

the Hurst

ISSUE 12

MAR/APR/MAY 2021



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What's going on in Hurst Green • News, views and information

EDITORIAL

I have recently been thinking about wisdom. It seems that we need a whole lot of it to make the right choices and decisions about how we live through this challenging era of our lives. The politicians and rulers of the world certainly need wisdom as the weight of responsibility lays heavily on their shoulders. But what is wisdom? The Oxford dictionary states that it is, 'The quality of having experience, knowledge and good judgement.'

Here are a few quotes.

'Any fool can know. The point is to understand.' Albert Einstein 1879-1955
'The only true wisdom is in knowing you know nothing.' Socrates 399 BC
'The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge, only fools despise wisdom and discipline' Proverbs 1 v 7, The Bible 950 BC
'The saddest aspect of life right now is that science gathers knowledge faster than society gathers wisdom.' Isaac Asimov 1920-1992

So, are we any wiser now in 2021, what can we learn from this lockdown time?

Here are a few tips for keeping sane...
Get out in the fresh air at least once a day, phone a friend and speak a word of encouragement, try a new hobby, sort out your drawers! Don't watch the news before bedtime.

It is very encouraging to see several people wanting to get involved in picking up litter around the village and along the A21, maybe it is a sign of how bored we are, but it does make a real difference!

Annabelle Blackaby

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Looking forward to bluebells

As the days meld into a long sameness and the pall of the lockdown exerts its grip, it would be easier to sink into inertia but... Spring races ahead. It is as magical as ever.

Gerald Manley Hopkins wrote:

'I do not think I have ever seen anything more beautiful than the bluebell I have been looking at. I know the beauty of our Lord by it.'

After the bluebells, Red campion appears in abundance. Yellow archangel glows in the depth of the darkening woods. Wild arum in its paleness emerges on damp verges. Commonly known as Lords and Ladies or Jack in the Pulpit, it is a striking addition to the darker greens on the verges and damp places.

Garlic mustard, so essential to orange tip butterflies for laying their eggs on, springs up at the foot of hedgerows and on derelict ground, unassuming but important.

Reflection

Reflect...

When all is said and done,
Covid contained,
Pandemic passed,
Vaccinations routine,
Lockdown a memory
Days, weeks, and months
Forgotten
In the mists of time,
Will lessons have been learned,
Attitudes changed,
For the better, for the good of mankind
Or slipping back into the 'norm'
Will we just carry on...
Where we left off?
AB

Brilliant yellow cowslips bloom on the bank. According to legend, St Peter dropped the keys of heaven when he learned that a duplicate set had been made. The keys landed in Northern Europe, and the first cowslip sprang from the spot. The nodding yellow flowers are thought to resemble the Saint's 'bunch of keys' which is another name for the cowslip in Somerset.



Lockdown school kids in their own words

I'm bored because I can't go outside with my friends. (Arthur)
It's good to be back at school but I still miss everyone who isn't here (Matthew)

I feel upset because it is stopping us from meeting our family and friends (Sophie)

Covid has been the worst time for me. I remember when me and my friends used to go down to the park but we can't anymore. I haven't seen my best friend since before Christmas. I love being at school but there's only 2 girls and it's quite lonely. I really want to go to PGL but I don't think I can.

I quite like lockdown because I've got lots of animals and can go horse-riding (Ava)

I'm bored and I miss everyone at school. (Erin)

I miss going into the hall and singing about God. (Poppy)

Miss Flack the Headteacher writes, 'We have been working hard over this lockdown to provide home learning for the children who are not with us, while teaching the ones that are. We have a rising number of children attending school daily and the nursery is open as normal. All the children have adjusted very well to the new school arrangements even though they are so different.'

The children at home have sent us some great work over the last five weeks and parents are doing an amazing job keeping

their children motivated and working in their home environments, which we can only imagine is exceedingly difficult.

We are looking forward to all the children re-joining Hurst Green Primary as soon as they can. We all really miss seeing the children in person and cannot wait

"We are looking forward to all the children re-joining Hurst Green Primary as soon as they can"

for the school community to get back to some sort of normality!

Meanwhile the Nursery has remained open and continues to provide a safe and secure place for pre-school children to grow, learn together, socialise, and play with their friends. Sheila Day and her staff have continued throughout this difficult period which has been a great benefit to parents and children alike.


A huge well done to all the staff of our school and nursery, you are greatly appreciated.

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Letter from the Vicar

As I am writing this, we are in the second week of the season of Lent. A couple of weeks ago we enjoyed our pancakes on Shrove Tuesday and Christians all over the world celebrated Ash Wednesday. Many choose to

mark this day by having a cross of Ashes put on their forehead or the palms of their hands. We reflect on the words that God said to Adam, 'remember you are dust and to dust you will return'. It is a time when Christians especially remember our frail humanity, our dependence on God and our need for His forgiveness for the things that we have done wrong.

John and I are huge Joni Mitchell fans, and I am chuffed that I once lived just across the bay from her home and recording studio in British Columbia, although sadly I never bumped into her. Ash Wednesday always reminds me of the song she wrote for Woodstock, in particular the line, 'we are stardust, we are golden'. It makes me smile because it is true, we are made of stardust. I was first told this by a good friend of mine who is an astrophysicist who used to work for NASA. The planetary scientist Ashley King, whose research focusses on how our solar system evolved from a cloud of gas and dust says this, "It is totally 100% true; nearly all the elements in the human body were made in a star". This fact, incredible as it is, doesn't in itself doesn't make us special – just about everything in the world is made out of stardust.

Christians believe that what makes all human beings very special indeed, maybe you could even say 'golden', is that we are made in God's image. Somehow every human being has God's handprint on them. It is this that gives us the ability to be loving and creative beings. You might be surprised at how many scientists, especially physicists,

"Every human being has God's handprint on them"



are Christians; I know several, two of whom have become vicars.

They understand far more than most of us ever will about the way the world and the universe is made, how it works and how it came about, and this knowledge and understanding has brought them to faith in a creator God. There is no conflict between faith and science, whatever some people might say. As Nicky Gumbel, the Vicar of Holy Trinity, Brompton and the originator of the Alpha Course always says, science and faith ask different questions; science asks how we are made, faith asks why we were made and who by!

By the time the 6 long weeks of Lent are over, I hope and pray that our community might be opening up a little and we will be able to spend time with friends and family again. Spring will be with us bringing warmth and better weather and surrounding us with new life. We are praying that we will be able to celebrate Easter in the Church and that will indeed be a wonderful celebration. We will celebrate again the new life, hope and peace that we experience when we have faith in the death and resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ!!

As always, please feel free to contact me for a confidential talk anytime.

God bless, Rev Annette
annette@jhbd.co.uk
01580 880282 / Mobile 07900 332791

Holy Trinity Church Hurst Green

OUR DISCOVERY

James Acock writes... If you go down to the church today, you're in for a big surprise.

Maybe you haven't been for months or years. Nor had we until the end of last year.

Claire and I went on Christmas Day – our plans to be in Hampshire having been dashed by Covid restrictions. It seemed fitting to connect into our village community within the permitted socially distanced guidelines.

Holy Trinity Church is small enough to feel warm and welcoming. Unusually, sections of the walls have a stunning William Morris design (left) which brings a further measure of intimacy to the space. Tall

south facing gothic windows threw shards of sunlight from the crisp clear sky onto us throughout the service. And very recently installed new chairs with soft upholstered seats providing a level of welcome comfort.

We were greeted warmly as we arrived – yes, the church has heating – but also from Richard and Annabelle Blackaby who conducted the service on this occasion (the Reverend Annette not being able to be in two places at once in the parishes she covers). And what a pleasure the service was.

I wholeheartedly recommend making your own trip to discover what Claire and I did – it is a little gem of an experience – and right on our doorstep!

KEEPING IT LOCAL, IT'S ALL ABOUT COMMUNITY

Lockdown has given us an opportunity to have the church floor sanded and re-varnished which has been expertly done by Mark Roby, so thanks to him and his team.

We were also glad to have Gareth Skinner's electrical skills, adding a light in the lychgate and outside the back door which does a great job lighting the path for those late-night walks! Hopefully, it won't be too long before we are back in the building!



We have been able to widen the path from the lychgate up to the church thanks to amazing work by Zuzanna and Bob and aiming to stop the flooding around the back gate by digging a new ditch, and thanks to James, some expert path laying, making the most of the old broken slabs.

Mandy Janes continues to research some of the names on the graves which have been adopted, looking forward to her book!



ADOPT A GRAVE – AN ONGOING PROJECT!

Even during the winter, maybe because of the inertia of lockdown, we have seen some great transformation of some of the overgrown and neglected graves. Hats off to the Acock family and friends who put in a load of graft on a sunny December day. Now, with the emergence of Spring, there is an opportunity to revive the project, so come on down!



NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN PROGRESS

'This winter, despite the change in circumstances due to the pandemic, the volunteers of the Hurst Green Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group have managed to keep the Neighbourhood Plan for our community on track by holding virtual meetings and publishing reports and materials on the hurstgreen2030.uk website.

One thing is for certain, as Rother District Council has allocated mandatory provision for at least 75 new homes for Hurst Green village, an expansion of our community is inevitable – seemingly our only choice is to try to influence what is built and to some degree where and how.

The Parish Council have received

an early concept housing proposal for consideration by the Neighbourhood Plan. The potential housing site on London Road is opposite the village school and is currently grass pastureland, and like the entire parish, falls within the High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

The site promoter is proposing that the site could provide Hurst Green with 40 new dwellings, which would be set adjacent to a new public village green that is roughly the same size as the Moor in Hawkhurst. Mixed housing consisting of 4 houses and 2 flats that have 1 bedroom, 7 houses and 4 flats that have 2 bedrooms, 9 houses and 3 bungalows that have 3 bedrooms, 7 houses that have 4 bedrooms and 4 houses that have 5 bedrooms.

The site promoter is proposing a new pedestrian crossing which would link

the site to the pavement on the opposite side of the A21. The plans also show a new area of public woodland, which we understand may include some new children's public play equipment.

A new school drop off parking area is shown close to the pedestrian crossing. We understand this could

be used by the school, and during the day, for those visiting the green or walking along the footpath that leads to Stage Field in Silver Hill.

Residents should note that while the site was identified as part of the Neighbourhood Plan call for sites process, that the receipt of this concept proposal does not mean the site will be allocated for development. It is a technical exercise aimed at identifying potential sites and options for development. Considering relevant external expertise and the forthcoming public consultation, the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group and the Parish Council will then consider how best to take the plan forward.

Residents with comments or thoughts to pass on to the site promoter and their agents are invited to contact a member of the neighbourhood plan Steering Group or any Hurst Green Parish Councillor.'

Email: clerk@hurstgreen-pc.org.uk
or Telephone: 01580 860111



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View from the boundary

Looking back to the early seventies, it seems that Hurst Green Cricket Club was on the up and up. According to the reports of 1973, 24 games were played, 13 won, 7 drawn and 4 lost, making this the most successful season in the history of the club.

Participating in the Haig National Village Competition, Hurst Green became Sussex Champions, having made it through 4 rounds to the last 16 of a competition that had attracted over 800 entries. The week before was spent putting the ground into A1 order, sprucing up the pavilion and installing a kitchen. A crowd of over 400 turned up to watch the match against Marden which they sadly lost but not bad going for the lads!

It has been some time since the heyday of Hurst Green Cricket Club but there is now a group of residents from the village who are working towards bringing some of the good times back.

Our aim is to play short format games

"We welcome players of all abilities, men or women"



of 20 overs on a Sunday afternoon with games of only two to three hours, rather than the 6 hours of a 40 over game. We hope this will encourage players to participate who feel they wouldn't normally have the time in a busy weekend.

We play for fun and keeping healthy and welcome players of all abilities, men or women, to help make the club a vibrant part of the Hurst Green community.

Match report courtesy of Wendy Browne whose father Joe Jenner was a member of the club back in the day!



PLAYERS WANTED

Hurst Green Cricket Club are playing short format cricket (20 over) games on Sunday afternoons this summer.

We'd like more players from the village and surrounding area to join our team.

Training and try-out sessions taking place this spring (when restrictions allow), keep an eye on our facebook page for more details.

 facebook.com/hurstgreencricketclub  hurstgreencc@gmail.com



THE ROYAL GEORGE
HURST GREEN

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The 2021 Census approaches.

Harry Farmer, the area's census engagement manager, will help organisations, charities, faith groups and community leaders within the district raise awareness of the census and the value to residents in taking part.

He says, 'I am looking forward to meeting as many of the communities of Rother as possible, offering my help and support to ensure a successful engagement and participation in Census 2021. With the assistance of Rother District Council and key organisations like Rother Voluntary Action I am confident of making communities aware of the importance of taking part in Census 2021'.

The census is a once-in-a-decade survey that provides a snapshot of households in England and Wales, helping to plan and fund public services.

Everyone across England and Wales will be asked to take part and the information people give will decide how services are planned and funded. Ultimately, it ensures funds are invested in emergency services, health care, school places and other vital services.

Pete Benton, Director of Census and Survey

Operations, said: "The census engagement managers and community advisers we have appointed have a critical role in making sure everyone understands why the census is important and making sure all households across England and Wales know why it is important to take part and how to get the help they need."

For the first time, the census will be run primarily online, making it easy for most people to complete the questionnaire on any device – whether that be a computer, a mobile phone, or a tablet. Local Census support centres will be offering help, while paper questionnaires will be available for those who need them. All census staff will operate in line with the Government's latest Covid-19 guidance.

The 2021 Census will include a new question on veterans of the UK Armed Forces, as well as voluntary questions, for those aged 16 and over, on sexual orientation and gender identity.

The census will be held on 21 March 2021. While results will be available the following year, all personal records will be locked away for 100 years and kept safe for future generations.

For more information, visit census.gov.uk

To reach your local census engagement manager, contact:

Harry Farmer
Census Engagement Manager
Rother & Hastings
Office for National Statistics
M. +44 (0)7452 942 713

E. john.farmer36@field.census.gov.uk

census 2021

Gardening Tips for Spring

Despite a long period of lockdown, Spring is as undaunted and as sure as day follows night.

MARCH

Spring usually arrives by mid-March and the frequent sunny days provide the opportunity for an increasing range of gardening tasks. It is time to get busy preparing seed beds, sowing seed, cutting back winter shrubs and generally tidying up around the garden.

Jobs this Month:

- Protect new shoots from slugs
- Plant summer flowering bulbs
- Lift and divide overgrown clumps of perennials
- Top dress containers with fresh compost
- Prune bush and climbing roses
- Plant shallots, onion sets and early potatoes
- Mow lawn if needed

APRIL

Sunshine and showers and showers

Jobs this Month:

- Keep weeds under control
- Tie in climbing and rambling roses
- Sow hardy annuals, herbs and wildflower seed outdoors
- Feed shrubs and roses
- Increase water given to houseplants
- Sow new lawns or repair bare patches
- Divide bamboos and waterlilies



MAY

As bulbs fade and herbaceous borders grow in leaps and bounds, it is now clear that summer is approaching.

Jobs this Month:

- Plant out summer bedding plants
- Mow lawns weekly
- Lift and divide overcrowded clumps of daffodils and other spring bulbs
- Earth up potatoes
- Regularly hoe off weeds
- Check for nesting birds before clipping hedges
- Water early and late to get the most out of your water

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Bellhurst Nature Conservation Trust and Burgh Wood

Burgh Wood is a beautiful ancient woodland that has been an important part of Hurst Green for as long as the village has existed. At times in the past, it would have been a resource of timber, charcoal, iron, hop poles, foraging for livestock, amongst others. Until recent times it will have been a place of livelihood for many men and women. It is even possible that the woodland provided timber for warships or was used as part of a hunting ground for noblemen or Kings. In short, Burgh Wood is a rich tapestry of cultural heritage.

The wood will have been managed by countless different owners over the centuries; all in their own way influencing the look and character of the land that we see today. A large part of Burgh Wood is now owned by Bellhurst Nature Conservation Trust (BNCT). The Trust aims to conserve and enhance biodiversity within the wood for current and future generations, whilst also protecting its archaeological, aesthetic, and intrinsic values that form a component of the High Weald landscape.

In recent years BNCT have set about removing invasive non-native Rhododendron in order to encourage native woodland plants to flourish once more. There has also been a renewed effort to coppice small areas in the traditional way – again, for the benefit of wildlife and also to supply local timber markets. Of course, these days Burgh Wood is popular with walkers and nature lovers. BNCT allow people to enjoy Burgh

Wood responsibly and believe it is really important that local people continue to do so, as they have for centuries.

BNCT, and indeed neighbouring homeowners and other users of Burgh Wood, are merely temporary custodians of Burgh Wood, in the context of the wood's long past and its future. In today's world of fast changes and uncertainty, we must all strive for Burgh Wood to continue as a beautiful place of exercise, rest, and engagement with the natural world.

Therefore, we must all play our part in securing a sustainable future for the wood.

As mentioned in the previous magazine, we plan to have a tidy-up of some of the rubbish dumped in the wood when Covid restrictions allow. Many people have very kindly offered their help, and we look forward to progressing with this before too long. It will be a great opportunity to meet with local people who are all passionate about our amazing local woodland. We will keep you posted.

"Burgh Wood is a rich tapestry of cultural heritage"



My day with the forces sweetheart

by Ray Young

In June, last year a remarkable lady died at the age of 103. She was one of the only entertainers to travel to Burma during World War 2, to sing to our 14th 'Forgotten' Army. She was dressed in army uniform proudly displaying shoulder flashes of ENSA, (Entertainers National Service Assn). Her songs included *When the lights go on again all over the World*, *The White Cliffs of Dover* and *We'll meet again*. By now you'll know I'm talking about Dame Vera Lynn.

Back in 2005, the Tony Blair Government organised a final Festival of Commemoration to mark the 60th Anniversary of the end of World War 2. It was to be held on Horse Guards Parade, London on Sunday July 10th and it was open to all Commonwealth countries, many European countries, and the USA.

From Monday July 4th, 25 WW2 military vehicles were invited to form a static display in The Mall and my 1945 RAF jeep was one of them. Throughout the week, 150,000 people visited the Festival. Dozens of photographs were taken, many of children sitting in the jeep with my RAF cap on.

While watching one of the rehearsals, I ended up having a more active role than I had anticipated. The huge stage platform was about 6 feet high with a steep ramp at either end. The idea was that the main Guest of Honour would be brought up the ramp in an old 1938 open topped Morris Army Staff vehicle, would get out and be greeted by the Master of Ceremonies, who



turned out to be Bruce Forsyth. Well, while I was watching, the little Morris mounted the ramp but when it got to stage level, it grounded and damaged the exhaust system, rendering it unusable. I could see the BBC Stage Manager was getting annoyed and anxious, so I went up to him and said I had a British RAF jeep sitting in The Mall which could climb the ramp with ease. "Well, don't just stand there – go and get it". I ran all the way in case they changed their minds, but all was well. It went up the ramp so easily and I suddenly found myself part of the show! At this point I had no idea who the main Guest of Honour was to be. However, the rest of the cast included Bruce Forsyth, Robert Harris, Jane Horrocks, Bradley Walsh, Claire Sweeney, Petula Clark, who I knew from my Pye Records days. On the BBC side I met Fiona Bruce, Sophie Raworth and Huw Edwards.

The big day arrived, and I was told to pick up the Special Guest at 2pm precisely. Imagine my surprise when down the stairs came Dame Vera Lynn!! What a thrill. I was to take her to a specially prepared 'hide-away' beside the gardens of No.10 Downing Street.

I knew my cue to start up was the military orchestra playing *Jerusalem*. That gave us four minutes to get ready to approach the ramp up to the stage. We had an hour to wait so to my surprise, Dame Vera said, "Could we have a short walk to get a breath of air?" I helped her out, she put her arm in mine and we walked in the

crowds to Admiralty Arch. Of course, people recognised her straight away, but nobody bothered us.

Back in the jeep, and to the strains of *Jerusalem*, we headed for the ramp. There were 12,000 Veterans seated between the stage and the Royal Stand. They started to stand as they recognised Dame Vera

and then we were besieged by newspaper camera men and a TV camera coming down on a remote telescopic pole.

Up the ramp we went. Bruce helped Vera out of the jeep to the strains of *We'll meet again*. My moments of glory were over. What a climax to a wonderful event, one that will remain in my memory for ever!

Ellerhoop/Hurst Green Twinning Association

UPDATE

Herzliche grüsse (warm greetings) from the Hurst Green Twinning Association.

Sadly, during the first lockdown last year, we had to cancel the scheduled visit from our friends in Ellerhoop, as it was due to take place in May at the height of the first wave. It has also meant that any catch up-visit this spring will not be able to take place. Who knows where international travel will be by May, as well as the vaccination process both here and in Germany. It is possible that we may be able to arrange a visit for later in the year, but only once we know that the visitors and their hosts will be safe from Covid. We will let you know in *the Hurst* if this goes ahead, and if at that time you would be interested in hosting a German visitor, we would love to hear from you!

Throughout the pandemic we have been in contact with our German friends Renata

and Wolfgang Dikomaty. While they are struggling with lockdown in Germany too, they also had lots of snow at the same time Hurst Green did in February – above is a photo of their street in Ellerhoop with a thick covering! All those associated with the twinning send their best wishes and hope to visit soon, and to welcome a reciprocal visit from us.

Joe Roper



This group photo was taken on the last visit to Ellerhoop in 2019

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