

...editorial

As I write this at the beginning of February Spring is already arriving and together with global warming we may not get a 'real' winter.

Congratulations to the Parish Council and Melbourn Village College for winning one of the new South Cambridge District Council Zero Carbon Communities grants, with the Community Refill Project. Refillable water bottle stations will be installed around the MVC site to reduce the use of single use plastic. See page 16.

Congratulations also to the Hub on their 6th birthday, a great asset at the centre of the village. Check out the activities available at the Hub over the coming year. See page 6.

The Fete returns this year, on June 20th with farming as the theme. See page 8.

We have an interesting article in this issue by Peter Guest a former Melbourn resident, who's family still live in the village. Peter works for the UN World Food Programme. See page 20. Bruce Huetts continues his 'Travelling the Himalayas' series of interesting stories and photographs of a place very few of us get to visit. See page 26.

There are many lovely photographs in this issue, starting with the front cover taken at the RSPB Reserve, also accompanying the excellent articles on wildlife in the environs of the surrounding area.

We are fortunate to live in such a pleasant village with so many amenities and events to look forward to.

We welcome contributions from members of the community, without your support there would be no Magazine.

Enjoy the Spring!

NEWS

Melbourn Mind Awareness Day

CPSL Mind was delighted when Melbourn Football Club, a local men's village team, chose them as their charity of the year for 2019/20.

As part of their fundraising, on November 30th they organised an amazing mental health awareness day in the village. Many local businesses and community groups got involved. The Melbourn Hub hosted a charity breakfast for over 30 people, and sold food at a reduced price with customers encouraged to make a donation up to the usual selling price. The Black Horse pub organised a raffle and raised £533 by themselves. Mark Williams and the team at Classic Wings, Duxford donated two tickets for a pleasure flight in a de Havilland Dragon Rapide, and Strand's Hairdressers held a raffle. Other local businesses who got involved included – Tony's Barbers, The Dolphin pub, Melbourn Fish & Chip shop, Leech's Butchers and Unlimited Logos. The day was completed with their annual dog racing trip, with 25% of the profits being donated to the charity. Overall they managed to raise just over £1,000 for CPSL Mind.

Simon Gascoyne, Secretary for Melbourn FC said: *"We were overwhelmed by the local support we received. So many local businesses got involved to promote the day and raise funds. We are so grateful to everyone who worked so hard to make the event such a success and for all the local people who donated."*

Zoe Doherty, Fundraiser for CPSL Mind said: *"We were over the moon when Simon contacted us to say we had been selected as their charity for the year. Melbourn Football Club, with the support of their community, organised so many different fundraising events. As well as raising much-needed funds, they were also able to raise awareness of the importance of looking after your mental health and encouraging others to seek support"*

when they need it. A huge thank you to Melbourn FC and everyone who supported this fantastic day.”

Melbourn Hub – 6 Years On!

Yes – Melbourn Hub has been open for 6 years now! It’s hard to imagine a time when the vibrant and bustling Hub wasn’t at the heart of village life.

This purpose-built modern facility on the High Street provides so much for all of the community, either as a place to meet friends and chat over a coffee or to use one of the raft of services and activities on offer.

The Hub has gone from strength to strength, progressively expanding the benefits available. This is a result of working closely with the community, listening and responding to suggestions, with the core objective of providing something for everyone! We are frequently told how much Melbourn village is envied for the Hub facility and the feedback has been fantastic. What we have created is a unique and special additional arm to the portfolio of public services available to Melbourn and surrounding villages.

All this would be impossible without our amazing team of staff and volunteers. We are always pleased to welcome new volunteers to the Hub ‘family’!

So what can I find at Melbourn Hub?

The Bookmark Café

Serving quality Barista coffee, milk shakes and an extensive menu of freshly prepared hot and cold food, the Bookmark cafe is a popular, safe and friendly meeting place in the centre of the village. A large free car park is opposite. The cafe offers free-to-use laptops and free Wi-Fi.

The Hub welcomes everyone from the very young to the more mature in years. Families are especially welcome with a special ‘Hubby Bear’ menu for little ones. There is outdoor space to

enjoy on the covered terrace overlooking the lawn. The cafe is fully licensed so you can also enjoy a glass of wine with lunch! In our recent survey 100% of customers would recommend the Bookmark café to others.

Library Access Point (LAP)

Open daily (see website for times) the library stocks a large range of books for adults and children. It is particularly popular with children, who are welcome to browse and take all the time they need in safe and supervised space. The Community Library may not always have the book you want but, with access to central library services, is able to obtain any book on request.

Meeting Rooms

The Hub offers a choice of modern well-equipped rooms of varying sizes for your business or community meetings, with on-site catering or buffets available together with business services. Rooms are ideal for business training, interviews and lectures – large or small. Alternatively, a generous scale of charges makes room hire at the Hub particularly good value for local community groups and charities.

Special Events

The Hub brings the community together on a regular basis to enjoy concerts, craft fairs, quiz nights and many other fun events throughout the year. It also hosts seasonal specials such as Halloween ghost walks and the popular ‘Turn on to Christmas’. The Hub delights in promoting local talent and has been proud to feature Melbourn folk duo Megson in concert, as part of their National tour, and local singer Tom Froggatt.

Services and Activities

Regular outreach services are available at the Hub including Relate, Citizens Advice and Mind CPSL. There is a drop-in ‘Good Mood Cafe’ every Friday afternoon and free NHS Health checks are available on pre-arranged dates. Once a month, ‘Community

Support for Dementia' runs a lively Dementia Friends Cafe with activities, offering welcome support and socialising for those living with dementia and for their families/carers.

There are children's activities including Story Time and Piccolinos, plus, for our more mature locals, regular Hub lunch clubs. Other activities and classes are held appealing to a wide range of interests and abilities.

Art Gallery

Each month a different artist is featured and their work is exhibited on our Hub gallery wall for visitors to view whilst enjoying a coffee in the Bookmark cafe. We occasionally feature one of the artists 'in residence', who will demonstrate their techniques to cafe visitors. The Hub gallery welcomes local artists to display and sell their work. We are taking bookings for 2021 so if you are an artist why not consider showcasing your talent via Melbourn Hub?

Finally – A Thank You

The vision for the Hub was to provide a community space in the heart of the village that meets the needs of all residents right 'on the doorstep'. As a registered charity the Hub has a duty to enhance the lives of people in Melbourn and the surrounding area.

Melbourn Hub wants to sincerely thank you for your part in achieving this objective, creating the safe, busy, warm and welcoming place we have today.

We look forward to many more years and extend an invitation and a warm welcome to all newcomers to Melbourn Hub.

For more information about what's on offer at Melbourn Hub or to find out about volunteering opportunities see www.melbournhub.co.uk or contact the Centre Manager on 01763 263303 or by email centremanager@melbournhub.co.uk. Follow us on Facebook @thehubmelbourn.

Melbourn Fete

20 June 2020

The fete committee are now well in to the process of organising this year's fete, and we are using farming as the theme. We hope to have some farming based exhibits which we will have details about for the next magazine just before the fete.

The favourites will be there, including lots of stalls from local groups and craft traders. This is a perfect way to spend an hour or two discovering what is going on in our area. Melbourn WI will serve traditional afternoon tea, cake and sandwiches in the pavilion. Some fairground rides will be with us again this year, and for the energetic types there will be bouncy castles and zorb balls.

In the arena we will be showcasing some local activities such as the Dynamos football team and Electrolytes Majorettes. We hope to have some dog agility competitions and the firm favourite of egg throwing returns. We will enjoy some live music from local groups and bands during part of the afternoon.

Our ever-popular bar returns with some refreshing non-alcoholic and alcoholic drinks including cask ales, Pimms and prosecco. A selection of tasty food will be on offer from a number of providers.

We also have the big marquee where the competitions will be judged. This year we have introduced a few farming themes to some of the categories. Make sure you check out the website and see what categories there are this year and get creative. Also in the marquee will be a new Lego display made by the family of one of our committee. Unfortunately, this year we will not be having any classic cars but we hope to have members of a local scooter club attend the day. Also, for the mechanically minded, the popular lawn mower racing returns.

The fete starts at midday and runs until 5 pm. As always we aim to produce a fun event that is good value for you, your family and friends. Any surplus money made will go to local clubs and activities that we have within the village.

We are very grateful to our team of volunteers who help us with setting up for the fete, helping us with tasks during the day and clearing up afterwards. It is great fun and rewarding to everyone who gets involved, and we are always looking for others who can come along and help. Even an hour of your time could make a difference. More details about volunteering is on the website.

Check out our Facebook and twitter feed for more information. Details of entry forms for competitions and stalls can be found on our website at <https://Melbournfete.com>

Library

The Community Library (formerly the LAP) in the Hub welcomes children to both browse and borrow the many children's books that we have. There is also Story and Singing Time run by Mandy, one of the librarians. This is held on Friday mornings from 10 to 10.30 am in the Hub and is designed for children aged from 0 to 5 years. It is free and not only is it a good fun for the children it is a great way to meet other mums and dads with young children. There is no need to book, just turn up.

For adults we offer a good range of fiction both modern and classic. The classic books are on a shelf above the children's books. It is well worth having a look at them and perhaps trying one or two. Classic books may have been written many years ago but they have stood the test of time and are a cracking good read.

Jane Stevens

Shepreth Hedgehog hospital

Could you be a hedgehog hero?

Shepreth Hedgehog Hospital likes to return healthy hedgehogs to the villages where they are found, so we are looking for release sites in Melbourn. Suitable gardens should be surrounded by other gardens or natural areas for the released hedgehog to escape into, and not be beside a main road or other hazardous

areas. You would be expected to have a nest house and keep the hedgehog in a temporary pen for up to a week while it gets used to outdoor temperatures. You may then need to keep feeding if it continues to visit your garden, and always have a shallow dish of water available. Hospital volunteers would give you full support and advice on making a box and a pen, and on the care and release process.

If you would like an application form or more information, please email judith.large62@googlemail.com. You can find out more about the hedgehog hospital at: www.swccharity.org

The Melbourn Singers

The Melbourn Singers are practising hard for the concert as part of the Cambridgeshire Choral Society (CCS) on 18th April. The choir will be singing Carmina Burana by Carl Orff, Chichester Psalms by Leonard Bernstein and Ave by Guy Turner – a very varied programme. The concert is being held in West Road Concert Hall, Cambridge, tickets will be available nearer the time either from a member of the choir, through the CCS website or at West Road on the night of the performance. I recommend this to everyone who enjoys choral music.

Jane Stevens

Melbourn & District U3A

Melbourn and District U3A was formed in 1994 and today has around 500 members from South Cambridgeshire and North Hertfordshire. There are 34 subject or activity groups including art, music, languages, history, philosophy and current affairs, together with excursions and leisure activities such as yoga and walking, to name just a few.

These groups are informal, mutual and self-help in nature rather than the lecturer and student format. In some groups, the leader brings professional experience and in others group members might share the role to build skills and understanding.

There are no exams, but members may choose to go on with further studies and qualifications. A leader of one group is often a member of other groups. We are all learning. Newcomers are welcomed regardless of experience or knowledge. Meetings are held in the morning or afternoon, in people's houses or in local halls.

A monthly general meeting is held on the third Wednesday of the month at 2.45 pm (but not in December) when there is an opportunity for social exchange over tea, coffee and biscuits. At 3.00 pm there is a talk by a guest speaker. These meetings are held in the hall of Melbourn Village College where parking is free. Occasionally we meet at Foxton Village Hall, so it is best to check before your first visit. Come for the first time as our guest to find out what is on offer. Our meeter/greeters will be pleased to welcome you, advise on what is happening and introduce you to others.

Melbourn & District U3A (an acronym for "university of the third age") is affiliated to the Third Age Trust, a registered charity which provides benefits to all U3As by being a conduit for the exchange of ideas, resources and in many other ways. Our subscription includes an amount due to the Trust.

The term 'Third Age' arises from considering childhood and dependence as the first age; adulthood, marriage and family responsibility as the second. The Third Age, or retirement, allows time to indulge in previously neglected interests or to expand horizons.

Everyone who is no longer in full time employment is welcome to join. You may decide to join one or more of the groups or just attend the monthly meeting. Simply complete the application form online or post a hard copy to our Membership Secretary together with the subscription due (currently £13 pa). Details of how to pay are on the form.

For further information including the list of groups see www.u3asites.org.uk/melbourn or contact our Membership Secretary, Email: membership@melbu3a.org Phone: 01763 264189.

Community Support for Dementia

About the Initiative

Nearly a million people in the UK are living with Alzheimer's or other forms of dementia, and many more millions of people are affected as they are caring for their loved ones or friends who are living with the disease. Nearly all of us will know someone with dementia and practical and emotional support for families is very hard to find. People can become isolated, including those who are caring for loved ones, and having a safe and welcoming place to come together is very important.

Melbourn is proud to be addressing this support shortfall through the creation of the 'Community Support for Dementia' group, a local initiative that is the result of a collaboration between villager Davina Biswell (whose own family is touched by dementia) and Melbourn Hub to raise public awareness of dementia, offer practical support and create a dementia friendly community environment. Look out for the 'Forget me not' logo.

Dementia Friends Cafes

The cafes have been running successfully for some months at Melbourn Hub, where those living with dementia and their family carers can get together with other people in similar situations to chat over coffee and cake, enjoy various fun activities and music, plus benefit from specially designed items to stimulate, all led by a professional. There was even some impromptu dancing and singing at the Christmas time cafe, when a live singer of Christmas songs was featured! Relatives have commented that the stimulus of the cafes has encouraged their loved ones to communicate and participate, and elevates their mood.

The Dementia Friends Cafes are inclusive and take place within the Hub's wider café, so that people feel part of the community and everyone visiting the Hub can enjoy the lively atmosphere and buzz that is generated. The cafes are currently held once a month on a Saturday afternoon and the next few cafes will be held as follows:

**March 21st, April 18th, May 9th, June 13th,
July 18th, August 15th from 2.30pm to 4pm.
Entry is free and there is no need to book.**

If you or a friend or loved one already have, or may be developing, signs of dementia, why not drop in with your friend, carer or family and receive a warm welcome. Melbourn Hub is a Dementia Friendly venue all year round, so people with dementia are welcome at any time and special blue crockery is available upon request to help those with dementia to see their food more readily. Just ask for “forget me not crockery” when ordering your food and drink.

Virtual Dementia Tour Bus

Community Support for Dementia have also run awareness events, including Virtual Dementia Tour Buses which enable people caring for those with dementia to experience for themselves what having dementia might be like. Another bus could be booked again for this year if there is sufficient demand, so if you would be interested in experiencing the Virtual Dementia Tour to raise your awareness of dementia, please contact the Centre Manager at Melbourn Hub 01763 263303 or email centremanager@melbournhub.co.uk. The experience is unsuitable for people who already have dementia.

To make contact with ‘Community Support for Dementia’, please call Melbourn Hub who will put you in touch.

Relate Cambridge

Volunteer Opportunity

Volunteer Evening Receptionist, Cambridge

- To welcome clients to the Cambridge Centre and support the counselling appointments process
- To carry out administrative tasks such as preparing marketing materials
- The opportunity to meet new people, network and give back to the community

For more information, contact us on:

admin@relatecambridge.org.uk | Telephone: 01302 347712

Address: 3 Brooklands Avenue, Cambridge, CB2 8BB

Registered Charity 1096975 Registered Company 4664883

Relationship Support For Everyone

Counselling Services:

- Relationship
- Family
- Sex Therapy
- Children & Young People
- Relate4Parents
- Sex Addiction

Telephone: 01302 347866 | admin@relatecambridge.org.uk

Melbourn & Meldreth Women's Group

We are a small friendly group and we meet on the 4th Tuesday of the month except in December; we vary our venue between All Saints Community Hall in Melbourn and Holy Trinity Church Meeting Room in Meldreth. We either have a guest speaker or in-house entertainment, followed by tea/coffee and biscuits. There is a fee of £1 on the evening and a chance to make a donation to our charity of the year.

On 24th March the Revd. Angela Melaniphy will lead us on a Lent reflection, and this will be at the usual time of 7.45 p.m. in All Saints Community Hall, Melbourn. We are looking forward to hearing Peter Draper talk on 28th April; this will be in Holy Trinity Church Meeting Room as the talk will be about Holy Trinity Church and Peter will show us things of interest in the Church itself. Then on 26th May we will have our Summer Supper in All Saints Community Hall; the committee prepare a ploughman's supper, followed by puddings, for members and their guests. There will be tickets available which must be purchased in advance to enable us to get the catering right.

All our meetings begin at 7.45 p.m. Do come along if you'd like to, or if you want to know more please contact one of the committee members: Pat Smith (262575), Sue Toule (260955), Anne Harrison (261775), Angela Leach (262793), Pat Ames (261130) and Kimmi Crosby (07976228377).

House and Pet sitting on our doorstep!

Jackie Bullen from Shepreth has just celebrated her 20th year of running her successful home and pet sitting company *Minders-Keepers*.

There are challenges working from home no doubt , but we have grown year on year and as a huge amount of our work comes from recommendation we must be doing something right! I had four children, now all adults but my youngest is registered blind and she needed regular support, hospital visits etc. and so for me working from home enabled me to always be on hand. I just needed to sort office cover!

Minders-Keepers now has more than 140 sitters across the country sitting for over a thousand clients. Variety seems to be the key, sitters can find themselves in remote farmhouses, historic mansions, modern hi tech homes, riverside cottages or even castles!

The usual common link is pets. Most clients have pets that need loving care while they are away.

We are typically known as a domestic pet agency and so we usually find ourselves caring for dogs, cats and maybe smaller caged pets, but we have had some amazing menageries including llamas, pot bellied pigs, parrots, bearded dragons and one client has a stately home complete with deer park along with a tank of stick insects.

Sitters are offered assignments they are given the dates location and pets involved and if they are free and like the sound of the sit they will then arrange a preliminary visit so that both the client and the sitter can ensure they are suited to each other as well as allowing the sitter to familiarise themselves with pets routine, and the running of the home.

Sitters usually are willing to travel up to 50 miles for sits and they do get their travel expenses reimbursed, but some do this in order to explore the country and so we always try to offer our sitters the sort of sits they would enjoy in locations that suit.

Most of our sitters are retired people and this often provides

an opportunity to have something to do, have new places to explore, pets to care for whilst earning a little extra money! The fact that they are insured and supported also gives security of mind

Ironically we have sitters located from Cornwall to Aberdeenshire and everywhere in between, but very few in Hertfordshire and Cambridgeshire, although we do receive lots of local enquiries from clients and so if anyone is interested in finding out more I would be delighted to hear from them.

They could call on 01763 262102, or email jackie@minders-keepers.co.uk, always happy to have a chat, as we prepare for our next twenty years!

Cambridgeshire Fire and Rescue Service

Cambridgeshire Fire and Rescue Service is looking for on-call firefighters to join on-call fire stations around the county. On-call firefighters aren't based at a fire station, instead they carry a pager and respond to emergency incidents as and when they happen.

The Service has introduced a new daytime contract to the on-call service, which allows people to be available to respond to emergencies from just 24 hours a week, for example while working at their regular day job or from home.

The new contract is available for anyone interested in joining an on-call station, providing they can offer a minimum of 24 hours per week (between 7am and 7pm during the week) and attend the weekly drill night.

On-call firefighters can be men and women who come from every walk of life. They may be at home, working for themselves or a nearby company, or even out in their local community. They must maintain their availability to respond to emergencies by staying within five minutes travel time of the fire station. They receive an annual wage plus additional payments for attending incidents and drill nights.

Those interested in finding out more can visit www.cambsfire.gov.uk/on-call or contact recruitment@cambsfire.gov.uk

Calling any villagers with a memory of elm trees

My name is Adam Cormack. I work for the Woodland Trust and have a keen interest in trees. I am researching a piece of writing on elm trees and their place in rural village life in England. Large elm trees were a feature of many villages until they were almost all killed by Dutch Elm Disease by the 1980s.

In my research I have come across an old photograph of an old elm tree in Melbourn outside the church. I would be very interested in speaking to anyone in Melbourn who has a memory (or story) about this tree.

I am writing about the importance of having large old trees in the heart of villages and highlighting the fact that we have lost so many – also linking what happened to elm trees to the likely loss of many old ash trees from the disease ‘ash dieback’ which is, unfortunately, spreading rapidly.

If you can help please contact me via my email address adamcormack01@gmail.com and I will arrange a time to call you. Many thanks.

Melbourn Timebank

Was your New Year’s resolution to do a good deed, to help others, make more effort to get to know your neighbours or do more for your community? It’s not too late to make a difference, you can achieve all of that by joining the Melbourn Timebank!

The Timebank is growing steadily; we now have members from Royston, Meldreth, Shepreth and Foxton too. Over 830 hours have been exchanged in the Timebank’s first year!

We hold regular social events: a weekly Coffee Morning on a Thursday from 10 – 12, either in The Hub or Moorland Court, a fortnightly Art and Craft club that runs in the pavilion on a

Wednesday afternoon from 1.30 – 4.30 pm, and a monthly Evening Social/ Timebank Games Night at The Black Horse (all these locations are in Melbourn). Non-members are always very welcome to come to any of these events to learn more about Timebanking and meet other members.

If you have missed previous articles about the Timebank or are new to our community, here is a quick summary:

Timebanking is a way for local people to come together and help each other by exchanging knowledge, help and skills. Everyone has something to offer a Timebank, from making a cake, picking up a prescription, walking their dog, doing some gardening, visiting someone for a cup of tea, welcoming new residents to the village; whatever you do will make a difference to the person that needs your help.

You get an hour's time credit which you can use to get something back. That may be help with your mobile/tablet, learning how to hem a skirt, someone picking up a loaf of bread, or gaining some new skills. Everyone's time is equal, so one hour of my time is equal to one hour of your time, irrespective of whatever we choose to exchange.

However, it's not just about giving and receiving. Timebanking is also about bringing people together to build a stronger, safer and happier community. The exchanges can go on and on, as do the new friendships, connections and networks that are made. Members feel less isolated and more supported in their own community.

For more information about any Timebank events, or to join us, please contact Cath on 07483 176929 or 01763 263303 Option 3 or via email timebank@melbournparishcouncil.co.uk

You can also visit our website: <https://tol2.timebanking.org/melbourn/>, or follow us on Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/melbourntimebank/>

Melbourn Parish Council

Christmas Tree Recycling

We are most grateful to Herts & Cambs Ground Maintenance for once again supporting our Christmas Tree Recycling Scheme. An impressive 33 trees were recycled and the chippings will be put to use around the village. Thank you to everyone who has supported this scheme.

Greater Cambridge Local Plan

The Greater Cambridge Local Plan went live on 13 January 2020. More details are available at www.greatercambridgeplanning.org. Residents were invited to join the Conversation which ran from 13 to 24 January. Details were published on our website and Facebook page, as well as on various notice boards around the village. We hope you took the opportunity to have your say.

Planning Appeal – Proposed development of 160 houses on Cambridge Road

The application for planning permission refused in February 2018 went to appeal in November 2019. The appeal was dismissed.

Fly-tipping

Fly tipping continues to be a problem in our area. We all have a responsibility to ensure that waste carriers are registered and that they will dispose of unwanted items properly. If you see fly tipping, please report it to SCDC Enviro Crime – www.scamb.gov.uk/environment/envirocrime/envirocrime/.

Precept

At the time of writing, the Parish Council has just set the precept for 2020/21. The parish precept forms part of the council tax bill that is collected by the District Council. The precept is paid over to the Parish Council, and all the money is used for the benefit of the village. For 2020/21 the precept will increase by 3.97% to £267,870 – this equates to £136.62 per year for a Band D property (an increase of £5.22). The precept is spent on

maintaining the Parish's assets: cutting grass verges, keeping the cemeteries looking good, maintaining and repairing parish recreation grounds and sports pitches. We are very fortunate to have some beautiful outside spaces including Stockbridge Meadows, and the precept is used to keep these areas in good order for the enjoyment and benefit of the whole village.

Your council needs you!

The Parish Council currently has 6 councillor vacancies. If you would like more information on what parish councillors do and how you can become involved, please contact the parish office – parishclerk@melbournpc.co.uk or 01763 263303 (Opt 3) or drop in for a chat. Working as part of a parish council is very rewarding as well as being a great way to become more involved with your community.

From your District and County Councillors

Cambridgeshire County Council

Potholes: Thanks so much to residents and parish councillors for reporting pot holes and other highways problems online and alerting us to having done so. This really helps to get repairs into the queue sooner rather than later. Unfortunately, we continue to exist in reactive mode with emergency repairs and no prospect of any significant change to the status quo – we need much more funding.

The County Council now requires its employees to take off the Christmas to New Year holiday period, which means that there's no one in the office to process reports of Highways faults during that time, causing a backlog in January. Our Highways officers do their best in very difficult circumstances – and lack the resource to do their jobs to the standard they would like, and which people rightfully expect.

Beechwood Avenue Traffic Meeting follow-up: Since our public meeting at the Melbourn Hub on October 29, when

residents from the Beechwood Avenue area met to discuss the problem of cut-through traffic, we've been tackling our Action List. Key things to note:

Highways have put Beechwood Ave down for surface dressing treatment this coming summer. Afterward, lines will be repainted. So we've asked our Local Highways Officer to include some additional line painting– something to signal the cul-de-sac at Beechwood Ave on the right entering from New Road, and lines at junctions to remind drivers that parking on junctions is illegal, etc. Hopefully we'll get everything we've asked for!

Meanwhile, Melbourn Parish Council has commissioned a village-wide traffic survey using data collection boxes at all entry points in the village plus gateways to Beechwood Avenue and the traffic signals approaching from New Road. These surveys will measure not just speed but also type of vehicle and direction of travel. They will be carried out by Cambridgeshire County Highways and at the time of writing are scheduled to be conducted in two parts, with a duration of one-week each, in late January after the holiday period has concluded. We looked at other suppliers but this was the cheapest and meets our needs.

After the survey has been concluded and data made available, we will be able to consider with County Highways Officer Josh Rutherford (who attended the Beechwood Ave Traffic meeting) the more significant long-term proposals on our Action List, including things like weight restrictions. The data gathered will help us to better understand traffic dynamics throughout the village, so that we don't develop ideas in isolation.

All these things are much more difficult than they used to be: basic projects that used to get funded and delivered by County Highways now fall to parish councils to get behind and pay for.

Applying for a bus pass: Unfortunately, the County Council no longer offers bus passes in paper form. To apply for a concessionary bus pass, you need to ring 0345 045 1367, or go online. To apply online: www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/residents/travel-roads-and-parking/buses/free-bus-pass/. The postcode

field is designed to prevent non-Cambridgeshire postcodes from being processed through the system. The postcode needs to be entered as three digits, a space, and then the last three digits, with the characters in upper case as it would appear on a postal address. Do please get in touch if you're experiencing any frustrations!

Royston and District Community Transport: More volunteer drivers from Melbourn are needed by Royston and District Community Transport, which provides a vital service for those with no access to private transport or who need more than our bus service can provide. Please ring 01763 245228 to find out more about what volunteering entails.

County Council new premises: Construction has started on the County Council's new Civic Hub (HQ) in Alconbury. The site is notable for its lack of public transport. The Shire Hall site will be leased and developed into an hotel and office space by Brookgate, the CB1 (Cambridge Station area) and Cambridge North Station developers.

New Archives Centre, Ely: The archives held in Shire Hall basement have now been moved across into the repository of the new building, where they will be stored in environmentally controlled storage for the first time. Archive boxes are scanned by the archive team's barcode scanning unit. The barcode system matches a historical document's entry on the online database to that specific document's location, thereby enabling staff to locate a document within seconds no matter where it may be stored in the new centre's amazing seven miles of shelving!

Opportunity to work with children and young people with disabilities: The Community Support Service and CamPlay provide short breaks to children and young people with additional needs, aged 0-18 years, as part of the Cambridgeshire Local Offer for children and young people with disabilities.

"We offer support in the home and community, Saturday clubs, community clubs and holiday clubs throughout the county of

Cambridgeshire. We are always looking for enthusiastic staff to join our team. We are currently recruiting for both services on a relief contract basis. The flexible nature of the job provides a way of ‘topping up’ hours in holidays, after school, weekends and evenings. We also provide a comprehensive training programme and support in working with children and young people with a wide range of learning and physical disabilities, which are skills that can be brought back to your existing job. We are based in Huntingdon but have work available across Cambridgeshire.

“If you would be interested in applying or have any questions, please get in touch on Community.SupportServices@cambridgeshire.gov.uk or 01480 379 800. We have ongoing recruitment with regular interviews, and you can visit www.publicsectorjobseast.co.uk to apply.”

Dear People of Melbourn – Missing Cat

I am trying to reach everyone in Melbourn after a sighting a couple of months ago of my missing cat Sparkle.

She disappeared during the night of Friday 20th September 2019 from Elin Way in Meldreth and unfortunately, apart from the sightings near The Moor I’ve not had any further news.

I would like to extend my thanks to everyone I have spoken to and the responses from people on the Facebook groups locally that have been so positive and supportive. Also, a huge thank you to Medivet, Melbourn and Meldreth Group and the Melbourn Neighbourhood Watch to name but a few.

There is another cat which looks similar to Sparkle called George who lives near The Hub in Melbourn. For this reason and for any other cats who appear similar I would only ask that you let me know so I can investigate rather than displacing other cats from their homes. I’m sure you all understand that I don’t want more missing cats but really want to hear any news, both good and bad.

Can I ask that if you hear of anything or have seen Sparkle out and about since the 20th then please call Nick on 01763

261452 or message 07769 693830 so I can direct my search in that area.

Warmest regards and huge appreciation for reading this.

Nick Gane

South Cambs District Council issues

Environment and Local Planning: South Cambs District Council has been independently assessed as being the most successful council in the region for promoting the environment in all its activities and operations.

It is not the business of the Council to promote any sites. Rather, in preparation for the next Local Plan, landowners have been invited to submit sites for development to the Council for consideration. A lot of sites have been submitted but only a small percentage will be successfully allocated in the Local Plan. This is a statutory process that happens for every Plan period.

The overall number of new homes required to be built in the Plan period is set by Central Government. If the Council proposes a Local Plan that doesn't adhere to Government's target, the Inspector is highly unlikely to approve it – opening the way for speculative developers, as we've seen so much of in the past few years when we had no approved Local Plan. You can learn more about it here: <https://www.greatercambridgeplanning.org>

Zero Carbon Communities Grants – local winners: The new South Cambs District Council Zero Carbon Communities Grant has inspired a burst of inspiration from many quarters, resulting in a competitive field with a multitude of applications. We're delighted to report on two local winners: 1) Melbourn Parish Council with Melbourn Village College students as the driving force behind the 'Community Refill Project', which will see the installation of new publicly accessible refillable water bottle stations around the MVC site in a drive to reduce single use plastics. 2) The Meldreth, Shepreth and Foxton Community Rail Partnership is collaborating with Govia Thameslink Railway on improved cycle parking facilities at Meldreth Station. The CRP's Zero Carbon grant will supplement GTR's Dept for Transport

Cycle Rail grant and means that new cycle parking facilities will include secure parking as well as a Cycle Repair Café element. More details to come.

Empty Houses: There are currently 648 unoccupied houses in South Cambridgeshire – that’s quite a large village-worth! The Council gives advice and assistance to get property back into use – please get in touch if you’d like to know more.

Helping the Forces: A new mobile app has been launched to signpost members of the armed forces community in Cambridgeshire and Peterborough to support and advice in their area. The free ‘Forces Connect’ app is aimed at serving personnel, veterans, and their families who can now find local services and organisations offering support in just four clicks. To download the app, search “Forces Connect” in Apple’s App Store or the Google Play Store.

Any questions or concerns, complaints or ideas? Please don’t hesitate to get in touch any time – we would be delighted to help in any way we can.

Susan van de Ven, County Councillor, Susanvandeven5@gmail.com, 07905325574 | Jose Hales, District Councillor, jose@josehales.me.uk, 07703 262649 | Philippa Hart, District Councillor, philippajoyhart@gmail.com, 07811 323571

Changing attitudes by education **www.RoADARC.org.uk**

Can you stop before you hit the vehicle in front?

The important thing to understand about deceleration (i.e. braking) is that the process is not constant. You might think that a car travelling at 60mph would shed a larger proportion of its speed at the onset of braking. The opposite is true.

Over a total stopping distance of (say) 40 metres, over half the speed is wiped off in the last 10 metres. It takes 30 metres to get from 60mph to 30mph; just 10 metres to get from 30mph to zero.

You are on a motorway travelling at 70mph, then you remember the chocolate bar that you hid in the glove box and go for the grab. When you look up, there is a sea of brake lights across all three lanes. In the second that passed the traffic has slowed to 50mph. By the time you react they are doing 30mph with a rate of deceleration a lot faster than yours. You can't match them, so unless you have the clear distance between you and the vehicle in front you find yourself at the wrong end of the braking curve and about to collide with the vehicle in front.

A vehicle builds up kinetic energy by a factor of its weight multiplied by the square of its speed, and as a result the braking distance increases exponentially (this is one of Sir Isaac Newton's laws of physics). So, if you double the speed, you quadruple the braking distance; and a Fiat Cinquecento moving at 40mph hits with the same energy as a Juggernaut doing 10mph.

RoADARC's mission is to promote safer driving and riding.

Our training is free with an annual membership fee of £10. Visit our website at www.roadarc.org.uk for further details.

This issue's top tips:

- In dry conditions allow a minimum of 2 seconds between you and the vehicle in front, and in the wet at least 4 seconds.
- Maximise grip with the road surface by having your tyres at the correct pressure and with a good depth of tread.

NATURE

Nature - Melwood Local Nature Reserve

As I write this on a cold, wet winter's day, Melwood is very quiet. Most of the creatures are sheltering, with a few hibernating. The trees have lost their leaves and there is a soft covering around the wood protecting the seeds and bulbs waiting to arrive in

their splendour about the time that you read this.

Luckily we have the birds that stay, or migrate to us for the winter, and the wood is still full of their song as these small species clean up the insects left behind from the summer. We have identified over 40 bird species in the wood over the years. Grey wagtail, fieldfare and redwing are winter visitors that have been spotted in the past, goldcrests and coal tits are generally present, and the tawny owl is more likely to be around in the wood in the winter.

Mammals that are likely to hibernate in or around Melwood are hedgehogs and pipistrelle bats. Hibernation is a state of decreased metabolism and hence inactivity. The particular metabolic changes distinguish it from normal sleep. Some amphibians go into a similar state of torpor; a state involving a significant drop in body temperature but not full blown hibernation.

When hibernating, a hedgehog's body temperature gets close to that of the outside. The heart rate slows to about 20 from 190 beats per minute, with hardly any breathing activity. It can thus survive the winter months on the fat stores built up in the summer and autumn. Four of the butterflies regularly seen in the wood also hibernate over winter.

Bats hibernate because their normal food source of insects is scarce during the winter. We have bat boxes in the wood to assist this process. There is a similar adaptation of bodily functions as the hedgehog, with reduced breathing activity and heartbeat.

If the early spring is mild, the creatures will have come out of hibernation by now and will be actively feeding to restore their reserves. Birds will be becoming more active and will soon be preparing their nesting quarters. In 2019 a great spotted woodpecker reared a brood in a natural hole in a tree trunk in the wood. The wood also has several birdboxes distributed towards the back, and one of the winter work group tasks is to check the boxes, clean them out and repair if necessary. When we cleaned them in December we found that 9 of the 13 had been used, a very good percentage. Unfortunately, owls have not yet made

use of their specially designed box, but the squirrels seem to like it, gnawing the wood to get access!

Early flowers will be already appearing, with snowdrops being one of the first. We have a variety in Melwood that was spotted on New Year's Day this year. There are two other snowdrop cultivars in the wood, one which flowers relatively late. In the last couple of years there has been a magnificent display and we have had to move some of the clumps off the side of the paths to prevent damage. Later there will be the flowering bulbs and we hope that our newly planted natural daffodils will begin to appear this year to join the hybrid varieties already in the wood (planted by the Girl Guides in the early years of conservation). We hope that the natural bluebells will also appear in larger numbers in April to complement the Spanish variety.

There used to be quite large patches of primroses, cowslips, oxlips and hybrids flowering from April, but these were not as extensive last year – possibly rabbits eating the young plants after the chicken wire protection got disturbed... The small dark purple flowers of Dusky Cranesbill will also first appear in April, lasting sometimes into early June. Hopefully the few wood anemone plants seen last year will also have spread and will flower again this year, and we have recently planted some foxgloves.

The Brimstone is usually the first butterfly to be seen, as it can emerge from hibernation in warm weather and go back to sleep again if things go downhill. Peacock, Comma and Small Tortoiseshell are safer if they wait until the warmth is more settled. Other butterflies will begin to appear again in April if the spring is mild. Last year Peacock and Brimstone butterflies made an early appearance and Orange tips were in good numbers by mid- April. The Holly Blue was recorded but seems to be far more at home in gardens. By mid-April the Speckled Wood was present in sunny areas and along the sunny side of the meadow, confirming its status as the wood's most consistent resident, and a Red Admiral was spotted in mid-April as the first example of this migratory species.

We hope that you will be able to wander through the wood as it wakes up after its winter slumbers and experience the rich variety this small nature reserve can offer.

FEATURE

Working for the United Nations World Food Programme

My name is Peter Guest and I still consider my home to be Melbourn. My mother lives in Water Lane and I visit several times a year. I thought it may be of interest to write this story to let you know what a boy from Melbourn has gone on to do far from the village. I hope it may also inspire and encourage people to see the world.

We moved to Water Lane in 1962 into a new bungalow. I'm told I helped my father move while my brother was being born; I can't imagine I was much help as I was two. A few years later, I attended Melbourn Primary School from 1964 to 1971 and then moved to the Village College. I went to Sunday school at the church, was a Boy Scout in the village, did a paper round after school and at one stage worked in the Fish and Chip shop as a Saturday boy. After leaving the Village College I had plans to be an engineer, and went on to study engineering at the University of Manchester.

My life took a different turn when, after graduating, I took a job as a teacher with Voluntary Service Overseas and went off to Cross River State, Nigeria for two years to teach Introductory Technology. I think I learnt far more than I taught anyone; I know I learnt a lot about myself. It was a remote village and for a while I lived in the village chief's house. Subsequent years have taken me to many countries for extended periods. On leaving Melbourn Village College in 1976, I never would have believed this was a possibility. Thank you Melbourn for a wonderful upbringing.

Today, as I approach retirement, I am working for the United Nations World Food Programme (WFP) as the Emergency Coordinator for the Rohingya Refugee Crisis in Cox's Bazar, Bangladesh. WFP is the UN's specialist food support agency, and a leader in addressing humanitarian needs around the world. I have worked with them for 24 years in countries including Cambodia, Sudan, Indonesia, the Philippines, Afghanistan, Nepal, and now Bangladesh.

You will surely have seen on the news over the last few years the hundreds of thousands of refugees who were forced to flee Myanmar to the safety of Bangladesh. In late August 2017 conflict broke out in North Rakhine State, Myanmar (Burma) and about 700,000 refugees crossed the border in the space of a month, either on foot or by boat, carrying their few belongings, their elders and their children.

The Bangladesh Government opened their borders and allowed the refugees to settle in Cox's Bazar District. There were already some refugees in Bangladesh and the total is now approaching 850,000 people, about the population of Liverpool. Bangladesh was already a congested country with a large population, but the Government of Bangladesh has been very generous and supportive, both to allow these refugees sanctuary and protection and to facilitate the work of all the aid agencies.

The town of Cox's Bazar got its name from a British diplomat, Captain Hiram Cox, born 200 years before I was, in 1760. He came here with the British East India Company, also to deal with a century-long conflict and refugee situation in the late 18th century. Sadly, Captain Cox died young. The town itself is now the largest tourist resort in Bangladesh, with an extensive 75 miles of beautiful sandy beach, very nice for a walk after a stressful week.

I arrived in Cox's Bazar in early November 2017, by which time most of the refugees had been settled in what is referred to as the Mega Camp in Ukhiya, about 40 miles south of the town. Basic shelter had been provided and a coordination structure

had been established. The role of WFP is to make sure everyone has adequate food to eat to maintain their health. Initially we distributed physical food rations of three commodities (rice, lentils and vegetable oil). The scale of the operation was, and still is, enormous. We distribute more than 10,000 metric tons of food every month: at 20 metric tons a lorry, that is over 500 lorries a month.

The refugee camps are relatively congested, on hilly terrain, and are prone to flooding during the monsoon season; these rains can trigger landslides. There is a lot of work to be done to stabilize the terrain, ensure proper drainage and build access roads so that food and other essential items can be delivered.

Upon arrival, many refugees were in poor health, and suffering from malnutrition, so WFP established nutrition feeding centres for all children under five and for pregnant and feeding mothers. A specially-formulated cereal (wheat/soya blend) is provided to prevent malnutrition. There is no formal education in the camps and learning centres were established where children can receive some basic education. WFP provides all children who attend a learning center with micro-nutrient rich biscuits to get them through their day. WFP also helps create employment opportunities where refugees can help to build and maintain the camps.

To help improve the dietary diversity, WFP worked with the local community to establish 'eVoucher shops', where refugees can use a card, similar to a debit card, giving them access to 20 different food items. This allows individual choice and is a more dignified approach to receiving assistance. It is also a good business opportunity for the host community, helping to reduce any tensions. Officially the refugees are not allowed to use cash, so the system was designed around non-cash transactions. Each family receives a monthly top-up on their card equivalent to £6.90 per person per month, which they can spend in any of the designated shops. There were a lot of challenges to establish the system, requiring biometric (fingerprints) of all refugees

for verification purposes. Shops had to be built and traders contracted to support the process. We are still on the way, with today just over half a million (507,000) refugees receiving food through the eVoucher; the remaining refugees are still receiving food supplies.

There are many international and national agencies here working alongside WFP: many of the United Nations agencies as well as non-governmental organisations. The massive scale means massive costs – mostly funded by governments around the world, including the British Government, which enables these vulnerable refugees to survive.

We have a motto in WFP Cox's Bazar, Towards a culture of Respect, Dignity and Equality. Often when talking to my staff I explain how the refugees are no different to us. This may sound a little strange coming from a Melbourn boy, but when I talk with refugees many of them come from villages and their aspirations for life are no different to ours: an education for our children, good health, a nice place to live, a job and to be safe.

If you have an Instagram account and you are a dog lover, you should follow our WFP dog Foxtrot humanitarian_pup. He found us during a beach clean-up and he came to stay. I'm not sure he knows how famous he is, but he has more than 5,000 followers.

Nature

Nature - Waterlight A journey along the river Mel

Film showing at the David Attenborough Building, Cambridge University.

This was the most prestigious showing of the film so far. Located in the important David Attenborough building, off Pembroke Street at the heart of the University, it was hosted by

the Cambridge Conservation Forum and the Cam Valley Forum.

The David Attenborough building, to quote from a news report on its opening: *“acts as a collaborative hub for the conservation community within Cambridge and beyond. Creating a collaborative and dynamic space in which experts from academia, practice and policy interact and work together on a daily basis helps shape the future of life on Earth and the relationship between people and the natural environment on which we depend for our own wellbeing and survival.”* It is visually stunning and the reception is backed by a wall of live plants stretching several stories high.

The CCF and CVF are significant conservation organisations in Cambridge. The CCF, a founder member of the Cambridge Conservation Initiative (CCI), assists in co-ordinating the activities of over 60 conservation organisations in and around Cambridge, including practitioners and researchers. Cam Valley Forum is the co-ordination body for an extensive network of partners working to protect and improve the environment of the River Cam and its tributaries, including the River Mel.

It was therefore a very significant venue in which to show the film. The event was fully booked (about a hundred spaces) several weeks before the event, indicating the interest in this topic. The audience comprised representatives of conservation organisations and river groups in and around Cambridge, stretching as far afield as Baldock, Bury St Edmunds and Milton Keynes.

CCF had kindly provided refreshments, and this provided an opportunity for individuals to mingle and share their river experiences and conservation initiatives. Several groups expressed an interest in developing a similar project and there were expressions of interest for showing the film at other venues.

After an enjoyable break the evening continued with questions to a well-informed panel of:

- *Rob Mungovan*: Wild Trout Trust (who had also assisted with Mel restoration);

- *Ruth Hawksley*: Wildlife Trust (who had also advised on Mel restoration);
- *Steve Hawkins*: Chair of the Mel River Restoration Group;
- *Mike Foley*: Bird expert and Member of CVF.

Questions mainly focused on abstraction and augmentation issues and how organisations could bring pressure to bear on the environmental agency, water companies and the government to improve the situation.

Reference was made to the Cam Valley Forum Manifesto, a recent analysis of the threats to the Cambridgeshire chalk streams. It can be downloaded from: www.camvalleyforum.uk

After this session, there was a further opportunity to mingle and discuss issues. During these conversations, there was a lot of praise for the film and, despite requesting comments for improvement ideas, all comments were positive.

Julia Grosse – event co-ordinator for CCF said: *“It was lovely to hear the fond memories of this little river. It goes to show how important places are to people. A great mix of history, nature and culture, beautifully filmed. I am now looking into how we can incorporate water use/ chalk stream ecosystems into the Earth Optimism event next April – it will be good to give people ideas of ways to reduce water use and raise awareness of their rare local habitats”*.

Dr Humphrey Crick, CCF Chair initially commented: *“The film was superb – congratulations!”* He then went on to email: *“Chalk streams are little jewels in our countryside and Waterlight shows this to perfection! The film highlights how these national treasures are threatened by a range of pressures but also how local communities can come together to conserve them, a wonderful example to show how each of us can make a difference”*.

Stephen Tomkins, from CVF, said: *“It was brilliant idea and the whole project was a model of community achievement. The serenity of the film is the abiding impression. It’s a gem...”*

Jacky Surron Adam, chair of Cam Transition, was also delighted by the film: *“Waterlight is a fine work weaving history,*

geography, nature, and communities: past and present. The beautiful imagery, poetry and music were incredibly moving; I felt joy, sadness, hope and wonder by turn. The interwoven lives of nature and humans through history meander like the river itself, and now converge once more with the help of the Mel River Restoration Group. A band of dedicated locals who've worked and nurtured this chalk stream back to health. At heart, it's an eloquent story of communities – I absolutely loved it”.

An even more intriguing comment was: *“For early man water was the only way it could see itself. I wonder if the murky view one now gets on peering into our chalk streams is a reflection of our blurred attitude to the importance of our natural world”.*

After a couple hours of intense interaction, the audience left the building fired up about the film, the wonder of our chalk streams and the need to ensure their survival.

Travelogue

Yunnan and Sichuan – the end of the range

In this account, we reach the eastern end of the Himalayas, the foothills that stretch into the northern part of the Chinese provinces of Yunnan and Sichuan. Yunnan is bordered by Myanmar to the West and Laos and Vietnam to the South. It is therefore another enigma with a history intermingling Chinese culture with that of the Tibetan Plateau and South East Asian societies.

Yunnan provides the last of the magnificent Himalayan snow-capped peaks (highest elevation 6,740 metres). However, it also has lush tropical valleys to the South kept moist by the mountain barrier to the West. This results in it being China's most bio diverse province, probably the richest botanically in the world's temperate regions, harbouring 42.6% of all protected plant

species and 72.5% of all protected wild animals.

It was settled very early and the Yuanmou Man, a *Homo erectus* fossil, was unearthed in the 1960s. This was considered to be the oldest known hominid fossil in China although there is an ongoing debate about the dating.

Some theories speculate that the Tibetan plateau was populated initially by migration from the Yunnan region.

It is also the most culturally diverse province in China with 7 main indigenous ethnic groups plus Tibetan and Han Chinese, with 25 ethnic minority languages. Ethnic minority groups are now 34% of the population following several Han Chinese inwards migrations over many centuries.

One of the most interesting ethnic groups are the Naxi (Nashi). They traded over the dangerous overland 'Tea and Horse' caravan routes linking with Sichuan, Tibet and India. The Nashi have their own writing, their own distinct language and pictographic script, musical scores and native dress. They also make their own paper.

Naxi society in the northern region is matrilineal and matrilocal, i.e. parentage is descended from the mother (like the Jewish tradition) and all children live in the house of the mother, from birth until death. Traditionally there was not an institution of monogamous marriage. Men and women had multiple partners and, as a result, children did not always know their biological father. The children were raised by the inhabitants of the household, the maternal uncles assuming the role of "father", as we envision it in the West.

There is also a Chinese muslim group the Hui, which are widespread over China. It maybe that they are descendants of western silk road and middle east traders that have interbreed with the Han Chinese. Their main distinguishing features are their religion and clothing – a distinctive white hat for the males. The cuisine is distinctive and very delicious.

The other main religions in Yunnan are Tibetan Buddhism and Taoism. However most of the population also practice traditional indigenous religions including the Chinese folk religions among

the Han Chinese, Bimoism among the Yi peoples and Benzhuism among the Bai people. Confucianism is also widespread.

Yunnan is now one of the main wine growing areas in China with vineyards supported by, for instance Moët. I can attest to the quality of the wine!

The neighbouring province, Sichuan, to the north, also has a border with Tibet and a significant Tibetan population. The Tibetan inhabited areas are called Kham. The Khampas had a reputation for being effective fighters and were heavily involved in the 1959 uprising against the Chinese government.

Sichuan was important for the Tea Horse trade routes. The Ancient Tea Horse Road rivalled the Silk Road trade routes for importance (and linked to them) and was certainly tough to travel going over very high mountain passes. It was first used for the tea trade in the Tang Dynasty (7th century). Sichuan and Yunnan are believed to be the first tea-producing regions in the world, possibly starting in the 1st century BCE. It was also used for transporting salt, another key commodity.

Sichuan is now famous for its panda population and is therefore a major tourist destination

There is a very important 14th century Tibetan Buddhist monastery: Derge (Gonchen) which used to make its own paper and has a substantial wood block printing house built in 1729. There are now a significant number of large revived monasteries some with significant western followers.

Linked to the revival of Tibetan Buddhism I recently researched a project developed by a monk who requested help from the local mountain deities in a village in Sichuan to help protect his biodiverse valley from development. This valley had been discovered as a sacred valley (Beyul) by local religious figures. When a monk from the local monastery discovered that there was the possibility of the introduction of a hydropower plant and even mining, he encouraged the local community to build special sacred structures: Lhatse, to request support from the local mountain gods for protection of the valley. This was supported by the production of a book on the biodiversity of

the valley and discussions on environmental law with the local government officials. So far there has been no development.

For our next travel account we will be leaving the Himlayas and picking up the routes followed by the silk road merchants, some of whom may have finished up in Yunnan.

Bruce Huett

Photographs on pages 26 and 27 by Bruce Huett. Photograph above by Ernest H. Wilson

NATURE

Waterlight – A journey along the river Mel

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EDUCATION

Melbourn Playgroup and Moos

Melbourn Playgroup first opened in the 1960s. In January 2011 we moved to our new room on the site of Melbourn Primary School.

Melbourn Playgroup and Out of School Club are delighted to be able to announce that they have retained an Ofsted inspection rating of OUTSTANDING.

We look forward to submitting a full article in the next issue of Melbourn Magazine.

Melbourn Primary School is seeking new governors to carry on the school's great work

Chris Shadforth, Chair of Governors, writes:

Melbourn Primary School is a happy and caring school with a strong sense of community. Alongside our fantastic head teacher and her staff, my fellow governors and I play an important role in the education the school's children. We are very proud of the difference we can make, and I am pleased to say that we are now looking to invite some new governors to join our experienced team.

Why become a school governor?

Many of us often want to 'give something back' but aren't always sure how to go about it. I joined Melbourn Primary's board of governors in 2018 for two reasons. First, as a parent, I wanted to know that my children were getting the very best education possible. Second, I wanted to develop some of my own professional skills. I have found the role to be challenging, but hugely rewarding. I particularly enjoy working with a

group of dedicated Board members from a variety of different backgrounds to make a real difference.

I want more people to get involved. Anyone over the age of 18 can be a governor and you don't need to be a parent. Indeed, we have a great number of parents on our Board already! That said, I want to hear from anyone who feels they have the time and energy to support the school.

What can you expect as a governor?

As a governor, we are not involved with the day-to-day running of the school. Our main responsibilities are to set the strategic vision and direction for the school, approve the budget and to hold the senior leadership team to account. Governors normally attend meetings in the evening, and read and comment on reports. We also occasionally visit the school to see first-hand what is happening in the school and the impact we are making. In sum, I would say the commitment works out to be about 1–2hrs per week.

I'm interested. What next?

I would be delighted to have conversations with anyone who is keen to be a member of the Board. Please contact me at chair@melbourn.cambs.sch.uk.

Sawston Village College Adult Learning

New Year, New Challenges?

Why not challenge yourself to try something new?

We have a wide range of courses to choose from on both our Adult and Family Saturday workshops in March.

Our Family Workshops take place on Saturday 7 March and include: Bollywood Dance, Cookery, Art and Blast off into Spanish.

These workshops are aimed at children over the age of 8, with a maximum of 2 children per parent/carer. The cost will be

£10.00 per child, adult FREE. There will be an additional charge for cookery ingredients.

Please keep an eye on our website and Facebook page @ sawstonadulted for updates and booking information.

We also have some fabulous Adult Workshops running on Saturday 14 March.

These include: Mindfulness Meditation for Health & Wellbeing, Indian Street Food, Drums for Beginners, Sugar Flowers, Bollywood and Contemporary Dance, Fused Glass Jewellery and Creative Writing. Costs range from £21.00 to £42.00 depending on the course.

There are places available on some of our weekly courses which can be joined at any time in the term.

For information on all our courses, please visit www.sawstonadulted.org or contact us on 01223 712424, community@sawstonvc.org

Workers' Educational Association (WEA) – Royston

The present course is on-going and will end on 31st March. The next course is expected to start in September. Venue: Heritage Hall, Royston Town Hall. www.enrolonline.wea.org.uk

FEATURE

A Walk on the Wild Side

Walking outside in the fresh air is recommended advice for all of us. It promotes good health in mind and body. It is also a source of pleasure and relaxation and can be undertaken alone or in groups. If you or your group have a favourite walk in or around Melbourn please share it with our readers. For further information contact the magazine.

Depart Melbourn's Orchard Road at the striking dome-topped URC Church – three hundred plus years on this site – and turn into Meeting Lane. Tip your hat (metaphorically speaking) to your possible ancestors whose Melbournian remains lie in the Church's old cemetery to your left and right.

Step out along Meeting Lane and, as you approach its end see prominently on your left a steeply pitched recently re-thatched roof, very professionally executed, with two sparring hares standing proud and tall adorning the roofline. Then turn right into Melbourn's High Street and admire what lies before you. Note the High Street's still elegant and ever so graceful leftward sweep which does justice to the lovely old residential buildings standing on the curve to either side and claiming the eye as you approach. When you reach the start of the sweep, cross the High Street and enter the majestic Rose Lane.

Rose Lane is a joy to traverse: no footpath and single car narrow; small and well-maintained front gardens either side; attractive family homes of all kinds – large, small, old, not-so-old, some imposing others coquettish but all exceedingly well-spoken. On your left, having passed the mouth of Cross Lane, wonder to yourself what motivated a Melbournian of old to name his or her family home "Killarney"? Also, further along the lane and on your right the equally thought-provoking name "Peace Cottage"? Even further along on your right, in the distance and approached side on, there squats a solid, singular, imposing, white-washed, thickly thatched old cottage. Above a front door which opens directly onto the lane, atop the thatch and visible against the clouds stands a comfortably perched skilfully crafted bird with elongated trailing tail fixed permanently to the thatch. Is this, perhaps, a clear statement of a permanent right of residence shared with the human residents below? Folly for sure as nothing is permanent in the world we have now created.

Turn right out of Rose Lane into Dolphin Lane. Continue slightly downhill to the junction with Station Road and then pass over to the other side which has a footpath. Most importantly, take great care to look both right and left for traffic rounding the

nearby blind bends off Station Road as the traffic sometimes approaches from each at speed. Do, indeed, take care lest while enjoying a 'walk on the wild side' with your thoughts for company you create great consternation and 'pass over' in a manner you had not intended! Having gained the opposite pavement, approach and observe the fine Sheene Mill hotel and restaurant – with the vibrant ESSE now on your right – together one of Melbourn's landmarks. Continue along the pavement reaching the sign-posted pathway to the right leading to Meldreth train station.

Walk smartly along the narrow, twisting, downhill path – shoulders back, arms swinging, deep breaths – and sense it's rural essence: dense undergrowth to either side; overhanging branches; pleasant trees masking the traffic sounds; leading into and then through a small copse of well-spaced, light-dappled trees. Under the road bridge with its urban multi-coloured murals of graphic street art – well-themed but unfortunately showing their age as are we all. And then, reassuringly rural, the pungent advance notice of the locally-monikered 'turkey farm' on your left. Passing quickly by in reflective mood – reflecting, perhaps, on the exuberance and confidence of once youthful artists or how precisely does our food end up on our table – see spread out to the right a vista of flat, wide, open, crop-filled fields. To the left, more fields of crops and on the horizon a road bridge rising into the sky. If timing is correct and appropriate stars are aligned and good fortune is yours to grasp then, for a very few seconds, you might be blessed as I sometimes am to see crossing that distant bridge a small red post-office van. Thus are brought to mind treasured memories of reading stories of "Postman Pat and his black and white cat" traversing the country lanes and bridges of a mythical "Greendale" to two enthralled children. With one eye on that distant bridge and a possible similar happy memory of your own, fix the other eye downwards on the narrow well-trodden path in much need of repair but which leads straight and true to the rising bulk that is Meldreth train station. Step out. Onward – and in due course unfortunately,

upward. But only very briefly and with the benefit of opportunity then to lean on the hand-rails of Meldreth Station's uppermost steps and admire immediate environs and distant horizons.

Reflect, as you tread the path stretching through open crop-filled fields to either side, on the visible surrounding infrastructure legacy left to us by the skills and vision of our leaders of old: humming telephone wires overhead; the distant narrow twisting road and bridge linking Melbourn and Meldreth; the railway tracks still carrying trains that stop at Meldreth Station to disgorge passengers, some now with bicycle or scooter, for onward journey to employment at Melbourn's several commercial or technology centres; and the legacy that is this old path itself. Wonder again on the possible legacy our present leaders are planning to leave on our behalf and, pausing to catch your breath, climb three flights of twelve steps each leading to the railway bridge, cross over, down the steps on the other side, and then turn right along the short path out of the station and into Meldreth's High Street. Over the centuries Meldreth village developed in a clear linear fashion always projecting along its lengthy High Street a quiet civility and graciousness that is still visible. On entry the High Street provides a relaxing ambience and, most importantly for present purposes following the Everest like climb to Meldreth Station, a walking surface that is not steep.

To left and right, adjacent the narrow High Street, are small, decades old, cul-de-sac developments of attractive modern houses. The first such on the right remains sheltered and enhanced by a linear dense road-side run of mixed trees which starts with a grassed entrance way attractively dotted with its own trees and bushes. Altogether the outcome of a thoughtful decision by some possibly long gone developer or planning authority. Either or both acted thoughtfully in a time when acting thoughtfully was accepted as simply the right thing to do. Yes, indeed, there was such a time. The evidence for it is a run of trees on Meldreth High Street today that is alive and bustling with nature and birdsong for all to observe, admire, listen and enjoy. Tramping along the pavement, the form and

setting of the houses and gardens one passes along the length of both sides of the High Street also demonstrate immense variety. Each presents its own distinctive face and charm to the interested walker. Some fine features – unique, surprising, attractive, curious – are displayed openly for all to see. Others, equally wondrous to behold, are tucked away discretely but still available to glimpse and admire. A brisk few minutes brings arrival at Meldreth Village Hall with its traditional clock face – glass-fronted and gleaming – above the door. Accurate to the minute – of course, this is Meldreth – and announcing the passing of the hours to its neighbour directly opposite, the handsome Meldreth Primary School. This wayfarer, without stopping to listen and even during school holidays can on occasion hear drifting across six decades or more the childish sing-song chanting of the once learned never forgotten one-to-twelve times tables. And there, standing at the front of the crowded class-room is Brother Francis – right hand raised, first finger pointed skyward and waving to and fro – keeping time and order amongst the chanting scholars. Perhaps age reveals itself not only in weary limbs.

Spirit uplifted yet once more by triggered happy memory, entering the final furlong with destination in sight the arms swing a bit more vigorously and an inch or so is added to the pace. Past the Meldreth post office cum general store, past the respect-commanding noticeboard of Meldreth Parish Council and the village's elected Member of Parliament, and there at last behold Meldreth's standing vision: The British Queen. An elderly but still shapely regal shoulder ready to be fallen upon if necessary stands side-on to the High Street. Accessed from an adjoining carpark the front door is but a mantle to a warm and welcoming bosom for the weary traveller howsoever one arrives. Even republicans are welcome here. In truth this upright old lady reigns over and leads a sprawling, disparate, multi-national, multi-faith, multi-cultural, multi-lingual Commonwealth. She publicly reminds us all of this fact at least twice a year when performing public duty at the Cenotaph on Remembrance

Sunday and from her desk on Christmas Day. Very regrettably all such inconvenient truths have been ignored of late by many in what passes for public policy and public discourse advanced by our leaders. Quickly now, up to the doorway and a long practised entry. A warm greeting from the bar. A seat beside the open crackling fire place. Friendly, familiar, flirtatious banter with the bar staff as fresh coffee is ordered, prepared, and served with pre-warmed cup on a small tray with all necessary ingredients. Relax. Sit back. Chat further if so minded. Enjoy a break and a rest at the mid-way point of ‘a walk on the wild side’.

Hugh Pollock

Part Two of this walk, being a return walk to Melbourn’s URC Church on Orchard Road, will appear in a subsequent issue.

NATURE

Fowlmere RSPB Nature Reserve

In the last issue of the Magazine we reported the water in the mere had dried up at Fowlmere RSPB nature reserve. However, with of plentiful rainfall at the end of 2019 and the start of 2020 the mere and water all around the reserve are now virtually back to normal levels, as can be seen in the image above. This, in turn, has brought in birds and wildlife, although the numbers and species haven’t yet quite recovered. In this article, local birder Ade Cooper sets out his diary for the months of October, November, December and the New Year.

By mid-October, up to 85 Redwing came into roost, but didn’t stay long. Also at least 200 Reed Bunting were seen, a good total. Two Teal, a Kingfisher, a Cettis Warbler and a Snipe were seen around the mere area. The mere had a bit of water, enough to bring in 46 Mallard. At least 5 Chiffchaff could be seen in the scrub.

Remarkably a female Stonechat was briefly spotted on the mere edge and 2 Redpoll flying over. Both are the reserve's first records of the year.

A really pleasant surprise was the discovery of a Barn Owl nesting in the box in front of reed-bed hide, with a single almost fully-grown nestling perching on the nest box shelf and trying to branch out. This is the first time the box has been used for nesting and probably by a different pair to those that raised two young elsewhere on the reserve earlier in the year.

On the third weekend of October, it was sunny and calm when a Skylark or Meadow Pipit flew by. Most unexpected sight were 5 Stonechat: three females were out by the solar farm just off the centenary end, with a male and female appearing in the reeds by the mere. A Teal, 3 Chiffchaff and 2 Snipe were also seen around the mere. Two Siskin were seen in the alders near the Reception hut. A Kingfisher, a Cettis Warbler and the young Barn Owl were all seen on the reserve.

Lots of Black-Headed and Lesser Black-Backed Gulls were heading west and 30-plus Redwing came into roost. I did a count of Reed Bunting coming into roost – a tally of 360 was not bad!

By the end of the weekend it was more overcast. This got the Redwing on the move with over 300 being noted throughout the day – always an enjoyable sight.

By mid-week a juvenile Grey Wagtail was spotted by the old water-cress hut. The bird had plucked a tiny fish out of the water and bashed it on a stone, Kingfisher style, but the slippery prey wriggled and got away.

A few winter Thrushes, 30-plus Redwing, 12 Fieldfare and 2 Little Egret were by the water-cress hut.

The juvenile Barn Owl was spending a lot of time outside its box, jumping around the nearby bushes and branching out. Lots of wing flapping and stretching meaning it won't be too long before the bird's first flight is made!

Towards the end of October, 2 Chiffchaff were still present,

a Snipe, and 14 Golden Plover were seen in the east fields. A showy juvenile Sparrowhawk and over 400 Starling came into roost. One surprise, considering the time of year, was seeing 3 Swallow heading east.

At dusk on the 27th, the juvenile Barn Owl in front of reedbed hide became restless and took its first flight, landing on the mere mud. It looked a bit lost, but was totally fine as the bird flew straight back to the box. It then took a further flight towards the hide giving us a very close-up view before returning to the nest box. An adult Barn Owl was seen hunting in the reed-bed.

At the end of October there was a small amount of rain to keep the mere mud wet but far from full. But there were some interesting sights including 50-plus Goldfinch and at least 6 Siskin. The winter Grey Wagtail continued to visit the mere along with a few Pied's. Teal increasing to 8 and 230 Golden Plover flying high above the reserve. Lots of birds coming into roost. The Reed Bunting numbers had grown to over 400, Redwing and Fieldfare at much smaller numbers, 40 and 20 respectively, although a flock of 100 Fieldfare passed through earlier. There's been a sudden increase in roosting Starling – at least 1200 at the beginning of November.

The highlight of the week was a calling Brambling, that flew down and landed right on top of a small elder bush in front of the reed-bed hide.

Unpleasant, but much needed, rain and strong winds made birding difficult, but thankfully conditions improved. The highlight of the first weekend was definitely the appearance of a female Merlin that came dashing past the reed-bed hide. The Starling roost had suddenly increased in size again – hard to estimate, but possibly 3000-plus birds came in on the 3rd November. They were keen to get in the reeds, so not a lot of flying around beforehand. The nice thing about the roost is that it's so close to the reedbed hide, so when a successful Sparrowhawk came in, the panicking speed of the flock was great to watch, as well as the noise of wings! Much better than the Red Arrows!

The first week in November and it's starting to feel like winter

– grey days. But still some good birds seen over the last few days.

The Starling roost had grown again with at least 4000 birds coming in, a nice sight. Three Sparrowhawk have been eyeing them up. Grey Wagtail and 7 Teal were on the mere. Some real excitement when a juvenile Iceland Gull flew over and joined other Gulls following a plough in an adjacent field. This is the first record of the species at the reserve.

By the second week, recent rain had improved the levels in the mere a little. Up to 10 Teal and a Snipe were present. Two Brambling in the alders near Reception were seen, a female Shoveler was the first for a while and 30 Lapwing in the east fields. A Red Kite flew over, as did an adult Yellow-Legged Gull, and one or two Siskin remain in the alders near the spring hide. A couple of days later an adult Peregrine flew by and a Little Egret was spotted up at the centenary end. The roosting Reed Bunting were around 350 but it was the Starlings that stole the show, the best part of 5000 coming into roost very close to the reed-bed hide, with the Sparrowhawks still causing panic. A Great-White Egret was again seen on the reserve.

The middle of November was very quiet on the bird front, although the Reception hut area was the busiest for passerines (small perching birds) with small numbers of Redwing and Fieldfare feeding in the bushes, along with the Siskin and Goldfinch in the alders. Nice to see the water in the mere gradually increasing; there are now 14 Teal present but little else.

The beginning of December, and it's often a bit quiet over the reserve at this time of year. The cold brought in over 100 Fieldfare and at least 50 Redwing, 30-plus Blackbird and several grey-looking continental Song Thrush. A hungry Barn Owl gave very good views hunting in the daytime along the Guilden Brook, the Little Egret was again seen by the cress-hut. Teal were increasing in number to around 29, and a Water Rail was spotted out on the mere edge. A female Blackcap was seen in the bushes behind the reedbed hide, but didn't stay long. Finding a scapular plume feather of a Little Egret along

the River Shep was exciting! A superb looking first winter male Kestrel was seen in between the reception and Drewers hide (front cover).

The first week in December produced mixed weather. It's great to see a bit of rain has caused the mere to rise again, now halfway to normal depth. And the springs by the cress-hut are also 'working' again! As a result, Teal on the mere have the highest count this winter at 38. A Kingfisher was seen around the loop up the centenary end, a Snipe on the mere edge and over 70 Goldfinch in the alders. A flock of 60 Lapwing seen flying south towards the end of the week, and an unusual record of over 300 Herring Gull feeding in the field opposite the reserve entrance. Never have I recorded such a number in this area!

A sad event was finding a female Fallow Deer with its leg trapped in the wire fence along the entrance drive. I managed to rescue it, but its leg was broken and it was a heart wrenching sight to see the deer trying to walk. Having no means of putting the deer out its misery, I contacted former warden Doug who knew someone who could. Thanks go to him for sorting that.

From mid-December to the end of the month it was incredibly quiet with numbers on the reserve as low as I can remember! While the birding has been at a snail's pace, I occupied myself with a small job. The rubbish in the car park verge, often hidden by bramble cover, annoys me and I was surprised to fill 3 carrier bags of mostly drink bottles and cans. A satisfactory end to the day to get rid of all the mess!

Over the Christmas period, the weather was drab and breezy. On Christmas Eve, a male Mandarin was seen on the mere. Cormorant and Red Kite were seen flying over. Christmas Day was an unbelievably sunny day, the female Merlin made a low flyby over the mere, a Redpoll also flew-by. It was only the second this year. The large numbers of Starling have stopped roosting at the reserve altogether.

At the end of 2019 the only real interest came from two species that have returned much earlier than expected – Little Grebe and Coot. Both species move elsewhere for the winter,

the Little Grebe usually don't return until February. The Coot was the bigger surprise as there has never been a December record at Fowlmere, with breeding birds usually returning in late January at the earliest. The mild weather could be a factor? Four Common Crane flew over, only the 5th on record. There were 128 Species of bird recorded at Fowlmere RSPB in 2019.

This article is a synopsis of the months of October, November, December and the New Year at Fowlmere Bird Reserve taken from the website produced by Ade Cooper and Caroline Scott. To see the full version and other interesting visits Ade and Caroline have undertaken in the UK and abroad, visit: www.cooperandscott.wordpress.com

NATURE

Spotted Flycatchers

Have you got this increasingly rare bird breeding in your garden? Let us know!

In recent years many Cambridgeshire community and parish newsletters, magazines and websites have helped with a County-wide survey of Spotted Flycatchers. These are attractive little migrant birds which are summer visitors to village gardens and churchyards. Although they breed with us, they spend up to nine months of the year travelling as much as 16,000 miles a year between here and their wintering grounds in Southern Africa – Angola and Namibia. This is an increasingly dangerous journey for them, and sadly they are in deep decline. Widespread losses amounted to a 50% decline during 1995-2010, continuing an 90% decline since 1970.

Only a few hundred pairs remain breeding in Cambridgeshire, but most villages still have a pair or two; they rarely breed out in the wider countryside. We are continuing our work to find and monitor nesting pairs. It's almost certain that there are many additional pairs out there of which we are not aware.

Do you have flycatchers in your garden? Will you see one this year, or have you in recent years? The few that remain are here from mid-May to September. And there's lots more to read about our project and Spotted Flycatchers in general at bit.ly/SpotFly

Please email: spofl@cambridgebirdclub.org.uk with any sightings.

Review

Women & Power: A Manifesto

Mary Beard

Whatever one's views on the 2016 Brexit referendum and the recent national election experience, or the outcome it delivered, the treatment meted out to many female MPs during that period was unacceptable by any measure. It is undeniable that an outrageous level of verbal abuse and threats of physical violence – which was widely tolerated and not condemned immediately and comprehensively as it should have been – drove many women from public life. To understand this better I picked up this slim volume which sets out to explain: *“just how deeply embedded in Western culture are the mechanisms that silence women, that refuse to take them seriously, and that sever them (sometimes quite literally, as we shall see) from the centres of power.”* (p xiii).

Mary Beard is both a national expert and a down-the-road local person – who is also down-to-earth and carries her great learning lightly. She can be seen in Cambridge where she is professor of classics at Newnham College, or in the popular medium of television explaining with ease the tangled roots of our society. She is a Wolfson Prize-winning author with an international reputation, being a fellow of the British Academy and a member of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences. In this short book of one hundred and thirty pages she writes

clearly and concisely while presenting complex arguments and details in a readily understandable manner. She demonstrates conclusively that *“When it comes to silencing women, Western culture has had thousands of years of practice.”* (p xiii).

The book is organised into two sections: *“The Public Voice of Women”* and *“Women in Power”*. It contains twenty-seven captioned illustrations throughout – some ancient and others very modern – all conveniently listed at the end. There are also brief references and further reading. In the book’s first section the author demonstrates that woven into our culture, our language, and into the millennia of our history, is the intention not only to exclude women but to parade that exclusion. She reveals that *“public speech was a – if not the – defining attribute of maleness”* (p 17) and *“that unpopular, controversial or just plain different views when voiced by a woman are taken as indications of her stupidity. It is not that you disagree, it is that she is stupid”*. (p 33) And yet it was always the case across all societies that ‘Women Hold Up Half the Sky’. Today, for many reasons, the denial of gender equality is being challenged. There is also an Afterword. This Afterword is particularly insightful as well as being highly personal. In it she addresses the phenomenon of rape – including her own rape as a young PhD student travelling in Italy which she publicly wrote about twenty years ago – and the emergence of the recent #MeToo development.

In the second section the author considers what it would take to ‘resituate’ women on the inside of power and advocates distinguishing *“between an individual perspective and a more communal general one”*. (p 79) In this way she argues that if you cannot fit women into a structure that is already ‘ceded as male’ then you have to change the structure and that means thinking about power differently. Thus, power is not something to be possessed. Rather, it becomes *“the ability to be effective, to make a difference in the world, and the right to be taken seriously, together as much as individually”*. (p 87)

This short book is well worth an evening’s reading to

understand what is taking place around us. It is sub-titled “*A Manifesto*” and as such it is a call to action for women of all ages, abilities and backgrounds. All men are, of course, welcome to answer the call – but of necessity only if they each present and act always with a feminist perspective.

Hugh Pollock

Sisters of Sinai

How Two Lady Adventurers Found The Hidden Gospels

Janet Soskice

Published in 2010 this is a remarkable book about two very remarkable women who were twin sisters. The author, also a woman and a recognised authority in her field, was Professor of Philosophical Theology at the University of Cambridge. She is a gifted writer conveying complex ideas and materials clearly and simply. Her book, based on extensive research (but with all references and footnotes securely tucked away at the end for those so minded) is primarily a joint biography of two intelligent, brave women of the Victorian era who were also extremely generous and fabulously wealthy. The author captures one’s interest in these two intriguing women immediately and holds it throughout so that the book – clearly written and fast-moving – reads in many ways like a work of fiction.

A recent conversation over coffee – about strong women, how women’s’ contribution is written out of history, the glass-ceiling absence of good strong women in the world our sons and daughters today inhabit and the importance of having positive role models, particularly for our daughters – propelled me to read this book. The twin sisters, Agnes and Margaret Smith were born in 1843 in Ayrshire, Scotland and were brought up by their father as their mother died shortly after they were born. The town of Irvine, where they lived, had a strong Presbyterian background and their father ensured that his daughters were educated the same as the boys. They learned several languages

and as a result travelled to the countries of the languages they had learnt. Orphaned at the age of twenty six, they inherited a large amount of money which in part explains how these two women were able to become such great adventurers. They also possessed a pioneering spirit which led them to travel to Cairo, Jerusalem and Cyprus in search of forgotten manuscripts. They discovered many manuscripts of great historical and biblical significance – and translated them into English. The travels were organised by the women themselves, hiring guides and travelling in heavy self adapted Victorian garments for riding camels across the Sinai Desert.

The book is very readable and is as much about the humanity of the twins' life and how they overcame difficulties and prejudices throughout their lives. The latter part of their lives when they settled in Cambridge, founded the University's Westminster College and participated fully in the local cut and thrust of its social and academic elites is also gripping.

Thanks to Janet Soskice's compelling, well-researched book these extraordinary women, positive role models for all, have been given the tribute they deserve.

Anne Field

Churches Together

Lighting Up Melbourn 2020

Flood lighting the church helps with the security and safety of both the building and those who walk through the churchyard. The path through the churchyard is well used and I am sure the flood lighting is appreciated.

Floodlighting however does not come cheap. The church is looking at ways of using low-energy lights for economy and to be more eco-friendly.

Until that can be achieved the Standing Committee has started a sponsorship scheme to help with the cost. The proposal is

that individuals, companies or groups can sponsor a week per year for £20. You can sponsor as many weeks as you like.

If you can help, please contact Gill Sutcliffe 01763 262530.

All Saints and Holy Trinity Churches

The Spring months see the advent of the most important celebration in the church's year: Easter! This year, our Palm Sunday procession with Noah the Donkey will be in Meldreth. Please do join us in Meldreth Village Hall car park at 9.30 am on Sunday 5 April to sing some early morning hymns! There will be services in both churches throughout Holy Week (keep an eye out on our website and Facebook pages for more details), but do please join us on Maundy Thursday (Melbourn 7.30 pm), Good Friday (Meldreth at 10 am, Melbourn at 12 noon and 1.45 pm), Easter Eve (Saturday! Melbourn at 7.30 pm), and Easter Sunday (Melbourn at 8 am, Meldreth at 9.30 am, and Melbourn at 11.15 am). Come and hear the story of Jesus' victory over death – there is something for everyone, at all ages, and with all tastes!

March, April, and May usually see both our churchyards burst into bloom, but, at the time of writing, the avenue of plum trees in Melbourn was due to be felled because the trees had been found to be decayed. We're sad to lose such an iconic feature of the churchyard, but in due course, new trees will be planted. Both churches welcome offers of help to keep things ship-shape and Bristol fashion: do please be in touch if you'd like to help with weeding or tidying.

Both churches are about to begin essential works to keep the buildings safe – we receive no government funding – and both churches are a very important part of the local community. Please help us to ensure both Holy Trinity and All Saints' are here for future generations, and consider making a donation. Do be in touch with me if you can help.

Finally, we've recently launched a floodlighting appeal to help with the cost of lighting the tower at All Saints' – if you'd like to

chip in (sponsorship starts at £20 per week per year) – please do, again, be in touch. Your sponsorship can remain anonymous if you wish!

Happy Easter! (when it comes!)

The Revd Lizzie Shipp

Melbourn United Reformed Church

Tastes of Christmas

The first Saturday of December seems like a long time ago now! Our Tastes of Christmas event held on that day was sociable and well attended, with lots of scrumptious food to eat, cakes and crafts to buy or to win, and food hampers were raffled. We thank everyone who contributed in so many different ways, and thank all who joined us in making the day a success, raising £1514.40 for our church funds.

Carol Singing

The carol singing at the Black Horse on Wednesday 11th December was a really great event with a lovely atmosphere, and the singing at the Melbourn Cross plus a visit to the Coffee Stop on Saturday 21st December was also most successful, raising £212 for Home Start.

Big Christmas Card

We signed a Big Christmas card and made a donation to our chosen charity, as a way of sending Christmas greetings to church friends in lieu of sending individual cards. As a result we collected £125 which was sent to East Anglia's Children's Hospices.

Week of Prayer for Christian Unity

The theme for the week was "Unusual Kindnesses", and commenced with an ecumenical service for Christian Unity, held in our Church on Sunday 19th January at 4pm; all the churches took part. The service centred on St Paul being shipwrecked on Malta, where St Paul and those with him encountered unusual

kindness from the inhabitants. We all enjoyed a bring and share tea after the service and continued fellowship.

World Day of Prayer

This year the ecumenical service will be held in All Saints, on Friday 6th March at 2.30pm. The service has been prepared by the Christian women of Zimbabwe on the theme “Rise! Take Your Mat and Walk”. The focus is on healing, reconciliation, love and peace. There will be tea and biscuits after the service and you are all invited to come along. Incidentally “Zimbabwe” means House of Stone.

Easter

Our Good Friday Service will be at 10 am on 10th April, led by Peter and Eirwen Karner, followed by hot cross buns and coffee in the hall. Easter Sunday Service is on 12th April at 11 am and will include the Sacrament of Holy Communion; coffee will be served afterwards. All are warmly invited to these services.

Melbourn Baptist Church

This quarter sees MBC looking back a little to the week before Christmas when we held our last Buzz Light Year themed children’s holiday club of the year.

The children had a great time doing crafts, playing games, meeting Father Christmas but most of all shouting at Buzz as he leapt about as others joined in, all to the delight of the children!!!!

We warmly welcomed many of the Primary school teachers and children from next door to their own Christmas celebrations; it was such a joy for us to share the space of our church with so many children, their families and teachers.

We were privileged again this year to join with the URC as we took a carol service to the residents of Moorlands Court where we shared chocolates with them afterwards.

Jason Allison our youth leader has settled in nicely as the young people get to know him and likewise him they. He, along

with helpers, runs a young people's youth night on Thursdays in term time between 18.30 – 20.00. It's called "J's club" – maybe if you can work out why it's called J's Club and you'd like to pop in and see if you were right, there's bound to be biscuits and a drink on offer!

This year the 12th of April will be Easter Sunday. Keep an eye on posters and banners outside the Baptist Church with details of what exciting things there will be to do in the lead-up to that very important weekend, when Jesus willingly hung on a cross on Good Friday to forgive our sins, only to finally rise again on Easter Sunday to ascend to Heaven so all who believe may have eternal life.

Bless you all, may your life be enriched.

The Minister for Melbourn Baptist Church, Stuart Clarke.

The Word of God from David Burbridge

Be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God.

Epistle to the Romans, Ch.12 v2

Sports & Clubs

1st Melbourn Rainbows

The end of term was very busy for the Rainbows.

They choreographed firework dances in groups to perform for the other Rainbows and then we sat around our glow-stick fire to sing campfire songs.

We travelled around the UK, all in one evening! We used Rainbow Railways to get from place to place, starting with a trip to Ireland where the Rainbows used torches to find 4 leaf clovers hidden in the garden. Once we had all made a wish the Rainbows split into 3 train carriages, each travelling to a

different destination. England for scones and tea, Scotland for tossing the mini caber and Wales where they decorated love spoons. Continuing with our travelling theme, we made a model village of Melbourn and the Rainbows were able to place many local landmarks. We talked about the buildings around us and what made a landmark special.

We helped a local charity in Cambridge by collecting items for the homeless. The girls exceeded our expectations with the volume of donations. Coats, scarves, hats, sleeping bags, food and toiletries were all collected and the girls talked about the people who needed our help and what it would mean to receive the items the girls had brought in.

Finally, both the Bees group and the Butterflies came together for the last meeting of 2019 at our Christmas party. We made hot chocolate snowmen jars, using marshmallows and chocolate. The girls played pass-the-parcel and we ended the party with a very special presentation.

Since the new badge system has been in place, our girls have all been working really hard to achieve as many badges as possible. We were thrilled when our District Commissioner visited us to present four of our Rainbows with the coveted Gold award! This award is only given out to Rainbows that have earned a set number of badges in each section, both at home and at the meetings. It's a lot of work for the girls and we were extremely proud to have four members gain this award before they left us to go onto Brownies.

We also said goodbye to our two young leaders, Snowdrop and Iris. They are concentrating on their GCSE studies, and we wish them all the best and thank them for their time spent with us.

1st Melbourn Guides

Girlguiding has always striven to equip girls with skills for their future and we have continued to embrace this in 1st Melbourn Guides.

This term we have focussed on completing our First Aid

skills builder badge. We investigated different types of calming techniques and took it in turns to lead a calming session. We next tackled 'temperature terror' and drew posters to illustrate the causes, symptoms and treatment for heatstroke and hypothermia. Our practical first aid skills have also been honed by practising the recovery position and CPR. A first aid challenge evening brought everything together and involved a quiz, a first aid kit memory challenge, bandaging skills and a role play exercise involving an unconscious casualty which required calling an ambulance.

We had an excellent turnout for the Remembrance Day service and carried our unit standard in the parade. We also helped at the All Saints church bazaar and ran the children's tombola.

This term has seen us introduce the 'Take Action' theme, designed to help girls make a difference. We debated global goals such as affordable and clean energy, responsible food production and the protection of our oceans and endangered wildlife. The evening finished with games and an indoor campfire with some of our favourite camp songs.

December saw us round off the term with a favourite activity – cooking! The girls made dishes including pasta bolognese and chilli con carne, and our Christmas cupcake decorating challenge saw some fantastic designs. Finally, we made Christmas door wreaths from Cypress foliage decorated with ribbons, baubles and pinecones.

If you would like to know more about joining our waiting list or becoming a leader, or if you have any skills, charities or interests which you would like to share with us, please contact

Hilary Marsh on: 01763 261443 or email: melbournguides@gmail.com Rachel Challands, Assistant Guider

Melbourn Beavers, Cubs and Scouts

As the clocks change and the evenings get darker, Beavers and Cubs have focused their attention more on indoor activities than the great outdoors.

For the Beavers, this involved undertaking activities for their Builder and Global Issues badges, as well as an entertaining visit from the police.

Meanwhile the Cubs worked towards their Scientist badge by observing plant growth, carrying out experiments with vinegar and growing crystals. They also travelled to Cambridge to the much loved Clip 'n' Climb for a fun evening scaling different kinds of climbing walls. The outdoors wasn't excluded completely, as the dark nights were perfect for learning how to light, cook on and extinguish fires, as well as embarking on a (very muddy) night hike in Shepreth.

Our Scouts have continued camping despite the cold weather, as nothing puts them off sleeping outdoors! We entered two teams into the fiercely contested Scout Green Beret competition, which attracts Scouts from the whole of Hertfordshire and as far south as Plymouth. With over 130 teams competing, our teams achieved 13th and 20th place overall, with one team gaining overall 3rd in the assault course and the other overall 5th in orienteering. A truly amazing achievement by our young people.

Back at their regular meetings, the Scouts have also looked at fire lighting and cooking, gained their Local Knowledge and Model Maker badges, mastered knots and splicing, and many achieved their Pioneer badge, hiked and enjoyed survival camp.

Across Beavers, Cubs and Scouts this coming term looks set to offer yet more exciting opportunities!

All three groups were also involved with the Remembrance Service in Melbourn on Sunday 10th November, and in December our Cubs and Scouts walked with the Royston and District Round Table's Santa Float to collect money from all around Melbourn for local good causes. The term ended with our now traditional pantomime, this year Jack and the Beanstalk, which Beavers, Cubs, Scouts and their families and friends enjoyed together.

1st Orwell Scout group continues to meet on Friday evenings in Melbourn: Beavers (5.30pm) and Cubs (6.45pm) at the

Primary School, and Scouts (7pm) at the Baptist Church. The Group continues to run at full capacity. To add your child to our waiting list, please contact: admissions@1storwellscouts.org.uk

We are very keen to hear from any adults interested in becoming a leader. You could inspire the young people of the village by giving something new a go! The more leaders we have, the more children we can accept from the waiting list.

Please contact: chairman@1storwellscouts.org.uk if you are interested in finding out more.

Royston & District Local History Society

www.roystonlocalhistory.org.uk

Our website shows all the books we have for sale. Many of these result from the considerable work undertaken by our Publications sub-committee. The books may be ordered by post from David Allard 01763 242677. They may also be purchased at the Royston Museum & Arts Gallery in Kneesworth Street (open Wednesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays 10 a.m. to 4.45 p.m.) and some are available at the Cave Bookshop in Melbourn Street or at Royston Library.

Our evening meetings are held in the Heritage Hall (the main hall downstairs), Royston Town Hall on the first Thursday of the month starting at 8 p.m.

- » 5th March The History of Allotments, illustrated Kate Harwood
- » 2nd April Stevenage: the first post-war New Town, illustrated Jo Ward
- » 14th May AGM 7.30 p.m. followed at 8 p.m. by a Travelling Theatre Presentation 'Letters Home the story of Gertrude Bell' Geoff Hales

Annual membership £5 (Sept-Aug) (Under 18s half price) Visitors £2. Our annual coach outing is on Saturday 6th June 2020 to Windsor.

Ramblers' Association Royston and District Group

Our walks programme continues right through the year. For details visit our website:

www.ramblers.org.uk or contact David Allard (01763 242677). Email: david.slade.allard@gmail.com or Lesley Abbiss (01763 273463). There is also a poster displaying walks for the current month in Royston library, Royston Museum & Art Gallery and Melbourn Hub.

We have walks on Sundays, which are normally 5–7 miles in the morning and a similar or shorter walk in the afternoon. Occasionally Sunday walks are Figures of Eight making it possible to do only the morning or only the afternoon. Half-day walks (5–7 miles) are held on Tuesday and Thursday mornings. Our evening walks (3–5 miles) on a different day each week will resume on 27th April 2020. Prospective new members may come on three walks before deciding whether to join. Go to: www.ramblers.org.uk to join.

Melbourn Bowls Club

We are now in the close season, but work is going on in preparing the green for the new season, and we are holding fortnightly whist drives in the clubhouse on alternate Fridays. These whist drives are friendly social occasions rather than serious games, and are used as an opportunity for members to keep in touch during the winter months. They are not confined to club members and a number of non-members attend. If anyone is interested in coming please contact Arthur Andrews (01763 261990) for further information.

Last season saw our Cambridge and District League Division 1 team retain their status, while the Division 5 team gave less-experienced members the opportunity to enjoy competitive games and hopefully progress upward in time. In the Business House League, again our Division 1 team retained their place

while the Division 2 team held their own. The men's team enjoyed a good first season, giving more players competitive experience. The Meldreth League team won their section, but lost in the final to a very strong Sawston team. The Foxton League team had an enjoyable season. This league takes place on Wednesday afternoons and is generally used to give the less-experienced players a taste of competitive bowls.

Our internal club competitions were keenly contested and the winners are listed below:

- Handicap Singles Arthur Andrews
- Mens Singles Gordon Andrews
- Ladies Singles Anne Howard
- Mixed Pairs Pat and Martin Leggett
- Drawn Pairs Lawrence Cunningham and Greg Smith
- Kernaghan Cup Terry Warburton
- Novices Cup Lawrence Cunningham
- Internal League Pat Leggett and Terry Warburton

We held a successful and enjoyable dinner at Sheene Mill in December, where the winners of the club competitions were presented with the appropriate certificates.

Looking forward to the coming season, we expect to be running the same seven league teams, giving both strong, experienced players and less-experienced players appropriate challenges. Also, we will be holding regular events on Saturdays trying out some different forms of the game. In addition, we will continue with the internal league on Thursday mornings as either a pairs or triples, depending on how many entries are received, and also hold Roll Ups every Monday afternoon.

As you will gather, there will be plenty of opportunities for players of all levels to play throughout the season. In this respect we will be holding an Open Day on 3rd May when all will be welcome to come along to the club to try your hand at bowls. It does not matter whether you have never played, tuition will be available, or are an experienced bowler, all will be welcome. We will be delivering leaflets around the village nearer to the date

with more details of the arrangements, or you can contact any of the committee members whose details are given on our website www.melbournbowlsclub.co.uk . If you come along you will find that bowls is a very sociable game and we pride ourselves in believing we are a very welcoming and friendly club.

We also intend to hold our regular Thursday Morning Coffee Mornings throughout the season and these are open to all, whether members or not, and run from 10.30 am until noon. While the majority of those attending are likely to be members, we have in past years had a number of non-members join us and enjoy socialising and watching games being played on the green. If anyone else would like to come they would be made welcome.

We will be celebrating our Centenary in 2022 and are now considering how to celebrate it. We have provisionally arranged matches with the Chelsea Pensioners in 2021 and 2022 as part of the celebrations, and are looking to improve the facilities of the club by incorporating changing rooms and investigating the possibility of replacing the present clubhouse. These are challenging and exciting times for the club and its members.

Barton Bowls Club

Try a NEW SPORT, 3 sessions FREE

Lawn Bowls for 11-99 year olds

(Parents are most welcome to stay and take part with other adults)

All coaching & equipment provided (please wear trainers)

Barton Bowls Club, High St, Barton, CB23 7BG

Open days/evenings: Sat April 25th, 10 am – 4 pm

Thurs April 30th 6 pm & May 7th 6 pm

To register your place: email m.seymour@orwellsbureau.co.uk
website & Facebook link www.bartonbowls.co.uk

Melbourn Dynamos Football Club

All welcome!

<https://melbourndynamosfc.wordpress.com>

<https://www.facebook.com/melbourndynamoscommunity/>

Founded in 2003, Melbourn Dynamos FC is a thriving and friendly community football club that gives boys and girls the opportunity to play regular football, regardless of their experience or ability, at all ages from 3 through to Adults.

We are a successful club, defined by the strength of support from members and families, the praise and recognition of fellow clubs and FA Leagues, the work with our Community partners including Melbourn Village College and Melbourn Parish Council, and of course our players' achievements on the pitch and their support for the community. With the support of our fundraising and community partners, we are making the club more inclusive by assisting players whose families are unable to afford the necessary fees. Our club is committed to developing our players through respect of fair play and a love of the game. This approach wins the respect of other clubs as well as providing the skills and commitment to win leagues and cup finals.

We are pleased to learn that the Managers and Coaches of our many teams are seen as important role models in our community for young players. All are trained to at least FA level 1, so have a clear understanding of child safeguarding as well as physical first aid issues.

At the start of the season a number stepped forward to request training in mental health first aid as well. This training is not compulsory for the club's FA Charter Standard status, but we recognise the importance of mental health issues for young people in our community and will provide this training. We have been very fortunate in receiving financial support from our sponsors for this training and will provide information about this in our next article. In the meantime, if you would like more

information you can follow this link to Mental Health First Aid England – <https://mhfaengland.org/mhfa-centre/about/> .

We regularly host tournaments on behalf of the Royston Crow Youth Football League, and these raise funds for our Club, the new full-size all-weather Astro pitch for Melbourn, and our nominated charity, Tom's Trust (www.tomstrust.org.uk). Our next fund-raising tournaments will be on 2nd and 16th May at the New Recreation Ground next to Melbourn Sports Pavilion.

We are having a strong and exciting season building on the success of our mini-soccer and youth football. Our Sunday League Men's Team is going from strength to strength, bringing in a wave of new players supplementing those graduating from our youth teams. In addition, we have established inclusive football teams to bring the beautiful game to a wider range of players at both youth and adult level. Thanks to the support of our wonderful club volunteers we now have the OWLS (Opportunities Without Limits), a team for adults who play in the Cambs FA Parability League, who have made a great start to their season.

We have also established the Melbourn Dynamos Jaguars, a new inclusive team for children with additional needs or a disability. Melbourn Dynamos is committed to supporting the health and wellbeing of the whole community. Thanks to these new teams, and the continuing growth and success of our youngest players in the Dynamites, we now have more than 300 players in 22 teams at the club. This increase in the number of teams and players this season has meant finding and training a number of new coaches and assistants.

Our Club was awarded the FA's Charter Standard status in 2009 and all of our coaches are DBS checked and FA qualified to at least Level 1. It costs the club £250 to train and provide kit for each of them, and we are grateful for the grant provided by Melbourn Parish Council to support this training and help us provide exercise and fun in a safe environment for so many children and young people.

Many of you will have seen the great news from previous

articles about the full-size, all-weather Astro pitch for Melbourn. Discussions with the Football Foundation have gone well and we are confident that, with the support of our community partners, we will soon have this fantastic new facility. This project is central to the continuing success and development of the club as well as providing a much-needed facility for the village. Thanks to the support of our members and the wider community, our fundraising has generated substantial amounts for this project, and we hope and expect that it will now go forward for the 2020/21 season.

Melbourn Dynamos' continuing success and growth means that we need your help. Please contact David Atkins at secretary.mdfc@gmail.com or Blake Carrington at chairman.mdfc@gmail.com for further information about the following opportunities:

- **Volunteers:** If you would like to contribute to the club as an administrator, fund-raiser, fixtures secretary, coach, match day official or in some other volunteer capacity then we would be pleased to hear from you.
- **Sponsorship Partners:** Our success and development comes at a cost, as we need to pay for the training and kit of our new volunteer coaches as well as ensuring that we have 2 trained coaches for each of our existing teams. In addition, our pitch fees are in excess of £9,000 per season plus maintenance costs. Therefore, as Melbourn's major community sports provider, we would be pleased to hear from potential sponsorship partners who share an interest in our community work

Our youngest players – the Dynamites, increasingly provide the core of our success, with league teams from under 7 upwards. The Dynamites' coaching team is led by Dipak Patel. Dee was Cambridge FA's Community Coach of the year for 2013, gained his Level 2 coaching qualification in June 2015, and is our Football Development Officer. These players, aged 3-6, have fun and develop their skills before deciding whether to play league football as the club's under 7s team.

The Dynamites train with level 2 and level 1 FA qualified coaches in Saturday morning fun sessions at Melbourn Sports Centre. These feature lots of short activities aimed at improving individual skills, concentration, and the ability to be part of a team. The first one hour session is free, thereafter we charge £2. All are welcome to the Melbourn Dynamites so why not bring your kids along so they can check it out?

We have a separate session for Dynamites Girls, to help them enjoy football and form the basis of our future girls' league teams. This season we aim to build on the success of the Lionesses in the World Cup by attracting more girls to join the club and form Girls' teams in addition to those who already play in mixed teams. We are offering training for girls aged from 4-8, at Melbourn Sports Centre on Saturday Mornings (see photo). Building on this success, the club is proposing to join the FA's wildcats initiative to get more girls involved in the game – watch this space for further news.

For more information on the Dynamites and current times contact Dee on 07951 289565, or vermin8@ntlworld.com

More information about the club and individual teams is available from the club's Website: <https://melbourndynamosfc.wordpress.com>.

Melbourn Sports Centre

For those of you who don't already know, we have:

- A state of the art fitness suite offering a variety of membership schemes
- A 20 metre swimming pool (kept ever so slightly warmer than most!)
- A comprehensive swimming lesson programme, catering for all ages and abilities
- Upgraded multi-sports courts for hire, including tennis, football and squash courts
- Water-sports courses and activities

- Traditional and modern exercise classes
- Access to Melbourn Village College sports hall and gymnasium for activities such as trampolining, badminton and basketball
- Supervised sports and pool parties

Winter Review

There's been a lot going on this season at the sports centre, to keep the community fit and ready during the Winter. Aside from our normal classes, courses, swimming and fitness suite activities, we also had:

Our Christmas party, which was really well attended with 40 children enjoying a festive pool party and a visit from Father Christmas, who gave up some time during his busy period to hand out some goody bags.

We also had a bumper bag of Christmas and Half Term activities running, including our OFSTED registered PlayScheme, where children were treated to trampolining, swimming and creative crafts. Other holiday activities included a Swimming Crash Course and Trampolining Taster sessions.

Our Fitness Challenges, including our Advent Challenge, set up by staff, went down well with those who participated and helped them to achieve their pre-Christmas goals, and our Fitness offer, which we ran in January, helped to encourage more to join the Centre..

Our annual Christmas Raffle this year was won by Julie Charlton, winning our a Christmas Hamper of goodies generously donated by various local companies including Hotel Chocolat, Fieldgate Nurseries, The Dolphin Pub, Cam Valley Orchards and Tesco's.

Finally, we have continued to work with Jenny Brackley (Head Coach of Mc splash Swim Club) to develop the Club on a Friday night. MC Splash Swim Club is a friendly, non-competitive club who welcomes swimmers from intermediate standards to advanced. We also offer adult pay as you go sessions too (20.45 – 21.45 – term times only).

Apart from swimming lengths, our swimmers also learn survival skills, snorkelling and other water-based activities. For more details, please visit our website at www.mc-sport.co.uk or email info@mc-sport.co.uk.

It's a universally accepted fact – Mums are great! So this Mothers' Day, how about treating her to her own gym membership or purchasing a gift voucher for our other activities here at Melbourn Sports? Make this Mother's Day one she'll never forget!

March 2020 sees the return of our charitable Swimathon, with all participants raising money for various charities. We'd love to have as many entrants as possible; teams of up to five are welcome, as well as individual swimmers. The Swimathon takes place on Friday 28th March and Saturday 29th March. For further information, please see reception or visit our website at www.mc-sport.co.uk.

We've got a bumper bag of Easter activities this year, including our OFSTED registered Play Scheme, where children can enjoy trampolining, swimming and creative crafts. Other holiday activities include a Swimming Crash Course and Trampolining Crash Course. NB. These activities do require booking, as spaces are limited.

May

We welcome back the outdoor sports and tennis season this month. And for all you budding Wimbledon stars, courts can be hired mid-week and at weekends.

Later this month, we will be running our children's holiday activities once again to coincide with the Whitsun holiday, with Play Scheme and a mixture of indoor and outdoor activities available.

June

For something a bit different this Fathers' Day, how about treating your Dad to his own gym membership or purchasing a gift voucher for our other activities here at Melbourn Sports? It's a great way to help a loved one get fit!

Plus why not start planning your summer sports early this year, with our holiday courses like the Children's Pentathlon and Swimming Crash Course on offer? Bookings taken from June onwards.

Other activities available this spring and summer include:

- Our usual popular swimming lessons, both group and private
- A range of exercise classes including Aqua-fit, Body workouts, Boot Camp, Pilates, Swim-Clinic (pool training session)
- Indoor and Outdoor Court Hire

For further details on these or any other activities, please drop in, call 01763 263313 or go online at www.mc-sport.co.uk. We look forward to seeing you this season!

Melbourn Sports Centre, The Village College, The Moor, Melbourn, Royston, Hertfordshire, SG8 6EF

01763 263313 / www.mc-sport.co.uk / info@mc-sport.co.uk

Graham Johnson-Mack / Melbourn Sports Centre Manager

Grinnel Hill BMX Trails

This winter has seen the refurbishment of one of the advanced lines on the site, as well as a small addition to one of the beginner lines. The Trails are open annually from Spring to late Summer.

Our aim at the site is to promote an activity for the community of Melbourn and surrounding areas to participate, with the guidance of our committee and experts, in a safe and friendly environment. Visitors will have access to BMX coaching and expertise on site when open.

Acknowledgements: Norburys for their kind support; Melbourn Parish Council for their ongoing support at all levels to keep the site sustainable and open; Wrights Mower Centre Melbourn for their help and generosity in supporting us to keep the site to a well maintained and safe standard for the foreseeable future.

What's On

The Enigma of Sutton Hoo – an Illustrated Talk

**Friday 15th May 2020, 7.00pm
Village Hall, High Street, Meldreth**

Sutton Hoo near Woodbridge in Suffolk and on the banks of the River Deben is home to one of the greatest archaeological discoveries of all time. Sally Sibley from the National Trust will tell the amazing story of how an Anglo Saxon king, probably Raedwald, was buried in his ship 1400 years ago together with his most treasured possessions. Narrowly missed by grave robbers, the royal burial mound was excavated in 1939 and its contents give a fascinating insight into the power and wealth of Anglo Saxon rulers, their trade links across the world and the exquisite craftsmanship of the time.

Organised by the Meldreth Local History Group, this illustrated talk will also offer a chance to view and photograph replicas of some of the extraordinary finds.

Tickets are £5 per person, £3 under 16s. To book and for further details please call Joan Gane (01763) 260129 or John Crawforth (01763) 262848.

Royston Choral Society

Musical Director Andrew O'Brien
East Herts SINFONIA
B MINOR MASS J.S. BACH
Saturday 21st March 7.30 pm

ASHWELL PARISH CHURCH

Following the success of last year's performance of Bach's St John Passion, Royston Choral Society is very excited to be returning to Ashwell Parish Church again in March to perform Bach's momentous B Minor Mass.

The work was one of Bach's last compositions, not completed until 1749, the year before his death, and is a musical setting of the complete Ordinary of the Latin Mass.

Maybe the early 19th century Swiss music critic Hans-Georg Nageli said it best when he called the mass, "The greatest work of music of all ages and of all peoples".

We will be joined by a stunning set of soloists and accompanied again by the East Herts Sinfonia.

Tickets (£15 each or £1 for under 18s) will be available online shortly and from choir members

Full details on our website www.roystonchoralsoc.org.uk

Craft Fair

21st March

Harston Village Hall

10.30am to 3pm

A wide selection of craft stalls

Relax with a cup of Tea, Coffee and cakes

All proceeds go to Harston Scouts

To book a table

e.mail colinandbrenda1@hotmail.com

DIARY

MARCH

Sunday 1

All Saints BCP Said Eucharist
8 am

Baptist Church Morning Service
10.30am

URC Communion Service 11am

Baptist Church Communion
Service 6pm

Monday 2

Melbourn Bridge Club URC Hall
7pm contact Howard Waller
261693

Tuesday 3rd

Melbourn Bridge Club URC Hall
2pm

Short Story Reading Group
10-11am The Hub

Toddlers Plus Baptist Church
9.30-11.30am (TT)

Wednesday 4

Baptist Church: Craft Club 9.30-
11.30am (TT); Coffee Break
10.30-12

Thursday 5

Said Eucharist All Saints 10am

Craft & Chat URC 2 – 4pm

Royston & District Local History
Society Royston Town Hall
8pm

Friday 6

Story & singing time (for 0-5yrs)
10-10.30am weekly The Hub

Coffee & Chat URC 10.30am

World Day of Prayer Ecumenical
Service 2.30pm All Saints

Saturday 7

Coffee Stop ASCH 10.30am inc.
The Bookshelf

Sunday 8

All Saints Sung Eucharist
9.45am

Baptist Church Morning Service
10.30am

URC Morning Worship 11am

Monday 9

Melbourn Bridge Club URC Hall
7pm

Tuesday 10

Toddlers Plus Baptist Church
9.30-11.30am (TT)

Short Story Reading Group
10-11am The Hub

Melbourn Bridge Club URC Hall
2pm

Deanery MU contact Diane
Blundell 221415

Wednesday 11

Baptist Church: Craft Club 9.30–11.30am (TT); Coffee Break 10.30-12

Hub Club Lunch 12.30pm

Thursday 12

Said Eucharist All Saints 10am

Craft & Chat URC 2-4pm

Friday 13

Story & singing time (for 0-5yrs) 10-10.30am weekly The Hub

Coffee & Chat URC 10.30am

Saturday 14

Coffee Stop ASCH 10.30am

Sunday 15

All Saints: Said Eucharist 8.00am; Sundays @11 Family Service 11.00am

Baptist Church Communion Service 10.30am

URC Morning Worship 11am

Megson 'Family Folk Concert' at The Hub Tickets £6, booking essential.

Monday 16

Melbourn Bridge Club URC Hall 7pm

Tuesday 17

Toddlers Plus Baptist Church 9.30-11.30am (TT)

Short Story Reading Group 10-11am The Hub

Melbourn Bridge Club URC Hall 2pm

Wednesday 18

Baptist Church: Craft Club 9.30–11.30am (TT);

Coffee Break 10.30-12

Thursday 19

Said Eucharist All Saints 10am

Craft & Chat URC 2-4pm

Friday 20

Story & singing time (for 0-5yrs) 10-10.30am The Hub

Coffee & Chat URC 10.30am

Melbourn Cinema Night ASCH, showing "Blinded by the light" Tickets: Brenda 261154, Mavis 260686,

Cyndy 264189

Saturday 21

Coffee Stop ASCH 10.30am

Dementia Friends Café 2.30-4.00pm The Hub. Free

Sunday 22

All Saints Sung Eucharist 9.45am

Baptist Church Morning Service 10.30am

URC Morning Worship 11am

Monday 23

Melbourn Bridge Club URC Hall 7pm

Tuesday 24

Toddlers Plus Baptist Church
9.30-11.30am

Short Story Reading Group
10-11am The Hub

Melbourn Bridge Club URC Hall
2pm

Women's Group 7.45pm ASCH
contact

Pat Smith 262575

Wednesday 25

Baptist Church: Craft Club 9.30–
11.30am (TT);

Coffee Break 10.30-12

Melbourn WI ASCH 8pm

Thursday 26

All Saints Said Eucharist 10am

Craft & Chat URC 2-4pm

Friday 27

Story & singing time (for 0-5yrs)
10-10.30am The Hub

Coffee & Chat URC 10.30am

Saturday 28

Coffee Stop ASCH 10.30am

Sunday 29

All Saints Sung Eucharist
9.45am

Baptist Church Morning Service
10.30am

URC Service 11am

Monday 30

Melbourn Bridge Club URC Hall
7pm

Tuesday 31

Toddlers Plus Baptist Church
9.30-11.30am

Short Story Reading Group
10-11am The Hub

Melbourn Bridge Club URC Hall
2pm

APRIL

Wednesday 1

Baptist Church: Craft Club 9.30–
11.30am (TT); Coffee Break
10.30-12

Melbourn WI ASCH 8pm

Thursday 2

All Saints Said Eucharist 10am

Craft & Chat URC 2-4pm

Royston & District Local History
Society, Royston Town Hall
8pm

Friday 3

Story & singing time (for 0-5yrs)
10-10.30am weekly The Hub

Coffee & Chat URC 10.30am

Saturday 4

Coffee Stop ASCH 10.30am inc.
The Bookshelf

Sunday 5

All Saints BCP Said Eucharist
8am

Palm Sunday procession with
Noah the donkey 9.30am
Meldreth Village Hall car park

Baptist Church Palm Sunday
Family Service 10.30am

URC Communion Service 11am

Baptist Church Communion
Service 6pm

Monday 6

School holiday begins

Melbourn Bridge Club URC Hall
7pm contact Howard Waller
261693

Tuesday 7

Melbourn Bridge Club URC Hall
2pm

Short Story Reading Group
10-11am The Hub

Wednesday 8

Baptist Church: Coffee Break
10.30-12

Thursday 9

Said Eucharist All Saints 10am

All Saints Maundy Thursday
service 7.30pm

Baptist Church Maundy
Thursday service 8pm

Good Friday 10

URC Good Friday service 10am;
Coffee and hot cross buns
10.45am.

All Saints Good Friday services
12 noon and 1.45pm

Baptist Church Family-friendly
Easter Reflections afternoon

Saturday 11

Coffee Stop ASCH 10.30am

All Saints Easter Eve service
7.30pm

Sunday 12 Easter Day

All Saints: Said Eucharist 8am;
Easter Day Family service
11.45am

Baptist Church Easter Sunday
Family Celebration 10.30am

URC Communion Service 11am

Monday 13 Easter Monday

Melbourn Bridge Club URC Hall
7pm

Tuesday 14

Short Story Reading Group
10-11am The Hub

Melbourn Bridge Club URC Hall
2pm

Deanery MU contact Diane
Blundell 221415

Wednesday 15

Baptist Church Coffee Break
10.30-12

Hub Club Lunch 12.30pm

Thursday 16

Said Eucharist All Saints 10am
Craft & Chat URC 2-4pm

Friday 17

Story & singing time (for 0-5yrs)
10-10.30am The Hub

Coffee & Chat URC 10.30am

Melbourn Cinema Night ASCH,
showing "Knives out"

Tickets: Brenda 261154, Mavis
260686, Cyndy 264189

Saturday 18

Coffee Stop ASCH 10.30am

Dementia Friends Café 2.30-
4.00pm The Hub. Free

Sunday 19

All Saints: Said Eucharist
8.00am; Sundays @11 Family
Service 11.00am

Baptist Church Communion
Service 10.30am

URC Morning Worship 11am

Monday 20

School Summer term begins;
MVC closed for staff training

Melbourn Bridge Club URC Hall
7pm

Tuesday 21

Toddlers Plus Baptist Church
9.30-11.30am (TT)

Short Story Reading Group
10-11am The Hub

Melbourn Bridge Club URC Hall
2pm

Wednesday 22

Baptist Church: Craft Club 9.30-
11.30am (TT);

Coffee Break 10.30-12

Melbourn WI ASCH 8pm

Thursday 23

Said Eucharist All Saints 10am

Craft & Chat URC 2-4pm

Friday 24

Story & singing time (for 0-5yrs)
10-10.30am The Hub

Coffee at URC 10.30am

Saturday 25

Coffee Stop ASCH 10.30am

Sunday 26

All Saints Sung Eucharist
9.45am

Baptist Church Communion
Service 10.30am

URC Morning Worship 11am

Monday 27

Melbourn Bridge Club URC Hall
7pm

Tuesday 28

Toddlers Plus Baptist Church
9.30-11.30am

Short Story Reading Group
10-11am The Hub

Melbourn Bridge Club URC Hall
2pm

Women's Group Summer
Supper ASCH 7.45pm

Wednesday 29

Baptist Church: Craft Club 9.30–11.30am (TT); Coffee Break 10.30-12

Thursday 30

All Saints Said Eucharist 10am
Craft & Chat URC 2-4pm

MAY

Friday 1

Story & singing time (for 0-5yrs) 10-10.30am
weekly The Hub
Coffee & Chat URC 10.30am

Saturday 2

Coffee Stop ASCH 10.30am inc. The Bookshelf

Sunday 3

All Saints BCP Said Eucharist 8 am
Baptist Church Morning Service 10.30am
URC Communion Service 11am
Baptist Church Communion Service 6pm

Monday 4

Melbourn Bridge Club URC Hall 7pm contact
Howard Waller 261693

Tuesday 5

Toddlers Plus Baptist Church 9.30-11.30am (TT)

Short Story Reading Group 10-11am The Hub

Melbourn Bridge Club URC Hall 2pm

Short Story Reading Group 10-11am weekly The Hub

Wednesday 6

Baptist Church: Craft Club 9.30–11.30am (TT);
Coffee Break 10.30-12

Thursday 7

Said Eucharist All Saints 10am
Craft & Chat URC 2 – 4pm

Friday 8 May Day

Coffee & Chat URC 10.30am

Saturday 9

Coffee Stop ASCH 10.30am

Sunday 10

All Saints Sung Eucharist 9.45am
Baptist Church Morning Service 10.30am
URC Morning Worship 11am

Monday 11

Melbourn Bridge Club URC Hall 7pm

Tuesday 12

Toddlers Plus Baptist Church 9.30-11.30am (TT)
Short Story Reading Group 10-11am weekly The Hub

Melbourn Bridge Club URC Hall
2pm

Deanery MU contact Diane
Blundell 221415

Wednesday 13

Baptist Church: Craft Club 9.30–
11.30am (TT); Coffee Break
10.30-12

Hub Club Lunch 12.30pm

Thursday 14

Said Eucharist All Saints 10am

Craft & Chat URC 2-4pm

Royston & District Local History
Society AGM Royston Town
Hall 7.30pm, followed by
regular meeting 8pm.

Friday 15

Story & singing time (for 0-5yrs)
10-10.30am The Hub

Coffee & Chat URC 10.30am

Melbourn Cinema Night ASCH,
showing “Judy” Tickets:
Brenda 261154, Mavis 260686,
Cyndy 264189

Saturday 16

Coffee Stop ASCH 10.30am

Sunday 17

All Saints: Said Eucharist
8.00am; Sundays @11 Family
Service 11.00am

Baptist Church Communion
Service 10.30am

URC Morning Worship 11am

Monday 18

Melbourn Bridge Club URC Hall
7pm

Tuesday 19

Toddlers Plus Baptist Church
9.30-11.30am (TT)

Short Story Reading Group
10-11am The Hub

Melbourn Bridge Club URC Hall
2pm

Wednesday 20

Baptist Church: Craft Club 9.30–
11.30am (TT); Coffee Break
10.30-12

Thursday 21

Village school staff training

Said Eucharist All Saints 10am

Craft & Chat URC 2-4pm

Friday 22

Village school staff training

Story & singing time (for 0-5yrs)
10-10.30am The Hub

Coffee & Chat URC 10.30am

Saturday 23

Coffee Stop ASCH 10.30am

Sunday 24

All Saints Sung Eucharist
9.45am

Baptist Church Morning Service
10.30am

URC Morning Worship 11am

Monday 25

Half Term begins

Melbourn Bridge Club URC Hall
7pm

Tuesday 26

Short Story Reading Group
10-11am The Hub

Melbourn Bridge Club URC Hall
2pm

Women's Group 7.45pm Holy
Trinity Church Meeting Room,
Meldreth

Wednesday 27

Baptist Church Coffee Break
10.30-12

Melbourn WI ASCH 8pm

Thursday 28

All Saints Said Eucharist 10am

Craft & Chat URC 2-4pm

Friday 29

Story & singing time (for 0-5yrs)
10-10.30am The Hub

Coffee & Chat URC 10.30am

Saturday 30

Coffee Stop ASCH 10.30am

Sunday 31

All Saints Said Eucharist 8am

Baptist Church Morning Service
10.30am

URC Service 11am