 design)

The Colne Valley viaduct at two miles long will be the longest railway bridge in the UK... and it's curved! Will it ever be compared favourably

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to the Ribblehead or Glenfinnan viaducts? I guess only time will tell.



Ribblehead viaduct

The Chiltern tunnel at 10 miles long is the longest tunnel designed for the HS2 project and does indeed tunnel under part of the Chiltern hills... just a pity it isn't a few miles longer and it didn't keep producing sinkholes; the latest of which recently appeared in a field at South Heath.

This spring should see the breakthrough of the two tunnel boring machines at the North Portal at South Heath (more on this next month). The portal will eventually (2030?) look something like the picture below.



Chiltern tunnel North Portal (HS2 design)

Also locally, the Wendover Dean viaduct is being built across a dry valley, using a technique of launching massive, prefabricated steel sections from pier to pier. Disappointingly, the steel sections are fabricated in France and shipped to the UK.



Wendover Dean Viaduct construction)

Finally, the Small Dean viaduct will (eventually) use a similar technique. This viaduct will cross the Chiltern Railway and the A413, which they say can remain open to traffic during the launching of the steel sections!

[Remind me to be somewhere else on holiday when they do. Ed]



Small Dean Viaduct (HS2 design)

To allow the piers for this viaduct to be built, overnight closures (8:30 pm to 5:30 am) will continue on the A413, London Road, Wendover. The latest information indicates closures:

- 26th February to 9th March
- 11th March to 15th March (tbc)

For the latest updates on works in the local area visit www.hs2.org.uk/in-your-area/map/

For more engineering insights visit <https://www.hs2.org.uk/building-hs2/>

The Difference

By Diana Taylor

There are poets in this village
Who never pen a line
There are artists who can paint a thing
But fear it won't be fine

There are people who can listen
There are people who can sing
Those that bake, arrange events
Or Scout, or dance or "swing"

They say there's a story in everyone
And certainly that seems true
Still waters, we know, can run very deep
And that 'dark horse' might be you

Having enjoyed many happenings
Arranged by those who 'do'
I have met the ones that provide a lot
For the many and the few

I noticed it's the ones that do
Who really make the difference
They can change a day that's ordinary
Into one of great significance

When I came here I felt diffident
Reserved and rather shy
I saw so many clever folk
And thought "what use am I?"

But then I read a plaque
That hung on an old man's wall
I pondered on it for a while
And saw it said it all:

"One ship" it told, "sails East
And one West by same breeze that blows
It's the set of the sails and not the gales
That governs where each ship goes"

I thought about the diffidence, the
shyness and the fear
I thought of resolutions that we like to
make each year
It might be brave to set a sail for a
brand new destination
Then, offering surprise results, could
give others inspiration

So please have a go at letting your
hidden light shine bright
Newsletter Editors sort things well and
help them turn out right
Stop being shy, get started. No need
for diffidence
Set your sail and wherever you land
you'll be one who made
"The Difference"

The Parish Hall

By Pippa Hart

Improvements at the Parish Hall site
have continued since the New Year
with the installation of extra lighting
in the car park, particularly at the site
entrance and around the bin area.

Previously a bit of a white knuckle
ride leaving or entering the site on foot
in the dark, the new low energy
floodlights are activated either from
the shop or hall – or by a PIR (passive



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infrared sensor) when there is movement in the car park. Shop volunteers in particular have welcomed this improvement.

Events

We were given notice just before Christmas that Busy Kids in Bucks were ceasing their toddler group sessions on Wednesday mornings – this was due to decreasing numbers – no doubt caused by the squeeze on families with the cost of living crisis.

The hall will be 75 years old on 30th April this year – we are planning to celebrate with a tea party on the afternoon of Saturday 27th April. There will be more details in the April newsletter but if anyone has any old photos or memories of the history of the hall we would be grateful to hear from you. Please contact Pippa Hart by email at pippahart@freuk.com or on 07785 323232.



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The Lee Forum



By the Forum Administrators

It's now four years since the 'new' forum was launched, and the sharp-eyed amongst you may have noticed that we have quietly started to refer to it as simply The Lee Forum rather than Forum 2020.

Posts

At the start of each year we look back on the previous year, and see how the forum has performed. The number of posts in 2023 showed a very slight increase on 2022 (1,699 as against 1,636) – an average of between four and five posts a day. Compared with 2022 there was an increase of 40 in the number of Lost and Found posts (more people out and about now that Covid has receded?), and an increase of 38 in the number of posts asking for recommendations. To make things easier to find we introduced a new category of What's On in the last quarter of the year, which has already had 75 posts. As in previous years, the most posts by far were for items Wanted and For Sale.

More detailed analysis is available at www.thelee.org.uk/the-lee-forum/

Membership

At the time of writing, membership of the forum stands at just over 850. We have however noticed that a significant minority of members do not actively use the forum, neither receiving email notifications of posts nor logging in to see what's going in the village. We have recently written to all of these, asking if they wish to retain their membership.

Reapplying

On a fairly regular basis, we receive applications for membership from people who are already members. Trying to be helpful we do our best to guess the reason for this, but unfortunately we aren't psychic so don't always get it right. To save us trying to second guess the reasons, please don't reapply if:

- **you have forgotten your username:** you can log into The Lee Forum using either your email address or username
- **you have forgotten your password:** just click on the link to say you've forgotten your password and you'll be sent a link to reset it (instructions with sample screenshots for how to do this can be found at <https://www.thelee.org.uk/password-reset/>)
- **you want to change your name, address, phone number or email address:** please complete the Update User Details form at <https://www.thelee.org.uk/update-user-details/>
- **you are having a problem accessing the forum:** please look at the troubleshooting guide at <https://www.thelee.org.uk/common-problems/> or email details to us at admin@thelee.org.uk

Bridge too far?

Despite N-S's bidding being straightforward and their holding 26 HCPs between them, the opening lead of 10♠ resulted in the contract going one down.

Just goes to prove that points alone don't secure a contract.



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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).

March

Saturday 2nd. Afternoon Tea in aid of Rennie Grove Hospice. See page 18.

Thursday 7th. The Lee village walk. 9:30 am on The Lee Green.

Thursday 7th. Ballinger Horticultural Society. 'Garden birds and their songs'. Ballinger Memorial Hall. 8:00 pm.

Friday 8th. Coffee Morning. 10:30 am at St Mary's, Ballinger.

Tuesday 12th. The Lee Parish Council Meeting, 7:30 pm at the Parish Hall.

Friday 22nd. Movie Night at Ballinger Memorial Hall. Door open 7:30 pm. See page 18.

Thursday 28th. The Arts Society Ballinger. 'The Dowager Empress Cixi - ruling from behind the Yellow Silk Screen' with David Rosier. 8:00 pm at Ballinger Memorial Hall.



Church Services

St John the Baptist, The Lee
(Subject to change: please check online via *The Lee Forum*)

Sunday 3rd. Holy Communion (BCP) at the Old Church. 8:00 am.

Sunday 3rd. Family Service at the New Church. 11:00 am.

Sunday 10th. Parish Communion (CW) at the New Church. 11:00 am.

Sunday 17th. Holy Communion (BCP) at the Old Church. 8:00 am.

Sunday 24th. Parish Communion (CW) at the New Church. 11:00 am.

St Mary's, Ballinger

Sunday 3rd. Informal Communion. 9:30 am followed by refreshments.

Tuesday 26th. Compline in Holy Week. 7:30 pm.

Coming Soon

Thursday 4th April. The Lee village walk. 9:30 am on The Lee Green.

Saturday 27th April. The Lee Parish Hall 75th anniversary tea party.

Saturday 27th April. Scannappel 80s night. See page 18.

Saturday 20th July. The Lee Flower Show. The Lee Manor Park.

Directory of local contacts

Ballinger Babies and Toddlers Group

Sophie Underwood, 07970 022190

Ballinger Hall Horticultural Society

Chairperson: Katharine Hersee

07801 948650, kjhersee@gmail.com

Membership Secretary:

jennywooding@btconnect.com

Ballinger War Memorial Hall

Bookings: Jane Ogden, 837379

Ballinger Evening WI

Contact: Jane Marsh, 837482
jane.marsh129@btinternet.com

Lee Common C of E School

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

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, The Lee

Vicar: Revd Chris Haywood, 837566.
Churchwarden: Trevor Pearce, 837601.
Treasurer: David Stephenson, 867617.

St Mary's Church, Ballinger

Associate Wardens: Anne Ellis,
837247 and Maggi Cameron, 864790
or maggi.cameron@hotmail.co.uk

Tennis Court @ Parish Hall

Bookings: Pippa Hart 07785 323232
(ideally WhatsApp)

The Arts Society Ballinger

Contact: Susanne Baker, 864893
ballinger@theartsociety.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

The Lee Parish Hall Committee

Bookings: Pippa Hart, 837340
Chairman: Tony Lea, 837237

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 in the newsletter or place an insert, please contact Hannah Lane at hannahcmlane@gmail.com or on 07747 114640, 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 Phil Harrison on 837469.

Other members of the Editorial team: Ruth Fowler, Mary Godfrey, Liz Macann, Jen Ogley, Adam Speller, Colin Sully and Louise Wadsworth.

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To book the Parish Hall

'phone Pippa Hart on 837340 or
07785 323232

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