



Young Hare near Oxen End by Doug Joyce

Dec/
Jan
2020

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News and views from Great Bardfield and Little Bardfield



Bardfield Times

Ten editions of Bardfield Times are published each year by volunteers from Great Bardfield and Little Bardfield parishes. Articles, letters, etc. for inclusion need to be received by the **editors** by the **14th of the month prior to publication**. The management team reserve the right to refuse, postpone or to edit any material received for publication. Views expressed in this magazine are not necessarily those of the management team.

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Front cover: Town Hall Christmas tree 2019 by Darren Hockley

Editorial

Christmas will be different this year. Normally we would be looking forward to family and village events with eager anticipation but this year there is an air of uncertainty, not knowing what the future may hold. But, there is still much to look forward to: some Christmas services will be held in both village churches; the volunteers who organise the Christmas hampers and lunches will be delivering as usual; there will be a Christmas tree outside the Town Hall thanks to funding from the Town Hall Committee, the Parish Council, Bardfield Charities and the *Bardfield Times*, and I hear there may even be some socially distanced, masked music making and carol singing. Please continue to look out for each other, particularly people living alone. You may think they're used to their own company but I know from the experience of the last year that for many single people the inability to socialise in their usual ways can be very depressing – social distancing means exactly what it says! Our thoughts are also with families who have recently lost loved ones: Danny Smith, Rob Wright and Liam Clarke.

We are grateful to all our contributors without whom there would be no *BT*! Thanks to the members of the 'Books and More' Book Club who have taken over Page Turners (page 10) with suggestions for Christmas reading. Congratulations to Michael Hitchcock who recently celebrated his 93rd birthday. Michael has a wealth of memories about his life in Great Bardfield some of which he has shared in this issue (page 26). Wendy Meldrum has divulged her passion for felting with some lovely ideas for Christmas presents, (page 8). Please continue to send in your ideas, letters, articles and photographs.

Whether Christmas is a religious celebration for you or a festival of light to drive the cold winter away, everyone on the *Bardfield Times* team wishes you a differently happy, safe and joyful time.

Janet Dyson

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Liam Clarke 1988-2020



FREE CHRISTMAS LUNCH

If you will be alone on Christmas Day and/or can't prepare a Christmas lunch, you can have one delivered free together with some goodies such as chocolates, wine etc.

Please either call me on 01371 810519 or 07973 736707.

There are no restrictions on age etc.

The meal will be delivered hot and ready to eat.

**Brenda Poston
Bucks House
Vine Street**

Dear Editor,

I wanted to write to thank you all for your support and business at my Nurture Barn since 2014.

I have met and fed so many of you & your children, friends' children and grandchildren over the years, but due to Covid 19, I am afraid my award winning business became unsustainable.

Without any bubbles, as in nurseries, toddlers cannot social distance.

So, not one to sit and wallow and with lots of us increasing our alcohol intake over the last 9m with lockdown, worry and homeschooling, I looked at what I was drinking (calories & units) and realised it was excessive and my jeans were tighter. So the news is, I have locally distilled an Alt.Gin at 12% called Mooze in sustainable packaging, sugar free, vegan and just 18 calories a glass.

Please let's keep supporting each other locally and have a look at www.moozebooze.com

Cheers.

Mel Sims

Dear Editor,

Two articles in the *Bardfield Times* caught my attention. The first, in October, concerned walking and the second, in November, hare coursing.

My favourite walk which takes me about 30 minutes is to walk 50 yards from my house, turn into Beslyn's Road then walk up the hill and follow on round the bend, past Beslyn's, turn right then come downhill back to the road again and home.

On Saturday 7th November about three o'clock in the afternoon I repeated this walk. The weather was glorious, the sun beginning to go down, the air very still. Usually it's very quiet up there but I met lots of people walking, people on bikes and people on horses. Just past Littles Farm I met two ladies who asked me for directions to Finchingfield. They were actually walking towards Great Bardfield so I advised them to turn around and follow me.

When we reached the footpath to Finchingfield they left me and I went straight on. What seemed very odd was to see an estate car standing in the field of newly sprouting grain. I saw a dog and a man beside the car, the man holding a hare. I had read about hare coursing but never expected to see it so close to home. The dog got into the car, the man flung a dead hare onto the round, got into the front passenger seat of the car which drove off, across the field, crossed the footpath and drove over the next field leaving deep tyre marks on the green shoots. The hare was left for dead. The lack of hedgerows and gates means that these people can just drive where they like.

What to do? I phoned 101 but they kept me on hold too long so I gave up. When I got home I referred to the article in the Bardfield Times and went on to the Essex Police website 'Report a Crime' and filled in the form. My lovely walk did not end well. I hope that my report will, in some way, help to track down these people. I did receive a phone call from Essex Police 3 days later thanking me for my report. They said that if you witness a crime you should always phone 999.

Name and address supplied.

Editor: See Parish Council Report for further comments. Any one with information should contact the police on 999 and not confront the perpetrators.

Great Bardfield Parish Council report

Seasons Greetings from Great Bardfield Parish Council

It looks as if this Christmas is going to be very different for many of us, with the Coronavirus refusing to fade away. I expect that restrictions will continue for some time to come, though hopefully not in the form of a full lockdown. A quieter Christmas for us all, so please do bear in mind whether your neighbours may be alone and how we may all bring a bit of cheer even if that must be remotely.

Thanks for our Volunteers Helping our Community

A big thanks to all those who have volunteered to help deliver prescriptions or do some shopping for those in the village who are vulnerable or isolating. Many of these volunteers have done a sterling job since the first lock-down in March and we have continued to offer a weekly prescription home delivery service since then, with volunteers on a monthly rota. Thanks also go to Iain Graham for staffing the Community Information Point twice weekly (Thursday and Saturday mornings) to enable residents to collect recycling or doggie bags.

Over time some of our original volunteers have had to withdraw as they have been able to return to work or have other commitments. We still have a good core of people but if anyone is able and willing to join the group and offer some support when needed please contact Lynsi Hayward-Smith at lynsi.haywardsmith@greatbardfield-pc.gov.uk

We remind vulnerable residents or those needing to isolate, that prescriptions can be collected for you from Finchingfield and Thaxted surgeries. Please contact the Parish Clerk for more information, or to ask for other assistance if required. 810111 or clerk@greatbardfield-pc.gov.uk.

Footpaths

Thank you to those that have come forward to help us undertake a review of the Public Rights of Way in our Parish. We have a good group of volunteers who will walk the paths over the coming weeks to ensure they are accessible and in good condition. Further information from Paul Kennedy or the Parish Clerk.

Planning Applications

After a busy few months for planning applications we only have one this month:

19 Northampton Meadow – to reduce the height and width of a twisted willow. No objections.

We have also, in the last month, responded to consultations on the Government's White Paper on Planning Reform and Braintree District Council's consultations on their emerging Local Plan and on the Scheme of Delegation for the determining of planning applications in this District. Much dense reading involved!

Hare Coursing

Following an article in last month's *Bardfield Times* a couple of residents have been in contact to let us know that they have seen evidence of this illegal activity close to Great Bardfield. This often involves men with dogs, and a 4x4 vehicle driven onto local fields. If you do see anything suspicious the police advise to call 999 straight away, but do not get involved or speak with the individuals as they can be dangerous.

Clothes Recycling Bin at the Playingfields

As Charity Shops have not been taking donations recently, we have noticed that the Clothes Bin is filling up quickly. If you notice that it is full, or that bags have been left next to it, please contact the number on the bin or the Parish Clerk to arrange for it to be emptied more frequently. Donations to this bin raise funds for Essex Air Ambulance.

Parish Council Meetings

Meetings continue to be held by video call. These meetings are open to the public so please contact the Clerk at least 24 hours before the meeting if you wish to attend, on 810111 or by email at clerk@greatbardfield-pc.gov.uk. An invitation and link to the meeting will be sent to you.

The next meeting will be held on Wednesday 9th December at 7pm. The January meeting will be held on Wednesday 13th January at 7pm.

Carolynne Ruffle

Chair

Town Hall happenings

Christmas Greetings from the Town Hall

It seems such a shame that the usual Town Hall Christmas events will not be happening at the Town Hall this year – no Carol concert, mulled wine, etc. However, with thanks for contributions from the Parish Council, Bardfield Charities, The Bardfield Times and the Town Hall committee, we will be able to have our, now regular, Christmas tree to cheer the village this strange Christmas.

The Town Hall Management Committee will be arriving in shifts to erect the tree, put on the lights and the decorations. We can't all gather together as in previous years. There will also be a new star for the top of the tree. We hope all residents will enjoy seeing the tree over the Christmas and New Year period.

Once we know what the restrictions will be after 2nd December, we hope that the Town Hall will be available to hire once more. Please contact Sarah the caretaker for enquiries and bookings. She also has copies of the Town Hall's own risk assessment on request. Sarah's contact details are in the back of this Bardfield Times.

Bardfield Boules Competition 2020

A quieter affair than usual but the Finals took place last month, with just the competitors and families in attendance. I'm sorry it couldn't be advertised to the public and spectators allowed. This year's winners were Cam Meldrum and Rory Hitchcock who beat the 2019 champions Tom & Louise Grinstead by 2 games to nil in a best of 3 game final. We hope to see you all back again for Bardfield Boules 2021, and that the competition will be back to normal.

On behalf of the Town Hall Management Committee I wish you all a happy and healthy Christmas and 2021.

Carolynne Ruffle

Town Hall Committee



Town Hall Yard: Edward Bawden

Private Passions

That Fuzzy Feeling: Wendy Meldrum

To be honest, I don't think of myself as a 'crafty' person but was introduced to needle felting by a group of friends. This craft can be a sociable or solitary hobby – it's been a particularly good pastime for this last year.

Needle felting is where you take loose wool and repeatedly poke it with a barbed needle until it forms a solid, three-dimensional shape. The barbs on the needle cause the fibres to interlock with one another, causing the wool roving to hold its shape once you're done. You can create anything from people, to animals, to imaginary creatures. It is easier than many other crafts, anyone can do it! Of course, "ease" is subjective but the only difficult part about needle felting is that it is very time-consuming. Some of my needle felting commissions can take up to five hours to create, the more intricate pieces can take days! It's a great way to unwind, needle felting requires you to slow down and focus on the task at hand. You can create almost anything! The sky's the limit with needle felting. It never gets boring and is so versatile. Each



time you make something it's different.

Tips:

- Do your research about all the types of wool, needles & felting pads, don't make the mistake I made by only buying Merino wool (I was seduced by the beautiful colours) the best fibres are the carded batts and slivers. They felt well and quickly.
- Merino wool is super fine and is best for enhancing the finished article.
- Make lots of space for your creations as you will soon need more and more space to store them all, needle felting is very addictive, you have been warned!

Hopefully I have inspired you to enter the world of needle felting, give it a try! Check out my instagram page @fuzzy_baubles for my needle felting projects. Commissions are always welcome or if you would like any advice on how to enter this 'Crafty' world you can DM on my instagram account or email:

fuzzybaubles@gmail.com

Wendy Meldrum



Page Turners

Bardfield Book Group 'Books and More' have shared some of their favourite page turners this month

We are a group of six who have been meeting in each other's homes or gardens for about ten years.

We have read many books, some as a group, but many more individually so we have a varied list of recommendations.

How can a book of 700 pages describing one man's life under house arrest spanning 25 years be so fascinating? '*A Gentleman in Moscow*' does just that. Author Amor Towles writes a captivating novel which is soon to be serialised on television with Kenneth Branagh as the Russian duke.

A must read is Laline Paull's '*The Bees*'. Well researched, this is a novel of life in a hive where the bees each have a persona. It is witty, sad and sometimes quite macabre. What an imagination this author has.

'*The Robin*'. A biography written by renowned naturalist Stephen Moss is a charming chronicle of a year in the life of Britain's favourite bird. It follows the bird's life cycle, close relationship with us and reveals many facets about its place in our cultural history. I chose this book as, not only was it a truly delightful book to read, but I actually learnt a surprising amount about the daily life of the robin during the month by month account. It was a real pleasure becoming more acquainted.

Written in 1938 by Winifred Watson *Miss Pettigrew Lives for a Day* takes place in the space of 24 hours. A shy governess, sent to the wrong house by her agency, finds herself in a totally different world from the one she is used to. She may disapprove of their life-style but her new friends make her, for the first time in her life, feel



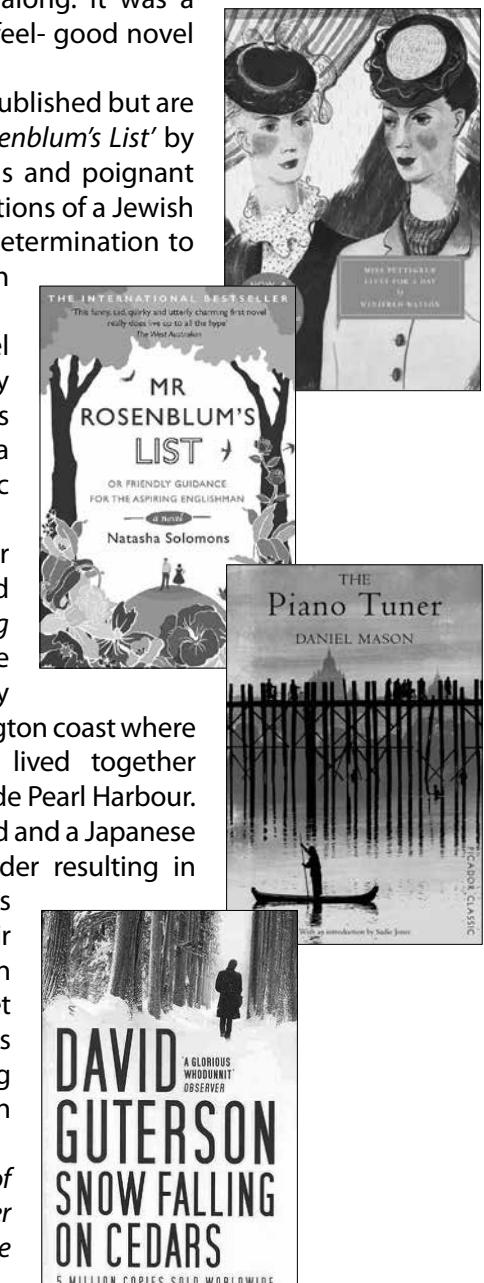
appreciated as they sweep her along. It was a delightful escape to re-read this feel-good novel during the first lockdown.

These books are not recently published but are definitely worth reading. '*Mr. Rosenblum's List*' by Natasha Solomons is a humorous and poignant read. It follows the life and tribulations of a Jewish immigrant, his new life and his determination to be more English than the English and so fit in.

'*The Piano Tuner*' by Daniel Mason follows the journey of a shy middle-aged man to the forests of North East Burma to repair a piano. The writer evokes the tragic history and politics of the region.

Often compared to Harper Lee's '*To Kill a Mocking Bird*' David Guterson's '*Snow Falling Among Cedars*' also has a trial at its centre involving racial prejudice. The story begins on an island off the Washington coast where Japanese and Americans have lived together peacefully until the Japanese invade Pearl Harbour. A local fisherman is found drowned and a Japanese American is accused of his murder resulting in the court-room drama which runs through the book. A love affair between a Japanese girl and an American boy is carried out in secret because of social disapproval. This book is an exceptional reading experience and has now been made into a film.

Editor: Thank you members of Books and More. If any of our other village book groups would like to share their favourites please contact us.



From the Reverend Dr Robert Beaken

My dear friends,

I am typing these words in mid-November 2020 during our second national Covid-19 'lockdown,' which is scheduled to end on 3 December.

At present, we are not sure quite what life will be like once we emerge from the lockdown and whether Essex will still be subject to the tier 2 regulations.

At present, no-one quite knows what Christmas 2020 will be like. My intention, if it is permitted by the regulations, is to celebrate Midnight Mass in St Katharine's Church, Little Bardfield, at 11.30pm on Christmas Eve, Thursday 24th December, and to celebrate the Eucharist in St Mary's Church, Great Bardfield, at 10.30am on Christmas Day, Friday 25th December. These are likely to be very plain and simple services, but they may perhaps be all the more meaningful and reflective of the message of the birth of Jesus Christ because of their very simplicity.

Much the same applies to our family celebrations of Christmas, which will also have to be scaled back this year. As with Christmas church services, we will most likely only manage to hold simple family Christmas celebrations and not see all of the relatives and friends we would normally see. Perhaps this year we might all try to keep an eye out for those who are going to be alone over Christmas: a telephone call on Christmas Day might make all the difference.

Many people find the modern December festive season rather a trial. All families – and indeed all men and women – have difficulties, bad memories, etc, with which we can cope during most the year; but at Christmas and New Year, when we and our families are all supposed to be perfect, our problems can feel much more pressing. Christmas and New Year can sometimes be a stressful time, and some people have told me they are jolly glad to go back to work afterwards.

Perhaps we might want to give the way we have hitherto kept Christmas some careful reflection. As with Christmas church services, doing things more simply at home does not mean we love our families any the less. And as the saying has it, we might find at Christmas that less is more.

With my love, prayers and blessing,

Father Robert



Service of remembrance at Great Bardfield war memorial by Will Edwards

Village People – Anna Bass

'You can have room in your life for three great loves and I have four: horses, surfing, music and model railways!'

Anna was born in Poole, Dorset, an only child. Her father was an electrician who fixed cars for a living; her mother a seamstress. She says her mother came from a big family and left school at 14. 'It was war time and there were no choices.' She describes herself as 'a bit of a day-dreamer at school – I had to be pushed, whipped into shape by my mother,'

who she describes as 'a positive force of nature.' At the age of five Anna suddenly realised she needed to ride, although she had no idea why. She pestered and pestered her parents to let her learn and started riding at a local stables. She recalls, 'We were never well off. Dad lost his job when I was quite young so started on his own.' It must have been a desperate and stressful time but Anna was shielded from it. She remembers that her mother went back to work for a large department store, 'She was sent out to big mansions to make curtains and covers, she made all my clothes – I still have some of them.' Anna's wish for a pony continued: 'It was always, "What do you want for Christmas? Not a pony, you can get a job and buy one when you're 16." But her luck was in. When she was 11 one of her Dad's customers took a pony in part exchange for a car and passed him on and she became the proud owner of 4 year old Pippin. He was 'small enough for me to teach him a lesson, a bit rocky at first, but we soon came to an understanding.' She took part in Pony Club shows and competitions 'We didn't win much but it didn't matter, we were having fun – I'd recommend any child of that age to have a pony, it's very grounding.'

At the same time Anna had her first music lessons, classical guitar, her teacher let her strum chords and sing – 'My parents enjoyed music, dad sang me to sleep with Hoagy Carmichael! She gave up on the lessons but still had her guitar, not realising that music would become such an important



Best in Show award Faversham Model Railway Show 2019

part of her life as she grew up. Despite day dreaming her way through primary school she passed the 11+ and went to a girls' Grammar School. This was not a success; she didn't do well at A level but set off, with her guitar, to study biology at Portsmouth Polytechnic: 'It was wonderful, I loved it – it was the first day of the rest of my life.' Here she made life-long friends and began her love affair with Folk Music. 'I started going

to Folk Clubs where anyone could just walk in and perform. I sang with a friend.' She graduated in 1984: 'I read Orwell's book that year and it haunted me for the rest of my life.' Her passion for folk music grew and she continued to perform, discovering the Brickies Folk Club at the Bricklayers' Arms in Parkstone. After university and some short term ecology related jobs she got the chance to do a Master's Degree and in 1986 set off for the University of Akron in Ohio. 'I found myself in an oil town mid-recession, the thing that kept me there was that all my aunties had knitted me sweaters to keep me warm!' Here she met a friend of a friend from California and eloped. She says, 'He was not the man you want your daughter to marry and my mother never forgave me.' After graduation they drove to California. Their marriage ended after 6 years: 'I was naïve but we remained friends until his death. We were adventurers!' Anna stayed in California working at the University in Santa Barbara but the offer of studying for a Ph.D. drew her to Canada and more adventures. 'I was in Victoria, British Columbia, a beautiful place with eagles and killer whales.' Her studies included collecting data on grey whales on the West coast of Vancouver Island. She describes 'lots of adventures', tells of camping on the beach, a storm wrecking the team's boat and the privilege of living in a First Nations village. There followed what she describes as 'an intermediate period' with her second husband in California: It lasted 11 years, a period when I was very politically active in feminist and environmental causes.'



Village view through Willow's ears

Anna moved back to England and, having left one of her great loves, surfing, behind, she discovered 'two completely unexpected loves: music and model railways.' Anna had collected a range of academic qualifications from B.Sc, PGCE and Masters to Ph.D. and on her return to the UK she was offered, by chance, a job at Braintree College teaching A level Geography. She reconnected with Barry Cheesman, an old guitarist friend, and serendipitously, through her involvement with music events at High Barn, came to Great Bardfield. She and Barry discussed where they might live: 'Wouldn't it be nice if we lived in Great Bardfield?' Together they rented 1 Vine Street and she has been there ever since: 'It's the perfect place to live, you can see the world go by.' You may have noticed that Anna loves running: 'You can just run out the front door and be in the fields. It's the best place I've ever lived.'

Sadly 3 years later Barry suffered a stroke and died. By then Anna was working for Barry's best friend, who owns a laser safety company, as a laser safety adviser. Her job involves travelling around the country to carry out audits in medical and beauty clinics and hospitals, and leading training sessions. Those who follow Anna's facebook page enjoy identifying her travels through her 'Where's Anna?' posts. It's a good game – Anna could be anywhere!



Beer festival, The Vine, Great Bardfield

Through a mutual musician friend Anna met musician Ray Taylor. They became friends and, later, partners, playing in several bands together: Black Waterside with Chris Bullen and Rachel Wilson; Two Coats Colder, a duo, and then joining with Chris Bullen and David Baird about 10 years ago. She

says they have been more successful than they expected, playing many festivals, making a couple of albums, and drinking a lot of Ray's homemade wine. She is surprised at her success: 'From my beginnings I never expected to be a headline act!' She says that 2020 was the farewell year for Two Coats Colder, although, forced into lock down after only a couple of gigs, it was a very quiet farewell. But Bass & Taylor have kept performing. They are looking forward to gigs next year and performing online. If you haven't seen their 'Bookcase Sessions' you can find them on Ray's facebook page and occasionally on the Bardfield Online Community page.



Anna demonstrating Ambleton Vale

So, there's surfing and music but what of model railways? Anna describes how she and Ray discovered their mutual interest in model railways during a 24 hour charity gig in Devon when they visited Pecorama where model railway track is made. They complement each other with Anna doing the fiddly fine detail and Ray the track planning. They have created a layout, Feldspar, which is part of the furniture, ingeniously using a coffee table, and a second larger layout, Ambleton Vale. Lockdown has enabled them to create a third, White Meadow Quarry. And, of course, there's her lifelong love of horses. Anna says, 'I'm always riding.' The little girl who wished for a pony can often be seen riding through the village and surrounding countryside on Willow. Look out for this interesting, adventurous, talented, energetic woman.

Janet Dyson

Ruffle's Picture Puzzle Answers



Brick House, High Street



Keepers, Braintree Road



Tanners, High Street



Bardfield playground



Entrance to St. Mary's Church



2 Bendlowes Road



St. Mary's Churchyard



Scraper in Vine Street

The fine wrought iron railings at Tanners, recently revealed and restored, were probably made at the iron foundry, run by William Young, which was behind what was Tanners' and later Hitchcocks' shop.

GREENFINGERS

Shivering in the freezer are my daughter's seeds, bilberries, the berry - bearing plant of moorland peaty areas. Smaller but tastier than its relative the blueberry, it requires stratifying to coax it into germination. Stratification (no not a geology lesson) is accomplished naturally in the wild by fallen seeds being exposed to the cold of winter, hence seeds in my freezer. If you are a patient person and want trees the seed needs to be left outside to break its hibernation then sown to grow. The beautiful 30 year-old acer in our garden came from a friend's tree and we did just this method. The impatient gardener is able to achieve this and admire a 'bonsai' acer in 4 years!!

Shivering is not what we wish on dahlias, gauras, salvias etc. Yes, they often survive the now wet, mild winters but one year a cold one will finish them off. Mine are sheltering in a cold frame, actually planted into earth, not in pots. Watched the last of the garden programme, Mr Monty, preparing his cannas for hibernation, said dahlias may be wrapped in newspaper, put in a cardboard box and stored somewhere cool - the shed/garage/roof space. Never tried it until now! In the said cold frame is growing lamb's lettuce, might as well use available space. While in the veg area in go 3 plants of ruby chard: bright red leaves light up the potager and not just for Christmas. Perhaps a small seed box to grow radish on the kitchen windowsill? Won't bother as M&S sell them ready to eat at 50p!

TASKS

- No room to keep winter-safe those agapanthus in pots? Move them towards a hedge or fence and cover the plants in a thick layer of bark. While you are out there heap a pile of gravel over the delphiniums to deter the slugs as advised a month or two ago.
- Prune roses and take off black - spotted leaves from the plant and gather those on the ground. But don't home compost them as the fungus persists in the resulting medium and then back into the garden.
- Not too late to grow inside the deeply scented paperwhite narcissus as 5 to 6 weeks to flowering. May be difficult to find bulbs now to force.

Motto: plan ahead next Autumn.

- Start chopping down the dreary dead and wet foliage of those long-finished flowering plants of summer and wait. Wait for what? you ask. Why, for the ugly garden to be made beautiful by Nature's beauty parlour:

SNOW! I love it.

Great Bardfield Horticultural Society

A compilation from several members of the Committee this month!

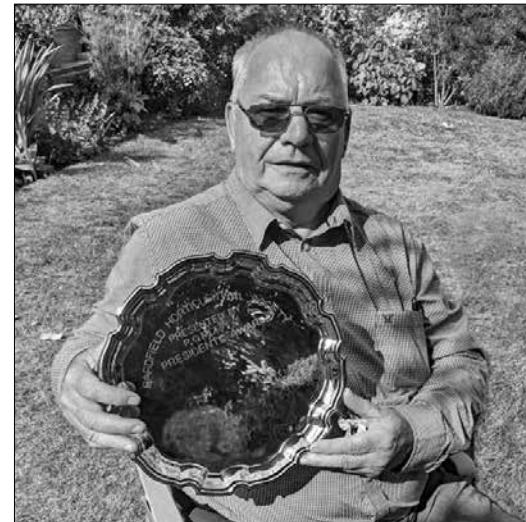
In the October issue of the BT, we mentioned that one of the awards we were able present in 2020 was the President's Award. This was given to Pip Chapman—here is a picture of Pip with his award—well done.

Pinecones always make me think of Christmas because they make such super decorations. A cheap hot glue gun (around £7), some cones you collect around the village and you can make a really nice wreath for a door or a table decoration. Look around the village for suitable free cones. Other things that can be sprayed and used in various decorations are teasels, walnuts which look good sprayed gold and also leylandii.

And don't forget all those wonderful red holly berries, dark ivy berries and pampas grass that are around at the moment. They can be incorporated into your creations.

Growing yourself a Christmas tree may sound crazy, but you could start off now and have a little tree ready for next year. To grow a tree, you need to find a cone that still has its seeds in place. The seeds look like little pieces of paper inside the cone. Place the cones in a plastic food bag and freeze. In February retrieve the pinecone and just push its stalk end into a pot of compost or garden dirt and place on a windowsill. The cone needs to be open and about half in the soil. Spray it with a little water each day and wait for the little green shoots to appear. If you find the seeds have fallen out of the cone don't worry plant the seeds about 1cm under the top of your soil.

All our spring bulbs have now been planted either in pots or in the garden giving us something to look forward to after the dark days of winter. We have also planted some paper whites and prepared hyacinths which hopefully will flower for us around Christmas.



Have added a poem this month which we hope will raise a smile or two!!

My Wife the Gardener

She dug the plot on Monday –
the soil was rich and fine,
She forgot to thaw the dinner –
so we went out to dine...

She planted roses Tuesday –
she says they are a must,
They really are quite lovely
but she quite forgot to dust.

On Wednesday it was daisies –
they opened up with sun,
All whites and pinks and yellows –
but the laundry wasn't done...

The poppies came on Thursday –
a bright and cherry red,
I guess she really was engrossed –
she never made the bed...

It was violets on Friday –
in colours she adores,
It never bothered her at all –
all crumbs upon the floors

I hired a maid on Saturday –
my week is now complete,
My wife can garden all she wants –
the house will still be neat!

It's nearly lunchtime Sunday –
and I cannot find the maid.
Oh no! I don't believe it!
She's out there WITH THE SPADE!

For added amusement try changing wife to husband and 'she' to 'he'!! Ed

We would like to wish all our members a safe and peaceful Christmas.

Nature Notes

Recently I looked out of my front window and was very surprised to see a white squirrel running along the electricity wires at a rate of knots. I was not quick enough to get a photo of it as it soon disappeared into the trees. Knowing that there are albinos in all sorts of creatures including humans I just passed it off, but a few days later someone mentioned on social media they had seen one but that was not in this part of the country. So this started me thinking are there some white grey squirrels? After all there are white moles and white deer which are not albinos, so time for a bit of research. The odds on finding an albino grey squirrel is said to be one in 100,000. One was featured on *BBC1 news* spotted in Sussex 29th July 2016; on that occasion the lady managed to take a photo of it on her bird table and it was a true albino with pink eyes. There are however white grey



Rare albino squirrel pictured in Sussex garden 29 July 2016

squirrels in Canada which is where grey squirrels came from in the first place. The biggest population of white ones can be found in Brevard in Northern Canada there are even some white ones with black ears.

Apparently there are some white ones in the UK which aren't albinos. These are white squirrels which, suffer from leucism, a mutated gene which turns their skin white but leaves their eyes black, meaning that they don't suffer with the eye problems albinos have. There are more than five million grey squirrels in Britain but experts believe there are fewer than one in a million that have leucism. So, whether the one I saw was an albino or one suffering from leucism I will never know but whichever it was I was privileged to a very rare sight.

The grey squirrel is recognised as being in the top 100 invasive pest species in the world by the international union of conservation of nature (IUCN) here in Britain and Europe, is classed as an invasive Alien Species (IES) which is any animal that is not native to the UK. It is legal to kill grey squirrels either by trapping or shooting as long as it is done humanely. Since 1981 the law has classed the grey squirrel as vermin. Greys are often carriers of squirrel virus which is killing our native Red Squirrels, they also do a lot of damage to maize and fruit crops. They are a threat to orchards and market gardens, they destroy bulbs and corms eat tree nuts and recently sown crops and enter roof voids damaging thatched and shingle roofs, telephone wires and electricity cables. They have been responsible for starting house fires by stripping the insulation off electric wiring. So, unfortunately they are not the nice little creatures which some people think they are.

Mac Beanland



THE HUNDRED PARISHES SOCIETY

www.hundredparishes.org.uk

With Christmas just around the corner we are thinking of calling friends and family but not, I suspect, from a red telephone box.

In 1924 the Royal Fine Art Commission invited three architects to submit designs for new telephone kiosks. The winner was Sir Giles Gilbert Scott who also designed Liverpool Cathedral where he is buried. Scott was at the time a trustee of Sir John Soane's Museum and he topped his kiosk with a dome similar to that on the mausoleum Soane had designed for himself. It was produced in cast iron as GPO model K2, replacing the K1 concrete kiosk.

Later designs had a similar appearance. The most common, the somewhat smaller K6, was introduced for King George V's silver jubilee in 1935.

The colour red was chosen to make them easy to spot, although Scott had suggested silver. These robust and iconic survivors of the 20th century, found in almost every town and village, are worth preserving. At the last count, 51 within the Hundred Parishes had been listed.

Most red phone boxes have now been decommissioned although a few, like the one in Anstey,



Westmill phone box defibrillator



Hildersham phone box library

still operate as a pay phone. Many villages have used the box to house a defibrillator; others have inventively turned them into informal book exchanges and information points.

Some villages have been even more imaginative: the box in Standon has been transformed into a greenhouse full of colourful plants.

With Christmas in mind, the Society still has a limited supply of its book *The Hundred Parishes: an Introduction*. The 400-page hardback with a thousand photos is available for £25 from tourist information centres and good book shops, or by arrangement with me – 01279 813226.

The Society's trustees wish you all a very happy Christmas.

**Ken McDonald
Secretary**

Editor: The red phone box in Bardfield High Street is listed and currently houses one of our two defibrillators. It was given a fresh coat of paint last year by Wayne.



Standon phone box garden



MEMORIES OF THE OLD DAYS

The old photo of farm threshing in your recent 'Bardfield Times' and quite a bit of the discussion that followed reminded me of the time I was a boy and we were allowed to play on the farm (No TV and little radio etc.).

The arrival of the steam traction engine drawing 3 implements all on iron wheels was one of the events of the year! Previously, harvest had taken the form of sheaves of corn being carted from the fields and being built into 'stacks' or ricks. These could be built singly in the corner of a field or collectively on the bigger farms into a stack-yard. They required a special art to build and this job was usually taken on by the boss or senior member of staff. They took a pride in the job and the site was left with all of the stacks thatched and tidy for the winter.

After some weeks the steam traction engine arrived and parked itself near the stack having placed the other machines in position. The main one was the one that actually threshed the corn and was right next to the stack. All available hands were used to get those sheaves off the stack and through that machine. The power was supplied by fixing a belt round the engine fly wheel. The thatch was taken off the stack and the men took their positions which would result in those sheaves having their string cut and being fed into that machine.

This sudden activity caused another disturbance – dozens of mice and quite a good few rats had made their winter home in the stacks and now started appearing hurrying to flee the scene. But by this time quite a lot of village people had surrounded the scene – anyone who had the time to spare, people with dogs, and others and children all armed with sticks to make sure none of the vermin escaped. It was all part of the day's "excitement". Boys used to pick up mice by the tail and hold on until the last second when they climbed up their tail to nip the finger – this was probably done to show off to the girls!

The newly threshed grain was collected in very large sacks on one end of the machine. A man spent his day weighing and tying these up ready for transport to the barn on a horse drawn cart. The human effort involved was amazing and there was a piece of equipment called a sack lifter which was used to get the heavy sack off the ground high onto a man's back. It was amazing how quite small men carried those sacks sometimes up steps.

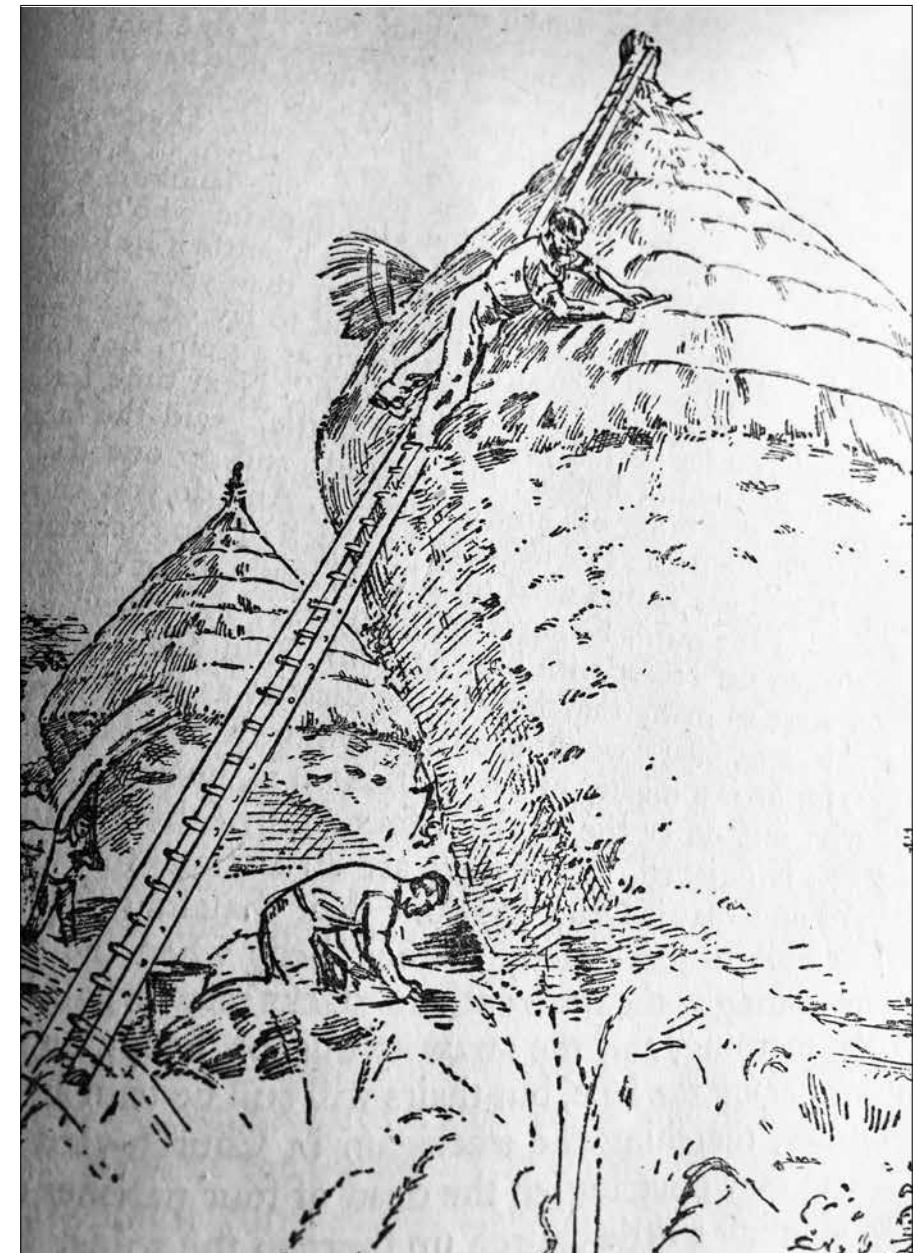


Illustration by Thomas Hennell from C. Henry Warren's book *The Land is Yours* published in 1944

The men on the stack used to tie a piece of string round their trousers. These were called "Thaxteds"! and stopped the mice wandering.

Operations carried on until it was time to move on to the next stack and when all was done to the next farm. Left behind was a newly built straw stack, made from the straw passed from the main machine by another implement called a pitcher and was height adjustable, and a vital part of the operation.

This straw was used by the farm throughout the year for livestock and other things and most important it provided us children with a super play area! Not a tractor in sight!

I don't think Tony Hayward is worried that I may take over his position!

Michael Hitchcock

The drawing to illustrate Michael's interesting article is by the artist and writer Thomas Hennell and is from C.Henry Warren's book *The Land is Yours* published in 1944. The book is a detailed account of agricultural and rural life in a parish in north west Essex. Hennell has a strong Bardfield connection. He met Edward and Charlotte Bawden and Eric and Tirzah Ravilious in 1931 when he rented a room at Brick House whilst cycling around East Anglia collecting material for his work. Bawden described in a letter of 1979 how he and Eric came down for breakfast to find Hennell, a complete stranger, pumping water and washing himself at their kitchen sink: 'Tom greeted us in the most friendly manner. Our identity was divulged in a matter of seconds and friendship established immediately ... Outside leaning against a doorpost was a heavy, khaki-coloured army bike and on it, tied to the bar ... a large and perfect specimen of a corn dollie called The Lord's Table.' Their friendship was established and Hennell became a frequent visitor to Brick House, drawing and painting in the surrounding countryside, recording rural life, as in the picture of haystacks. Like Bawden and Ravilious he became a War artist. Three War artists died on active service including Ravilious whose plane was lost over Iceland, and Hennell who disappeared in Java in 1945. He was 42. The Historical Society has recently been able to purchase a fine drawing by Hennell, of Stebbing Church, which will hang in the Bawden Room.

Janet Dyson



countryfile

Once again, the weather has dominated the activities on the farm this month. We have just heard that we have had 8 inches of rain since 23rd September. Incidentally this is the date on which it began to rain last year, and it means we have had even more this autumn. Drilling the new crops has been extremely difficult only working on the few fine days we have had. As we say it has been 'muddled in' and some of the fields don't look pretty!! Some of the headlands around the outsides of the fields have had to be left as they were too wet, but if we get a few frosts this may get rectified, or a green cover crop will have to be sown to cover the ground in the spring.

One plus point has been the Agricultural Bill going through parliament at present which is giving priority to environmental schemes which will make subsidy payments for countryside schemes instead of the present subsidy scheme which simply makes a payment on an acreage basis regardless of the crops which are grown and this policy is being phased out in four years' time so that the priority can be given to feeding the nation and maintaining the countryside. It remains to be seen how they propose to do that.

It just remains for me to wish the editorial team a very Merry Christmas (if the regulations allow it) and a Happy New Year to all our readers.

Tony Hayward



Great Bardfield Primary School

At Great Bardfield Primary School we are being resilient and positive in the face of another Lockdown. This time, it is good that we are still open for pupils and able to give a degree of routine and normality for everyone. Staff are being amazing, going above and beyond to safely manage the class bubbles and ensure that we are following our risk assessment. The governors and I are very grateful to the staff for their dedication; it is a very worrying and anxious time especially for those who were shielding in the first Lockdown.



We are endeavouring to deliver as normal a curriculum as possible and we have been so pleased with the children's enthusiasm for learning. Already, we have narrowed some of the gaps that inevitably opened up when the children missed three months of school, in spite of the marvellous job our parents did with Home Schooling. Part of our extended curriculum is thinking about others and looking after our world. Every year in November, we collect our Smile Boxes for children in The Ukraine. This year we were delighted to collect 105 boxes which we were able to give to the charity that has collected them every year at the school, for the last 22 years. This tradition every year is very important to our school ethos.

Remembrance Week, is also a very important week in our school calendar. Every year, the children are involved in an art project to mark Armistice Day. This year, we hope that you noticed our Poppy Wall if you were driving through the village. All of the children decorated a poppy and wrote a message of thanks to the servicemen and women for the sacrifices they made for our freedom. As we do each year, our Year 5 and 6 children walked up to the War Memorial in the village, on the Friday before Remembrance Sunday, and laid a wreath on behalf of our school. This year the wreath was laid by our Year 6 school ambassadors Charlie and Alice.

Christmas will be very different at school this year. Sadly, the children won't be visiting the pantomime in Chelmsford or presenting the usual carol concert in the church. We will miss these two important events but we are still looking going to present a Nativity showcase. Not quite the same production as normal, as each bubble will perform a little Christmas scene, which will be watched by the Key Stage Two



Year 5 and 6 children laying a wreath on behalf of the school at the War Memorial

children. Unfortunately, we are not permitted to have parents on site so they won't be able to come to a performance however, we will still make sure that the children have their moment to shine and have fun.

Mrs Kerrell
Headteacher

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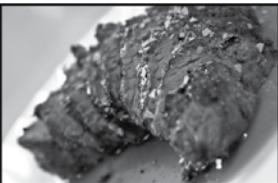
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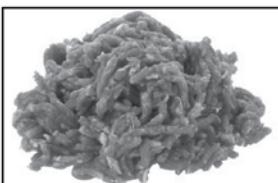
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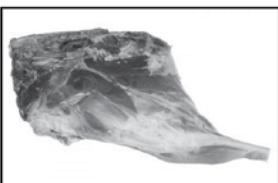
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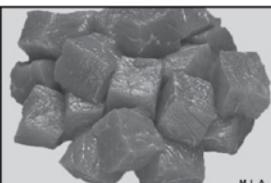
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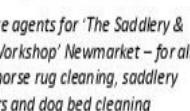
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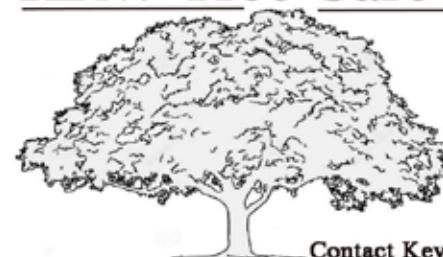


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Mary is the Manager of our Breakfast Club which is open 7.30-8.45am and we will drop them off at the top playground with their teacher. We offer a delicious Breakfast between 7.30-8am only (due to our ratios of qualified staff to children being affected when someone is needed to cook). This can be a hot cooked plate including; Sausage, Bacon, Eggs (scrambled, boiled or fried), Beans or Spaghetti or Hash Browns or Toast, Pancakes or Waffles. There is always cereal too and they will be asked on arrival what they prefer.

We cater for Gluten Free, Vegetarian and Pescatarian morning and afternoon.

Pat is the Manager of our After School Club and children can be picked up from their classrooms or from the School's Clubs and brought back to us. Children from other schools can be dropped off directly at ours. Tea is served at ours 4.15-4.30.

A Hot Tea is provided every day and alternatives are available, such as hot soup, salads, sandwiches or fruit. There is always a pudding after the meal and a snack when they arrive.

We have Playstations, 'Monitored' Internet, X Box, Crafts, Board Games, a Football Table and Themed Days (see below) – everything is monitored to be age appropriate.

Here is an example of what we have running for kids to join in if they wish:
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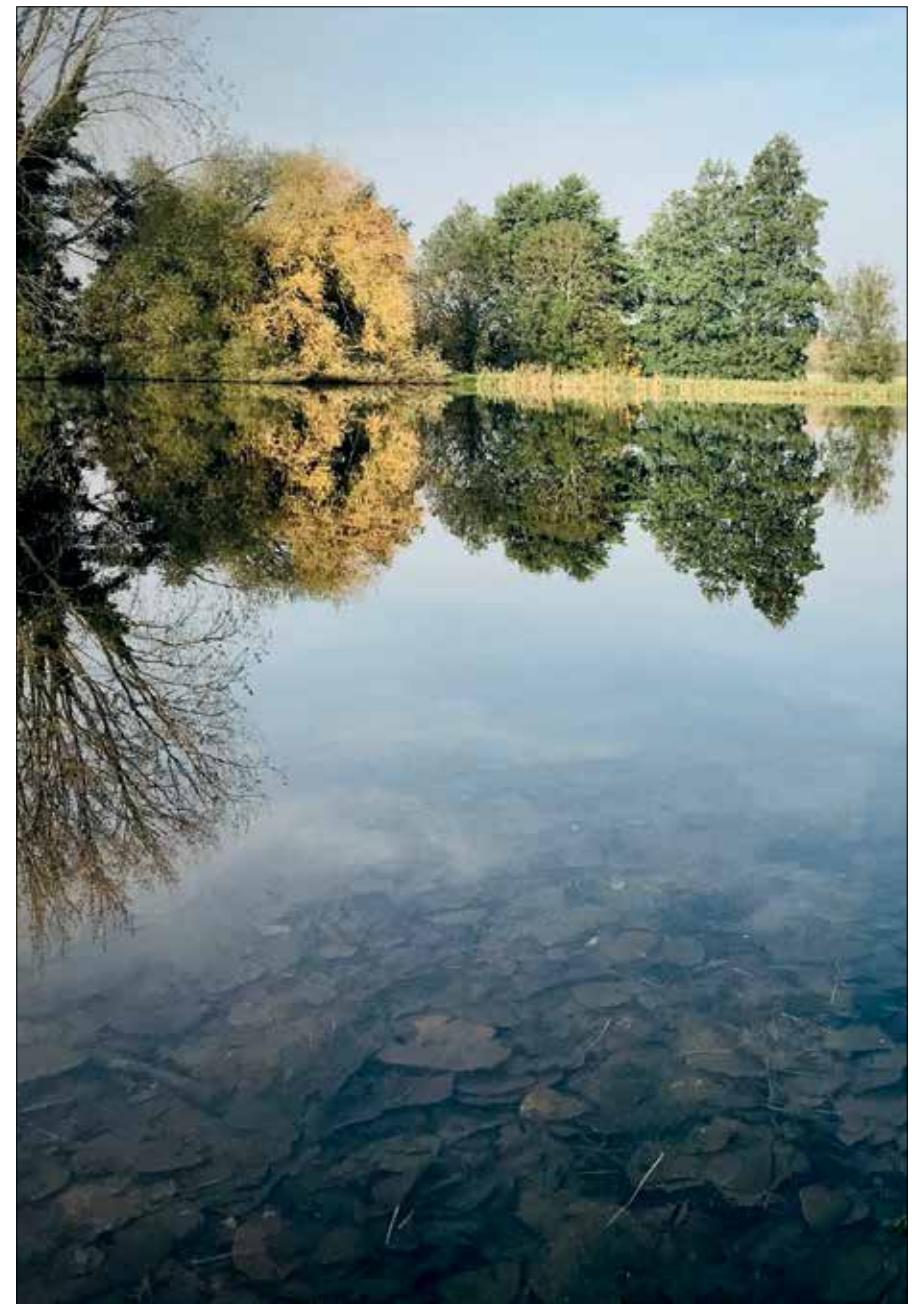
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