

Hope Bagot Spring 2020 Newsletter



Silent Spring

While Hope Bagot is sleepily quiet at the best of times we are now experiencing a deeper silence as the distant sound of traffic and trains reduce - no Saturday football cheers from Knowle playing fields or Sunday motorcycles pilgrimaging from the midlands. The valleys and hills around Hope Bagot still, thankfully, echo to the sounds of nature. In recent days there have been migrant wheatears and nightjars calling and, occasionally, very occasionally, the cuckoo – once a common harbinger of spring – now becoming increasingly rare and who, having never heard a cuckoo, will miss its passing? While swallows have arrived (it appears in lesser numbers) there are no signs of house martins – none appear to have returned to their regular nesting sites as yet.

The wheatear has nothing to do with wheat or ears but was originally commonly known as the 'white arse' due to its white rump – a name totally unacceptable to Victorian sensibilities!



The old name for nightjar was goatsucker - presumably this nocturnal bird was often found around animal pens in their search for insects.

Village Fête Cancelled

When the Fête committee met on 6th March (yes physically met!) a date was set for 24th April for a go-no-go decision about holding the event as the Coronavirus was appearing to be spreading rapidly. By mid-March, however, the social distancing strategy was announced with restrictions coming into place on leisure and retail activities. Hope Bagot Fête, along with many other events across the UK, has sadly been cancelled.

One of the fete's great supporters, Michael Hamlin, passed away on 21st April - our condolences go to Michael's family - his passing is a great loss to the village.

Bottles in the hills

Occasionally, when walking in the hills above the village, you may see the odd bottle which has been kicked out by rabbits or badgers diggings from what is, largely, industrial spoil.

Two examples are illustrated; The green bottle on the left is from Ludlow and Craven Arms



Brewery which was based in Corve Street, Ludlow and operated from 1894 to 1928. The bottle on the right is from a brewery in Aston Birmingham, started by a 21 year-old named Frederick Smith, incorporated as Frederick Smith Ltd in 1898 and acquired by another brewery in 1955.

To handle these bottles for the first time after they have been, presumably, thrown away by people working in the hills about a century ago can be a very 'sobering' experience!

Spring Flowers at St John's Church

How fortunate we are here in Hope Bagot – being able to enjoy nature and the changing of the seasons quite often bring a wow! factor. While the photograph doesn't do justice to the stunning display of cowslips in the church grounds the emerging ox eye daisies and other wildflowers promise to reward us with delightful vistas in the coming months.



Rosie and Jim's diary

With such a wet winter Rosie said to Jim "We could do with a caravan holiday" and Jim muttered "Oi'll see what I can do" and pottered off to his shed. Well, bless his soul, he got his adjectives mixed up and he has built a holiday caravan. Give him his due though - it's a splendid gypsy caravan and Jim said "When we're not usin' it the chickens can live in it".

Then Jim googled a wonderful holiday location, hot sun, sandy beaches and a popular drink called retsina (make a change from cider) and it's not that far away - so they had planned to go to Greete for a fortnight - it's only a bit further down the lane than Whitton.



Well, as you know, no one is going anywhere and so the chickens have a lovely new home!

Don't forget that jim is our investigative reporter so if you see anything of interest let him know at hopebagot@gmail.com.

