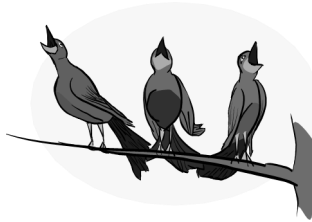


# **BIRDSONG**

**April  
and  
May 2021**



**BIRDINGBURY  
NEWS  
No 103**



**Here's Looking at You**

Photograph by Morgan Thomas

# **Birdingbury Parish Council Report**

The period covered by this issue should see the country take significant steps out of lockdown, assuming vaccines and variants don't get out of hand. The clocks have gone forward, spring flowers have sprung and there's even a green fuzz starting to appear on the hedges and trees – who could not be optimistic that Summer, and some freedom, are on their way?

I was optimistic about giving updates on some of the items that I covered last time, but, for various reasons, progress has been hard to come by. Openreach have proved elusive regarding fibre broadband and we are in the process of escalating a complaint about the lack of service. We held a Parish Council 'surgery' by Zoom to discuss the fibre opportunity, so I am very aware of the enthusiasm across the village for better broadband services. The voucher schemes that fund these projects are also now due for review, so we are awaiting news as we go to press.

As of the last Parish Council meeting, we had seen no further progress on the proposals for the Glebe Field or on the units at the Business Park (this last one is not silence; we've chased and been told there's no news).

Discussions at the last two Council meetings have had a roadside theme. We notified Rugby Borough Council of the retaining wall that has failed beneath the bridge over the Leam by the railway bridge. Their initial view is that recent heavy rains have undermined the wall and they are now assessing the risk to the bridge and the road ... we might have to suffer barriers there for a while and then closure whilst they make repairs. And on that topic, we'll share advice of local road closures on WhatsApp and Facebook.

The wet weather had also softened verges and we've raised the issue of resulting damage in Main Street. Sadly, we've also needed to talk about litter on verges, mainly dropped out of cars, we believe. There might be a case for more signs and more bins if we think there are places where walkers are the problem. And dog mess continues to be an issue, this time when it has been put in a bag (thank you) then either left by the road or, worse, 'hung' from the hedge. As a dog owner, I know that it is sometimes easier to leave the bag and pick it up on the way back ... but that second step is important.

We have also decided to delay the Annual Village Meeting from April. It wouldn't be the same on Zoom and it is an important village tradition, so we are hoping that the positive Covid situation will enable us to have a real meeting later in the year. We'll continue to use social media and the notice board in the meantime and have decided to share the PC agenda and dial-in details in this way prior to meetings. We welcomed three villagers at our March meeting, two of whom have moved here during lockdown. Maybe someday soon, we'll be able to welcome them in person!

*Guy French, Chair Birdingbury Parish Council*

# Grand Easter Bunny Hunt

Since we won't be able to do the traditional annual egg roll at the recreation field this year due to the current restrictions, we will be doing the same as last year. So, from Good Friday, 2nd April, to 12 noon on Easter Sunday, 4th April, you will be able to take the children round the village, counting all the bunnies that are hiding in people's houses. Look out in for them in windows, on gates and other secret nooks and crannies. There is also a grand hare who keeps his eye on the village from a great height – see if you can spot him too!



Bring your answer on a piece of paper with your name and address, to The White House, Marton Road, where there will be a bucket for you to place your entries in.

Winners will be notified by a knock on their door by our favourite Easter Bunny later that afternoon. Grateful thanks to the village PCC for their donation of the prizes: it is very much appreciated.

Good luck!

*Jo Cutts*

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## News from the Club

We are making plans to reopen in line with the current guidance and, as we stand, will therefore reopen on Fridays, Saturdays and Sundays from Friday 16th April at 5pm. Service will be outdoor, table service only until at least May 17th, when it is hoped indoor table service can be resumed.

The Club has tried hard to keep people entertained and fed (if not watered!) each week during lockdown and I'd like to thank everyone for their support, particularly those who have hosted and taken part in the many and varied online activities.

The Friday night take-aways have proved really popular and seem to have become a fixture in your calendars! So, we're really pleased that our Friday night partnership with Taste Events will continue when we reopen. The schedule for the next two months is on the back page.

One minor point of housekeeping: membership renewals were due in January but for obvious reasons we didn't ask you to renew! So, recognising that, 2021 memberships will be 50% of normal rates at £6. You can pay at the Club at any point from when we reopen.

See you on the 16th April and let's all pray for good weather!

*Tony Flint, President*

## More Railway Mania

Continuing the theme started by Andrew, it seems Birdingbury has a number of budding railway modellers. My own creation is now 5 years in the making but my love of steam railways goes back much further to my childhood. My grandfather Sam drove a small steam loco at Welbeck Colliery (co-incidentally one of the last coal mines in the UK to close). Undoubtedly, he inspired my love of steam and one of my fondest memories of him is when we shared a journey together behind a steam loco over the awesome Settle to Carlisle line. The founder of Jaguar cars, William Lyons, once said that the car is the closest thing we have created to something that is alive. Despite my obvious devotion to that particular company I have to say he was wrong. That accolade should definitely go to the steam locomotive in my opinion! The sight of an express pacific loco storming up a gradient in a whirl of steam, smoke, fire and fury is one of the most impressive feats of engineering that you can witness and has been known to bring a tear to my eye!

Turning to the world in miniature, I was lucky enough to receive my first Hornby train set when I was 4 and this started my love of a hobby which has continued, on and off, to this day.

My early ventures into the hobby got off to a stuttering start when the controller for my first train set fell off the bed and into my friend's cup of tea! That put a temporary stop to the trains but as I grew up more and more of my bedroom floor began to be covered in plywood and more railway (until I was left with just a narrow little pathway to my bed!). Understandably, my Mum was not willing to let me leave my bedroom in this condition when I left for university, so my railway building exploits were put on hold for what ended up being quite some time. I should point out though that my Mum has otherwise been a staunch supporter of my hobby!

Some 17 years after the last train ran around my childhood bedroom, Sara and I moved to Birdingbury and the extra space we have here afforded me the opportunity to think about starting up the hobby again.

I decided to set my layout in the 1930s as this has always been a period that has fascinated me. In many ways it can be viewed as the zenith of steam locomotive development as the big four railway companies of the day competed with each other for both speed and luxury, famously culminating in one of Sir Nigel Gresley's streamlined locomotives, Mallard, setting a world speed record for speed in 1938 which has never been surpassed to this day.



Phase 1 of my new project is centred around a locomotive depot with a turntable, round house and coaling stage. Loco depots were ‘cathedrals of steam’ by all accounts and I am keen to add more details to evoke this going forwards. I also have a continuous main line running around the outside of the depot and into a long tunnel so I can sit and watch the trains go by if I want to!

Phase 2 is now underway which involves an extension of the main line around the other side of the garage allowing the addition of a hidden ‘fiddle yard’, and more importantly, a viaduct scene which I have always been keen to incorporate. Control of the layout is digital, a relatively recent addition to the hobby which affords easier operation and really allows you to bring the layout to life, with WiFi controlled features such as realistic sound, lights and even smoke generators.



For the railway buffs, my rolling stock is mostly express engines from both the LMS and LNER, my personal favourite being Stanier’s mighty ‘Princess Coronation’ class. I also have a couple of A4 live steam locos which are a little temperamental but great to watch.

In general though, 75% of my time on the model is spent building it rather than running it and I thoroughly enjoy the challenge of this - even the basic carpentry required to build the raised base boards! I find it is a fabulous way to take my mind off work and relax.

Of course, I cannot finish without thanking Sara and my neighbours for tolerating all the sawing and drilling - don’t worry that part is nearly finished! Perhaps we can hear from others whose hobbies have helped them through lockdown?

*Matt Hancock*

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# Running up that Hill

I find having something to focus on at the moment helps my sanity, and if it also helps to combat the Covid calories, all the better! So, when my local fitness studio, Everest Fitness, introduced the February running challenge, I decided to give it a go.

If I'm honest, exercise classes are much more my thing: the social aspect (even with Zoom) and someone telling me what to do (or directing the torture, if you will). I had taken part in the January challenge - to do three classes a week - and came out a winner. I did the most classes of all members in January. I think I managed 31 in total; equivalent to one per day. Me? Competitive?



So, I had some pre-existing fitness, but no running experience. In fact, I've proclaimed for about the last 25 years or so that "I'm not a runner" after nearly falling out with a good friend when she persuaded me to join her on a lunchtime run. I therefore decided to take on my fixed mindset around running, and practice what I preach in my day job: having a growth mindset when it comes to personal development.

On the face of it, the challenge didn't seem too bad. Start with running one minute on the 1st February, and then just add one minute per day. What's a minute, eh? Quite a lot, it turns out, as you get later in the month...but I didn't think that far ahead (thankfully)!

As you may remember, the weather in early February was not particularly conducive to a novice runner's plight. Baltic was probably a reasonable description. So I took the coward's option for the first week or so, taking advantage of my daughter's new treadmill. 1st February was a breeze. 2nd February took me by surprise...how could I feel so near collapse after two minutes of running? I'm relatively fit (remember that January challenge), even if I have just had a birthday that bumped me up the priority list for a covid vaccination. I seriously questioned my ability to get to 28th February and 28 minutes of running.

I continued for the next few days, taking the treadmill speed down slightly and concentrating on not doing some comedy fall off routine from it. As the minutes ramped up (ok, we're only 10 minutes in) I decided it was too boring on the treadmill and I really should get outside in our lovely countryside. I was inspired by the motivational videos being posted daily from Grandborough by lovely Kate (who set the challenge). Day 11 was the day...brighter but still Baltic: I had found a reason to wear my ski base layers in February 2021! And I'm so glad I ventured out to the Birdingbury countryside (and also glad to have my thermals on!). It seemed easier to run outside. Maybe it was just more distracting, maybe it was the second half when you know you're heading for home, maybe it was saying hello to the sheep.

You may have spotted me on my runs. I stuck to the Stockton Road - that way I could measure how much further I was going and set myself little targets, or landmarks, to

aim for. Those landmarks included David and Julie's house, the 'big house', the second tree after the corner, the crossroads sign, and so on. My husband did question if I was actually running to the pub. Perhaps a future target when such institutions are allowed to re-open? Seeing the progress on Casa Colledge was another bonus. Yes, I was spotted at one point apparently talking to the hedge but I can assure you that Craig was behind it!

I kept going, adding the minutes, starting to head towards Long Itchington (a little respite after the gradient up to the crossroads). I surprised myself, on an almost daily basis as I kept managing to achieve my daily target. Yes, it was tougher on some days than others, especially when running into the wind! The final week was when "it's just another minute" really kicked in. 22 minutes on the 22nd, 23 minutes on the 23rd, 24 minutes on the 24th...you get the idea...right up to 28 minutes on the 28th!! Yes, 4.5km in 28 minutes! I did it!

I guess I can't say "I'm not a runner" anymore. For me, it's been great example of growth mindset winning over fixed mindset. No plans to run marathons, but I think I'll keep one or two 30 minute runs in my weekly exercise regime. I've even managed to get both daughters out to join me - 10 minutes with Kara, then 20 minutes with Lexie, so 30 minutes total for me. I love my classes, so I won't be giving up my Body Pump, Body Combat, aerobics or Pilates, but it's refreshing to get outside and enjoy our beautiful surroundings. A time to clear the head, escape the technology and get a bit sweaty.

*Lesley Thomlinson*

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## Caravan Crime

Each year around 1,400 caravans are stolen in the UK. Very few are ever returned to their original owner, partly because they can 'disappear' into an illicit network of buyers and sellers, and partly because, when a caravan is found by the police, all identifying marks have been removed. It is not just new caravans that are prime targets for being stolen; in fact caravans that are about two or three years old that are more likely to be stolen.

Thefts occur all year round; most occur either from homes or commercial storage sites, but occasionally thefts will occur from caravan sites dealerships or repairers or car parks and lay-bys.

Many caravan security devices are available on the market, from hitch locks to steady locks, from alarms to wheel clamps. There are also sophisticated, if expensive, tracking systems available.



For a comprehensive guide to caravan security go to [www.caravanclub.co.uk/media/1022841/caravan-security-mo.pdf](http://www.caravanclub.co.uk/media/1022841/caravan-security-mo.pdf).

*David Banks, PCSO*

# Don't Lock Me Down

As many of you know, music is my biggest passion. Like all musicians, I thought the prospect of a third lockdown at the start of the year could be the final nail in the industry. However, studios were allowed to stay open and now we have a roadmap out, it has certainly been all systems go...although really, the music never truly stopped. Here's what I have been up to!

## *The Silhouettes - Instrumental Rock 'N' Roll*

After the success of our sell-out debut '45, we have been busy in the studio writing our next EP, which will be recorded at Embassy Studios in Basingstoke, before we hopefully head back out on the road with some exciting gigs. These include playing with The Voodoo Kings (who supported The Specials in the Cathedral ruins a few years ago), as well as our first trip to my favourite London borough, Camden, in July where we play the iconic Fiddlers Elbow.

As the rest of the world opens up, we plan to fly over to Belgium, Holland and Dublin before we head out to Los Angeles, USA to record our debut LP 'Extra Shot' for WILD Records, followed by shows in both LA & Vegas!



## *Lisa & Lewis - Jazz / Soul / Classic Covers*



For those of you that don't know, the town of Rugby has an incredible local music scene, and, for everyone involved, it is like a huge family. A couple of years back I was lucky enough to come across the talented Lisa Curley whose passions include Imelda May, Amy Winehouse and Caro Emerald to name a few.

Towards the end of 2019, we started performing at Open Mic nights at The Squirrel and soon formed 'LL Cool Hill', with local saxophone extraordinaire, Ian Hill.



Unfortunately, lockdown hit pretty soon after, although we managed to play an exciting outdoor gig last year in the cobbled streets opposite ‘CV22’ in Rugby.

In between these times, Lisa and I have been working remotely behind the scenes on our set, trying out new tracks and arrangements as we prepare to get back out on the road. We have also enjoyed sharing ‘Lockdown Covers’ from our respective ‘Gin Bars’. We both thank you all for your kind words on the videos we have shared and hope to be playing in the village very soon!

### ***Other Projects***

These include further lockdown covers with The Black Cats (Hanzo) and Simon & Zoe Thompson of The Jellyheads. I have also had the pleasure of writing some guitar and bass lines with my friend Sara, who has now released her debut punk album ‘Lost in London’ which has been completely self-recorded at home and is gaining lots of interest on local media.

At the time of writing this, a year ago to the date, when I was playing a sell-out show in the centre of Birmingham at the awesome Sunflower Lounge, little did we know this would be the last time for some months, but I’m very much looking forward to getting the show back on the road!



If you’d like to listen to some of my work, check out my links link:

<https://linktr.ee/lewiscutts>

Let’s rock!

*Lewis Cutts*

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Birdingbury knows

Bursting Spring impels new thoughts

Everything adapts

*Thin Jethro Laskey*



## Birdingbury Hall in Inflationary Times

It is over a hundred years since Birdingbury Hall was sold by the Biddulph family, who had owned it since 1687. In that hundred years it has changed hands ten times.

On the eve of the First World War, in 1914, Alexander Crundall bought the entire Biddulph estate including 12 farms covering about 2000 acres, numerous houses and cottages as well as the Hall itself (with a sitting tenant). He paid £46,000 which would be about £4.3 million in 2020 prices. In a subsequent auction, the Hall failed to meet its reserve and was withdrawn at £13,850 (today £1.1 million)

In 1910 the Hall with about 50 acres of land had been let for 21 years to John Bathurst Ackroyd for £465 per year and this tenancy continued with the change of ownership. John Ackroyd died in 1919 and his widow was paid £3,000 to conclude the tenancy, following which Crundall sold the Hall with its 50 acres to Henry Egerton Norton for £12,000 (today £550,000)

The value of country houses like Birdingbury Hall with their staffing and maintenance liabilities declined during the 1920s; many were actually pulled down as they could not attract a buyer at any price. After the Shaw family moved out of Bourton Hall in 1942 it became a rest home for Jesuit priests before being turned into a grain store.

When Norton sold Birdingbury Hall in March 1927 to Earnest Gustav Bing it was for £9,000 (today £540,000). Bing lived there for only seven years and in January 1934 he sold to Charles Albert Goodall of Cape Town for even less - £6,500 (today £465,000).

It is not clear that Goodall even moved in and there is no mention of him in the local newspapers, but he sold to Marie Caroline Wilheimina Fredericke Pollack, a wealthy widow, in May 1936 for £6,750. A few villagers remember Mrs Pollack as she lived in the Hall until 1962.

Since then there have been three more owners including Quinton Hazell, well known for his motor spares business, and the Pirbic Organisation who used it as a training college for sales staff.

*Recordsworm*



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## Thank You

Thank you so much to everyone who took the time to complete my online survey on renewable energy sources for my dissertation, it is very much appreciated.

*Crawford Timms*



# Children's Poetry Competition



**The Birdingbury Children's Poetry Competition is now OPEN!**

Poems on any topic will be welcomed but if you need some inspiration here are some ideas:

My friends, family, pets, village

My favourite things, experiences, activities

Magical Creatures, imaginary places

Lockdown dreams

Outside my window

Unheard voices

Send your entries to [Birdsong1@btinternet.com](mailto:Birdsong1@btinternet.com) or pop to either Steve (Rose Cottage, Main Street) or Lesley (Moonrakers, Back Lane) by 30 June.

Prizes will be awarded in the following age groups:

7 and under

8 to 11

12 to 14

15 to 18

Our panel of judges (Steve, Venice, Lesley & John) will be declaring the winners in early July, ready for a special prize giving and publication in the August / September edition of Birdsong.

So, now's the time to voice your verse and rock your rhymes!

Good Luck!

## The Adventures of a Parcel

Some of you may remember that one of our granddaughters from Australia, Jacla, stayed with us for a while in 2019. She is not one to travel light and arrived here with a huge pack and other bags. When she flew back to Oz in February 2020, she had acquired yet more, so we became host to a considerable mound of miscellaneous clothing and footwear.

While on this side of the planet, Jacla had organised a course in France studying design and fashion at a college in Lyon, which she started in September 2020. We understand that when she left Sydney she was well encumbered but, nevertheless, she asked us to parcel up some of the stored apparel and send it to her in Lyon. We filled a box and took it to the Post Office, where they asked what was in it. 'Used clothes' we said and it was dispatched with no difficulty: arriving in Lyon a few days later.

In December, with winter closing in (it can get very cold in central France), another request came: there were some wintry garments she would like. Another box was filled but as it was just a few days before Christmas, we thought that with lock downs and general confusion, we would leave it until the New Year. Bad mistake: Brexit!

In early January, we consulted a website called Parcel to Go which allows you to choose between the various forwarding companies. The one we selected was going to collect it from us. They emailed the necessary labels, together with four copies of a customs declaration which we had to put in an envelope and stick to the parcel, as well as a form to give to the driver.

The parcel went on schedule and should have taken a week. After ten days we tried to track it but the company said they had lost it. They later said they had tried but failed to deliver it. Jacla put in a lost parcel claim and time went by. Then to our surprise we get an email starting 'Good News – we have found your parcel'. They said they would deliver it.

They did, but not to Jacla. About a week later it arrived back on our doorstep in Birdingbury, intact but a little battered, still with the four copies of the customs declaration in their envelope, unopened and various other labels stuck here and there. It looked like official French graffiti.

Try again. This time, with Parcel to Go, we chose TNT; more expensive but their Express service sounded appropriate. They emailed more paperwork including four copies of a 'Commercial Invoice' which we were to sign and give to the driver. This included a 'tariff code' for used clothes – 621790. They were to collect it from us on Friday afternoon, but they didn't. They didn't collect it on Saturday or Monday or Tuesday, so we asked for our money back. Amazingly they said OK and indeed Parcel to Go have refunded a not insubstantial sum.

Meanwhile, we were in touch with yet another firm called Pack & Send. You can ring and actually speak to a human being: two in fact, one in Lincoln and one in Hall Green.

Yes, they would do the job, pick up the now very battered parcel, much bound up with parcel tape, and deliver it to Lyon for a considerable fee, although not as much as TNT. They did admit that the system was in chaos and whereas it would have taken three days in 2020 it could now take ten. They would deal with the customs but there might be less trouble if they could show it was for a student. So Jaella copied the photo page from both her UK and French passports and her student card. Pack & Send emailed us a new set of labels and sent UPS to pick it up, which they did when they said they would.

At the time of writing, we are waiting – what will happen next? Will there still be any need for winter clothes in Lyon?

*Chris and Rhondda Barney*

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## Pawprints Pup-date

Well, here we are again - still in Lockdown and with no clear idea of how much longer the Covid pandemic is going to restrict our daily lives and future plans. All we can do is follow the rules and wait.



At the new Pawprints HQ in Monks Kirby, workmen have continued to make life more comfortable for the dogs and their carers, and supporters have responded generously to requests for a tumble dryer, rotary washing lines, timber, storage facilities and other items.

We've begun to welcome some of our dog walkers back, and their feedback on the new site is all good. Parking is a bit of a squash when the kennels are busy but there are plans to address this in the future.

Apparently, the neighbours are busy installing a cafe, which should be opening this summer, and there is a plan to apply for an alcohol licence there.

The dogs are doing really well. As reported in the last Birdsong, there is no barking at night, apart from a few weeks ago when foxes were about.

Our Birdingbury pop-up shop continues to do well in raising funds for the dogs, thanks to the generosity of the lovely people who donate interesting items for us to sell and those who buy them. We are so grateful for your support.

When the days start to warm up, we will offer tea and cakes again, subject to Covid restrictions, and we both look forward to seeing you all for a good chat.

*Chris Kilvington and Barbara Sweet*

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## Prevent the Perils of Pottering

As the weather starts to improve and days get longer, the gardening season is upon us! Although it is generally not considered a strenuous form of exercise, gardening can provide a good workout and is beneficial for our physical and mental health. However, gardening injuries are common, with approximately 300,000 reported every year. Falls in the garden top the list of gardening A&E visits and 6000 injuries were related to the harmless flowerpot! I have already seen a patient with tennis elbow caused by jet washing a patio and another struggling with back pain from a four-hour weeding session.

Here are some simple tips for pain free gardening.

- Like with all exercise, it is important to warm up, especially before heavy gardening activities such as digging, lifting or using a chain saw. A short brisk walk followed by some stretches will prepare your body for physical activity. I know it is tedious, but you would never see Usain Bolt run a 100m without a warm up!
- Consider the 20:20:20 rule. This involves switching activity every 20 mins or so: for example weeding, pruning and digging. This is because prolonged, repetitive and heavy activities are most likely to cause injuries.
- Try and pace yourself, especially if you have not done much physical activity over the winter. It is better to work in short bursts and return another day than blitz the garden and then be unable move for a fortnight!
- Avoid lifting heavy objects immediately after prolonged bending and kneeling. If you have lots of pots in your garden consider buying a folding hand truck, sack trolley or pot mover.
- Try to wear gloves to protect your hands.
- To protect your knees, use a padded kneeler when planting and weeding. If you struggle to get up from the floor consider garden kneelers combined with a seat and standing aid, a garden stools on wheels or rolling garden carts.
- If you suffer with back or neck pain, consider working at a table when planting baskets or pots and pricking out seedlings.
- Long handled tools including trowels, hoes and leaf grabbers are kinder to your back and make jobs more manageable.
- If your hands and wrists are painful, there is a wide range of tools available with contoured or padded grips.
- If you find it difficult to carry heavy watering cans, especially if you have a large garden, an automated watering system might be the solution.

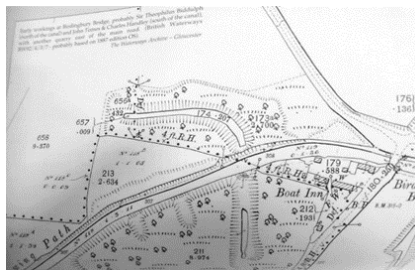
Happy Gardening!

*Jill Drew*

# Birdingbury-on-Sea in the Age of the Dinosaurs

I have a longstanding interest in the limestone and cement industry in and around Southam, including the local railways and canals. The area is dotted with many quarries, some filled in, some still working, where limestone and clay were dug.

While reading one of the books I have on the subject, I decided to investigate the site of an old quarry, shown on an 1887 OS map, and reportedly owned and worked by Sir Theophilus Biddulph. The site of the quarry in question was almost opposite the Boat Inn (Birdingbury's only pub since it is in our parish), behind the small copse next to the car parking area, as shown on this map.



I walked through the copse and onto the field edge where, if you look carefully, the outline of the one-time quarry can be made out as a dip in the field. It was here that I noticed my first fossil, lying on the surface of the field. At this point I didn't know what I was looking at. I collected around a dozen of these intriguing, fossilised shells and headed off home to research what I had found.



It turns out that at some point around the Triassic to Jurassic periods (basically around the time of the dinosaurs), this area was a warm shallow sea and what I had found were the fossilised shells of an extinct oyster of the genus gryphaea. These are commonly known as devil's toenails and are apparently quite commonly found, both around here and elsewhere in the world.

I returned a few weeks later with my grandson Toby, who is a massive dinosaur fan. He was ecstatic, looking for fossils and actually coming up with a dozen for himself. He and I could not believe we were holding an extinct creature that was around 200,000,000 million years old (give or take a few million). Great fun and very educational.



If you follow up on this article and have a look, please note that although this little corner is easily accessible through the well-used copse, it is private land. The field has been newly ploughed and drilled, so please respect the farmer's crops and fences.

*Steve Edgar*

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# LH Academy Update

At Leamington Hastings Academy we have created some exciting opportunities for the children to take part in, despite having half the children in school and half the children learning from home between the Christmas holidays and 8th March.

Children at both home and school joined in with book day; the children and staff dressed up as a book character, and the staff read stories to the children online, so that those at home could be included.

We also received a delivery of eggs and some equipment such as an incubator, which were kindly donated by Luke Scofield. This week the chicks have hatched and the children are really enjoying learning about the life cycle of a hen and how to care for the chicks. Luckily, all children had fully returned to school before the first egg hatched; it was a very exciting moment! A special thank you to Ellie Harris who let us borrow an additional heating plate when one chick hatched later than the rest. When the chicks are ready, they will return to live with Luke.



Mental wellbeing is more important than ever with the ongoing pandemic, and we marked children's mental health week with a wellbeing day. Children tried out lots of different activities and decided which activities helped them to feel calm and relaxed.

As we move towards Easter, we will be learning about the Easter story and making sure traditional events such as the Easter egg hunt continue for the children, whilst also keeping them in their bubbles.

*Suzanne Marson, Head of School, Leamington Hastings Church of England Academy*

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## Altar Guild



As restrictions are slowly being lifted, I am looking for people in our community who may be interested in joining St Leonards Altar Guild.

We are a relatively small group of 29 volunteers who look after the flower arranging, the brasses and the linens in our church. Although membership has remained fairly constant over the years, we would love to welcome new members.

If you think you may be interested, then please contact me on 01926 632876 or at Thurlby, Main Street.

*Eira Owen*



# First Impressions

So, before I begin, let me introduce ourselves! Andrew, Kate, Sophie (11), Sam (5), Alex (3) and Jessica (1) make up the Whitworths.

We moved to Abberley (one of the bungalows near the War Memorial) back in November, after living in Banbury for several years. With us all crowded into a 'new build' with a small garden, moving to a property with a proper garden was number 1 on our list: number 2 was a nice village. Now.....boy! Did we get lucky with both! Not only do we have a garden we'll spend the rest of our lives looking after (whether that's a good thing or bad is yet to be decided), but we have also met so many of you and settled so quickly into this fantastic village.

From the Taste Events on Fridays and the lively WhatsApp & Facebook groups, to meeting so many of you on our regular trips to the park and back (I'm working my way through fixing up those goal posts...cable ties & duct tape can fix anything!), we have been welcomed so warmly to Birdingbury. It has made it a truly special four months for us....this is all during COVID with 90% of our time so far 'locked down'.



If there is anything we can do to muck in or help out (post COVID) we would happily join in. I have heard stories of good voluntary work being done with the park, bus stop and general upkeep of the village: all areas we would be keen to help out with.

You will generally hear us before you see us, so apologies in advance, but we look forward to meeting more of you and, hopefully, doing so properly when we are allowed!

Thank you so much for the warm welcome.

*The Whitworths*

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## Safer Birdingbury

PCSO David Banks, who covers Birdingbury, has now been joined by PCSO Helena Seal, who some will remember has covered our area before. Together they are available for any enquiries or issues you have. Please do not hesitate to get in touch if you need their help. David can be contacted by voicemail on 01788 853851 or by e-mail at [david.banks@warwickshire.pnn.police.uk](mailto:david.banks@warwickshire.pnn.police.uk)

I will continue to send out the Safer Neighbourhood Team newsletter each month,

If you'd like to join the Birdingbury Neighbourhood Watch email circulation list or the NHW WhatsApp group, please contact me at [johannacutts@aol.com](mailto:johannacutts@aol.com)

*Jo Cutts*

## Spring into Summer with a Smile!

There's nothing like starting something new to arouse the senses and raise one's hopes. Rugby's Percival Guildhouse is offering an exciting variety of new courses alongside its existing range of courses for its summer term.

When the term starts in mid April there will be 11 new courses, 11 new day schools and four summer schools to tempt students with something for all, including beginners' courses in Spanish, Amigurumi Crocheting or Guitar.

Also new are courses on Creative Writing; Contemporary Patchwork and, for art history lovers, Practical Art History and Making Art in Tudor England. Or there's Sotai Ho, a Japanese form of movement therapy, and Therapeutic Arts and Life Coaching. Music lovers have a treat in store with a chance to enhance their appreciation by joining 'Take Ten - Listening to Great Pieces of Music'.

For those who prefer to concentrate their learning into a day or a few days, the day schools and summer schools are ideal. These courses will run in June and July when, according to the Government's roadmap, we should be able to mix once more.

The day schools, planned for 19th and 26th June, feature classes on English Paper Piecing; Guitar for Beginners; Willow Weaving; Plant Climbers; Needle Felting for Beginners; German for Absolute Beginners; Wall Shrine Workshop; Cut and Folded Books; An introduction to Digital Photography; Writing on the Edge; Therapeutic Arts Seminar; and Life Drawing.

Summer schools will run in the week beginning 5th July, starting on Tuesday 6th and include Guitar for Beginners; Kickstart Your Writing; Make your own Tote Bag, and The Power of the Mind.

Full details of all new courses and all existing art and crafts and language courses can be found on the Guildhouse website at [www.percival-guildhouse.co.uk](http://www.percival-guildhouse.co.uk) You can also call the office on 01788 542467 or email [contact@percival-guildhouse.co.uk](mailto:contact@percival-guildhouse.co.uk)

As Covid restrictions will still be in place in April, the term will start with all courses that can be, being taught online via Zoom. The Guildhouse aims to open its doors to other courses in-house in May.

*Claire Turnbull, Trustee*

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## Plant Sale

Thanks to everyone who bought *Sarcococca Confusa* plants, raising £42 for church funds. The flowers are a bit underwhelming but they are at their best in January. On a still day the scent is great so, hopefully, they will be enjoyed in other village gardens next winter. They seem to multiply easily from berries dropped from the parent plants, so there should be more to pot up for sale later in the year.

*Dick Withington*

## The Guide

'My cottage, Sir,  
Stands on a hill,  
Where further up  
A spring breaks forth,  
To flow beneath  
My window sill.

No wife or child  
Could stand its fall,  
Yet here I wait  
Each traveller's call.

By yonder stream  
A stone's my bride,  
A smaller stone,  
Our little child.'

When told this tale,  
The ploughman said,  
'Poor creature's mad,  
He never wed.'

Yet as I walked  
Within the night,  
There shone  
The single cottage light.  
Which with its friendly  
Gaze, I thought,  
Found that small group,  
So fondly sought.

## Birdingbury Calendar

Pop-up events are being organised on a week by week basis, so do keep checking the Facebook pages for Birdingbury Village and Birdingbury Club. The village website and notice board in the bus shelter will continue to capture community messages and information.

## Tasty Takeaway Timetable

Taste Events will be at the Club car park from 17.00 to 20.30 as follows:

Friday 2 April	Pie & Mash
Friday 9 April	Indian
Friday 16 April	Pizza
Friday 23 April	Mexican
Friday 30 April	Build a Burger
Friday 7 May	Pie & Mash
Friday 14 May	Pizza
Friday 21 May	Mexican
Friday 28 May	Indian



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