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August 2023

# Eastcombe, Bussage & Brownshill Newsletter

Welcome to the August issue of the newsletter. To receive a digital copy FREE every month, contact [eastcombebnews@gmail.com](mailto:eastcombebnews@gmail.com). You can also read the newsletter online at [www.chalford-glos.gov.uk/Newsletters\\_34865.aspx](http://www.chalford-glos.gov.uk/Newsletters_34865.aspx) & [www.bisley-with-lypiatt.gov.uk/eastcombe/](http://www.bisley-with-lypiatt.gov.uk/eastcombe/).

Printed copies 60p from **Eastcombe Stores & Post Office, Frith Community Café & Chalford Parish Centre**. The newsletter is also available to customers of **Head First & The Lamb Inn**.

Please send items for the September issue to [eastcombenewsletter@btinternet.com](mailto:eastcombenewsletter@btinternet.com)  
by **NOON on 20th AUGUST**.

## E-GNOME-OUS TOTAL RAISED FOR EASTCOMBE PRIMARY SCHOOL!

The 2023 Eastcombe Gnome Hunt raised a record-breaking £6,500 over the weekend of 8th and 9th July. Over 1000 visitors flocked to the village to spot the gnome displays and complete the Gnome Trail.

The popular family event, which has been running for over a decade, was held in aid of Eastcombe Primary School. Highlights included dads dressed in gnome costumes, fierce competition between Year 5 and 6 students in the peg-a-plate game, and smiles from happy children as they received their gnomes. The event was even featured on BBC Radio Gloucestershire's Sunday [breakfast slot](#).

Claire Jones, headteacher of Eastcombe Primary School, said, 'This year's Gnome Hunt raised money for outdoor play and learning resources, playground furniture and books for each class. We are exceptionally proud of our friendly school and welcoming village, and are delighted to have shared this special event with so many.'

The event was organized by [Eastcombe School Association](#) (registered charity 1107187) and sponsored by Sawyers Estate Agents (incorporating Fine & Country).



## THE FUTURE OF OUR LOCAL PARISH CHURCHES

A crisis of monumental proportions faces our local churches. For generations, the churches on this hilltop have been the centre of our communities for Christian worship, at the centre of many families lives, whilst weathering the changes of our modern world. Many will remember them as

a sanctuary in times of trouble and grief or a place of joy when celebrating a personal milestone like a wedding or christening.

Congregation numbers have been falling for some years, but the pandemic, with long closures followed by worries about close contact, has speeded this up.

Despite popular myth, we are self-financed with no funding from a central pot. Currently there are not enough people going to church to pay the bills and maintain our splendid but old churches. As the congregations get older and sparser there are not enough volunteers to do the jobs needed to keep the churches running. At France Lynch, our Church Warden has reluctantly had to stay on because no one else has the energy to organise all the things that need to be done. No one has come forward to be either Parish Secretary or Treasurer. Soon the money will run out altogether. If no action is taken, in 10 years' time we are likely to be in a position where all places of Christian worship in our local community have disappeared and all the church buildings closed. In this part of Gloucestershire, the churches in France Lynch, Bussage, Eastcombe, Chalford, Bisley and Oakridge work together as a Benefice, with one Vicar, Rev Sue Murray. We share congregations, but everyone is in the same boat.

**So, we have to do something!** Two people from each of the five parishes have met frequently these last few months with the Diocese of Gloucester to find practical solutions. Currently, we are looking to combine all five parishes into a 'super parish', with one governing body, not based in any one church building, thus avoiding duplication of effort. This will allow us to assess what is needed to keep Christ alive in our beautiful part of the Cotswolds. We might find that we do not need all five churches.

We know that each of the churches has served many generations and **we would like to hear what you think**. Please talk to one of the Clergy or Churchwardens to hear more or air your views:

- **Mike Kent – Churchwarden St John the Baptist, France Lynch (01453 885977)**
- **Shirley Bushell – Churchwarden Christchurch, Chalford (01453 883971)**
- **David Langdon – Churchwarden St Michael & All Angels, Bussage with Eastcombe (01453 886545)**



## BISLEY-WITH-LYPIATT PARISH COUNCIL NEWS: AUGUST 2023

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

**Eastcombe Allotments:** Chris James has now taken over as Allotment Warden and will be assisted by Eddie Butler. Chris has plans to install shelving in the Bus Shelter to enable allotment holders to donate spare fruit, vegetables and seeds for anyone to take.

**Playground Upgrade:** A Consultation Board has been erected by the playground detailing ideas for improving the complete experience. The idea is to build on and enhance what is currently in place to create a fun and engaging new play space for children of all ages. New, natural style timber equipment will be arranged to allow children to run, jump and tumble along play trails whilst additional bench seating will be installed to provide places to sit and socialise. A combination of new trees, areas of wildflower meadow and ecological features such as bug hotels will help boost biodiversity.

The major obstacle at the moment is lack of funding and the PC will not commence work until we are sure that sufficient funds are available to complete the project. Whilst we have secured some funding from GCC's Build Back Better scheme we need to acquire a lot more in order to make this project viable.

If you have any suggestions, or feel you could contribute in some way to this exciting project, please get in touch by emailing any of the Eastcombe Councillors (contact details on website).

**Next Meeting:** There is no parish meeting in August so the next meeting will be held at Bisley Village Hall on Wednesday September 6<sup>th</sup> at 7.30pm. All are welcome to attend.

## WALKING OUR FOOTPATHS



If you enjoy walking, you will already know the delights of the amazing footpaths that surround Eastcombe and Bisley, where you can walk for miles, only occasionally crossing a lane or road.

We have centuries of workers to thank for these paths. Before the Enclosure Acts, the land was open and people could walk wherever they pleased. With the factories situated mainly in the valleys, workers walked over the hills and through the woods to work and they left a myriad of paths for us to enjoy.

This time of year, the paths soon become enveloped in stinging nettles and brambles, along with dock leaves, grasses and wild flowers. This is the time that the footpath group go out with shears and cut back, so paths can be passable without too much trouble.

We are looking for volunteers to help keep our footpaths passable, joining a small group of men and women who meet occasionally, usually on a weekday morning.

We have a small amount of money for a bigger project in the autumn - if you know of a need for steps or a kissing gate, let us know, especially if you can help to install.

**To find out more, text Sue Wise on  
07821 806724**

## BISLEY-WITH-LYPIATT TWINNING ASSOCIATION



Our Twinning Association will welcome visitors from Plessala over the late August bank holiday weekend for their first post-Covid trip.

On Saturday 26<sup>th</sup> there will be a bring-and-share supper with music at Chalford Sports and Social Club.

**If you are not a member but would like to come, please ring the Brookes: 01452 770346.**

## ChalCAN UPDATE: AUGUST

ChalCAN focuses on local practical action to facilitate small reductions in emissions and make improvements to biodiversity. But to achieve net zero requires commitment from government and big businesses. Here are some actions you can take to press for change to protect our children and grandchildren from the consequences of climate change (note that ChalCAN does not necessarily endorse the views or methods of these organisations).

- Support the [Good Law Project](#) which is taking the government to court over the inadequacy of its net zero strategy, and is challenging other issues e.g. the discharge of raw sewage
- Support [Greenpeace](#) or [Friends of the Earth](#), who campaign on issues such as stopping new fossil fuel projects, promoting onshore wind farms, insulation and banning deep-sea mining.
- Support a group engaging in peaceful protest such as [Just Stop Oil](#) – though some disagree with their methods, they aim to stop new fossil fuel works and keep the climate issue at the forefront of the news.
- [Extinction Rebellion](#) has shifted its focus towards building grassroots support, 'dirty water', acting through social media, and exposing the financial basis of the oil industry.
- Write to our local MP [Siobhan Baillie](#) to question whether government action to cut carbon emissions is adequate. Be as specific as possible ([Friends of the Earth](#) have useful briefing).
- Send in questions to local authorities to press for action – [Gloucestershire County Council](#) for highways, transport (buses, cycling etc.); [Stroud District Council](#) for housing and recycling.
- If you're in employment, ask questions at your workplace about their policy and practice re carbon emissions – even better discuss with colleagues and jointly make suggestions.
- Use your consumer power to question major firms (especially supermarkets, energy suppliers, delivery firms) about their practice.

*Don't forget – we're all part of the problem – let's all be part of the solution!*

### Meanwhile ChalCAN Biodiversity has run events on:

- **Regenerative Growing:** boosting productivity using the No Dig method with deep layers of organic material on top of the soil.
- **Compost-Making for Beginners:** using organic material to promote productivity.
- **Moths:** showing the huge array of stunning moths living in a local garden.

**Coming up:** scything and raking our green spaces, sowing wildflowers and planting a hedge and trees.

Do get in touch if you'd like to join us: [info@chalcan.org.uk](mailto:info@chalcan.org.uk).



**ChalCAN**



## CHALFORD PARISH COUNCIL NEWS: AUGUST 2023

Chalford Parish Centre, 50 Gerald's Way, Chalford, Stroud, GL6 8FJ; 01453 887204;

[info@chalford-glos.gov.uk](mailto:info@chalford-glos.gov.uk) [www.chalford-glos.gov.uk](http://www.chalford-glos.gov.uk) [Facebook](#).



**Mini Food Bank** – the table in the Parish Centre that is usually full of dry goods available to all is running low on supplies. We would be very grateful for donations of dried goods such as rice, pasta, tins, tea, coffee, long-life milk, cereal, jam, squash etc. Please drop them into the office, Monday to Thursday 10am-3pm.

**GCC Questions** – Following our last newsletter, we submitted questions to Gloucestershire County Council (GCC) concerning poor road conditions. We were very pleased to receive a full and detailed response. The questions and answers can be found on our website and Facebook page.

**Highways Survey: Have your say** – GCC are collecting feedback about the condition of the roads in our area. We need as many surveys as possible completed so we can highlight Chalford as needing attention. Follow the link above, or on our website ([https://www.chalford-glos.gov.uk/News\\_34844.aspx](https://www.chalford-glos.gov.uk/News_34844.aspx)) and [Facebook page](#). The survey closes at midday on 1st August 2023.

**A419 re-surfacing – great news!** We are relieved that Highways will be re-surfacing the A419 from Stroud to Aston Down from 12th September. The work will be carried out overnight, running from 7pm to 7am most days. Advanced warning signs for specific locations will be put up nearer the time.

**Boots** – You may have heard that Boots are closing around 300 branches across the UK. The Parish Council discussed this issue at their last Full Council meeting and have written to Boots urging them not to close our branch at Tanglewood Way (see the letter on our Facebook page). If the branch closes the Parish Council is committed to do everything in its power to ensure we continue to have a pharmacy within the Parish. The Parish Council also intend to contact the local MP Siobhan Ballie, Bisley and Lypiatt Parish Council, Councillor Martin Brown and work with the District and County Councillors to raise awareness of the issue.

**World Jungle Go wild play session: August 17th** – Join us for a free play session at Bussage playing field, 10am -12.30pm. All ages welcome to enjoy circus skills, giant bubbles, arts and crafts and sports.

**Footpaths – Back to Basics** – The Footpath Volunteers started out in spring 2017 and have since branched out into dry stone walling, installing kissing gates, and improving the accessibility of playing field entrances. The last few weeks have seen us clearing PRow of encroaching vegetation. We'll be back to our wider range of tasks as growth slows, and the Volunteer holiday season is over.

**Tree Work** – We recently had to fell 3 Ash trees from the footpath near to Bussage Primary School as they were suffering from Ash Dieback Disease. An aerial inspection of the CPC owned part of Frith Wood has identified many beech trees suffering squirrel damage. We will be erecting permanent signs within the PC owned area of the wood and at the entrances to advise people of the danger of falling branches, especially during high winds. We kindly request that people refrain from feeding the squirrels.

**Become a Councillor** – Do you want to make a difference to where you live? The role of a Councillor can be very interesting and rewarding! We currently have 3 vacancies, one in Hill and two in Bussage. If you are interested, or you would like to find out more, please get in touch with the Clerks. Also, **Stroud District Council are holding a 'Be a Councillor' event on Wednesday 6th September** at Ebley Mill at 6pm - a great opportunity to discover more about the role of a Councillor. Please email [democrat-ic.services@stroud.gov.uk](mailto:democrat-ic.services@stroud.gov.uk) to register your interest., or call 01453 766321 for more information.

Please contact us if you have any questions, concerns or suggestions.

### BUSSAGE PRIMARY SCHOOL UPDATE:

**Summer Fayre:** Thank you to everyone who came along to the Summer Fayre and football tournament. We had brilliant dance displays by Level X and Ballyhoo, as well as singing from a TK choir. The event was a huge success and raised an amazing £5,400!

**Sports Day:** It was fantastic to see the determination and enjoyment on sports day. The whole school participated in a carousel of sporting activities in the morning to earn points for their houses, while the afternoon involved races, including sprint, obstacle and long distance. For the first time ever, Stonecote Sharks won the cup.

**Staff Updates:** Mr Hilliker, who has been with us for the first year of his 2-year Early Career Teacher programme, is heading to a school in Swindon to complete his second year. Mrs Gillan, who has worked with us as a HLTA for 8 years, is off to pursue a new career away from education. We thank them both for their time with us and wish them all the best for the future.

**Other News:** We were delighted to welcome professional pianist Clare Hammond, who performed 6 classical pieces to an impressed audience of 194 children and staff. This was followed by a mini concert by our pianists, performing pieces learned in their peripatetic lessons. One of our pupils also brought along her harp and played *Greensleeves*.

Finally, in September we are able to accommodate children in Reception, Year 2, Year 3 (1 space) and Year 4. We would be delighted to show you around our school. Please contact 01453 883 205.

### EASTCOMBE WI:

Pauline welcomed Members and visitors to the hall. We moved on to business, hearing of the events and classes, planned by County and National Federations, then local events. On 2nd August there is a trip to Weston. On September we are holding a Bubbles and Cake afternoon event. Tickets will be £5, to include a glass of bubbly and a slice of cake. There will be a raffle, cake stall, and tombola, with proceeds for Sue Ryder, Leckhampton, in memory of one of our members. More details in the September newsletter.

After refreshments, our speaker was Steven Bruce, an auctioneer. He started by informing us that our families would not want our treasured possessions and we should sell them and go on a cruise! His tales of his career were informative, fascinating and also caused much laughter. He was thanked by Jo, to warm applause.

Eastcombe WI are a friendly group of women who enjoy friendships, good speakers and outings. Most meetings are open to visitors for a small fee. New members are always welcome.

Meetings take place on the 3rd Tuesday of the month at 7.15pm at Eastcombe Village Hall, and usually include some form of entertainment. For more information please contact the Secretary, Glenys Sharpe, on 01453 886298



## Eastcombe Baptist Church

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

## DISTRICT COUNCILLOR'S NOTES

### Political Composition of Stroud District Council:

The political balance of SDC has changed over the last year due to the break-up of the Labour Group, the suspension from his party of one Conservative councillor pending a criminal trial, and the resignation of another due to ill health. The latter resulted in a by-election in Painswick and Upton, won by the Green Party on May 17<sup>th</sup>. The composition of the Council is now: 17 Conservatives, 14 Greens, 5 Labour, 4 Independent Left, 4 Community Independents, 3 Liberal Democrats, 2 Conservative No Group, and 2 Independents. The Council is led by a cooperative alliance of the Greens, Independent Left, Community Independents and Liberal Democrats. The Council Leader is Catherine Braun (Green) of Wotton. All 51 seats will be up for election in May 2024.

**My Positions on the Council:** I am on the Environment and Planning Committees, and the Equality, Diversity and Inclusivity Working Group. I represent the Council on the Board of Trustees of Stroud Valleys Project and the Cotswold National Landscape (the AONB), helping create a plan for the Cotswolds to be Net Zero by 2050 (or sooner), complementing SDC's Carbon Neutral 2030 goal.

**Brimscombe Port Redevelopment:** The Council and developer St Modwen Homes remain committed to creating a new canal side community at the old port site, despite tough national economic conditions. It will be an exemplary, sustainable development, with the canal and basin restored; new energy efficient homes with a mix of tenures, including affordable housing; visitor and community facilities and new habitats to enhance biodiversity and bring nature into the site. The next public consultation is expected to take place after the summer holidays.

### Other Current Council Projects:

- **"Night Safe Officers":** To make the town centre safer on weekend nights, two officers will be patrolling key locations, providing a visible presence to identify issues before they escalate, supporting door staff and marshalling the taxi rank on King Street at peak times.
- **Cost of Living Support:** The Council continues to offer support to those struggling with the cost of living, including Council Tax relief. Details on the Council website: [www.stroud.gov.uk](http://www.stroud.gov.uk) (search 'council tax support').
- **Stratford Park Lido:** Now open 7 days a week from noon until 7pm for safe outdoor swimming. Lane swimming on Tuesdays and Thursdays 7am to 9am.
- **Electoral Register Canvass:** The Council is contacting all residents to ensure electoral details are correct so those eligible can vote. You may receive an e-mail from [elections@stroud.gov.uk](mailto:elections@stroud.gov.uk), or letter or phone call.

As always, please do contact me about anything District Council-related:

Martin Brown, Green Party District Councillor: 01452 770878 or [cllr.martin.brown@stroud.gov.uk](mailto:cllr.martin.brown@stroud.gov.uk)

## St Michael's & All Angels, Bussage

Visitors are always welcome. Our services this month are:

**August 13th** - Holy Communion at 9.30am  
**August 20th** - Morning Prayer at 9.30am

On other Sundays there are services in different parts of the Benefice. For details visit [www.bisleybenefice.org.uk](http://www.bisleybenefice.org.uk) or sign up to our mailing list: [pewslipsbisley@hotmail.com](mailto:pewslipsbisley@hotmail.com).

For weddings, funerals & baptisms, contact Revd Sue Murray: [vicar@bisleybenefice.org.uk](mailto:vicar@bisleybenefice.org.uk)

## EASTCOMBE VILLAGE GROUP

Well done to the Eastcombe School Association for the amazing **2023 Gnome Hunt!** Thanks to all who supported the event: the sponsors, the bakers and all who came along to take part.

**Wine Walk:** Sunday 30 July 4-8pm: **THIS EVENT IS SOLD OUT**—we were delighted that the 100 tickets sold so quickly. Ticket holders can look forward to some fine wines, from five different regions, and a fun evening with friends and neighbours at the five venues. We appreciate the help of Debbie and Mike and staff at Eastcombe Stores who helped sell the tickets, and are grateful to the hosts and helpers who make this enjoyable event possible.

### FUTURE EVENTS:

- Scott Sissons, Helen Watkinson and team will be running a **Village Quiz & Ploughman's Supper** at Eastcombe Village Hall on Saturday 25th November.
- Plans are also afoot for a **Burns Night Dinner** in January 2024, at The Lamb Inn.

### FROM OUR MEETING ON 3RD JULY:

- Mike Eccott outlined Parish Council plans to upgrade the **children's playground** at Eastcombe playing field. More details on Page 2.
- We would like to organise more events for young families and those new to the village. Please let me know if you have any ideas or suggestions.
- **The Eastcombe, Bussage and Brownshill Newsletter:** The not-for-profit community newsletter is produced by a small team of volunteers, and more people are now needed to get involved with generating ideas and also to occasionally help with administrative tasks. If you can help, or would like to find out more about the newsletter, please contact [eastcombenewsletter@btinternet.com](mailto:eastcombenewsletter@btinternet.com)

If you would like to keep up to date with our activities, please contact Chris Sissons [csissons52@gmail.com](mailto:csissons52@gmail.com).

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



## KEEP IT LOCAL! Did you know that the hilltop has a WEEKLY MARKET?



**When?** Wednesdays 8.15am-9.45am

**Where?** The Old Neighbourhood Inn car park, Chalford Hill

**What's there?** Salt Bakehouse, Bisley Birds free range chicken & duck eggs, Bisley Lane Farm Meats & plants, chutneys & jams by Felicity.



Please be aware that on Monday 30th August it will not be possible to take certain breeds of black and white dogs for a walk.... It's a ban Collie day...



## A WALK ON THE WILD SIDE...

Six of us set out on Thursday 13th July with the aim of recording all the wild flowers on our route from Fidges Lane, Eastcombe, down to the valley, through Hawkley Wood, along the course of the stream to Lower Nash End, then back via Sheephouse Farm. Our total count was 74 within 2.5 hours, which amazed and delighted us.

Helen Watkinson was our verifier and recorder, and we all contributed with the identification, with interesting variations on local names handed down through families. Several Pyramidal Orchid were admired, and more unusual plants were found growing along the stream sides, including the towering Figwort, obviously happy growing with its roots well watered. As well as the flora, both Moths and Butterflies were noted. **Click [here](#) for a full list of the plants we saw.**

Locating and recording wildlife and flora helps to monitor the health of the environment. We shall aim to repeat the walk several times a year.

We will be walking the valley again to continue the job of pulling up the invasive weed, Himalayan Balsam. Anyone willing to give an hour or so to join us please contact Sue Wise (07821 806724) to be added to the circulation list.

Pam, Helen, Sue, Lyn, Jacqui and Debs



Top: the survey team.  
Below: Meadow Brown & Small Skippers on Birdsfoot Trefoil.



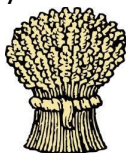
Pyramidal orchid

## ALL ABOUT AUGUST

In today's Gregorian calendar, August is the 8th month of the year, but in Roman times it was the 6th month. It was named after the 1st Roman Emperor, Augustus Caesar (63 BC–AD 14), grandnephew of Julius Caesar (who named July after himself). Previously, it was called Sextilis, but in 8 BC the name was changed to mark Augustus' military victories. The Anglo-Saxons called August *Weod monath*—Weed month—because it is the month when weeds grow most rapidly.

### A FEW AUGUST DATES:

- **August 1: Lammas Day**, a festival to mark the corn harvest and the mid-point between the summer solstice and the autumn equinox. The name comes from the Anglo-Saxon word *hlafmaesse*, which means 'loaf-mass', with bread baked from the first grain and laid on the church altars to give thanks. Traditionally, Lammas marked the end of the growing season: according to folklore '*After Lammas Day, corn ripens as much by night as by day.*'
- **August 9 marks the start of the Islamic New Year**, or the First of Muharram, beginning at sundown.
- **August 10 is St. Lawrence's Day**: according to popular folklore, fair weather on this day will bring a fair autumn.
- **August 15 is the Feast of the Assumption**, marking the passing of Mary, mother of Jesus, from this life and the raising of her body into heaven.
- **August 24 is St. Bartholomew Day**. Many fairs were held on this day, including the famous St. Bartholomew Fair in Smithfield. In weather lore it is predicted that '*At St. Bartholomew, there comes cold dew.*'



### AUGUST ASTRONOMY...

The **Sturgeon Moon** on **August 1st** is one of 4 Super moons in 2023. Later in the month, there is also a **Super Blue Moon on August 30**, the biggest Super Moon of the year.

August is the month of the Perseid meteor shower, one of the most dramatic things in the night sky. It will take place between 17 July–24 August, peaking around 12th–13th August.



BisCAN

Bisley, Eastcombe & Oakridge Climate Action Network

## NATURE-FRIENDLY OPEN GARDENS & ALLOTMENTS

Sunday September 17<sup>th</sup> 2023

Wildlife-friendly gardens and allotments open to visit!

See what your neighbours are doing to help nature in our area – a pond, a home for hedgehogs, flowers for pollinators, a little wildness, edible plants...

If you would like your garden or allotment to be included, please email BisCAN:

[bisleyeastcombeoakridgecan@gmail.com](mailto:bisleyeastcombeoakridgecan@gmail.com)

or call Martin 01452 770878



## SUMMER FUN...

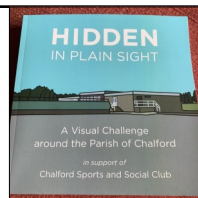
*Hidden in Plain Sight* is a treasure hunt pictorial book based around Chalford.

Name all the places and you could be in with a chance of winning £500!

A great activity for the summer holidays – take the children for walks and see how many you can spot.

Books cost £10 each from Chalford Sports & Social Club.

All proceeds towards the renovation fund!



## The Starfish Story

Original Story by: Loren Eiseley

One day a man was walking along the beach, when he noticed a boy hurriedly picking up and gently throwing things into the ocean.

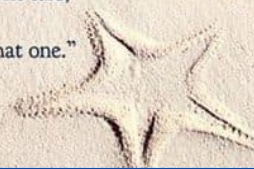
Approaching the boy, he asked, "Young man, what are you doing?"

The boy replied, "Throwing starfish back into the ocean. The surf is up and the tide is going out. If I don't throw them back, they'll die."

The man laughed to himself and said, "Don't you realize there are miles and miles of beach and hundreds of starfish? You can't make any difference!"

After listening politely, the boy bent down, picked up another starfish, and threw it into the surf. Then, smiling at the man, he said,

"I made a difference to that one."





## HUNT FOR THE WILDERPEOPLE

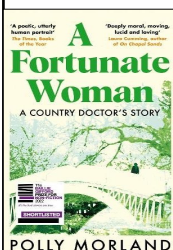


**Wednesday 30th August**  
**Chalford Hill Primary School**  
**Doors open 19:15,**  
**film starts 20:00**  
**Tickets £4 on arrival**

Enjoy social time, with wine, beer, ice cream, popcorn, cosy blankets, candlelight and our monthly film screening.

For news about Chalfilm, visit us on [Facebook](#) or look out for posters.

## A FORTUNATE WOMAN



*"In many ways, she was like any hard-working GP, except for the turn of good fortune that had brought her to this valley, this practice, this community"* wrote Polly Morland in *A Fortunate Woman*.

This straightforward yet eloquent country doctor's story is a wonderfully descriptive account of her work in an unnamed village in the Forest of Dean, not a million miles from our five valleys. There is a connection between her and a former GP in the same village, whose life was described by the writer John Berger in his book *A Fortunate Man*, published in 1967, which adds another dimension to the narrative.

The story begins with the writer's realisation that she knows and loves the very place where the GP of *A Fortunate Man* lived and worked. She approaches the current GP and their conversations about her life and work form the backbone of the book. At its heart, it is a beautifully written acknowledgement of the doctor's role in the valley.

I chanced upon *A Fortunate Woman* while buying another book I'd wanted for ages. Once I started reading, I couldn't put it down, but I never got far with the other book that I'd been so keen to read!

Gill Calvert

## HILLTOP GARDENING CLUB HAPPENINGS...

The Club had its annual holiday in June, setting off by coach to North Yorkshire, visiting superb gardens with amazing walled gardens, abundant flowery borders, roses, sumptuous vegetables and orchards. A medieval house, **Donington Le Heath**, visited on our way up, had enthusiastic volunteers, relaying knowledge on healing plants which were incredibly well-labelled. **Sledmere's** walled garden, with its interesting conversations with gardeners, and **Helmsley walled garden** were the highlights for me. The latter has a ruin as a backdrop and thrushes sang loudly over the stunning display of flowers. Marvellous to hear them when ours have diminished. Bees were abundant and it was special to have quiet moments watching them.

Based at Harrogate in an excellent hotel for 3 nights, we went out each day, usually in full sunshine. However, one afternoon at a nursery with a maze of extensive borders and paths, the clouds opened and we were drenched. Still, nothing deters a real gardener and many were still tempted to look through the plants and purchase some. Many thanks to Olive Turner and Kathy Eccott who organised the trip.



We also had a day out at **Bourton House Garden** near Moreton in Marsh, where the borders were an eclectic mix of plants with surprising combinations in a series of rooms created with an artistic eye. We had lunch at Batsford Arboretum and a look round their plant centre, then it was homewards after a great day out. Thanks to Glen Beswetherick who drove the minibus.

## This year's Autumn Show will be held on Saturday 9<sup>th</sup> September at Eastcombe Village Hall.

As usual, there will be 5 categories: Fruit and Vegetables, Flowers and Pot Plants, Decorative, Home Produce, and Photography. This year there is also a Special Award for a Floral Arrangement reflecting the King's Coronation. Schedules and entry forms available from Eastcombe Stores, The Lamb Inn, Head First, The Ram Inn, Chalford Parish Office, and Stancombe Beech Farm Shop. They can also be downloaded directly from the website: [www.hilltopgardeningclub.org.uk](http://www.hilltopgardeningclub.org.uk)

**Next Meeting: 1 August: 'Heavenly Beauty, Earthly Delight-Gardens of Paradise'** - A returning speaker and photographer, Adrian James should draw us into another world with his knowledge and superb images.

Non members welcome. £3 entry. Eastcombe Village Hall 7.15 for 7.30pm.

Jenny Exley, Programme Secretary/Mike Eccott, show organiser.



## VOLUNTEERS PLEASE!

The ever popular Frith Community Cafe needs more volunteers. If you can give a few hours on a Wednesday morning every 5 weeks or so, we would love to hear from you.

**Please contact:**

**Carol Lambert: 07791 219876 or Cheryl Shears: 07519 267123**

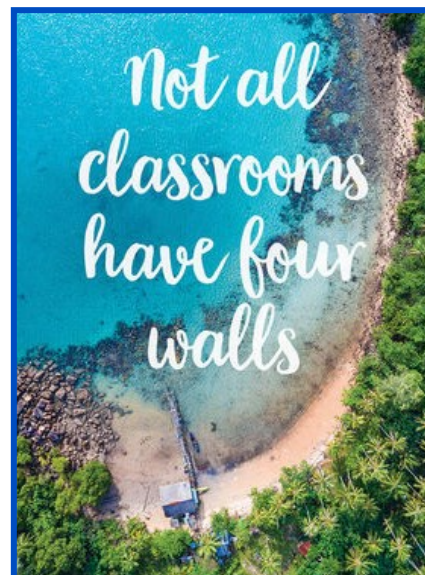
## WHEELBARROW WANTED

The community allotment, The People's Patch in Brownhill, is in need of a wheelbarrow.

If you have one which you no longer need and could donate, please get in touch.

Many thanks,  
 David Rhodes

[davidrhodes51@gmail.com](mailto:davidrhodes51@gmail.com)



## CAROL'S COOKERY CORNER: FRUIT COMPOTE

This is a quick and easy dish. It's good for breakfast too. If blackberries are not available, add another apple and plum to the mix. It can be made the day before and warmed gently to serve. Serves 4

### INGREDIENTS:

- 25g butter
- 2 dessert apples, peeled, cored and thinly sliced
- 1 star anise (optional)
- 50g caster sugar
- 3 plums, stoned and sliced
- 100g blueberries
- 100g blackberries
- 100ml water

### METHOD:

1. Melt the butter in a saucepan and add the star anise and apples. Put this lid on and cook for 6 minutes, stirring occasionally.
2. Add the caster sugar, water, plums, blueberries and blackberries
3. Cook rapidly for 6 minutes, stirring frequently until a syrup forms. The fruit should be soft and tender.
4. Remove the star anise. Leave to cool a little, but serve while still warm with Greek yoghurt or cream.



### INTER VILLAGE QUIZ

Teams needed from:  
 Bisley Bussage Chalford Eastcombe  
 France Lynch & Oakridge

To Compete for a Prestigious Trophy



Sunday 27th August 2023  
 6.30pm for a 7pm start  
 at  
 Bisley Flower Show Marquee,  
 Cheltenham Road, GL6 7BJ

To Include a Ploughman's Supper.  
 Licensed Pay Bar Available.

£36 a Table/Team (max 6 in a team)  
 (no limit to number of teams per village)

**Tickets available:**  
[www.ticketsource.co.uk/Bisley-Flower-Show](http://www.ticketsource.co.uk/Bisley-Flower-Show)  
 or Fiona [fiona@gillfamily.org.uk](mailto:fiona@gillfamily.org.uk)

Funds raised for The Bisley Flower Show and All Saints Church

## SKYLARK SURVEY...

Out walking on the commons or farmland of Stroud? Could you register and record the Skylarks you see, using iRecord:

<https://irecord.org.uk/join/landscapes-of-the-lark>

We are monitoring the Skylark (*Alauda arvensis*) population in the Stroud area. It is a Red status listed bird due to declining numbers.

Please record where you see Skylarks, how many and any observations like grass (sward) length, dog/human disturbance etc. You can also record other ground nesting birds like Meadow Pipit (*Anthus pratensis*). The app Merlin Bird ID can help you to identify the birds through images and sound recordings.

Information about the best walks to see Skylarks are available from Stroud Valleys Project. There is even a photography competition!

**Thank you for your help.**

<https://www.stroudvalleysproject.org/.../landscapes-of...>



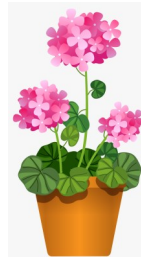
## BISLEY FLOWER SHOW SATURDAY 26TH AUGUST: 2-4pm

There's lots of interesting things in the schedule for the 2023 Bisley Flower Show, whether it's a brilliant bake, a stunning rose or a mis-shaped vegetable!

To inspire you to enter, please visit our website for the schedule and entry forms:

[www.bisleyflowershow.com/](http://www.bisleyflowershow.com/)

More details on our [Facebook](#) and Instagram pages.



## A DAY N THE LIFE of OHBOT...

I've been working at Ohbot Ltd for 6 years now. Ohbot is a robot developed by Mat Walker, the creator of Inkha, a receptionist robot at King's College, London, and Dan Warner, a primary school educator and advisor. It's a social robot with a cheeky stylised blue head, and needs to be programmed to move and chat and be expressive; it is a remarkable physical aid for learning how to program. Its inner workings are on view, which adds to the learning experience. It runs on a block-like program, similar to Scratch, widely taught, but can also operate with Python and has activities to help the transfer from one to the other.

Ohbot has a smaller sibling, Picoh, with eyes made from LEDs. My co-worker Emily and I had to learn to assemble the robots, fetching the plastic parts from Elbesee, the factory across the road, drilling holes in the eyeballs, or soldering in the case of Picoh.

We have assisted in the setting up and running of interactive stands at London Science Museum, Manchester Museum of Science and Technology, Jodrell Bank and Cheltenham Science Festival, as well as sessions at schools around the country. We have sold hundreds of robots to Microsoft for their summer camps in the US, sold to Cheltenham's CyberHub for the free loans to local schools and also sold to over 50 other countries.

Now, we are entering a new era, working with Chat GPT, and our little robots easily held their own against the humanoid robots on show at the recently held AI for Good conference. Ask the robots a question and they will respond, in whichever character you have programmed them to be, a historical person, or a grumpy or a cheeky person. It's fascinating.

**Ohbot Ltd is based at Halliday's Mill, Chalford. To find out more, follow the links below:**

<https://www.ohbot.co.uk/>  
<https://twitter.com/ohbotrobot>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4282sALp4zY>  
<https://twitter.com/i/status/1417880530243178501>





## VILLAGE HISTORIES: A BISMORE BABY...



In June, Bob and Muriel Brooks travelled to Eastbourne to celebrate the 100th birthday of Muriel Little, a long-time penfriend and one time resident of Bismore. A woman of great wit, humour and energy, Mrs Little drew a hall full of people testifying to her loving kindness.

Muriel Little, nee Stephens, was born in 1923, in the cottage now known as Woodlands, almost opposite Keeper's Cottage in Bismore Bottom. Her father, one of the great Stephens tribe of this parish, lived at Edgeworth Valley Farm, he one of 15 children, who walked to Bisley School and back every day. If the children of the family were ill or harvesting or crow-scaring, then the school was half-empty.

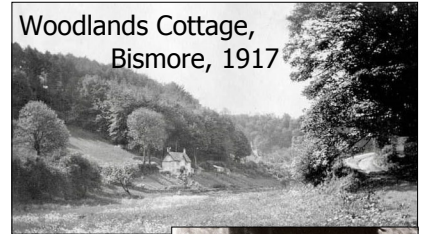
Muriel remembers watching her father cycling down the hillside from his work at Lypiatt Park for lunch (the woods on both sides of the valley were felled for the war effort), and him walking down to the tap by Keeper's Cottage to fetch water, a pail in each hand, white goat Thora on one side and Bunny the dog on the other. She also remembers the adder that slithered across the path one day in front of them.

Muriel's mother was a London girl, who must have found life hard in remote Bismore in the 1920s. Revisiting Woodlands cottage and smelling the damp air when she visited in the 1990s, Muriel could understand her parents' worry about the risk of TB, even though in those days the valley was open, with few trees. As it was, Muriel caught diphtheria and had a spell in isolation at Cashes Green Hospital.

Muriel left Bismore at the age of five, but has clear memories of her idyllic beginnings. Her family had to move around for work during the Depression and they went first to Bedfordshire, where Muriel's father worked on the airships at Cardington. It was one of several moves for the family, but the Bismore photographs were the only memorabilia the family kept, the source of many of the 1920s postcards we are now familiar with.

As the Brooks left the party, Muriel Little thumped her chest and said 'Give my love to Bismore. I bear it in my heart.'

Find more of Muriel Little's story in 'What I know about Bismore' on [www.eastcombearchive.org.uk](http://www.eastcombearchive.org.uk)



Woodlands Cottage,  
Bismore, 1917



Muriel (right) & her  
siblings at Bismore  
c.1926



Muriel revisited  
Bismore  
in  
the  
1990s

With grateful thanks to Muriel Brooks

**BUSSAGE BEAR HUNT** is Back!

Sponsored by  
**Hamptons**  
THE HOME EXPERTS

**SAVE THE DATE**  
Saturday 23rd & Sunday 24th  
September 1pm-4pm  
Starting at  
**BUSSAGE SCHOOL**

Charity No. 1112164

**SUPPORT CANCER AWARENESS**

**CERVICAL CANCER FUNDRAISER**  
at  
**EASTCOMBE VILLAGE HALL**  
on  
**28TH AUGUST 2023**  
Doors open at  
**2PM**  
TEA AND COFFEE  
CAKES AND SCONES  
RAFFLE  
VARIOUS STALLS  
honoring the  
**TAKEN**  
and never, ever  
**GIVING UP**

**WE CAN FIND A CURE**

**SO PROUD OF YOU**

**YOUR FIGHT OUR FIGHT**

**NOT GOING DOWN WITHOUT A FIGHT**

**CANCER SUPPORT SQUAD**

**TOGETHER**

**COULD YOU CONTRIBUTE TO THE NEXT NEWSLETTER?**

- An upcoming event?
- An update about your local group?
- A book review?
- An article on local history?
- A write up of a recent event?

Please send contributions to:  
[eastcombenewsletter@btinternet.com](mailto:eastcombenewsletter@btinternet.com)  
**by NOON on 20th AUGUST**

## WHAT'S ON in AUGUST?

**1 August:** [Highways Survey](#) ends/Hilltop Gardening Club meeting, 7.15pm (7.30pm), Eastcombe Village Hall

**17 August:** World Jungle Go Wild play session, Bussage playing field, 10am-12.30pm

**20 AUGUST: DEADLINE FOR SEPTEMBER NEWSLETTER**

**26 August:** Bisley Flower Show, 2-4pm/Bisley-with-Lypiatt Twinning Association Bring & Share Supper, CSSC, 7pm

**27 August:** Inter Village Quiz, Bisley Flower Show marquee, 6.30pm (7pm)

**28 August:** Cervical Cancer Fundraiser, Eastcombe Village Hall, 2pm

**30 August:** Chalfilm, Chalford Hill Primary School, 7.15pm (8pm)



## NAME THAT VIEW!

**How well do you know our villages?**

July's photo was the wildflower meadow in The Ridge, Old Bussage.

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

**Can you identify its location?**

The answer will be revealed in the September issue.