

Village news

May 2026

Puttenham
Astrope
Long Marston
Gubblecote
Wilstone
Little Tring



Your independent village magazine - produced and delivered free to every home in Tring Rural villages entirely by local volunteers.



Long Marston School

"Got talent"

by Laura Whateley

On the last day of the Spring term we held Long Marston's Got Talent 2026. The school talent show was a real highlight and we were treated to some fantastic acts from singing and dancing to drums and piano.

It's always a wonderful occasion, bringing together the whole school and staff for a morning full of energy, creativity and courage.

All our acts were of a really high quality and the children wowed us with their confidence and enthusiasm. It was wonderful to see so many pupils stepping out of their comfort zones and supporting one another along the way.

We are incredibly proud of all the performers – what a talented group we have!

Congratulations to:

1st Place: Victor (Class 4) doing a magic show

2nd Place: Holly A, Ivy and Daniella (Class 4) dancing to Benson Boone

3rd Place: Finley H (Class 4) playing the drums

Runners up: Heidi and Ollie dancing to Madness



For the residents of Puttenham, Astrope, Long Marston, Gubblecote, Wilstone & Little Tring.

New foot bridge at Millhoppers Nature Reserve

In Memory of John and Margaret Noakes

ON 12th April wardens and volunteers of the Herts and Middlesex Butterfly Conservation group, as well as local residents and friends of family of the late Margaret and John Noakes, gathered for the formal opening of a new bridge at Millhoppers Nature reserve.

We got to hear about the history of the site, the work that dedicated wardens and volunteers have been doing to improve the habitat for moths and butterflies, and the ongoing recordings of wildlife that it supports. A plaque in John and Margaret's memory was unveiled on the bridge to acknowledge their passion and dedication to this special place. John was the first warden up until 2009.

The 3.5 acre site was acquired by Butterfly Conservation in 1998 and remains their only reserve in Herts. An area of unimproved grassland, encircled by arable land, streams and 16 black poplar trees, (nationally rare but locally common trees), making it a rare site. It sits between Long Marston and Wilstone and was



previously used by the Boy Scouts and for grazing of horses but never as farmland as far as was known.

After a lot of research and a great deal of consideration the Branch applied for funding from Dacorum towards the cost of buying the land, with an additional contribution from Herts and Middx Branch and local residents. The National Organisation approved of the sale and the deal was done.

The reserve has remained a very special place for local residents and wildlife enthusiast to enjoy for the last 28 years.

Recordings over many years has identified 26 species of butterflies and around 400 species of moths. Volunteers and wardens have worked hard to manage and improve the biodiversity of the site. Over recent years a lined pond has been added as well as a chalk bank with chalk sourced from the excavation of the Wendover Arm of the canal.

This bank has been sown with wildflowers to attract species such as the Small Blue, which was recorded there for the first time in 2025. Planting of trees in the last 12 months has also been targeted to attract butterflies and moths.

A guided walk organised by the branch will take place on 27th June at 10.30, meeting place at Wilston Village Hall.

It will involve a short walk across the fields and last approximately 1.5 hrs with the aim to view a range of summer butterflies and a look at moths recorded from the previous night. Bookings can be made via a link on the website under events:

www.hertsmiddx-butterflies.org.uk and there is link to



further information about the reserve on the home page.

If you would like to come and help out at the sight there are working parties held on the first Sunday of every month from 9.50-12.30 with a break for lunch

Millhoppers can be found at grid reference SP903142, postcode HP23 4PE or what three words: serenade.busy.guard

or email contact:

millhoppers@hertsmiddx-butterflies.org.uk

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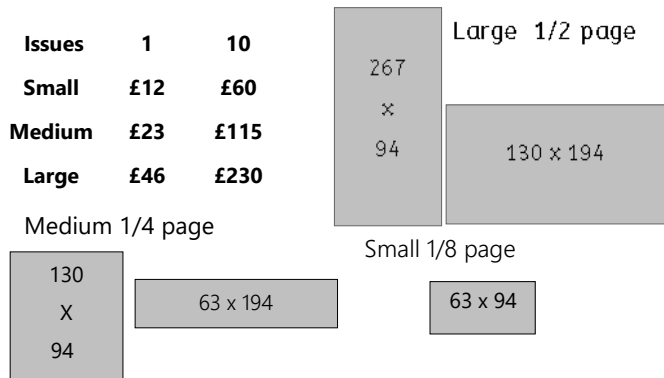
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Village News is written, edited, produced and distributed entirely by local volunteers. We aim to be local, interesting, informative, fun and a good read. Please let us know if we are not!

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The editor for the June edition is John McCall and the deadline for items is May 13th Wed 13 May 2026.

“May whispers in colours bright
With flowers blooming in the light
Trees dressed in leaves, a delightful sight
Nature’s heart beats with might.”

Spring is such a lovely season. Everything looks so fresh and makes all that hard work in the garden seem so worthwhile.

On a more practical note it is good to read that the works on the Wilstone reservoir are nearing completion. A stimulating walk with the fresh air blowing strongly in one’s face is something good to look forward to.

It will help to take our minds off the pretty dire state the world is in at the moment and remind us of how good it is to live in our own little “bubble” on the edge of Hertfordshire.

You can always find a copy of **Village News** wherever you are: www.wilstone.me.uk or just scan me



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What's on in and around our villages

Diary Dates

Saturday 2 May Pet Tea Party
1.30-5 pm Cecelia Hall Put.

Saturday 9 May Tring Family
Fun Day 11am to 3pm

Thursday 21 May

Wilstone Village Hall AGM. 7.30pm St Cross Wilstone

Saturday 23 May to Monday 25 Mays

Wendover Arts Festival St Mary's Church Wendover

Saturday 13 June and 18 July "Sessions on the Farm"

See Mead's advert for details

Sunday 14 June

Wilstone Fete

Friday 10 July

Long Marston Tennis Club Summer Ball

Saturday 1st August

The Long Marston 'Make, Bake and Grow Show'

9 and 23 May. 13 and 27 June

Farmers market Saturdays 9.00-2.00 Church Sq Tring

Church Services for May

Services could change so please check online at <https://www.tringteamparish.org.uk/news-events> or phone the Rectory on 01442 822170 We also will have live streamed services online so please take a [look](#).

Sunday 3 May

10am – Joint Holy Communion service for Village Churches – All Saints, Long Marston

Tuesday 5 May

10am Morning Prayer – St Cross Wilstone

Tuesday 12 May

10am – Holy Communion cw, St Cross Wilstone

Sunday 17 May

10am – Holy Communion cw service at All Saints, Long Marston with Children's activity

Tuesday 21st May

10am – Morning Prayer– St Cross, Wilstone

Sunday 24 May

3.30pm – Evensong service at St Mary's, Puttenham

Tuesday 28 May

10am – Holy Communion cw– St Cross, Wilstone.



St Mary's, Puttenham

Join the successful team at Wilstone Village Hall.

Wilstone Village Hall is in great shape, thanks to the team of people who give their time and skills in keeping it that way.

We want someone who can help us at committee meetings with taking minutes, issuing agendas, and attending meetings every two months. This is an official role on the committee, helping it run efficiently and especially supporting the chairman. If you are a working person your company may support this role in giving something back to the community.

If you would like to join the team, just call Peter Walker on 07768 605 684

Final chance to experience popular summer walking event

The clock is ticking to secure your places for the DENS Castle Walk – taking place on Sunday 14th June at Berkhamsted Castle.

Kick off your summer plans at this family-friendly day out, with a choice of 10- or 5-mile routes through stunning countryside and peaceful woodland.

Run by Hertfordshire homelessness charity, DENS, the event promises fantastic community vibes and a finisher's token to remember the day.

Entry fees start from just £10, with a discounted family ticket available. Sign up today at www.dens.org.uk/castlewalk.

Tring Rural Parish Council Wed 27 May Cecilia Hall, Puttenham.

Council Meeting
starts at 7.30pm
the public are welcome to attend.

You can always find a copy of **Village News** wherever you are: www.wilstone.me.uk or just scan me



Wilstone Village Hall Annual General Meeting St. Cross Church, Wilstone on Thursday May 21st At 7.30pm

At this AGM, we review what we have achieved this past year, and discuss what lies ahead for the Village Hall.

Do please come along and support the Hall Committee in their work and feel free to ask questions and make suggestions.

Fancy joining this successful group?

Please contact Peter Walker at walkersandbrook@gmail.com

2026 TRING FAMILY FUN DAY

PLEASE HELP TRING'S HEART BE STRONG

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TRING HERITAGE BAR

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For further information contact Grahame Senior on 01442 822770

theWI
INSPIRING WOMEN

Sat 2nd May 1.30 - 5pm, Cecilia Hall

The Puttenham Pet Tea Party

Pet Photos, Artist & more

Meet Hagrid's Dogs

Homemade Tea & Cakes

Puppachino's Doggie treats

Pre-Loved for pets

Kids games

Pet Blessing in St Mary's Church

Working Dogs demo

Pet Talent Show

Doggy Catwalk

All proceeds to Long Marston & Puttenham WI, Appledown Rescue & Aylesbury Womens Refuge

Tring
enjoying life Together

Spring Fayre

Save the dates!

25 April to 17 May 2026

Launch Day
Saturday 25 April
10am-2pm

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- * Live music
- * Tring Farmers' Market
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For more information visit www.tringtogether.org.uk

Save the Date
Wendover Arts Festival
Preview Night
Friday 22nd May
from 6pm to 10pm

St Mary's Church, Church Lane, Wendover HP22 6NL

You are warmly invited to join us for a Preview Night for the 2nd Wendover Arts Festival..

See over 90 artists displaying art, sculpture, glassworks, jewellery, prints etc.

A complimentary drink on arrival and also available to purchase is some wonderful hot food from Fallow and Fields.

Any queries contact Deborah Hale on 07831 707023

Please visit our website

www.wendover-arts-festival.co.uk

The arts Festival proper is held from

Saturday 23 May to Monday 25 May 10.00 to 5pm from 6pm to 10pm

Wilstone Great British Fete
& Dog Show
Sunday, 14th June
Tombola Stall
Looking for your help

A traditional part of any great British fete is a tombola stall and ours always proves very popular.

Can you help us by donating suitable items such as in date cans, bottles or household items?

If you can please come into Wilstone Community Shop and pop them into the donation box in front of the deli.

Thank you for your generous support and see you on the 14th June.

Cleaning staff position
at Long Marston School

We are looking to recruit a reliable cleaner who would be part of our friendly, dedicated staff team.

Candidates would need to have excellent attention to detail and be able to use their own initiative to problem solve.

The hours would be 2 1/2 hours a day, Monday to Friday, term time only. We offer employee assistance including counselling, out of hours GP services and wellbeing services.

Additionally we pay above the minimum wage

If you are interested please contact the school office on 01296 668386 or email admin@longmarston.herts.sch.uk for a job description and further information on how to apply.

The role would be subject to rigorous safeguarding checks



Church Square, High Street, Tring

From 9.00 am to 2.00 pm*

Saturdays!

9* and 23 May

13 and 27 June

*9 May is part of Tring Family Fun Day at The Church, Churchyard and Church Square from 11am to 3pm

www.tringfarmersmarket.co.uk

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Wilstone Village Hall
Monday 9.30am
Tuesday 6.00pm
Wednesday 9.00am and 9.30am
Thursday 9.30am and 6.00pm
Friday 9.30am
Saturday 9.00am

Nora Grace Hall, Tring
Wednesday 11.30am



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Grave Matters

From life to death

By the reverend Canon Jane Bannister

In the villages, we have two open churchyards at All Saints, Long Marston and St Mary's Puttenham, and one cemetery (run by Tring Rural Parish Council) in Wilstone. All are beautiful, well cared for places, full of memories and wildlife, offering somewhere to wander round, or to sit and think.

As customs around death have changed, there are fewer and fewer burials in these places, whether of ashes or bodies, but it seemed worth writing this article to give some practical information for anyone who might need it, whether now or in the future. For Wilstone cemetery, please go to TRPC, and to me for the churchyards.

Burial in our churchyards is normally for those who have a connection with the village, which is usually that the deceased has lived there, but this is not always the case. The churchyards are consecrated ground, which means that they have had a Christian blessing to be a burial place, but that does not mean that those buried there have to profess faith in any particular way. It is also possible to have a burial or an interment of ashes without a service in church.

These are the current costs in 2026:

Burial after service in church on same day £634
 Burial with service at graveside £503
 Burial of ashes, funeral having taken place before £206

.There are of course other costs associated with a funeral

Many people chose to have memorial stones on graves or ashes plots, and there are some restrictions about these: natural materials, non-reflective, within a certain size.

There is a document on the Diocese of St Albans website that provides further guidance on this which I can send to anyone unable to access it.

Plans for any new memorials, or new inscriptions on old ones have to be sent to the clergy for checking so that they fit with the regulations, and stone masons know this.

The guidance also says no artificial flowers but real ones, whether cut or potted, are allowed. We are aware that this is a difficult issue for some, but it

would be good to get to a point of no plastic in the churchyard.

It is also important to recognize that we are not trying to create an immaculate, manicured area, but an place of natural beauty that reminds us that we are all part of God's creation, and that the words "ashes to ashes, dust to dust" in the funeral service are to show that we return to the earth.

There are occasions when people reserve graves, usually because they want to be sure of being buried there, or because they want a plot next to a family member.

This requires some paperwork, the permission of the Parochial Church Council (the church's management committee), and currently costs £512 or £582 depending on whether it is a single or double grave.

At the moment we have space in our churchyards, so reservation should only be done for a very particular reason.

We do have some records of the churchyard, but in villages in the past, many people could not afford memorial stones, so accurate records are really only from the late 19th century onwards, and all old registers are kept at the Hertford Record Office and not in church.

A particular problem in All Saints, Long Marston, is that the clay soil shifts, so the ground can be uneven, and the gravestones do not always remain at their original position.

Care should be taken when walking around.

Simple cremations have become more popular recently, not least because they are much cheaper as the cost of funerals, as with everything, has risen.

What I would urge people to remember is that as human beings we need ceremonies and rituals, particularly when saying goodbye at the end of a life.

Not having any sort of service or gathering does not reduce sorrow, but it can leave it with nowhere to go.

What is vital for all of us, is that we make our wills, and plan our funerals, even if the plan is only to say to one's family "I don't mind what you do".

That is still a plan, and is the most loving thing you can do for your family.

If there is anything else you would like to know about funerals and burials, then do get in touch. I am always happy to have a chat over a cup of coffee, with no obligation!

March for Love, Hope and Unity

by Anne Nobbs

As Spring got going, some of us got walking to show our Christian commitment and to show solidarity with all humanity. This wasn't for the Easter Monday pilgrimage to St

Albans, this time, but a march in London organised by the 'Together Alliance' which took place on Saturday 28th March.

There were many organisations who signed up to join this alliance for that day: many Trade Unions (including those for teachers, nurses, and emergency workers); climate action groups like Friends of the Earth and Greenpeace; other NGOs and charities such as Amnesty International and the Fairtrade Foundation; family or faith focused groups like The Woodcraft Folk and The Quakers; also groups representing women, LGBTQ+ people, students and refugees.

A large number of people were there calling for peace in the Middle East. We even saw some Jewish people and holocaust survivors who were calling for an end to the war in Gaza. The Together Alliance slogan for the day was, "Say No to Hate" – and the focus was on opposition to the

far-right and fascists.

But what united us all was a desire to promote Love, Hope and Unity instead of the divisions, exclusion and animosity that are so often seen these days.

Some members of the Justice and Peace Group in Tring decided we would join the march. We are an organisation of volunteers affiliated to Churches Together in Tring. We marched under our banner alongside 500,000 other protesters. We started outside The Dorchester Hotel in Park Lane. It took a while to get going – the people at the front had arrived in Trafalgar Square before we began to walk! But the day was fine and dry, and all those we saw in the march were friendly and peaceful. We chatted with police, who were friendly and helpful, and who told us that the day had passed by peacefully for them, too.

The next day was Palm Sunday. It was not lost on us, as we marched, that there was a time when crowds gathered in love, hope and unity to lay palms under Jesus' feet. Within a week, a mob were shouting Crucify him! I am writing this on Easter Monday. During Good Friday services, hymns, prayers and teaching were all reminding us of Jesus' commitment and his words of love, even as he suffered. May we, as individuals, and as a nation – indeed, as humanity and part of God's creation – hold that love in our hearts, worship God in spirit and in truth, and conduct ourselves as Jesus commanded.

Justice and Peace Group Tring.

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Oh Mother!

A Story of Longub Puttastone

by Martin Winship

Alice had been hard at work most of the morning in her kitchen, preparing certain recipes of the sort Siegfried would refer to as Potions. She had previously made up a considerable stockpile of her ever-popular Celebrated Brussel Sprout Relish, and this was all now securely stored in heavy duty jars, each carefully and clearly labelled. She never troubled with things like Best Before Dates; the stuff would instantly kill any spores foolish enough to get close.

She needed more jars to store her latest produce, much of which coincidentally contained various forms of fungus and toadstools. She paused, and gently rubbed her chin. Then she recalled seeing a box of glass jars in one of her lumber rooms. They were, she thought, the kind with a tightly fitting glass lid with a rubber seal. Just what she wanted.

Without delay, she went rummaging, and soon gave a satisfied grunt when the box and its jars came to light in a small room – a cupboard really – beneath the stairs. As she pulled the box out however, an object that had been leaning against it was dislodged, and partially slid out and down, causing Alice a moment of fright, which no doubt accounted for the uncharacteristic squawk she gave vent to.

All seemed stable again, so after a deep breath she took the box and the jars back into her kitchen and, having sterilised the jars, she filled them with the different pastes and unguents, each one emitting its own unique and often pungent aroma. When she was done, she remembered the thing in the cupboard that had given her such a scare, so she returned, with a torch, to investigate. It was a very curious-looking item, with a wide dish-shaped main part, and tangled lengths of old electric cable (the sort that was sheathed in cloth) were attached to what looked like some sort of socket. At first, Alice thought it might be an ancient satellite dish, but quickly realised what an oxymoron this was. She really had absolutely no idea what the thing was, so she carefully put it back in the cupboard, positioned in such a way that it would not fall out and scare anyone, and she determined to have a word with Jake, to see if he

had anything to say about it.

Jake turned up a couple of days later, hoping to replenish his stock of the sprout relish, and Alice was only too pleased to oblige. She took the opportunity of Jake's arrival to get him to have a look at her "mystery item", and with his help they pulled it out of the lumber room cupboard and carried it to the kitchen. Over a mug of tea, Jake gave the device a good and thorough examination, under Alice's interested gaze. Every now and then, Jake would wet his finger and thumb with his tongue, and touch some part of the object. He frequently mumbled to himself and tutted. Then, finishing his tea with a satisfied slurp, he sat back and raised an eyebrow.

"You don't know what this thing is, do you?" he said to Alice, who shook her head. "Well, neither do I" Jake admitted. "But I've got an idea, and if you want, I'll take it away and do some more digging and investigating".

Alice cleared up the teapot and mugs. "That would be very kind of you Jake". So that was how they left it. Jake took the "thing" away in a carrier bag, and Alice carried on with her many and diverse chores and pastimes, and in a few days had virtually forgotten the entire incident.

Jake, however, had not forgotten or given up. He was something of a terrier. Once he got hold of something, he was reluctant to let go, and would worry it until he got the measure of it. And so it was in the present case. He was quite a traditionalist when it came to any sort of fettling, but even he was not averse to using the power of the internet to "dig and investigate", and thus it was that he succeeded in identifying the mysterious object. With his new-found knowledge, he set about getting things sorted out and back to working order. He replaced the dangerously worn and tangled wiring with new cable, and discarded the crumbling Bakelite socket (the likes of which he had not seen for many a year) with a new, screw fit version. He had some doubts about whether or not he would be able to secure one of the rather specialist bulbs the device required, but again the internet came to his assistance. He straightened various bent parts and gave the whole caboodle a good clean, then put it back in the carrier bag, and took it round to Alice's.

Although she was as usual busy as only a true Alice can be, she was delighted to see Jake again, and even more pleased when he told her that he had solved her riddle. He took it out of the bag, and placed it proudly in the centre of her kitchen table. He stood back. "There you are, you see" he said portentously.

No" said Alice. "No; I'm afraid I still do not see.

Continued on the next page

What is it?" Jake chuckled. "Well, it's a Moth trap. Obviously."

"A *Moth trap*" repeated Alice. "How does it work?"

"You see this bulb? Well, it's a special one. Called an Actinic bulb. Moths love 'em. You put the trap outside in the evening with the light on. The moths are attracted and fall into the dish thingamabob and through the hole into the box".

Alice put her hands up to her face. "How awful! I would not dream of killing moths like that. They don't do any harm. Mostly."

Jake shook his head. "No, no. It doesn't kill them. They just go into the box and in the morning you take the box off and have a look at what you've caught. Then they fly away."

Alice looked relieved. "Oh, good. That's alright". She hesitated. "Shall we try it out? This evening?"

Jake had hoped for this. "Not half!" he agreed.

That evening in the Half Head, Jake seemed to be a little preoccupied. Old Siegfried and Thomas both noticed, but Thomas was too involved with his pint of Old Nosey cider to pay much attention. Siegfried swilled his Old and Nasty down, and pushed the empty glass towards Jake. "Your round" he informed him.

"Right ho" said Jake. "I'll get you and Thomas another but I won't have one myself."

Siegfried looked stunned. "Not have one yourself! Why the blooming heck not?"

"Well" said Jake, "I've got to go".

"Where?" demanded Siegfried. "Why? What?"

Jake gave him a wink as he took the glasses to the bar for refills. "I have an assignation" he revealed.

Alice and Jake set the Moth trap up as per Jake's instructions, and almost immediately they were in business. They heard rather than saw their first customer. It so happened that both their backs were turned to the trap when there came a fairly loud PLOP. Alice wanted to look to see what they had caught, but Jake said that was not how it was done, and they should wait until morning. So they stayed in Alice's garden where the trap was set, watching an amazing flying circus of moths and other insects. It had been a long day, and the night began to cool rapidly, so Jake said good-night, promising to call round early in the morning to inspect their catch. He was as good as his word, and

arrived just as Alice had finished her breakfast. For two such mature people they were in quite a state of excitement as they went out into the garden. Jake switched the lamp off, and removed the box from under the dish. The spectacle that met their eyes was astounding.

There were so many moths; the bottom and sides of the box seemed to be covered. And the variety was incredible. There were countless small, mostly brown moths and individual moths of much larger size and in many cases brightly coloured and intricately patterned. There were also beetles, including one enormous cockchafer, and spiders, one of which, to Alice's dismay, was happily engaged in eating a particularly fine moth. In any event, they agreed the experiment had been a great triumph.

Nor was it an isolated event. The Moth trap was put out many times. Alice took to her new hobby with spirit and genuine interest; she bought books about her new winged friends, and became quite informed and knowledgeable. She could recognise many of the more spectacular and larger species, and was thrilled when she found a pair of Death's Head Hawk Moths (with five inch wingspan) in the box one morning. She bought herself a note book and made detailed entries of her finds, and even tried (rather unsuccessfully) to sketch them. She eventually joined Butterfly Conservation under whose auspices she took part in the National Moth Recording Scheme. It was through her work in this that she discovered that someone with her specialised interest was known as a Mother – pronounced Moth – Er. She obtained such great pleasure and joy from her passion that she decided to share it, by holding a special evening in her garden for all her friends. Accordingly, she prepared some beautiful invitations, all by hand, in her favourite lilac ink;

INVITATION

AS YOU MAY BE AWARE, I HAVE RECENTLY BECOME A MOTHER
YOU ARE INVITED TO ATTEND A GATHERING IN MY GARDEN ON
THE EVENING OF THE 14th OF THIS MONTH TO VIEW THE
VARIOUS PROCEDURES

JAKE SPARHAWK, WHO WAS RESPONSIBLE IN A LARGE PART FOR
ME BECOMING A MOTHER WILL BE ON HAND TO ANSWER
TECHNICAL QUESTIONS

DRINKS AND REFRESHMENTS WILL BE PROVIDED

Shortly after the invitations were delivered, Old Siegfried had some sort of fit, most of Alice's friends began to snub her, but Jake received a good deal more female attention than he was used to.



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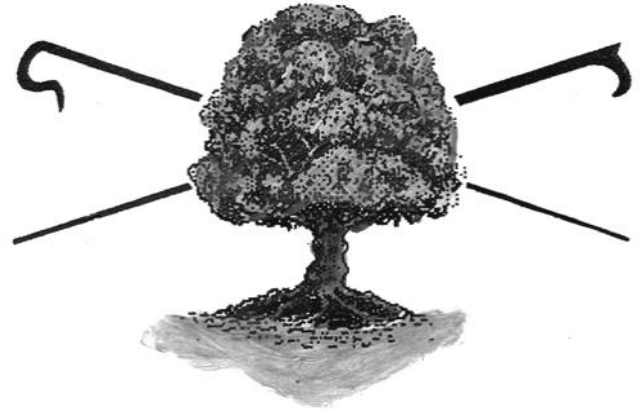
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From the Vicarage

by the Reverend Canon Jane Bannister

For many people, if you ask then where they can find God, then it will be outside. They will talk of the majesty of a mountain range, or the beauty of sunsets or sunrises, or the peace of a country side walk that can be a reset for body and mind.

For people who would term themselves spiritual and not religious, nature is a vital part of life for them – the Princess of Wales has spoken about it over the last year – and if you look for local events, then walks and nature retreats are well publicized.

It is something that I understand, but there are some aspects that I struggle with. One is exemplified by the expression “nature red in tooth and claw” which comes from, as I discovered when writing this, a poem by Lord Tennyson. It captures the duality of nature, its beauty and vitality alongside its inherent violence. It shows the tension between human ideals of morality and the indifferent, often brutal, processes in the natural world.

My husband has kept sheep for some years with a group of friends, and that has informed our view of the natural world. People love to see the lambs in the fields, and bring

their children to see them. But any shepherd will tell you that sheep are some of the most self destructive animals: if they can find some way to damage themselves they will.

Some ewes will abandon their lambs; the smaller lambs are in danger of being taken by foxes. And dealing with fly-strike on a hot day really shows you the gross parts of nature.

While I understand the importance of nature and the role it should play in our lives, we have to have a balance. Nature is not always sweet and wonderful, and living in the countryside is not just about the luxury of being able to look out over fields and hills rather than high rise flats. We have a responsibility to play our part –how do we protect this beauty so that it is there for others? Do we appreciate that we are privileged to have this? Do we live lives that give back in a way that benefits everyone rather than just take in a manner that helps me?

While I do not believe that God literally created the world in 6 days, I do believe that as a Christian, I have the blessing of being able to enjoy the beauty of this created world, while having a responsibility to look after it. And that includes all aspects of this world, not just the little part in which I live.

*Lord God, in our daily lives,
we see so many people hurting and living in fear.
Mighty God, may we be always open
to your marvellous hope, ready to share it wherever we go.*

May our lives imitate you, always aware of your life-changing power.

Amen.

Sudoku Corner by Colin Moore

No 198

					4		
	6				8	9	
	9		8		2		7
		2	5	7			
8		1			3		
		7			9		
	7	5	2		8		3 6
							1
				4		5	7

Solution on page 20

Inklings by Steve Thompson



Churches "Count on nature"

by Anne Nobbs

Think ahead to the Summer. Long days of sunshine, soft rain overnight sometimes, plants flowering in profusion, trees in full leaf, insects doing their thing, and young animals growing fast.

Every year things are a little different and it's very useful to scientists to have new data about what is happening in Nature.

And we can help! Churches Count on Nature happens all around the country in Great Big Green Week (6-14 June this year.) In Tring, all the churches in our Team Parish (see list below) have information available to help you identify and record whatever plants, fungi, lichens, mammals, birds or insects you see in our churchyards, at any time to suit you, during that week. All wildlife is important – you don't just have to seek out the rare stuff. Some people use the iNaturalist app to record their photographs, or you can write down what you see on the sheets we provide. Then we submit your records to be included on a national

database. Churchyards are uniquely valuable for this, as they have been 'unimproved' for centuries and have been the long-term home for many varieties of wildlife throughout that time. Please help us with this citizen science project.

And do come to Aldbury on Friday 12 June at 6pm to find out about those elusive nocturnal creatures, Bats! St John the Baptist church in Aldbury has its own colony, and National Trust rangers will be there giving us a talk about them, and leading us in some family-friendly bat-themed activities. Refreshments will be served at the talk, and people can return later to watch bats emerging at twilight (around 9.30 pm).

Put these dates in your diary, and be sure to look out for all the other activities that will be happening in the town and local villages during Great Big Green Week. Let's all come together to take action in support of biodiversity and sustainability.

Postcodes for the 5 Churches in Tring Team Parish:

St Peter & St Paul, Tring HP23 5AE

St John the Baptist, Aldbury HP23 5RS

St Cross, Wilstone HP23 4NU

St Mary's, Puttenham, HP23 4PR

All Saints, Long Marston, HP23 4QS

Local Contacts

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Call the police if you see a crime being committed.

Reports of river flooding

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Dacorum's Councillors: Tring West

Brian Patterson 01442 823868

Brian.patterson@dacorum.gov.uk

Caroline Smith-Wright 07931 733151

Caroline.smith-wright@dacorum.gov.uk

Changes or additions? Contact the Editor.

editorwlm@yahoo.com

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cldr.fox@tringrural-pc.gov.uk

Vivian Wood

cldr.wood@tringrural-pc.gov.uk

Richard Foster (Vice-Chairman)

cldr.foster@tringrural-pc.gov.uk

Gill MacDonald (Long Marston)

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Maria Adams

cldr.adams@tringrural-pc.gov.uk

Clare Hill

cldr.hill@tringrural-pc.gov.uk

Andrew Turton-Ward

Vacancies 1

Clerk to the Parish Council

Chloe Collins 07516 344248

email:

clerk@tringrural-pc.gov.uk

Villages Warden

Mark Smith 07919 077979

warden@tringrural-pc.gov.uk

To contact by phone, use the clerk's number: 07516 344248

Letter to the Editor

As dog owners and walkers we are finding our walks more frustrating as wherever we walk we are noticing what seems to be an increase in dog poo; in the middle of the canal tow path, the Wilstone recreation ground where children play, the public footpaths and the fields where the farmers are growing grass for cattle feed.

We all know dog poo can cause some serious illnesses, including blindness, with children being more susceptible and of course it is not very pleasant to accidentally step in it.

It often seems to be the larger dogs (this is based on the size of the poo!). We assume it is owners/dog walkers

who let their dogs off the lead to run free and then are not being attentive.


Please watch your dog/dogs and clear up their mess.

Editor's note; submitted anonymously following the editor's comments last month

Nothing Changes ! Extract from 1985 Parish Magazine .

Control of Dogs
Concern is felt regarding the health of young children using the recreation ground. Dog owners must not allow their animals to foul the recreation area and footpaths. We hear that Aylesbury Vale Council are imposing heavy fines under a new bye-law! Perhaps we should do the same?

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4	7	5	2	1	8	9	3	6
3	8	6	7	9	5	2	4	1
2	1	9	3	4	6	5	8	7

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Summer days bring long walks, picnics and BBQs - your community shop has everything you'll need to make a success of all those special occasions

It's that time of year again when you can purchase a picnic blanket or bag, or even a BBQ from Wilstone's community shop. So why not pop in and buy some of our Cumberland sausages and get them sizzling? Alternatively, you could enjoy a cold drink from our well-stocked fridge or maybe cool down with an ice cream from our fully-stocked freezer where you can now buy pistachio-flavoured Magnums (Magna?).

A bit like Lidl, our middle isle is full of inspiration for seasonal gifts including china cups, gardeners' hand soap, sketchbooks and a set of picnic plates. And we always have a selection of yummy biscuits, chocolates or even a bottle of fizz should you be lucky enough to be invited round to a friend's and wanting to take a little thank you gift.

Don't forget Father's Day is on Sunday 21 June - we have beer, shaving soap, car cleaning cloths (for you to clean their cars!), bamboo socks, and cards on sale or why not buy the ingredients to make them breakfast or a cake?

Off to a summer wedding? Did you know we provide a dry-cleaning service if you need to freshen up your suits and dresses.

Wilstone's village fete is on Sunday 14 June 12-5pm when we will be offering our traditional refreshments of tea and homemade cakes, all served by one of our amazing volunteers.

And speaking of volunteers, here's Doug Chalmers looking after two residents who are taking a well-deserved break from their exertions of chirping and hopping their way around the village collecting money for charity.



Wilstone Reservoir Strengthening Works nears completion Here's how it was done

As the final works at Wilstone Reservoir draw to a close, Mark Stephens, project manager on behalf of the Canal and River Trust, made a presentation in April to a packed Wilstone village hall of locals keen to know more about the reservoir and why the works were necessary.

Mark thanked the patience of Wilstone residents and businesses for putting up with road closures while they built access roads capable of supporting the heavy cranes, which was a significant part of the whole process.

In his presentation, he talked about the evolution of the group of four reservoirs which comprise the Tring group. Wilstone was the first reservoir to be built in 1802, but that was only about a quarter of the size it is today, and that was the southeast corner where the bird hide is. You could see this quite clearly when the reservoir was partly drained to allow works to begin. Banks were raised in 1827, in 1835 and finally again in 1839 to increase capacity. The reservoirs were built in the industrial revolution



to provide an ever-increasing demand for water supply to the Grand Union canal at the summit in Bulbourne, the main route for trade between London and the North. It was the equivalent in those times of the M1 of the waterways before the railways and roads.

The construction and complexity of the building of the four reservoirs in 1802 is astounding for that time. Limited machinery was available, so it was down to a massive workforce of labourers to dig the underground pipework, build the pumping stations and create the massive embankments.

Why were these works necessary? Well, since 1798 there have been 100 incidents at Britain's dams. In 1925 the Reservoirs Act enforced inspections by QCEs (Qualified Civil Engineers) and in 1970, there were further regulations with mandatory actions, and Wilstone Reservoir falls under those, as the reservoir has a history of leakage and slips over the period 1933 to 2021. A 2024 inspection confirm suspicions of internal erosion and seepage. Similar seepage occurred at the Whaley Brid at the Toddbrook Reservoir in Derbyshire which threatened to release 1/3 million tonnes of water. The water eroded the bank underneath the concrete slabs, so it was not the bank that collapsed as such, but the earth beneath it. The RAF dropped 600 one-ton bags of aggregate into the void which sealed the breach (see photo).

At Wilstone, the QCE issued legal binding measures to undertake immediate works. Wilstone has now been classified as a Category A reservoir, meaning that if a failure occurred, flooding would affect the village, its properties and downstream areas.

Loss of life would have been unlikely as the area is quite flat so the water would have spread over a wide area, but we would have had wet feet! The works are now compliant with the Act and are future proofed against climate change.

The remedial works decided were to install sheet



piling around the two embankment sides of the reservoir, replacement of drains and raising the NE and SW crests to improve flood capacity. So, this will stop leakages, strengthen the embankment and improve flood safety. These 11 metre steel piles were lifted with four different types of cranes including a 150ton crawler crane, 250ton mobile crane, a 60ton mobile crane and another crane with a luffing jib to reach over the trees.

Probably too much information, but the engineers had to cope with variable ground pressure surfaces to take the weight, and to deal with the different lift heights required to be able to reach over trees to avoid removing them. The piles were pushed into the top of the dam with a specialist hydraulic press which sat on the preceding three piles to gain leverage.



This method was chosen because it creates minimal vibration and noise, it protects the clay core and avoids damage to existing drains and culverts. It also offered less disturbance to wildlife.

The piling works have been completed for a few weeks now and there is just some culvert work to be completed during June.

There is now an impressive new path around three sides of the reservoir which sits on top of all the piling works (so all that work and you can't see any of it!), and there are new steps leading from the resurfaced car park, which sadly is the same size as before.

Article compiled by Peter Walker from information provided by Mark Stephens. Peter is a CRT volunteer.

Photo competition at the "Make, Bake and Grow" Show

Victory Hall, Long Marston.

Sunday August 2nd



Glorious display of bluebells submitted to the Village News

by Tim Dean

Tim Dean writes that the two categories for the photograph competition at the Make, Bake and Grow Show in the Victory Hall, Long Marston on Sunday August 2nd are :“Local views and landmarks” and “Animals – wild or pets”.

With cameras on phones so good these days anyone can join the competition – so get snapping. Or have a look through your photos and choose a favourite.

The photos shown are illustrations of the types of photos which would be welcomed

Details of how to enter will be announced when the show programme is published in June.

Get snapping!



A baker's dozen submitted to the Village News by Mark Fowler