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May 2021

Eastcombe, Bussage & Brownshill Newsletter

Welcome to the new Eastcombe, Bussage and Brownshill Newsletter!

With grateful thanks to Beryl Freebury for her 54 years of editorship of the previous newsletter, a new monthly publication is now being trialled. Anyone in Eastcombe, Bussage or Brownshill is welcome to submit a contribution—we will do our best to include as many as possible. Please send your news and updates to eastcombenewsletter@btinternet.com.

You can read the newsletter online on the Bisley with Lypiatt Parish Council website (<https://bisley-with-lypiatt.gov.uk/eastcombe>) or have it delivered FREE by email: if you would like to receive a colour digital edition each month, please contact sissonsscott@gmail.com to be added to the circulation list.

Printed copies of the newsletter will also be available to buy at 50p per copy (to cover printing costs) at Eastcombe Post Office, The Lamb Inn and The Ram Inn.

Being a new publication and with many organisations still emerging from lockdown, not all are represented in this issue. We will be in touch with groups and organisations in Eastcombe, Bussage and Brownshill over the coming months and all are welcome to contribute. Better still, you can get in touch with us: send your news or updates to eastcombenewsletter@btinternet.com. We hope you enjoy the first issue.

Eastcombe Bus Shelter: Green Oasis & Swapping Hub!

The Eastcombe bus shelter has been transformed, courtesy of local artist Chris James. Chris has worked hard to install planters, bookshelves and benches, as well as painting a superb mural, creating a fresh, clean space for all to visit and enjoy the donated books, DVDs, puzzles and games. Chris is pleased with the initial response:

'The library is very popular. Approximately 6-10 books are taken each day and we have a good stock, including DVDs and children's books. If anyone is looking for a particular book or author, I am happy to take a look for you. The seed bring and take started as mostly take, meaning that stocks quickly disappeared, but has now been replenished; if anyone has spare seed, please drop into the bus shelter. The plants are surprisingly healthy, although a couple have been taken, which is disappointing. The mini daffodils were very successful and will be back next year, and if anyone has succulent verve cuttings these would be appreciated. The shelter is no longer as damp due to the boarding and clearing out of a tiny channel at the front. Please don't park on the white lines outside. If anyone would like to use the shelter one Saturday morning e.g. for a charity or craft sale, let me know.'

You can contact Chris on chrishujamesart@yahoo.com



What's in a Name?

Have you ever wondered how our villages got their names? While there is some debate, these are some of the likely origins:

- **Eastcombe:** Combe means valley, therefore Eastcombe may be so named because it is the village on the east side of the Toadsmoor Valley. However, it may have its roots in *Isscombe* or *Esscombe*, meaning *Combe of the Ash Tree*.
- **Bussage:** Both Bussage & Bisley possibly owe their name to Bissa, a Saxon of some importance in the area. Bussage could be 'Bissa's Ridge, or, alternatively, it may derive from *Beech Ridge* or *Ridge of the Does*, alluding to deer.
- **Brownshill:** It's possible that Brownshill's name comes from ownership (the hill owned by Brown), or it could be a descriptive term—the brown hill. If you know better, please get in touch!
- **Bismore:** *Both moor* and *more* likely come from the same root, meaning marshy area or lake.
- **Toadsmoor:**



Bisley-with-Lypiatt Parish Council News: Eastcombe Ward

<https://bisley-with-lypiatt.gov.uk/>

Meetings: Due to COVID restrictions, our regular meetings are still being held remotely. These meetings are open to the public and are normally held on the 1st Wednesday of each month. If you wish to attend, please contact our Clerk for details on 01452 771089 or admin@bisley-with-lypiatt.gov.uk.

Fidges Lane: Over the last 6 months we have received many complaints from residents about delivery vans and HGVs causing damage to verges and private property in Fidges Lane. New warning signs will be posted at the entrance of the lane, which we hope will resolve some of the issues. Residents are also concerned about parking near the shop, especially on the white lines opposite the lane.

Gas Works: The installation of new gas pipelines has caused major concern; this work will continue until at least the middle of May. The PC had no warning of the work; we will work towards a more proactive relationship with GCC Highways so that we get notice of any future work.

Handrails on Spring Hill were severely damaged by a delivery van over the Christmas period. They have been repaired by GCC, but it would be nice to replace them with something more aesthetically pleasing. If you have any suggestions, please let us know.

Trees at St Mary's: the PC has raised a formal complaint to SDC over the felling of trees in St Marys, near Thomas Keble School; we had asked for a Tree Preservation Order but this was not actioned.

Bus shelter: The PC is pleased to support the superb work undertaken by Chris James; Eastcombe bus shelter must now be one of the best in Gloucestershire, if not the whole country. Please visit!

Local elections take place on 6th May. Eastcombe Ward is entitled to 4 members, but at this time we only have 3 councillors: Jenny Exley, our latest recruit Louie Wilkes, and myself, Mike Eccott. If you are interested in joining the council, please contact the Clerk.

Neighbourhood Development Plan (bisleyeastcombeoakridge-ndp2030.org.uk)

The new NDP is in process, although progress has been hindered by Covid. You should have recently received the NDP survey, sent to all households in the parish, the results of which are now being analysed by Gloucestershire Rural Community Council (GRCC); these will be used to help formulate NDP policies. On the dedicated NDP website you will also find the results of the Housing Needs Survey and the Gloucestershire Wildlife Trust Survey as well as information regarding the NDP and why it is important for the future of the parish.

Bob Brooks: Finally, it is time to say a big thank you to Bob Brooks who is standing down as an Eastcombe Ward Councillor after many years. Bob has been responsible for overseeing many projects in the parish, and also set up the original Parish Council website, one of the first in the country. His knowledge and experience will be missed. We wish him and Muriel all the best for the future.

Mike Eccott, Chair of Bisley with Lypiatt Parish Council

BisCAN: A Year to Change the World



A year to change the world, and in Eastcombe we have already started. As part of the newly founded Climate Action Network (CAN), on Easter Sunday we planted more than 40 trees – oak, hazel, hawthorn, dogwood, spindle, buddleia - and many wild flowers around Hodge's playing field (alongside the allotments).

Sue Wise, who organised the event, said, 'We need more trees, birds and insects – more biodiversity'. Many Eastcombe and Bisley volunteers came to lend a hand, armed with spades and rakes, and there was also help from Duke of Edinburgh Award scheme volunteers Naomi Mohamed from Archway School, and Josh Kluckow from Thomas Keble School.

The group, like other 'CANs' in the district, wants to encourage energy efficiency, active

travel and local resilience in the parish of Bisley-with-Lypiatt, with plans for bike rides and nature recording as well as looking at other ways to help our environment. If you are interested in getting involved, contact

bisleyeastcombeoakridgecan@gmail.com or Martin Brown on 01452 770878.



Welcome to you all from Eastcombe Baptist church.

Our service is held every Sunday morning at 10:30am, and Richard Mortimer, our pastor/my husband, will be preaching.

I'm sure you wouldn't be expecting a FIB coming from The Manse, but that's exactly what I'd like to share with you this month! I have recently found this lovely pattern for poetry. It's called a Fibonacci structured poem, Fib for short. The formula is to add the last two numbers together and use this as the number of syllables in a line: 0, 1, 1, 2, 3, 5, 8, 13 etc. Here is an example

*Spring.
Joy.
Sunshine.
our steps quick,
walking fellowship;
the valley filled with soft sweetness.*

It's a great structure to have fun with—I'd love to hear your efforts.

Kind regards, Maressa Mortimer

Are You Interested in Local History?

If so, you might be interested to know that a local history group for Eastcombe & Bismore has been created on Facebook. Search for **Eastcombe and Bismore Local History Group**

& answer the quick question.

All members are welcome to post information or ask about the history of Eastcombe or Bismore & surrounds. You don't have to live in Eastcombe or Bismore to join.

If you have any questions, please contact: EBLHG@btinternet.com.



St Augustine of Canterbury, Eastcombe & St Michael's & All Angels, Bussage

Like all organisations, the local church has had to adapt to new conditions. The Parish of Bussage with Eastcombe supports two buildings and, over lockdown—indeed for the last year - we have offered weekly Zoom worship on Sundays. When out of lockdown these will continue, but we will also offer face to face worship at Eastcombe on the third Sunday (11am) and Bussage second Sunday (9.30am). Other Sundays will find us in different parts of the Benefice.

Weddings and Funerals are possible, with restrictions on attendance, and baptisms are now also going ahead.

For full details, why don't you sign up to our mailing list? Email: pewslipsbisley@hotmail.com

NB: In June the worship pattern will change, no Zoom:
1st & 3rd Sundays Eastcombe 11am
2 & 3rd Sundays Bussage 9.30am

Revd Sue Murray vicar@bisleybenefice.org.uk

There will be no Zoom.

Eastcombe Primary School

The school is delighted to be fully opened again after the most recent lockdown, and is once more resonating with the sound of chatter, laughter and children enjoying both their learning and friendships. This, paired with the beautiful spring weather, creates a positive and hopeful start to the new term. Whilst we are still working under some COVID restrictions, we are keen to give the children positive learning experiences alongside well-being activities, outdoor learning and lots of memorable moments to treasure. One of our first tasks this term was to participate in an art competition to help decorate the Eastcombe bus shelter; the children were tasked with creating a piece of art to depict 'Eastcombe in the Spring'. Congratulations to our winners: Bailey, Isabella, Holly, Isla, Lily, Sheba, Amy and Elsa. Their art work is displayed in the bus shelter for the whole community to enjoy.

Mrs Claire Jones, Head Teacher



Eastcombe Cricket Club

The cricket club is very much looking forward to the new season, after a Covid interrupted last year. The weather seems to be improving, the wicket has been cut, rolled and even watered by our hardworking groundsman. The outfield has been given its annual clean-up and the pavilion a good polish, so bring on the 2021 season.

We run two teams, playing league cricket on a Saturday and practice sessions in the week and have a close relationship with the Lamb pub cricket team who play on Wed/Thursday evenings.

The club is very friendly and we welcome anyone to a net session or a match to meet members and hopefully become a player, umpire, scorer—or a spectator. (We will be abiding by the ECB Covid restrictions at all times)

We start the season with a inter club friendly, followed by league games from the 1st May through to 28th August. If anyone who would like more information, please contact us or call into the club on a match day.

Richard Powis, ECC Chairman 07963 530013.

Gloucestershire County League & Stroud League Fixtures Saturday Matches

Date	1.00pm start 1 st XI and 1.30 pm for 2 nd XI			
	1st XI		2nd XI	
01/05/21	Down Hatherley	H	Bye	A
08/05/21	Oaksey	A	Cam 3	H
15/05/21	Painswick 2	H	Frampton On Severn	A
22/05/21	St Philips North	A	Hawkesbury Upton 3	H
29/05/21	Chalford	A	Chalford 2	H

Hilltop Gardening Club News (www.hilltopgardeningclub.org.uk)

After a break of over a year, The Hilltop Gardening Club is up and running again with Zoom meetings in March and April in place of our usual monthly get togethers. The March meeting was titled 'Propagation' and was given by Victoria Logue from her home. April's meeting was 'Plants that have changed our lives' and was delivered by Bill Laws. Despite a few hiccups, both talks were thoroughly enjoyed by those able to tune in.

We plan to hold a plant sale on May 22nd, time and location to be advised. For our club holiday this year we will be travelling to Shropshire in late June, staying in Telford and visiting various gardens in the area.

Our meetings are held on the first Tuesday of each month, and once Covid restrictions are lifted, will recommence at the village hall. New members are always welcome.

We intend to hold the Autumn Show in September. If you would like to help organise the show or have any suggestions please get in touch.

For more information visit our website or phone Kathy Eccott on 01452 770824.

Eastcombe Village Group

The Eastcombe Village Group organises events to provide enjoyment for people living in Eastcombe. In the past, we have organised Wine Walks, Quiz Nights, Village Meals at the Lamb, Village Tea Parties, the Village Christmas Tree and celebrations marking national events.

When we are able to meet up indoors, we will organise a meeting in the Village hall to share ideas and plans for the future. In the meantime, a few dates for your diary:

- **Sunday 8 August: Wine Walk.** The chance to visit a number of gardens in the Village to enjoy wines from different countries. Look out for further information nearer the time.
- **December 2020:** The village Christmas tree on the green.
- **June 2022:** Village street party for the Queen's platinum jubilee.

We hope to see you at one of our regular meetings as soon as these are permitted.

In the meantime, if you have ideas for future events or would like to help in any way please get in touch. We are particularly looking for someone to take notes at our meetings and to prepare minutes. We have around 4 meetings a year.

Peter Scott, Chairperson. (peterhscott@btinternet.com)

Re-wilding the Verges

Seeing wildflowers gradually emerging from the cold earth is an annual joy! There are small delights along the village verges; look closely and so much is there, waiting to be discovered. County, District and Parish Councils are now responding to the desire to see wild flower corridors along our verges to encourage pollinators, and it is hoped that we can all begin to enjoy the first sights of those wild flowers and plants which previously had their flowering eclipsed by the strimmer/mower. For the greater part of the year, verges are best left to flower and seed—they should not be cut before autumn, at least - as well as allowing seed dispersal, this allows us to see what is growing there. Unfortunately, too often, dominant grasses eclipse the smaller flowers and the answer to



this is to sow Yellow Rattle in the autumn. It is a parasite on grass and will gradually lessen the dominant plant's vigour, allowing others to proliferate, although it is not a swift process. A group of Eastcombe residents have identified grassy areas in the village which might respond to such treatment and, hopefully, over the next few years, we can look forward to seeing verges humming with bees and butterflies, including, we hope, the later flowering, brighter field flowers like Cornflower, Corn Marigold and Poppy. These have become rarer in the wild, although they can still be enjoyed in our own gardens, of course.

Pam Perry

Nature Notes for May:

May is a time of great activity in our countryside. Listen out for the cuckoo—a rarer sound in recent years, but it may yet return to our valleys and woods. If you hear it, let us know! The swallows and house martins arrived in April, but mid May is when the swifts return—they like to nest in the same places year on year, preferring older properties. However, anyone can encourage them by installing a 'swift box' (<https://shopping.rspb.org.uk/garden-bird-nest-boxes/rspb-swift-nest-box.html>). The nightingale is another summer visitor and May is the month when it habitually sings for a large part of each night.



Blossom is a common sight in April and May, and many gardeners hope for fair weather to allow the successful pollination of fruit trees—a windy May can mean a poor harvest later in the summer.

You may see baby birds in your garden: if you do, try not

to interfere, even if you think they may need help—the chances are that the parent is not far away and will return to feed it once you have gone. In the fields and woods, too, young are being born, and you may be lucky enough to catch a glimpse of fawns or cubs.

Above all, May is a time to enjoy your garden—but beware of planting out tender plants too early—as the saying goes: *'Cast ne'r a clout 'till May be out!*



'Eastcombe & Bussage Group'

National Garden Scheme

11 Beautiful Gardens Open for Charity

Sunday 2nd & Monday 3rd May 2021
Opening from 12 - 5pm

Tickets £8 for adults - Children free!

Booking is essential - Book on-line
ngs.org.uk

Afternoon refreshments at Eastcombe VH

The National Open Garden Scheme is back!

This bank holiday weekend (2/3 May) several gardens in and around Eastcombe, Bussage and Brownhill will be throwing open their gates for charity. These include Hawkley Cottage and Brewers Cottage in Eastcombe and Hampton View and Valley View in Bussage.

Due to Covid restrictions, this year **PRE-BOOKING IS ESSENTIAL for all visitors.**

Visit <https://ngs.org.uk/view-garden/17526> to view the full list of gardens and to secure your tickets.

May is the month of rhubarb: here's a recipe you might like to try.

Rhubarb & Custard Cake

Prep: 20 mins

Cook: 1 hr, plus time for rhubarb cooking and cooling

Easy

Ingredients:

400g rhubarb.

250g butter, softened, plus extra for greasing

150g pot ready-made custard (e.g. Ambrosia)

250g self raising flour

½ tsp baking powder

4 large eggs

1 tsp vanilla extract

250g golden caster sugar

Icing sugar, for dusting



Method:

1. Heat oven to 200C/fan 180C/gas mark 6.
2. **Roast the rhubarb:** rinse & shake off excess water. Trim the ends, then cut into little-finger-size pieces. Put in a shallow dish or a baking tray, tip over 50g caster sugar, toss together, then shake into a single layer. Cover with foil & roast for 15 mins. Remove foil & shake, then roast for 5 mins more or until tender & the juices are syrupy. Drain off juices & allow to cool.
3. Butter and line a 23cm loose-bottomed cake tin. Reduce oven temperature to 180C/fan 160C/gas mark 4.
4. Reserve 3 tbsp of the custard & beat the rest together with the butter, flour, baking powder, eggs, vanilla and sugar until creamy and smooth.
5. Spoon one-third of the mix into the tin, add some of the rhubarb, then dot with one-third more cake mix. Alternate, ending with a layer of cake mix, leaving in rough mounds. Scatter the rest of the rhubarb, then dot the remaining custard on top.
6. Bake for 40 mins until risen and golden, then cover with foil and bake for 15-20 mins more until a skewer inserted into the middle comes out clean. Cool in the tin, then drift with icing sugar.

Litter can be a perennial problem — but local litter pickers are fighting back!

During lockdown, more people than ever have got out and about into the countryside, and, while it's great to see folk enjoying the outdoors, there has been a corresponding rise in litter.

Recently, however, you may have noticed less rubbish about, due to a concerted effort by local litter pickers to rid our villages, fields and woods of this age old problem—and they are now being backed up by many of the visitors, helping to keep things clean.

While litter picking is nothing new, Facebook groups such as the family friendly [Five Valley Wom-bles](#) have encouraged a new generation to take up their 'womble stick' and make a difference. It's tempting sometimes to feel that there's a mountain to climb, but litter **can** be tackled—one wrapper at a time!



What you can do to help:

- Please take your litter home or to the nearest bin.
- DON'T leave plastic poo bags—hold on to them until you reach a bin. NB: Those who walk in the Eastcombe fields will be pleased to hear that a dog bin is to be installed near the bench in Fidges Lane, by the path to the fields.

Who's Who on the Hilltop? We asked Phil and Olivia Battye...

We moved to Eastcombe in July 2003, and haven't regretted a single day since. We met and married when we were 40; I was living and working in Telford, Olivia living in Minchinhampton. Pooling our resources, we looked for 'our house' and settled on Greenhills; 18 years later we think we have convinced people to stop referring to it as 'Oh, you mean Rob Gardiner's house!' We vividly remember the perilous journey from Minchinhampton to Eastcombe following the removal van. At the steepest part of Toadsmoor, we had the fright of seeing the side door of the van bulge open and half of our worldly goods momentarily hang over the road until the van straightened up and the door shut again. Funny in hindsight, but at the time...



Olivia taught many local boys in her 37 years at Marling School in Stroud. She is probably better known to them as Miss Watkins, and for teaching Biology as well as looking after a progression of fresh-faced and excited Y7 boys as they moved from primary to secondary school.. She retired from teaching in 2019 and is now enjoying retirement with husband and puppy. She loves her garden, and has quite a collection of ferns. During Covid, she helped to make deliveries to the vulnerable members of our local community.

I am also retired now, spending too much time playing both golf at MGC and bridge after a career in engineering, specialising in the measurement and science of air pollution. I can navigate the country from industrial chimney to chimney.

Eastcombe is a green oasis: clean air, open fields, and amazing views. We have a great pub, a well-stocked shop and thriving schools. Covid has been an awful time for so many folk, but if one positive thing has come out of it, it is a rediscovery of a sense of community and watching out for each other.

Phil Battye

Gardening Tips

May is a busy month in the garden—here are a few jobs to be getting on with!

- Allow spring flowering bulbs to die back in their own time, enriching the bulb for next year.
- Thin out direct-sown vegetables such as lettuce and carrot seedlings.
- Protect strawberry plants with straw (to control weeds and lift berries off the ground) and netting (to keep birds off fruit). Ensure netting is pegged down to prevent birds getting trapped.
- Use fleece to protect plants from late frost. Remove during the day to let pollinating insects in.
- Sow tender vegetables under cover, ready to plant out when all risk of frost has passed. Harden off outdoor tomatoes, ready for planting outside.
- As the soil warms up, plant out tender crops. Invest in a cloche, or make your own by cutting plastic bottles in half.
- Early May is your last chance to sow annuals & spring-flowering biennials, such as wallflowers.
- Plant summer hanging baskets, using peat free compost. Protect from late frosts.
- Divide herbaceous perennials & hostas to improve vigour and create new plants.
- Harvest rhubarb and asparagus.
- Make supports for your runner beans & support pea plants with twiggy sticks.
- Prune early spring flowering shrubs once flowering is over and clip evergreen hedges.
- Take cuttings of tender perennials and shrubby herbs such as sage and lemon verbena.
- Tie in rambling and climbing roses. Laying stems horizontally will produce more flowers.
- Tadpoles and baby newts should be leaving ponds soon. Make sure there is a sloping side so they can get out. If removing weed, leave it beside your pond overnight to allow pond life to escape back into the water.

From your armchair in May:

- Keep a diary of the seeds you're sowing and planting.
- Take time out from all your hard work to relax and enjoy the garden as the warmer weather arrives.



Keep it Local! As we emerge from lockdown, our local businesses are welcoming back their customers...

We are lucky to have a range of businesses across our villages, including **Eastcombe Stores** and **The Lamb Inn** at Eastcombe (<http://thelambinneastcombe.co.uk/>) and **The Ram Inn** in Bussage (<https://www.the-ram-inn.co.uk/>). Visit their websites for the latest opening hours and menus.

The team at **Cotswold Ice Cream** are also getting ready for the new season. Pick up a list of flavours from Berwick House in Dr Crouch's Road in Eastcombe, or visit their Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/cotswoldicecream>.

It's not only hospitality venues that have been hit hard by lockdown—hairdressers and beauty salons were also affected. **Head First Hair and Beauty** in Eastcombe, has now reopened for business—contact them to arrange an appointment or visit their Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/headfirsthairandbeauty>.

While we will not be running advertisements as such, we are keen to support local businesses. If you have a local business and would like a mention, please contact us on eastcombenewsletter@btinternet.com.

Youth Transport Survey April 2021

In conjunction with Stroud District Youth Council, the Gloucestershire Community Rail Partnership (GCRP) is seeking the views of young people between the ages of 10 and 25 in order to assess and improve transport across the county. This is the most important survey to be carried out for years and will support a number of projects, including positive changes to transport which will improve young people's access to career options and education and leisure opportunities.

Visit: <https://www.smartsurvey.co.uk/s/GlosYouthTravelSurvey/> to complete the survey—and get the chance to win a voucher up to £50 in value!

If you have any questions, please contact Hannah McDonnell at hannah@gloucestershirecommunityrail.org

May Traditions

May is the month of many traditions, not least in Gloucestershire. The well dressing in Bisley is well known, while, in Eastcombe, the crowning of the May Queen was a hotly anticipated part of the annual carnival.

Later in the month, at Whitsun, the Whitsun procession would form up near the school, then move through the village, singing hymns at every crossing point and especially where someone was sick. This was a substantial annual event and many photographs exist, including those above.



Enjoy Walking? Want to get Fit?

Join us on Wednesday mornings to rediscover and improve our footpaths and maintain our ancient Rights of Way. To find out where, when and what's involved, contact:

mike.eccott@bisley-with-lypiatt.gov.uk



Can you help to create the next newsletter?



We want this newsletter to be a community effort, so we need your contributions!

A few suggestions:

- An item of news
- A seasonal recipe for June
- Nature notes
- June gardening tips
- Do you have a favourite mid-summer walk or place to visit? Tell us about it!
- Do you have a favourite book you'd like to share?
- Are you under 16 & would like to write an article—on anything? If so, we'd love to hear from you!

Please send all contributions to eastcombenewsletter@btinternet.com by 20th May.

Thank you.

What's on in May?

- **1 May:** Cricket season begins
- **2/3 May:** NGS Open Gardens in Eastcombe, Bussage & Brownhill
- **3 May:** Early Spring Bank Holiday
- **5 May:** Parish Council Meeting (via Zoom) 7.30pm
- **6 May:** District Council Elections
- **22 May:** Hilltop Gardening Plant Sale
- **31 May:** Spring Bank Holiday
Half term holiday