

Happy Easter!



Colour Me In!

Dates for your Diary

Hothfield Parish Council next meeting 7pm Wednesday 10 April at the Bluebells Centre

Arts Society Egerton 2.30pm 10 April (see page 8)

St Margarets Church Spring Fayre & Plant Sale 10am 11 May (see page 8)

The writer H E Bates moved from Northamptonshire to Little Chart Forstal in 1931. His deep knowledge of the countryside coloured all his writing. In 'Through the Woods' (1936), with fine wood engravings by Agnes Miller Parker, he wrote in loving detail about the plant and animal life in Coldham Wood, which lies due west of the Extension section of Hothfield Heathland. Close to the heathland, then a working common, he describes a 'paradise of flowers' in May on marshy ground, including 'a blaze of kingcups... immense luminous islands, gigantic buttercups among lush clusters of pink-stemmed burnished leaves of bottle-green...water torches...more burning than any noon'.

Spring is about four weeks early (unless Easter snow hits us) so Bates' water torches will be blazing in April. Less common now, they occur along the stream running along the western margin of the reserve, usually in dappled shade, and again on the Fen section of the reserve off Watery Lane, where they can be seen beyond the bus stop on the A20. The kingcup or marsh marigold, with many more regional names, is an axiophyte of wet woodland and alder carr, indicating a habitat that is considered important for conservation. *Caltha* is derived from the Ancient Greek for goblet, *paulustris* from Latin for marsh-loving. A perennial, rooted in soil but happy with its hollow stems growing up through water, unlike the meadow, creeping and bulbous buttercups growing on the heathland, it doesn't have sepals and petals, just one ring of tepals with no nectar sac at the base. Up to 100 stamens provide a lot of pollen for insects. The seeds, held in an upright pod similar to a pea pod, a follicle, fall or are splashed out of the pod by rain once the pod splits down one side, and are able to float away. The spent



flower stems tend to fall close to the water surface, helping spread the seeds beyond the plant, and where stem nodes touch a solid surface they grow roots, helping the plant spread vegetatively. The newly flooded areas on the reserve should help the kingcups to spread.



There is a miniature white, alpine species, *Caltha leptosepala*, which I was thrilled to find flowering one May in a trickle of snowmelt on Hurricane Ridge in the Olympic Peninsula of Washington State, USA. Flowering currant, *Ribes sanguineum*, was flowering on the steep stony slope above.

Whitethroats will be arriving this month from the Sahel, just south of the Sahara, the males arriving perhaps ten days before their partners, to establish their territories ready for the breeding season. They build a few rudimentary nests of dried grass and plants for the female to choose from, the female then finishes one or starts a new one from scratch, /lining them with cobwebs, willow fluff, wool and other animal hair. Nests are built only a couple of feet from the ground, in nettles, or brambles, making it very vulnerable to disturbance by dogs during the breeding season. Egg laying begins in early May, incubation takes up to two weeks, chicks are fed for another 10 -12 days, then a second brood is laid.

The whitethroat is a medium-sized, long-tailed warbler of grassland, scrub and hedgerows. Males are sandy-grey above, with pale grey heads, pinkish-buff breasts, bright white throats, rusty-brown edges to their wing feathers. Females are duller. It is a hedge bird, seeming to be permanently hopping about during nesting time, singing or babbling and tail flicking all the while. Song flights are short and bouncing between bushes or back to the same low perch, head feathers held erect as it sings. If disturbed at night in May and June will give snatches of song, less mellifluous than a nightingale. They feed on insects and larvae, ants and spiders, but in late summer, with young brood in tow ahead of migration in October, they eat fruits as well. Drought in the winter quarters of the whitethroat affects survival, and a prolonged drought in the late 1960s led to a 90% crash in UK numbers. The species is still recovering from this crash so is on the Amber Conservation list.

In order to help protect these vulnerable, disturbance intolerant ground nesting bird species we will be asking that dogs be kept on leads and on the paths in the open areas of heath across Hothfield. This will enable our heathland bird species to nest in peace away from the paths. Dogs can still be off lead but under control in the wooded area around the edge of Hothfield Heathlands as tree nesting species are less sensitive to disturbance by dogs and people. With all of your help we can support these vulnerable and rare species to thrive again in our unique heathland habitat. Margery Thomas

Hothfield Parish Council

For full minutes of meetings of Hothfield Parish Council, please either see the noticeboard outside the village shop, or visit www.hothfield.org.uk
PLEASE NOTE: The email address for the Parish Council is parish.clerk@hothfield.org.uk

Ashford Borough Council

Ashford Borough Council has started work on the statutory review of its Local Plan, which will primarily set the strategic vision and planned growth for housing and jobs within the borough to 2041.

As part of the Local Plan process, the council invited landowners, developers and other interested parties to submit sites that they own, or suggest land that may potentially be available, for inclusion in the Local Plan. The call for sites consultation has now closed and submissions can be viewed on the ABC website under Planning & Development section 'Emerging Local Plan 2041'. An interactive map is available showing location of site submissions.

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Art Group

There is a small group that meets twice a month on Monday afternoons in Westwell Village Hall.

We enjoy painting, drawing etc, together with a cup of tea and a chat.

If anyone is interested in joining us, please contact Penny Sutcliffe on 01233 634191 for more details.

Hothfield Village Hall

Bookings via www.hothfieldvillagehall.co.uk

Regular weekly events

Mondays @ 16:30

Target Shooting School
www.targetshootingschool.co.uk/ashford

Tuesdays @ 19:00

Bowls Club

Contact: John 07492 862974

Wednesdays @ 17.30

Koba Dog Training

Contact: justine@kobadogtraining.co.uk

Fridays @ 18.30

Bowls Club

Contact: John 07492 862974

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Hothfield Carnivals



Last month I reported that long-standing resident Penny Sutcliffe had kindly donated historic Village Newsletters to the village's archive, along with some brightly coloured posters and programmes from carnivals. The Carnival posters are from 1977 to 1983 which includes the Silver Jubilee year. Penny's husband Richard had been part of the carnival committee for a few years, and both Penny and Richard were active in supporting other village groups and societies.

The carnival posters and programmes list numerous attractions at the events including our own Majorettes, the Sea Cadet band, Morris dancing, Judo display, displays by the school and prizes for the best carnival floats. In 1977 there was a Glamorous Grandmother competition, and of course plenty of food and refreshments. The 1978 carnival and fete included aerobatics by the Kent Gliding club, as well as the usual array of sideshows and stalls, tossing the bale and pony rides. The programmes also give thanks to Sir Reginald & Lady Rootes and to Mr E Coles who owned and farmed the 'Park' (the grounds of the former Hothfield Manor) for allowing the events to take place there.

We've previously been given photographs of some of the floats and dressed-up characters of past carnivals. It's clear that a lot of effort was put in by many residents who put on a great show each year. Well done to everyone involved in those carnivals and fetes.



Railway Exhibition open until 27th April

The exhibition tracking 140 years of the Ashford to Maidstone East railway is at the Ashford Gateway Plus, Church Road, Ashford. Entry is free and it's open Mon-Fri between 9am and 5pm, and on Saturdays 9am to 3pm. There are displays about Ashford West station and the some of Hothfield's past including the Manor and the Lords that lived there, and the WWII Nissen Hut camp. In addition the Ashford Festival of Railway Modelling is spread across various other town centre venues on 6th and 7th April. For more information visit: www.aimrec.co.uk

Also, Steve Beck from Charing and District Local History Society launched his own book at this event on the history of the line to mark 140years of Charing station. His book is £7.50 available at the event or from the Charing Local History Society from late March. See: www.charinghistory.co.uk

Village History website offline

Our village's website of stories and information on our history will be temporarily going offline for a few months. It is necessary to upgrade the website and to move it to a current platform where it is hosted. The updated website, when finished, will work better with smaller devices like smart phones and tablets, as well as complying with modern standards. This upgrade has been known about for some time, and the on-line archive has already been taken down pending this upgrade. I apologise to anyone that wished to access the website or archive. In the meantime if you have any enquiries or want to see if we can help provide information for a local history project then please e-mail me at: hothfieldmemo-ries@hotmail.com Chris Rogers, Hothfield History Society

A Plea for the Bees

I am a beekeeper and for those of you who don't know me, I live in Hothfield. I have been a beekeeper for about 9 years. Bees will come out of their hive in the winter if the temperature is 10 celsius or greater. If there are flowers about (snowflakes, snowdrops, crocus' etc.) they will forage. They also take water back to the hive and the most important reason, they go out for a poo. Bees 'hold it' all winter until it is warm enough to exit their hive and relieve themselves. If ever you've seen a tiny brown/yellow rust streak on your laundry hanging outside, that is bee poo! Now, back to spring 2023. We had a cold winter and in early March I saw a few bees flying in and out of their hives. As a beekeeper that was a joy. It meant they survived the winter cold and had had enough food (fondate which I fed them) to survive. Around mid-March I did not see anymore bees coming and going from my hives. It was also cold again so I wasn't sure if they were just staying inside or something had happened. In April the weather warmed up enough that I could open the hives and do a quick inspection. What I found was alarming and distressing. Bees were dead in-situ stuck to the honeycomb where they had been working, and baby bees dead as they were exiting their honeycomb breathing life for the first time, and then not. Each beehive in the winter months holds 12,000 to 20,000 bees. In the summer these numbers grow to 50,000 per hive. That means 72,000 to 100,000 bees were dead in my apiary. Bees do not all die naturally at the exact same time. An external sudden force killed them. A bees worst enemy are pests, disease and chemicals. Herbicides in particular kill bees. Herbicides travel in patterns similar to natural gas meaning not in a straight line. It can wind its way around buildings and drift over hills then settle again. I have been a beekeeper a long time and never seen such a distressing site as 5 beehives quiet, no life and dead bees dead in-place stuck to honeycomb.

The next time you consider spraying 'Round up' or any glyphosate based weedkiller this spring, think about the 100,000 dead bees in my apiary that died in less than one minute. While my article may annoy some readers, my hope is that it inspires thought and promotion of no herbicide gardening or organic spraying--if you must. My 100,000 or so bees that died that day were and are the stark evidence of herbicides. The thousands of other insects that died that day with the same herbicide spray had no voice as they fell silently to their death. I am telling the tale of my bees and have written this article as a plea on their behalf; think before you spray. Mother Nature will thank you. **Brenda Stowers of Brenda's Bees**



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World Sleep Day is a day to promote sleep health and spread awareness. It is very normal to experience the occasional bad night's sleep, but there are some ways to improve it if you are struggling. My mum always used to tell me if I was struggling to sleep, to still always close my eyes because you are still in a state of resting and allowing your mind and body to re-charge.

Top Tips:

- Don't stress about it- Worrying about your sleep will only make it worse!
- Self care- Give yourself some self care to relax you
- Take a 10 minute meditation break during the day
- Try to schedule a bedtime and stick to it
- Do not have caffeine or alcohol too close to bedtime
- Take a relaxing bath
- Turn off electronic devices an hour before bed
- Read a book
- Calm App or listen to YouTube for calming sleepy music
- Enjoy a relaxing massage

This week try one of my tips and see if it helps you sleep!
Love, Georgia x

HOTHFIELD POST OFFICE STORES

Sunday	0900 To 1200		Post Office closed
Monday	0900 To 1300	1400 To 1800	Post Office closes 1730
Tuesday	0900 To 1300		
Wednesday	0900 To 1300	1400 To 1800	Post Office closes 1730
Thursday	0900 To 1300	1400 To 1800	Post Office closes 1730
Friday	0900 To 1300	1400 To 1800	Post Office closes 1730
Saturday	0900 To 1300	1400 To 1800	Post Office closes 1230

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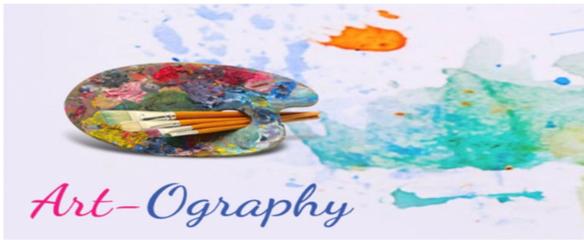
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Nine Oaks Vineyard



This year we are excited to unveil a fresh chapter with the release of our new still Bacchus. Bacchus, named after the Roman god of wine, is a grape that has found a harmonious home in the warm sunny vineyards of Kent. Similar in style and character to a Sauvignon Blanc, Bacchus is an aromatic grape variety with a delicate bouquet of elderflower, hinting at the traditional English countryside's floral aromas. On the palate there is vibrant notes of crisp green apple, freshly cut grass, and a subtle hint of citrus zest. The finish is refreshingly acidic, making it an excellent companion to seafood and soft cheeses or fresh salads.



Spring also signifies the release of our 2023 still Rosé. Dry, with fragrant notes of cherry and strawberry on the nose, the Rose' has crisp refreshing acidity and is the perfect accompaniment to seafood, light pasta dishes and dishes with a hint of spice. We will be releasing both wines in time for the long Easter weekend.

As the days grow longer and the world begins to bloom, we are looking forward to our upcoming events in the vineyard. Towards the end of May we will be hosting This Is My Theatre showing both L.Frank Baum's *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz* and an adaptation of Jane Austen's final novel, *Persuasion*.

L.Frank Baum's *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz*

When Dorothy Gale is carried from her home in Kansas by a cyclone she finds herself in the magical land of Oz. There she must journey to the Emerald City to meet with the great Wizard and, with the help of the friends she meets along the way, defeat the Wicked Witch of the West.

Based on the original novel by L. Frank Baum, children and adults alike will love this ever-popular story reimaged for the stage.

Jane Austen's *Persuasion*

We follow the story of Anne Elliot who was persuaded by friends and family to end her engagement to Frederick Wentworth. Seven years later over many humorous encounters they meet again....will they once again be persuaded to stay apart or will love conquer all?

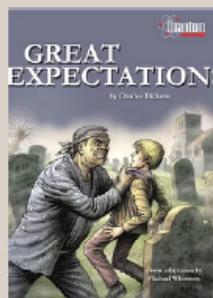
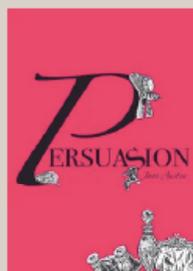
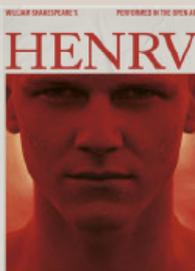
Too many characters and not enough actors will see this much-loved Austen novel brought to life in a comedic and potentially catastrophic production. In a similarly choreographed, character-swapping style to our critically acclaimed productions of *The Importance of Being Earnest* (2018), *The Three Musketeers* (2020) and *A Comedy of Errors* (2022), audiences will love this truly unique adaptation!

Both plays have a run time of 90 minutes and tickets can be booked at the following web address:

www.nine-oaks.co.uk/whats-on-summer-2024



Summer 2024 at Nine Oaks Vineyard



L Frank Baum's *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz*

Sunday 19th May 3.00pm

Jane Austen's *Persuasion*

Sunday 19th May, 7.00pm

Beatrix Potter's *Jemima Puddle Duck*

Saturday 27th July 3.00pm

Charles Dickens' *Great Expectations*

Saturday 27th July 7.00pm

William Shakespeare's *Henry V*

Thursday 15th August 7.30pm

For more information and to book tickets visit www.nine-oaks.co.uk.

Nine Oaks Vineyard, Hothfield, Kent

Saint Margaret's Church

For weddings, baptisms, etc. contact the Parish Office calehillpcc@gmail.com 07395 910317

Rector: Rev. Sandra Marsh The Vicarage Pett Lane Charing Kent TN27 0DL Phone: 01233 713996 email: revsandramarsh@btinternet.com

Services in April

Sunday 7th 11.00am The Eucharist

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For services in our other churches, see www.calehill-westwell.uk

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THE ARTS SOCIETY EGERTON

The Arts Society brings people together through a shared curiosity for the arts



We meet at Egerton Millennium Hall on the second Wednesday of each month at 2.30 p.m. (doors open from 2.00). Our next lecture will be:

Wednesday 10th April at 2.30 p.m.

THE DANCING FAUN: A PERSONAL STORY OF A MASTERPIECE

This lecture recounts the extraordinary tale of how a small bronze statue, which had sat in his grandfather's garden for 40 years, was discovered as a master piece and ended up in the Getty Museum, California.

Bertie Pearce has a BA (Hons) in Drama, and a Diploma Internationale from the Ecole Internationale du Théâtre, Jacques Lecoq. Member of the Inner Magic Circle, with Gold Star. Has toured the world with a magic cabaret show

and a one-man show entitled All Aboard

Visitors are always very welcome at £6, refunded if you join. For further information please contact Christine Willis, our Membership Secretary via cmwillis75@gmail.com or 01233 756377.

HOTHFIELD NEWS

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