

# Eastcombe, Bussage & Brownhill Newsletter

Everyone is welcome to contribute to the newsletter. Please send your news, updates and photos to [eastcombenewsletter@btinternet.com](mailto:eastcombenewsletter@btinternet.com) by 20th of each month.

You can read the newsletter online at [www.bisley-with-lypiatt.gov.uk/](http://www.bisley-with-lypiatt.gov.uk/) and [www.chalford-glos.gov.uk/](http://www.chalford-glos.gov.uk/) or get it FREE by email each month: contact [eastcombebandedbnews@gmail.com](mailto:eastcombebandedbnews@gmail.com) to join the circulation list.

Printed copies are available to buy at 60p per copy (to cover printing costs) from **Eastcombe Stores and Post Office, Frith Community Café** and **Chalford Parish Centre**. It is also available for customers to read at other local establishments, including **Head First** and **The Lamb Inn**, Eastcombe.

**We hope you enjoy the April issue.**

## SAVE THE STONE STILES!

Long a feature of the Cotswold landscape—many are more than 200 years old—stone stiles have, for centuries, given pedestrian access across the Gloucestershire countryside, marking ancient pathways which pre-date land enclosure and passing spots where cottages have long since vanished. However, despite their historic value, no comprehensive record of stiles exists - and now they may be threatened.

Peter Wilson launched the **Gloucestershire Stone Stile Project** in the summer of 2020, with support from CPRE Gloucestershire and the Cotswold Naturalists' Field Club. The project was divided into three phases: the reporting of stiles, indexing and, finally, the production of an interactive OS map. Support was overwhelming, with over **800 stone stiles** reported, and the project was expanded to include historic metal stiles, water spouts and other historical landscape features.

The project is now at the stage of creating the interactive map, with locations, details and images of each stile. However, the 2021 revision of the Countryside Code has introduced a complication; it advises farmers to make land more accessible by installing self-closing gates *'instead of stiles'*. In recent months, project contributors have reported that some stone stiles have been removed, leaving gaps, or being replaced with metal kissing gates.



New gate installed alongside existing stone stile

Peter Wilson feels that the stiles need not be destroyed, even if more walker friendly access is installed: *'It is perfectly reasonable to retain the stone stile and place more rambler friendly access alongside.'* This has already happened in some places, including on the path from Eastcombe to Nash End, where a wooden kissing gate was installed alongside the stone stile, but Peter's concern is that other stiles may be removed, destroying a part of Gloucestershire's history.

**If you share Peter's concern, please contact your local Councils and your MP to express your views (contact details on page 8).**

**You can still contribute to the Gloucestershire Stone Stile Project.** If you spot a stone stile:

1. **Photograph the stile**, if possible from both sides
2. **Complete a stile recording form:** [www.cpreglos.org.uk/resources/stone-stile-recording-form/](http://www.cpreglos.org.uk/resources/stone-stile-recording-form/)
3. **Email your form to:** [peter.wilson@woodchestervalleyvillage.co.uk](mailto:peter.wilson@woodchestervalleyvillage.co.uk)

If you can help with the project, please contact Peter using the email address above, or call 01453 834486 or 07712 591043.



**There are 3 main types of stone stile:**

**Slit or squeeze stiles** are usually two upright stones, set too narrow for farm animals to pass through.

**Slab stiles** vary in height, but consist of a single slab (many slab stiles have fallen and now form a large flat stone on a path or in a field).

The less common stile is the **step stile**, with a step leading up to the main stile.



**Above:** Slit stile to Middle Hill Allotments

**Top right:** Slab stile in Fidges Lane, Eastcombe

**Bottom right:** Fallen slab stile in the Eastcombe fields.



## THE COMMUNITY CAFE

This popular Cafe runs every Wednesday morning from 10.15am-12 noon at Frith Youth Centre in Brownhill.



Come and join us for a hot drink, home-made cake and the chance to see and make good friends.

On Wednesday 13th April, Olive will be holding her ever popular **PLANT STALL**, with an opportunity to buy good quality locally grown plants for your garden.

The Cafe is run by a long standing group of local volunteers. All profits go to Frith Youth Centre and the work of the Youth Team who do excellent work with local young people.

You will be very welcome.

Carol and the team

## Bisley-with-Lypiatt Parish Council News: Eastcombe Ward

[www.bisley-with-lypiatt.gov.uk/](http://www.bisley-with-lypiatt.gov.uk/) Parish Clerk: 01452 771089/email [admin@bisley-with-lypiatt.gov.uk](mailto:admin@bisley-with-lypiatt.gov.uk).

**Parish Council Policies:** Did you know that the Parish Council has several policies which are aimed at providing a consistent approach to the maintenance and upkeep of the various council assets? These policies cover **Tree Management, Hedgerows, Stone Walling and Boundary Treatments**, the **use of pesticides** (see below) and **genetically modified organisms** and can be found on the council website: <https://bisley-with-lypiatt.gov.uk/policies/>.

The Council adheres to these policies on the land for which it is responsible and encourages local householders to also read the policies and use them as guidance when maintaining their own properties. The Council's Climate Emergency Policy and Action Plan can be accessed from the same page of the website.

**Trees:** There have been several applications to fell or prune trees within Eastcombe Conservation Area this year. Please consider carefully before you apply to take down a tree, as they provide our beautiful setting, help to reduce carbon, give us oxygen to breathe and give shelter from the sun in the summer. There are specific requirements for any tree works, which can be found on Stroud District Council's website, and most work needs to have their approval. Remember you can always consider pollarding some trees as an alternative to felling them. April is the last month for planting trees with bare roots, trees planted from April onwards should be container grown.

**Annual Parish Meeting:** The Annual Parish Meeting will be held on **Wednesday 13<sup>th</sup> April** at **Bisley Village Hall, starting at 7.00pm**. This is our annual review of the last 12 months with summaries provided from the 3 wards, a Financial Statement, and the progress made on the NDP over the last year.

The Annual Parish Meeting will be followed by the monthly **Parish Council meeting**, which will start at **7.30pm, Wednesday 13<sup>th</sup> April** at **Bisley Village Hall**. Agenda details for both meetings will be posted on the Parish Notice Boards and website a few days in advance.

## Bisley-with-Lypiatt Parish Council Policy: Ban on the Use of Pesticides

Bisley-with-Lypiatt Parish Council prohibits the use of pesticides on land it manages and owns. All Parish sub-contractors will abide formally by this ban. Recent research <https://www.nature.com/articles/s41586-021-03787-7> indicates that the impact of pesticides on bees and other beneficial insects has been underestimated, and that further declines ... will occur. Furthermore ... it may affect human health. This policy supports the Parish Council's declaration on emergency climate action and nature recovery.

The Parish Council encourages all private landowners, gardeners and those working in and with the landscape to ban... or seek alternatives to the use of pesticides.

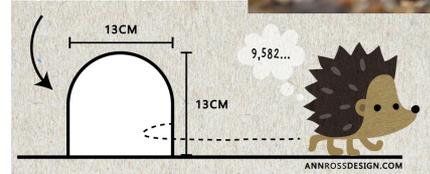
**Definition:** *The term 'pesticide' includes herbicide, insecticide, fungicide and more. The most common of these are herbicides, which account for approximately 80% of all pesticide use.*

### GOT A PEST PROBLEM? DON'T DESPAIR!

When a slug scoffs our seedlings, it's tempting to reach for the nearest chemical. But natural methods can be more effective in the long term, as well as better for wildlife and our pocket.

**Slugs:** try traditional techniques such as crushed egg shells, coffee grounds or beer traps. Copper tape around pot rims helps to keep slugs out of pots. Use nematode warfare and encourage birds, hedgehogs, frogs & slowworms into your garden—creating a CD sized hedgehog hole in your garden fence will encourage in a prickly helper who will be only too happy to rid you of the slithering pests!

**Helpful larvae** (such as hoverfly larvae) are voracious aphid eaters, often found in the middle of an aphid cluster on your roses. Don't mistake them for pests! In fact, there will be beneficial creatures all around, munching happily on pests on the undersides of leaves. If in doubt, leave them be.



## RECYCLE EVERYTHING!

Remember, you can recycle many items, even those not eligible for kerbside recycling.

One example is:

**Dental products:**  
**toothbrushes, electric brush heads, toothpaste tubes, lids and floss containers.**

Drop off your used dental products at any of the locations shown—and raise money for schools, playgroups and charities

Chalford also need occasional volunteers to help sort and pack the recycling. If you can help, please contact:

[clr.tricia.watson@stroud.gov.uk](mailto:clr.tricia.watson@stroud.gov.uk).

Thank you!

## DROP OFF POINTS:

### Bisley Greenshop Car Park Entrance

Bisley, Stroud GL6 7BX

2 labelled bins.

All the items on this poster are accepted.

### Chalford Parish Centre

Geralds Way, Chalford GL6 8FJ

Monday-Thursday (10am - 3pm)

Labelled bin inside.

For larger stashes ask staff to store out back.

All the items on this poster are accepted.

### Chalford Hill School Garden

Chalford Hill GL6 8LG

Labelled bins available.

Drop off outside school hours.

All items (except gloves)

### Stroud Valleys Project

8 Threadneedle St, Stroud GL5 1AF

Labelled bins inside the shop.

For disposable gloves and nuts.

**TOGETHER WE WILL MAKE A DIFFERENCE!**

## Going **GREENER** in 2022 ONE way to make 2022 a bit greener is to:

### HELP NATURE TO HELP YOU

Avoid using chemicals in the garden—these can affect whole food chains. Build a natural balance to help control pests, & encourage wildlife, such as hedgehogs, in to get rid of slugs and snails. It might take a while to establish an effective ecosystem, but it will be worth it.



**Bisley, Oakridge &  
Eastcombe  
Climate Action  
Network**



## CHALFORD PARISH COUNCIL NEWSLETTER – April 2022:

01453 887204; [info@chalford-glos.gov.uk](mailto:info@chalford-glos.gov.uk) [www.chalford-glos.gov.uk](http://www.chalford-glos.gov.uk). Follow us on Facebook.

**Roads:** we are receiving more complaints than ever regarding the deteriorating condition of our roads. Middle Hill is of particular concern, and we are in close contact with Highways and the new housing organisation about this area, as well as liaising with our County Councillor. The number of road closures currently in place is also causing a great deal of disruption and we have questioned why there has to be so many taking place at the same time. We are told that different bodies are carrying out the work and they are unable to co-ordinate schedules.



**Drainage:** another current concern from residents is blocked drains. A delicate matter, but one of the main problems is items being flushed down toilets, which are not biodegradable. Wet wipes and sanitary items should not be disposed of in this manner and cause extensive problems; Severn Trent has had to attend various areas in the Parish recently, to flush out the system. Whilst on the subject of drainage, an update on the **shopping/doctors' surgery area car park:** the management company has instructed a contractor, so we are hoping that work to improve drainage will be carried out soon. At the same time, the management company will be addressing the lighting problems and reinstating the disabled parking bays.

**Speeding:** the police camera van caught 12 motorists speeding, and others for not wearing seat belts. Our newly formed Community Speed Watch group has met three times, and several drivers will be receiving letters from the police advising them of the speed limit. The message is to adhere to the speed limit or points/fines will be imposed.

**Ukraine:** at the time of writing, we are receiving donations for shipment to Ukraine. The lists we are given are very specific, according to current needs. A big thank you to everyone who has donated items. We have a very generous community.

In addition to **'Barry'**, our freezer of love, we also have a dry food bank, set up by students at Thomas Keble School and proving increasingly popular for residents. Thanks to everyone who has donated food - more donations welcome.

**Befrienders:** for the last few years, we have been running a useful service, pairing up volunteers with isolated residents requiring a visit, perhaps for a chat over a cup of tea or maybe a game of chess or cards. If you can offer your services to help someone, please get in touch. All volunteers are subject to a Disclosure and Barring Service check prior to visits.

**Footpaths – 'Lost Ways':** 'Lost Ways' are historical paths which existed before 1949, but missed off official maps. The **good news** is that the 1 January 2026 deadline for applying to record them as Public Rights of Way has been scrapped. The **bad news** is that the government plans to give landowners a right to apply to divert or extinguish Rights of Way 'in certain circumstances'.

**Why Not Come Along to a Meeting?** Our next Full Council Meeting will be held on Thursday, 7th April at 7.00 pm. Please contact the Clerk beforehand to find out where the meeting will be held and to let her know if you would like to attend, particularly if you wish to speak, so that she can make time for your issue on the agenda.

## ChalCAN UPDATE: April 2022:



**ChalCAN Open Evening: Saturday 2 April, Chalford Sports and Social Club, 6.30 pm for 7pm start. Free pizza and the bar will be open.**

*Got unanswered questions, or great ideas? Want to do what you can for climate change and nature?* Join your neighbours and ChalCAN to chat about these issues.

**ChalCAN will be at the CSSC Community Market on 10<sup>th</sup> April: 10am 1pm:** e-bikes to try out, 20 is plenty, seasonal veg, plus our thermal imaging camera will be on display.

**The New 'Boiler Upgrade Scheme' (BUS)** launches on April 1<sup>st</sup> and run to April 2025, providing upfront capital grants towards the installation of heat pumps (and for some biomass boilers). Grants of £5000 are available for air source heat pumps and biomass boilers, and £6000 for ground source heat pumps. Details at [www.ofgem.gov.uk/environmental-and-social-schemes/boiler-upgrade-scheme-bus](http://www.ofgem.gov.uk/environmental-and-social-schemes/boiler-upgrade-scheme-bus)

**Fuel costs:** with fuel prices rocketing why not:

Investigate public transport options

Invest in a bike, e-bike or electric car

Look at lift sharing opportunities - visit Liftshare Stroud: [www.facebook.com/groups/511543142661870](https://www.facebook.com/groups/511543142661870)

Rationalise your trips to cut down on mileage

Cut your speed and drive as smoothly as possible - every 10mph reduction means a 10-15% decrease in fuel consumption.

**'20 is Plenty' campaign:** free stickers for wheelie bins, windows and cars can be collected from the Parish Centre, Eastcombe Stores and Chalford Village Shop. Please sign our petition ([www.change.org/p/20-is-plenty-in-chalford-and-eastcombe](http://www.change.org/p/20-is-plenty-in-chalford-and-eastcombe)) and spread the word. Keep our roads safer, enable active travel and reduce emissions and pollution.

**Peat free compost** is available from Middle Hill Farm (will deliver), Stancombe Farm Shop, Nailsworth Garden Centre and Dobbies in Cirencester.

**Chalford Biodiversity Action** has been 'mulching' the trees and hedges we've planted - laying down pre-used paper sacks and covering them with wood chippings. Come and join us if you can spare an hour

*If you'd like to know more or get involved with ChalCAN,, please contact Penny [info@chalcan.org.uk](mailto:info@chalcan.org.uk) (tel: 01453 887204) and check out our website [www.chalcan.org.uk](http://www.chalcan.org.uk) and Facebook page.*

## Eastcombe Baptist Church

A service is held every Sunday morning at 10:30am at the church in Dr Crouch's Road, Eastcombe.

## Eastcombe Primary School: Update:



We are so excited about the **Gnome Hunt**, which takes place next month **14th and 15th May**. Can you guess the theme this year from the poster? The gnomes are looking forward to getting out and about once more - we are currently dusting off their cobwebs and giving them a makeover at Gnome HQ. We have some brilliant gnomes to give away at the end of the trail too.

Great news about the **School Quiz on 2nd April**. The quiz is fully

booked and we have been overwhelmed by the support from the villages. It's going to be a fun night! Proceeds from both of these events go to Eastcombe Primary School - we are hoping to raise enough money to buy all the classrooms new interactive white boards.

*Sophie Harrison, ESA Chair*

## Bussage Primary School: April Update:

On 3rd March, we had a brilliant time celebrating World Book Day, on its 25th Anniversary!

The children (and staff!) all came to school dressed as an interesting word. Everyone looked fantastic, with a huge and diverse range of words represented. I think it's safe to say we all learnt a few new words to add to our vocabulary bank! A huge thank you to parents for their efforts in helping their children dress so brilliantly.

We had a little competition for the outfits and the deserving winners received an extra World Book Day book token.

There were lots of interesting book and vocabulary-related activities. The children brought in their favourite book from home, which they had the opportunity to share with their peers. We also had DEAR (Drop Everything And Read) opportunities throughout the day where, on hearing a special bell, everyone would stop whatever they were doing, pick up their book and just enjoy reading for a few minutes. This was thoroughly enjoyed, including by the staff!

In addition, lots of the children participated in live workshops and Author/Illustrator online academies and produced some super work, with storytelling throughout the day.

We really enjoyed celebrating this fantastic day and our love of reading has now grown even more! Please check out our photos of the outfits and some of the activities.

Contact the school on 01453 883205 or visit our website: [www.bussageprimaryschool.co.uk](http://www.bussageprimaryschool.co.uk).



## St Michael's & All Angels, Bussage

Visitors are always welcome at our services. Services for this month are:

**April 10th (Palm Sunday):** Holy Communion, 9.30am

**April 15th (Good Friday):** Stations of the Cross, 12 noon

**April 17th (Easter Day):** Holy Communion, 9.30am

**April 24th:** Holy Communion at 9.30am (followed by the APCM)

On the other Sundays there are services in different parts of the Benefice. Please visit [www.bisleybenefice.org.uk](http://www.bisleybenefice.org.uk) for more details.

For Weddings, Funerals and Baptisms please contact Revd Sue Murray

For more details, why not sign up to our mailing list?

Email: [pewslipsbisley@hotmail.com](mailto:pewslipsbisley@hotmail.com) or Revd Sue Murray [vicar@bisleybenefice.org.uk](mailto:vicar@bisleybenefice.org.uk)

## NOTICE OF REVISION OF CHURCH ELECTORAL ROLL:

Notice is hereby given that the Church Electoral Roll will be revised by the Parochial Church Council beginning **Sunday the 20th day of March 2022** and ending **Sunday the 3rd day of April 2022**.

After Revision, a copy of the Roll will be exhibited for not less than 14 days on, or near to, the principal door of the Parish Church for inspection.

## Ridgeway Playgroup

At Ridgeway Playgroup, we are super proud to share our exciting letter from The Queen.

Ridgeway Playgroup decided, a few weeks ago, to send a 'Congratulations on Your Jubilee' card to the Queen. All 38 children decorated a piece of bunting in red, white and blue, which was great fun. We then put them all onto a big card and wrote messages, which were posted off to Buckingham Palace with the hope that the Queen would reply. And she did! The photographs show the beautiful response, which we shall treasure forever. We will be putting it into a frame to be displayed in Bussage Village Hall.

We have been learning about our Queen and it has been lovely seeing the children respond to a really important part of British history, which we are never too young to appreciate.

Ridgeway Playgroup is a thriving setting, offering daily, term time childcare for children from age 2 years old. We have an amazing outdoor space and it is run by a fantastic team of very experienced ladies. Every day is full of fun, happiness and friendship - all are welcome to visit.

Amanda Baber - Deputy Play Leader

[www.ridgewayplaygroup.co.uk](http://www.ridgewayplaygroup.co.uk)



## EASTCOMBE WI: April Update:

Official business at the March meeting included discussions regarding the Platinum Jubilee and other local and county activities. Once this was completed, Judy Sawyer was introduced and she delivered a talk on 'Bisley Girl'.

Born and brought up in Bisley, Judy is passionate about what she has achieved over the years. Her talk included many photographs and recounted stories of local people which some of our members were able to remember and relate to. Judy became the first lady estate agent in Gloucestershire, and, some time ago, was featured on a TV programme, where she sold a property to a man who worked at Renishaws. Judy advocates that to achieve your potential you should not give up on your dream.

### Planned WI members events:

Luncheon club at The Kitchen in Minchinhampton in April, proposed coach trip to Weston at end of May, County Quiz, annual council meeting, painting course and more.

Our next meeting is on **Tuesday April 19th at 7.15pm** where the speaker will be PCSO King on the subject of Crime Prevention. New members are always welcome.

We are a very friendly group of women who enjoy friendships, good speakers and outings (COVID allowing). Most meetings are open to visitors for a small fee.

If you would like more information, please contact the Secretary, Glenys Sharpe, on 01453 886298.

## Eastcombe Footpath Group

The weather has kept the volunteers close to home for the last few months, but now the days are getting longer (I saw sunshine today) it is time to plan what to do this year.

The steps and handrail installed at the very bottom of Fidges Lane last year are looking good, and the kissing gate for the path above, leading up to the Copesgrove fields, has arrived and is awaiting a dry day to put it up.

We are always looking for volunteers: come the spring the nettles and brambles need to be managed, along with any overhanging branches. Some of the paths are getting very muddy; we have applied for a grant from Stroud Rotary, and if this is forthcoming, we might put some stones down on the muddiest, most walked tracks.

If you would like to volunteer, maybe for an odd morning or for a regular stint, please text me (Sue) 07821 806724 or Scott on 07547 485926. We look forward to hearing from you.

## Eastcombe Bus Shelter Book Swap:

**Plants.** Following the taking of plants from the shelter, new ones are now surrounded by hawthorn twigs. Anyone tempted to pull the plants out for fun will find things a little prickly.



**We are short of books:** stock is very low—if you have books you no longer want, please drop them off in the shelter. If you have borrowed a book and read it, please return it for others to read.

Thank you.

## EASTCOMBE VILLAGE GROUP:

**Whisky tasting – Saturday 12 March:** This proved to be a really great evening for those who enjoy the 'uisge beatha' or the water of life, entertainingly hosted by Cyrus Johnston. We sampled 8 different whiskies, each with unique characteristics and flavours. At the end of the evening, the left over whisky was auctioned, raising £268 for the Ukraine Appeal, which was match funded to a total of over £530. Thank you to everyone for their generosity. Our thanks also go to Cyrus, and to Chris Sissons, who did the lion's share of organising what was a very enjoyable way to spend a wet and windy Saturday night.

**Jubilee Celebrations – Sunday 5 June:** The Jubilee Lunch Party, to which everyone in Eastcombe is invited, will be held on the Village Green and the road next to Lamb Inn, where drinks, barbecue food and other delights will be available for purchase. Alternatively, if you prefer, please bring your own picnic. Entertainment already booked will include The Metz Swing Band, the Marie-Lou Cabaret – a song and dance act - our local Morris Dancers, and the Hilltop Band. Eastcombe Primary School and the WI are keen to be involved, and the local Scouts and Guides have offered to help on the day.

**Exhibition of Local History:** As part of the Jubilee celebrations, an exhibition of photographs and memorabilia will be held at Eastcombe Primary School, including video footage of past village events. If you have items which you are happy to be included, please contact [eastcombenewsletter@btinternet.com](mailto:eastcombenewsletter@btinternet.com).



**Flower Arrangements:** To celebrate the Jubilee we hope to have some flower arrangements in the marquees and The Lamb. If you can help, please get in touch with me, Peter Scott, using the contact details below.

**Wine Walk – HOST GARDENS NEEDED:** Following the success of previous events, we are planning to run another Wine Walk later in the summer, on a Sunday, probably in August. We are looking for hosts prepared to offer their gardens as suitable venues. If you would like to find out more, or are happy to help, please contact me.

Peter Scott: [peterhscott@btinternet.com](mailto:peterhscott@btinternet.com)

## MAY DAY MUSIC

The Hilltop Village Band will be playing on the Eastcombe Village Green at **11am on May 1st** to celebrate the first day of summer.

Come along and listen to a varied programme of music (weather permitting, of course!)



  
**SAVE THE DATE!**  
*Jubilee Celebration*  
*Lunch*  
on  
**Sunday, 5th June**  
at  
**Eastcombe Green**  
&  
**The Lamb Inn**  
**All welcome!**

## HILLTOP GARDENING CLUB

Our meeting in March was well attended, with several visitors. Our speaker was Alan from Gloucestershire Wildlife Trust, who spoke about the Dimmel's Dale Project in Chalford, within The Golden Valley.

Gloucestershire Wildlife Trust was founded in 1961 by a group of volunteers, including Sir Peter Scott, who recognised that wildlife was under threat. Dimmel's Dale was purchased by Gloucestershire Wildlife Trust in 2019. This was made possible by a donation in memory of a volunteer who loved the outdoors.

Dimmel's Dale is 3 hectares of unimproved grassland with a west facing bank, a brook and a woodland, offering a rich variety of wildlife habitats. Initially, man-power and machinery were needed to clear the site, revealing common spotted orchids. Now, there is an abundance of grasses and wildflowers, which in turn attract a large number of butterflies and bees.

The site is managed with selective grazing, using ponies. This supports scrub, ideal for species like bullfinches and yellow meadow ants, which attract green woodpeckers, who dig holes to get to the ants inside.

Dimmel's Dale is definitely worth a visit, with a beautiful wooden carved seat overlooking the site. Gloucestershire Wildlife Trust are working with landowners locally to link up local wildlife reserves: Three Groves Wood, Siccaridge Wood and the Daneway Banks, creating a much needed corridor for wildlife.

**Our next meeting is on Tuesday 5<sup>th</sup> April 7.30 at Eastcombe Village Hall.** Our speaker will be Natalie Mignotte 'Of Meades and Flowers' (medieval gardens). Visitors are very welcome. For the full programme for 2022/23, please visit [www.hilltopgardeningclub.org.uk](http://www.hilltopgardeningclub.org.uk).

## April in the Garden

April is one of the busiest months in the gardening calendar, with everything bursting into life. Here are a few jobs to get on with!



Now is the perfect time to plant summer flowering bulbs into pots or directly into borders as the soil warms up and frosts become less likely. Gladioli are coming back into fashion, especially the smaller, more naturalistic varieties like deep pink *Gladiolus byzantinus*, which is hardy and perennial and looks great with grasses. *Acidanthera murielae* is a cousin of the gladiolus; it has a lovely scent and looks beautiful in a pot, flowering late in the season when the garden needs a pick-me-up. Lilies are also great in containers (they're targeted by slugs in the border), remember that they prefer ericaceous (acid) compost. And if you have an area of dappled shade, why not try a few martagon lilies? If happy, they will naturalise and increase year on year. Dahlias can also be planted now for a fantastic show from July onwards. The smaller, single varieties are great for pollinators and can easily be fitted into a mixed border.



Get on top of the snail and slug population in your patch (naturally) before they get out of control: beer traps, upturned grapefruit 'shells' and night time slug forays with a head torch are all effective. For treasured specimens, it's worth investing in copper slug rings or tape to go around the outside of containers – the copper reacts with their slime to create a mild electric current, which deters them.

Don't forget to put supports in place for your growing border perennials – hazel twigs, canes and string, wire hoops or specially designed commercial supports will all do the job, and, although they look a bit awkward at first, they'll be obscured by plants in no time.

Jane Gandy

## SCREEN ON THE GREEN

### West Side Story

**Starring:** Ansel Elgort,  
Rachel Zegler, Maddie Ziegler

**Director:** *Steven Spielberg*

Directed by Academy Award winner Steven Spielberg, from a screenplay by Pulitzer Prize and Tony Award winner Tony Kushner, *West Side Story* tells the classic tale of fierce rivalries and young love in 1957 New York City.



**Venue:** Eastcombe Village Hall

**Date:** Saturday 16th April

**Time:** Doors open 7pm

Film starts 7.30pm

**Admission: £3.50 per person**

**Selection of Ice Creams £1.50 each**

**All welcome!**

## GARDENERS NEEDED – NOW!

During lockdown, a small group of us, living locally, decided it would be good to start up a community allotment, using an allotment in Brownshill, named 'People's Patch', to create a welcoming garden space where people could meet and chat together while growing fruit and veg.



As restrictions ease and spring approaches, we want to welcome local people to join us for some gardening - perhaps people who don't feel able to take on the responsibility of managing their own allotment. We aim to offer people the chance to meet others with a shared interest in growing fruit and vegetables, and to build relationships within the community. We want to be as inclusive as possible and hope in the future to create spaces for everyone, with or without any green fingered expertise!

If you like to be outdoors and to grow things, as well as meeting new people over a cuppa, please contact us. Now is the time to work together to create something special in our community. If you are interested, or know someone else who might be, please contact us via [sissonsscott@gmail.com](mailto:sissonsscott@gmail.com).

Scott Sissons

## Community Defibrillator Seminar

**Tuesday 26th April, 7pm,  
Eastcombe Village Hall**

On Tuesday 26th April, the Community Heartbeat Trust will be demonstrating the use of defibrillators and explaining how the equipment works and its benefits to the community in saving precious minutes in the treatment of sudden cardiac arrest.

All welcome. If possible, please register your intention to attend at [defibeastcombe@btinternet.com](mailto:defibeastcombe@btinternet.com)

## CAROL'S COOKERY CORNER:

Carol's recipe for April is:

### Easter Simnel Cake

This cake was traditionally given by servant girls to their mothers on Mothering Sunday, before becoming an Easter treat.

#### INGREDIENTS:

100g glacé cherries  
225g butter  
225g light muscovado sugar  
4 large eggs  
225g self raising flour  
225g sultanas  
100g currants  
50g chopped candied peel  
2 teaspoons ground mixed spice

#### FOR THE FILLING AND TOPPING

450g golden marzipan & 1 tablespoon of apricot jam.

#### METHOD:

1. Grease and line a 20cm/8in cake tin. Pre-heat oven to 150 degrees/gas mark 2.
2. Rinse the cherries in hot water. Drain and cut into quarters. Pat dry.
3. Place the cherries in a large mixing bowl and add the softened butter, sugar, beaten eggs, flour, sultanas, currants, candied peel and mixed spice. Beat well until light and thoroughly mixed.
4. Pour half the mixture into the prepared tin.
5. Take one third of the marzipan and roll it out to a circle the size of the tin and place on top of the cake mixture. Spoon the remaining cake mixture on top and smooth down with a spoon.
6. Bake in a preheated oven for about 2 hours until well risen, evenly brown and firm to the touch. Leave to cool in the tin for 20 minutes and run a blunt knife around the edge to loosen and turn out. Leave to cool completely.
7. Spread the top of the cake with the jam, roll out three quarters of the remaining marzipan to fit the top of the cake. Place on top and crimp the side to secure.
8. Make 11 even balls from the remaining marzipan and press evenly around the top of the cake as above. Traditionally, the balls represent the apostles, minus Judas Iscariot. My three little Easter chicks wanted to appear in the newsletter, so there they are!

It's good to keep the baking traditions going for posterity. The cake is delicious too.

**Enjoy!**



## KEEP IT LOCAL!

**Chalford Market** is held once a month, on a Sunday Morning at Chalford Sports & Social Club.



You will find a variety of stalls: food, drink, and a wide range of crafts from woodwork, glass, haberdashery, and plants.

I am very interested to hear from any other food producers in the area that would like to be involved.

Bacon rolls and refreshments are available, offering a lazy Sunday morning and a chance to browse the wonderful stalls on offer.

The next market takes place on **April 10th 10-1pm**, when we also have ChalCAN on site.

For further details, contact Josie 07527 947615 or visit the Chalford Sport & Social Club Facebook page.

**CHALFORD MARKET**  
CRAFTY & DELICIOUS @ CHALFORD

**Sunday 10<sup>th</sup> April**  
10am – 1pm

**FOOD, DRINK, PLANTS, GIFTS & CRAFTS**

## WHO'S WHO ON THE HILLTOP? We asked Martin Brown...

I have been District Councillor for Bisley, Eastcombe and Oakridge since last May, and I do my best to represent all residents.

I am on two Stroud District Council committees: Environment (responsible for waste and recycling, environmental health, canals, and carbon management, among other things) and Development Control (i.e. planning). I am also on the Parish Council, and I hope serving on both councils enables me to better represent local interests at the District level. My priorities include helping the area and its residents respond to the challenges of climate change; protecting our beautiful environment and aiding nature recovery, as well as supporting the more vulnerable and those in need, making our roads safer for all and supporting local businesses.

I lived in New York for many years, where I worked as a teacher, including teaching chess in primary schools and English to immigrants. I and my wife Leigh have lived in Bisley for five years, but we know the area well since my parents came to live here 30 years ago.

I am a cyclist and a bell-ringer (at All Saints, Bisley), and a keen gardener, growing much of my household's fruit and vegetables – with plenty of the excellent local compost from Bisley Community Composting Scheme. I helped start the local climate action group BisCAN last year, as well as a community speedwatch group in Bisley, and remain active in both.

Please don't hesitate to tell me anything you think I should be taking up at the District Council.

Martin Brown

[Cllr.martin.brown@stroud.gov.uk](mailto:Cllr.martin.brown@stroud.gov.uk)

01452 770878



## SKETCHING IN THE PAST is back!

Eastcombe artist, Pete Westley, has created a series of sketches of Eastcombe, Bussage and Brownhill as they once were. Month by month, we are sharing these with you, along with their stories.

This month, we look at **The Ram Inn and The Ridge, Old Bussage.**

Bussage is an ancient parish, greatly extended by the building of the Manor estate in the 1980s. The oldest part of the village lies around The Ridge.

First recorded in 1304, as Bysrugg, Bussage was originally the primary settlement in the Bisley tithing, one of 9 tithings that comprised Bisley Common, and taking its name from the edge of the plateau in the south-west part of the parish. The tithing originally included Eastcombe and stretched as far south as Black Ness to the Stroud Valley. The earliest mention of Bussage inhabitants was William of Bysrugg in 1304, but it was not until 1589 that property is mentioned, when Horshalls 'lying in Busridge' was noted.

Settlement in the tithings originally consisted of a few scattered farms around the common edges, but, in c.1710, the parish had 'an abundance of poor cottages'. By c.1775, 5 substantial villages had become established on the hilltop: Eastcombe, Bussage, Chalford Hill (also known as Chalford Lynch, lynch being the name for a ridge), France Lynch and Oakridge Lynch, as well as the smaller hamlets of Brown's Hill, Bournes Green, Oakridge/Far Oakridge and Waterlane. All were inhabited 'chiefly by poor people employed in the cloth trade', with cottages on the higher slopes, below the rim of the central plateau.

Settlement continued into the 19th century, and by c.1810 it was estimated that 120 cottages had been built in the previous 17 years, standing at all angles to meet the unevenness of the ground. The remaining long fingers of common, snaking between the cottages, were largely taken as gardens in the enclosures of 1869, leaving a network of narrow paths. The decline of the Chalford cloth industry caused a fall in population; in 1870-72, John Marius Wilson's Imperial Gazetteer of England and Wales described Bussage as 'a chapelry in Bisley parish, Gloucester; adjacent to the Cheltenham and Western Union railway, 3 miles E of Stroud. Pop.312. Houses, 73'. Population fell again prior to the Great War, but by 1931 it was restored to 326.

The parish had 3 alehouses in 1660, 12 in 1781, and 15 public houses and 35 beer shops in 1838. The Ram Inn was originally a cottage or farm, dating from 1800, with a Cider Room and Sweet Counter as add on businesses, before a licence to sell alcohol was granted to Mr Rogers in 1811 (the Rogers family appear in local records from 1678 to the mid 1700s and appear to have been well established in Bussage, primarily in Toadsmoor). As well as providing warmth and drink, the pub hosted official gatherings; before the establishment of police courts, many village pubs were the only large indoor space where public events such as Coroners' inquests could be held, and the Ram hosted many such enquiries until the early 1900s.

The Ram Inn has been evolving ever since, with extended dining space added 16 years ago. It remains a valued part of the local community.



### SALE

Fabric soft furnishing remnants, ends of rolls, fabric/wallpaper sample books, cuttings & accessories  
Suitable for crafting and small projects

Saturday 23rd April at Eastcombe Village Hall Annex

10am to 12noon.

For further details, contact Geraldine Peyton 07775 796345

### Could you contribute to the next newsletter?

- An item of news\*
- An upcoming event\*
- An update about your group\* (\*max 300 words)



Please send to:

[eastcombenewsletter@btinternet.com](mailto:eastcombenewsletter@btinternet.com)

**by noon on 20th April.**

### Local Government: to express your views, contact:

Bisley-with-Lypiatt Parish Council: [admin@bisley-with-lypiatt.gov.uk](mailto:admin@bisley-with-lypiatt.gov.uk)

Chalford Parish Council: [christine@chalford-glos.gov.uk](mailto:christine@chalford-glos.gov.uk)

Stroud District Council: [customer.services@stroud.gov.uk](mailto:customer.services@stroud.gov.uk)

Siobhan Baillie, MP: [siobhan.baillie.mp@parliament.uk](mailto:siobhan.baillie.mp@parliament.uk)

### NAME THAT VIEW!



### How well do you know our villages?

Last month's photo was Bismore Lane, aka Old Hill, which links Eastcombe to Bismore.

April's photo is once again taken in or around the 3 villages.

### Can you identify its location?

The answer will be revealed in the May issue.

### WHAT'S ON in APRIL?

**2 April:** ChalCAN Open Evening, CSSC, 6.30pm/ESA Quiz, Eastcombe Village Hall, 7.30pm

**5 April:** Hilltop Gardening Club meeting, 7.30, Eastcombe Village Hall.

**7 April:** Chalford PC Meeting, 7pm

**10 April:** Chalford Market, CSSC, 10am - 1pm (with ChalCAN)

**13 April:** Bisley-with-Lypiatt PC Annual Parish Meeting, 7.30pm, Bisley Village Hall/Plant sale at Frith Community Café, 10.15am-12 noon

**16 April:** Screen on the Green, 'West Side Story', 7.30pm, Eastcombe Village Hall

**19 April:** WI meeting, 7.15pm

**20 April: Deadline for contributions to the May newsletter**

**23 April:** Fabric Sale, Eastcombe Village Hall Annex, 10am-12pm

**26 April:** Community Defibrillator Seminar, 7pm, Eastcombe Village Hall