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February 2017



NEWSLETTER

For The Lee, Lee Common, Hunts Green, Kings Ash and Swan Bottom

From the Editor

By Peter Archer

This is the first issue of the Newsletter for 2017 and, while we all look forward to the new year with optimism and hope, I cannot help looking back on a series of unhappy events which have happened over the past few weeks in The Lee.

Some of these have involved cars, including the abandonment of a possibly stolen car, crashed on the side of Ballinger Road which, at the time of writing, had been there for six weeks. Then we have had a series of cars being broken into and contents stolen.

More significantly, however, in early January we learned of the serious fire at Kingswood Cottages, about which we have a movingly written letter and article in this issue, and of the death of a long-standing resident.

On a more positive note, we are able to report that The Lee has come to the favourable attention of the Prime Minister who has made not one but two visits to The Old Swan over the Christmas period. This is also reported on more fully later in this edition.

Next month's editor is Jonathan Batten. Please email your contributions to theleenewsletter@googlemail.com or hard copy to Saddlers, Swan Bottom by 12th February.

HS2 update

By Simon Morris, Chairman CRAG

We continue to wait for the House of Lord's final verdict on the HS2 (Phase 1) Bill. Having received the report of their Select Committee in December, the Lords completed their 'Grand Committee' stage in January – itself a protracted process. This was followed by 'Report Stage' and 'Third Reading' - due to take place on 31st January. The Bill then returns to the Commons for their approval of amendments made by the Lords. Only then can the Bill finally receive Royal Assent and the major construction contracts be placed.

Some contracts for investigative work have already been placed; drilling machines have been seen all across the Chilterns trying to discover in detail what lies beneath the surface. Preparatory works contracts have also already been tendered: these will include works such as constructing access roads (e.g. from Gt Missenden to the tunnel portal), laying in electricity supplies and the re-homing of listed animal species.

The major works contracts (including the tunnelling) will probably not be placed for a few months yet.



CHILTERN RIDGES HS2 ACTION GROUP

Discussions continue

Meanwhile, at the local level, discussions continue with HS2 Ltd on a wide range of unresolved mitigation issues including: the exact location of the temporary spoil heap at Hunts Green, changes to road layouts on the Link Road at Great Missenden, work to be done at 'sensitive road junctions' and the detailed design of all the structures in the Bill, including viaducts, bridges, embankments, buildings, gantries, etc.

Only when the contractors are in place (who in any case are being given 'design and build' contracts) will any clear picture emerge on many of these issues and even then the detailed proposals will still be subject to District or County Council final planning approval.

Doubt about value continues

At the national level, the reliability of the HS2 passenger demand figures has again been called into question by the chairman of the Treasury Select Committee, Conservative MP, Andrew Tyrie.

Tyrie said the Department for Transport needed to justify "why the latest projection for growth in demand will be any more reliable than its predecessor. Over the last seven years we've had six of these – each different".

Changes in passenger demand are the single largest driver in boosting the business case for HS2.

Tyrie said "Without this latest data, the business case suggests that the project will deliver low value for

money, according to the Department's own guidance. In other words, HS2 would scarcely be worth the candle".

Yet, another voice telling the Emperor he has no clothes... but is he (she) listening?

Chiltern Ridges news



By Councillor Patricia Birchley

HS2: "the zombie train that refuses to die". Whilst this comment is not new, it's certainly true. It's worth reading what The Guardian had to say about the project in June 2016 when it did an in-depth analysis revealing that, as the claims for its necessity became weaker, backers have become ever more insistent that it is a matter of 'supreme national importance'. With the cost now likely to exceed £72 billion the Major Projects Authority must explain how such a high risk project can be allowed to proceed.

Lord Slade's recent comment in the House of Lords, that he didn't want more tunnelling, as he "wanted people to be able to see the Chilterns", is the final straw for people living between Potter Row and Wendover.

Recently I saw the Spanish high speed train, which the Spanish are proud of, on the track between Madrid and Barcelona with a ticket price of 10 Euros! As your County Councillor I pledge to keep up the pressure to seek the best possible mitigation to keep our roads running and continue to fight on your behalf.

Local pressures

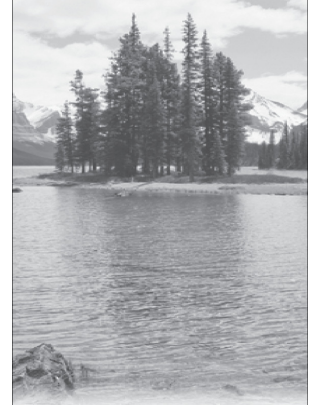
Turning to good news, the County Council has obtained a redistribution of government funding for our schools, with an additional £10 million annually on top of £18 million already agreed. Schools such as Chesham Grammar and Chiltern Hills Academy will each receive approximately another £155,000, while primary schools will get another £25,000. Seven out of the ten lowest funded schools in the country are currently in the county; the uplift in funding follows delicate negotiations with the Secretary of State.

We are fortunate in Chiltern Ridges not to be directly adversely affected by the amount of house-building taking place and planned throughout the county. As your representative I have kept closely in touch with District Councillors as they developed the Chiltern Local Plan. At County Hall I have expressed my concern constantly about the amount of work planned in and around Aylesbury at the same time as HS2 is built. Funding is now in place to extend the new relief road east of Aylesbury and a new bypass is planned for Stoke Mandeville.

Road resurfacing in 2017/18 is currently at the planning stage and I have demanded an end to the one road per member scheme. This puts us at a disadvantage with a network of 125 kilometres and the need to improve our rural roads has never been greater. The turnover of local area technicians and TfB staff in 2016 was not helpful but a move to procure more services locally could benefit the parish councils by lowering the cost.

Please let me know if I can raise your concerns with officers at County Hall. You can contact me at pbirchley@buckscc.gov.uk or on 01296 651823.

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The Lee Walk



By Judy Hart

Despite the cold, we had a very good turnout for our January walk. This is now our third year of walking and is thoroughly enjoyed by all, but especially the dogs. We had 14 or 15 this month (they never stood still to be counted!) and they all had smiles on their faces and enjoyed each other's company.

We try to meet at the shop when the nursery is on holiday so that there is more parking space but otherwise meet on the first Thursday of every month at 9:30 on the Green. We generally walk for about an hour and half over our wonderful, if muddy, Chiltern countryside.

Do come and join us.

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The Lee Parish Council News

By Liz van Hullen, Parish Clerk

Drop-in Parish surgeries

Relationships and communications between residents and the Parish Council are key to ensuring the parish gets the best out of its council and with this in mind councillors are planning to hold some 'Drop-in Surgeries' on occasional Saturday mornings.

The purpose of these surgeries would be to:

- * answer questions and provide information on **Parish Council** related matters - allotments, playground, etc.
- * listen to comments / questions on **District / County related matters** (e.g. roads, waste, schools, social services, etc.) and, where appropriate, provide information and / or give pointers as to where to go / who to contact
- * receive comments/questions on **other matters** where the Parish Council might wish to be involved (e.g. HS2, policing, Broadband).

The proposed dates are on Saturdays - 18th March, 6th May and 1st July, from 10 am to noon in the Parish Hall. Do put these dates in your diary.

Whether you have a discrete planning query or a general gripe about the condition of the road surfaces, we hope that you will take the opportunity to come and talk to us. We may well be able to provide you with a contact or better still, raise a query on your behalf with District

or County Council and see it through to a response.

Allotments

We currently have some plots available! Please contact the Clerk (see below) if you are interested in growing your own fruit bushes, plants and vegetables – but just don't have the space at home.

Councillor Vacancy

It is with sincere regret that we will be losing Cllr John Ford from the team. John has been a Councillor (at District and Parish level) for 22 years and was our Parish Council Chairman until May 2016. He has contributed significantly to Parish Council matters during his time with us and we offer him a huge thank you.

John's departure gives us the opportunity to recruit another councillor. So, if you have an interest in village life, this community and the infrastructure that supports it then we would love to hear from you. Councillors meet six times each year, in the Parish Hall. In between meetings Councillors will share management of a variety of matters that include: responding to Government consultations, considering individual planning applications and wider planning proposals, lobbying Chiltern District and Bucks County Councils for improved services, maintenance and repair and the consideration of local matters such as traffic management.

For further information, in the first instance, please contact the clerk at: theleeparishcouncil@hotmail.co.uk or telephone 01494 758800 - by 16th February.



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The Newsletter Annual Dinner

By the Editorial Team

As 2016 drew towards its close we held a very enjoyable annual dinner for everyone who has played a part in the continuing success of The Lee Newsletter.

The evening was particularly well attended with 55 people sitting down to enjoy a splendid meal with plentiful wine! Highlights of the evening are shown below.



Much to her delight, Pippa Hart receives the 2016 Newsletter Award at the annual dinner from Colin Sully.

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Simon Morris spoke eloquently at the annual Newsletter dinner about the impact HS2 has had on him, his family and on local residents. He also entertained us with a fantasy story from the future (look out for it in a future edition of the Newsletter).

News from Prospect House

By Linda Cooke

The Patient Participation Group at Prospect House surgery has been busy. Throughout October we are pleased to have successfully recruited 43 members who have signed up to receive information on what is happening both at the surgery and in the wider community on matters to do with health. It is hoped that members will participate with suggestions and comments on what is good and what could be improved.

Some of the 43 patients who signed up might like to join our, currently, very small committee of three and would be most welcome.

For more information about the PPG or to attend a future meeting please get in touch via ppgprospecthouse@gmail.com or ring reception on 01494 862325.

A new network of local PPG's, overseen by Healthwatch Bucks, will enable the sharing of information between practices. The first network meeting took place in November where suggestions were made about running shared health awareness events.

One current concern, common to all practices, is about proposed changes to the funding for local pharmacies.

Prospect House PPG and Friends of the surgery have recently raised £230.00, the combined takings from an autumn raffle and the ongoing selling of second hand books in the waiting room. We thank both the Co-op and Big Sky in Great Missenden for donating generous prizes for the raffle.

The picture shows the practice manager Alan drawing out raffle tickets helped by a member of the committee.



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Your letters

Life-changing

To the Editor:

[A fuller account of this story will be found on pages 20/21. Ed.]

It's amazing - and frightening - how quickly your life can be changed. Friday 6th January (Epiphany) started much as any other day, but by 4pm our homes were no longer habitable and our lives were changed for ever. We are eternally grateful that all the occupants, including the dog, escaped with their lives.

We cannot find the words to thank all our friends and neighbours for their generous and amazing support, both practical and emotional. Whilst many possessions have been lost, we've realised that memories last forever, and what really matters is the friendships forged over lifetimes. We feel truly blessed to live in such a caring community. Whilst it's invidious to single out any individuals, we want to offer our heartfelt thanks to the residents of our lane, Jane Joel at The Old Swan Pub, and the LeeWay volunteers who kept Joyce company on subsequent days. I've heard that many garnered nuggets of local history from her. In subsequent days an angelic dog walker has appeared in the vilest of

weathers to take the dog out, and an industrious laundry fairy has magically transformed our sooty and smoky clothes, huge thanks!

Being so old, the cottages have seen this all before and the substantial rebuild that will need to be undertaken over the next 12-14 months, will equip them to face the next 400 years. Of one thing you can be assured, they will outlive us all.

Trish, Jon, Jules and Joyce Swain
Swan Bottom

P.S. Sadly Joyce passed away on Wednesday 18th January, less than two weeks after these events.

HS2: end of the beginning

To the Editor:

I sometimes wonder what exactly have we collectively achieved locally with all our petitioning and visits to the HS2 Select Committees?

The decision to extend the tunnel from Mantles Wood, under South Heath, to Bury Farm certainly benefitted a great many people in Hyde Heath and in parts of South Heath... and also saved some valuable landscape. The situation has also been improved by the decisions to remove the permanent spoil heap at Hunts Green, to safe-guard Potter Row from HGV traffic, to deepen the cuttings as they pass The Lee and to fund a Chilterns Design panel to further mitigate some of the impact on the AONB. HS2 is also spending money to mitigate the impacts in Wendover and Gt Missenden and many individual residents will have also had successes in achieving their personal goals. Even in The Lee we do have some 'assurances' - albeit rather uncertain - from HS2 Ltd on the Hunts Green spoil heap, on traffic and on other matters.

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Of course, we have not succeeded in convincing Parliament that the whole of the AONB should be tunnelled. Neither have we succeeded in totally removing the spoil heap, nor in getting the haul road moved, electricity cables buried or rights-of-way bridges 'greened'.

Has it all been worth it?

Well, it has certainly allowed a great many voices to be heard on the impact of the proposals in the Chilterns and more widely on the whole cost/benefit case for the project.

Sadly, those that we hoped would be listening seem not to have been... or perhaps, with all else that has been going on these past 18 months, they have simply been distracted.

A new Prime Minister, a new Chancellor, a new future for the nation outside of the EU, a new leader of the western world... and still a shiny new railway!

The fight for improved mitigation against HS2 and for compensation is certainly not over... but it is changing.
Colin Sully
Swan Bottom

Thames Valley Police

To the Editor:

As part of our public engagement process every three months we will be asking residents what you think the top three priorities should be for policing your community.

The responses will be collated and the most frequent three concerns given priority. We will also feed back to you on what we have done to help with these priorities. Please reply to: angela.oconnell@thamesvalley.pnn.police.uk by the 6th February.
Angela O'Connell
Thames Valley Police

New Year's honours for Lee residents

By Colin Sully, Chairman, The Lee Parish Council

Two local residents were honoured in the New Year's Honours list - Dr Heather Barret-Mold of Kings Ash and Mr Barnaby Usborne of Lee Common.

Heather received her OBE for services to Horticulture, Sustainable Development and Environmental Conservation. Barnaby received his MBE in recognition of his work with the Chiltern Society and the community of The Lee.



Heather, an ecologist, has spent her whole career in horticulture, sustainable development and environmental conservation. She has been a member of the Government Advisory Panel on Sustainable Development Education, is a Past President of the Institute of

Horticulture and is Vice President of the Institute of Environmental Sciences. Until recently she also acted as Secretary of State Board member for the Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.



Barnaby, another long-standing Lee resident, has been actively involved with the Chiltern Society for 25 years and for the last 15 years, has been acting as their local quartermaster. Together with a team of other volunteers, he has kept footpaths clear and maintained and installed stiles and kissing gates in the Chilterns.

In addition, he has been Cllr and Chairman (for nine years) of The Lee Parish Council; he was instrumental in the setting-up of the community shop and he is an active member of the Parish Hall Committee, as well as many other community groups (*Ed: including this Newsletter*).

On behalf of everyone in the parish we congratulate them both on their deserved awards.

New regular at the Old Swan

By Colin Sully

You never know who you might bump into in The Lee. For example, we know that the Prime Minister and her husband like a good walk in the country; so where better to stop off for a drink and a bite when walking in the Chilterns than the Old Swan at Swan Bottom.

Delighted with what they found there, the Mays came back with their family for lunch on New Year's Eve.

Who knows who she'll bring next?

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Conversations with the Revd David Burgess

No. 7: Faith in action

In a series of articles for The Lee Newsletter, the Revd David Burgess is interviewed by Tony Brignull, an old friend and lifelong Buddhist. In this piece they explore 'faith in action' and ask how it works, especially on a bad day.

Tony Brignull: David, we seem to be in the age of rage. Every month seems to introduce a new version: road-rage, trolley-rage, dawdling-pedestrian-rage, I even heard of someone who succumbed to flat-pack-rage, how does the Church teach us to cope with anger?

David Burgess: It might help to put this into context. The overall aim of a Christian is to realise the Holy Spirit in everything we do, so as to find access to the kingdom of heaven in this life, today, right now, as well of course in the life to come.

TB: And rage inhibits this?

DB: It's certainly not conducive.

TB: What is your personal strategy?

DB: I incline to the head rather than the heart in dealing with emotional matters. My approach is threefold. The first is to

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recognise it, to name it.

TB: And the second?

DB: To remember that I'm a human being and not to beat myself up if I slip up. Then, if things are getting out of hand, to ask the Holy Spirit to intervene. On reflection, it might be better to do this first.

TB: But anger is much faster than our powers of analysis, isn't it. By *anger* I mean a spectrum from mild irritation and impatience, when we do have an opportunity for restraint, to incandescence when we don't.

DB: As I see it, it's all part of growing-up. A two year old has no discrimination, things are either wonderful or awful and, goodness, how they let us know which. With maturity come civilising influences, coping mechanisms, refinement.

TB: Does Christianity offer any specific help here which common sense and self-help books don't?

DB: Many of the practical tips offered by the Book of Proverbs or St Paul's letters are, it's true, equally helpful to believers and non-believers but in extremis I always say a little prayer.

TB: The Prayer of the Heart, for instance?

DB: Exactly the one I had in mind: 'Lord Jesus Christ the son of God, have mercy on me'.

TB: I use it too, but drop the end bit, 'a miserable sinner'.

DB: (laughing) So do I – usually!

TB: An old Buddhist nun offered another prayer for when we're caught up in emotional turmoil: 'Come precious energy and burn my selfishness away'. Her point is that anger is universal energy distorted by our own desires and we must learn to work *with* it rather than trying to shun it, as we in the west are prone to do. She referred to it as 'gentling the bull'.

DB: On good days of course we seem to have a little more time. We are naturally benevolent and courteous. It's on our bad days we need help and sometimes we simply have to ask for it. For me, and for all Christians, this means asking the indwelling Holy Spirit to take over and give us pause to recollect ourselves.

TB: I could have done with such assistance the other day. Driving home past Chartridge School when mums were collecting children, I was forced to edge up on the wrong side of the road. A rather attractive blonde in a Volvo gave me the V-sign. I felt less than benevolent.

DB: There are times when even the Holy Spirit takes a back seat.

TB: But still I thought if I'd been better prepared, more mindful, I wouldn't have been so thrown.

DB: Which brings us full circle to the practice which is, I believe, always available to us, of allowing God into every little thing we do, so that we are informed with and by his presence.

TB: David, let's see how that works when next month we tackle another affliction we must learn to work with – greed!

Services for February

St John the Baptist

1 st 10:00am	MHC	Revd D Burgess
5 th 8:00am	HC	Revd D Burgess Old Church
	10:00am	AA
		Joint all-age Service at Lee Common Methodist Church
12 th 10:00am	PC	Revd D Burgess
19 th 10:00am	Matins	Lay Leader
26 th 10:00am	PC	Mr A Eccleston

HC	Holy Communion (said)
MHC	Midweek HC (said)
PC	Parish communion (sung)
AA	All-age service



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Methodist Church

5 th 10:00am	AA	Joint Service at Lee Common Methodist Church
12 th 3:00pm		Jaqi Sheppard
19 th 3:00pm	HC	Revd Stephen Watts
26 th 3:00pm		David Bennet

Our next **Coffee Morning** is on Saturday 4th February 10:30-12 noon. All are welcome.

Our thanks to all who attended our Carol Service when over £150 was raised for the Lindengate Charity.

St. Mary's, Ballinger

5th 9:30am Holy Communion

Lee Cricket Club news

By Trish Swain

November 2016 saw a well-attended Quiz in the Parish Hall. Chairman, Patrick Walsh was Chief Quizmaster, ably assisted by Dave Laver, The Lee's answer to 'Pointless' hosts, Alexander Armstrong and Richard Osman. The battle between the teams was close, with 'The Dunnos' bringing up the rear. In the last



round they realised that "points mean prizes" and stormed into the lead; they were worthy winners indeed.

Summer must be round the corner, as winter nets have started at The Amersham School on Thursday evenings. Work has been done on the square in readiness for 2017 season and the date for the AGM has been set for 7:45 pm on 8th February in the Clubhouse.

If you are new to the village and would like more information about the cricket club, then please contact patrick_a_walsh@hotmail.co.uk

Newsletter team changes

By the Editorial Team

Our appeal for some fresh talent to join the Editorial team has yielded some success. Adam Speller joins us at the start of the year to bring some much-needed financial acumen to the team; Michael Jepson, Babs Dorme and Helen Jones have all offered to help with Newsletter distribution and Dominic Killinger has also offered assistance on the

advertising front. We are pleased to welcome them all to the team and are grateful for their commitment.

Opportunity still knocks

What we could still do with however is another one or two part-time editors. The Editors rotate through the year, with each Editor leading on just two or three editions. The work requires a basic knowledge of Word and some time – mainly mid-month – to co-ordinate and follow-up on the various contributions. Ideally we could do with two such volunteers.

If you think you might be interested then please contact the team at theleeneewsletter@googlemail.com

Bridge too far?

By Rita Sully et al

This hand occurred during our weekly bridge evening. It presented us with another interesting bidding challenge.

♠ J 7 3
♥ 10
♦ 7 3 2
♣ A K 9 6 3 2

♠ A K Q 10 2
♥ A K Q 9
♦ K 10 9 6
♣ -

♠ 6 5
♥ 7 6 5 4 3
♦ A Q 8
♣ J 8 7

♠ 9 8 4
♥ J 8 2
♦ J 5 4
♣ Q 10 5 4

Dealer: West
Vulnerability: None

How would bid to a slam?
See how we bid on page 17.



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History first hand No. 6

A Cockney's Tale

By Leslie Robins

Social History has seen monumental change in the twentieth century but none more so than those changes brought about by the Second World War. Leslie has kindly written a first-hand account that highlights those changes and how they influenced the course of his life.

I made an unpromising start in life, my mother having died within a few days of my birth, but I had the great good fortune to be taken in by loving foster-parents and in their care I spent a happy childhood. Then, in 1931, two formative events took place. Firstly, I got a coveted place at one of the best London Grammar Schools. Secondly, I joined the mass migration of working class families from their dingy and overcrowded London tenements to the vast new suburban estates springing up all over the North-Western fringes of the capital.

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The demise of my old London home

house purchase – a thing he had never dreamt of – was within his means. Typically, a terraced house would cost £475 or £495 for an end-of-terrace one. A deposit of £25 was required, the balance being a mortgage loan repayable over 20 years. My father, after anxious deliberation, decided to go ahead.

It would be difficult to exaggerate the effect this move had on our lives. Electric light! Hot water on tap! An indoor loo! A garden! It seemed to us a sort of earthly paradise. The pride of possession was immense – no Duke in his castle could surpass it – and weekends were loud with the clamour of men putting up rose pergolas or staking out concrete paths. A resourceful photographer went from door to door selling pictures of these palatial dwellings to their proud owners.

Our pleasures were simple: cricket for me, bowls for my Dad, rambles in

Ruislip Woods for all of us. On Saturday evenings attendance at the local cinema was compulsory and we queued up patiently in the rain whilst a commissionaire with WW1 medals jingling on his chest walked up and down shouting out the prices of tickets, either seated or standing.

This Golden Age of innocence and optimism lasted until September 1939 and then ended abruptly with the outbreak of War. I joined the RAF and served in Egypt, Italy and Yugoslavia as a Squadron Adjutant.

Back in Civvy Street life was austere and even hard at times (coal supplies ran out in the bitter winter of 1947) but nobody minded – the War was over and that was all that mattered. The Golden Age of the Thirties had gone for good, but an unforeseen consequence of the War was that a profound social revolution had taken place. Where it had once been a reproach to a husband if his wife needed to work so as to supplement the family income, married women now routinely took up employment, often doing work traditionally done only by men.

Moreover, the rigid pre-War class structure had virtually disappeared; in particular, former Grammar School pupils, having shown their mettle during the War, were now admitted to all the professions and to positions of influence and authority once far beyond their reach. I myself had a good career in the old Chief Inspector's branch of the Inland Revenue and retired in 1980 with a letter of thanks and good wishes from the Chancellor of those days, Sir Geoffrey Howe.

I don't think I have made any contribution to history since then – unless you count my becoming the first

Treasurer of The Lee Village Shop. It's a far cry from the lock-up shop at the bottom of our London street where I used to buy liquorice and cadge cigarette cards some 90 years ago.

If you have a story to contribute to the History First Hand series please contact Anthea Hartley on 837372 or bassibones@yahoo.co.uk

Bridge too far?

Our bidding went as follows:

S	W	N	E
	2♣	-	2♦
-	2♠	-	3♥
-	4NT*	-	5♣*
-	6♥	-	-
-			

* Blackwood showing one Ace

In practice all thirteen tricks were easily made!

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Pet of the month No. 14

By our Equine Correspondent 'Pye'



I was originally bought as a 'companion pony' but have outlived the horse for whom I was supposed to be a companion! I'm still regarded in the yard and the field as number two in the equine pecking order but the grass is good and I'm well looked after!

[If you have a pet you would like featured in the Newsletter, send a photo and a few details to the Editor - see page 1.]

As time goes

By Reina Free

I am writing my story on the last day of the year 2016 and my thoughts go back to the end of the year 1944, the time of the 'Hunger

Winter'. Such a great difference to the time in which we are living now.

It is the custom in Holland to cook *oliebolle* on the last day of the year or *Oude Jaars Avond* (old year's eve). The main ingredients are flour, milk, raisins, sultanas, yeast and oil. When the mixture had risen mother cooked it in a big pan, but of course, not in 1944! Believe me, there was nothing and I cannot really remember what happened that year.

It was the custom to go to church on the last evening of the year and after that there were several special treats. When the clock was about to strike twelve, father got up and embraced us. We then left the house and wished our neighbours all the best for the coming year. I remember there were fireworks but not as we experience them today.

That year good news was on the way for the Allied Forces were advancing and liberation was on its way. I remember standing with my father by the side of the canal, overhead was the humming sound of many aeroplanes. I asked my father "What is this?" Father said, "Reina these are the Tommies on their way to Germany". Liberation was on the way, but at such a high cost. In Holland there are large cemeteries where many airmen, mostly British, are buried. Many people of my generation will, with gratitude, never forget.

Just in time

Liberation took another four months. Our Queen Wilemina asked Winston Churchill, "When are my people in the north going to be liberated. They are starving?" And he

said "It will be done" and so it was at the end of April. Again, Dutch people will never forget.

I still remember the roar of the Lancaster bombers flying low over the fields dropping tins of crackers and digestive biscuits. Mother used the biscuits to make porridge. Later on we as children used the empty tins, tied them together to make rafts on the canal.

As children we were all underweight and were given a hot meal every day in the school, I remember so well the cauliflower in white sauce with mashed potatoes.

I remember well being woken up by father. "Children come and see," and there were the remnants of that mighty German army leaving in the dark of night on stolen bicycles carrying stolen goods. There were people who grabbed back what had been taken from them.

We will never forget the British, American and Canadian armies plus the contribution of the Polish army who had helped liberate my country at a very great loss of life.

Next time I will write about the liberation and what happened afterwards.

Pied wagtails

By Don Stone

In the autumn whilst working in the centre of the village, I noticed a couple of Pied Wagtails on one of the rooftops. A few days later they were back again, this time they numbered six, darting over the tiles chasing the insects which had been



activated by the weak autumn sun as it chased away the shadows, slowly warming the tiles. As the sun cooled down, the Wagtails would disappear.

Now in the winter we have had a record count of five Pied Wagtails feeding on our lawn, quite possibly the same group.

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Swan Bottom fire wrecks family home

By Viv Robins

As most in the village will now know a devastating fire broke out at Kingswood Cottages in Swan Bottom on 6th January. This account of what happened draws heavily on an email Trish Swain sent out after the event, in part to thank local people for their support. [See also letter on page 8. Ed.]

Jon Swain's mother Joyce has lived at Kingswood Cottages for over 60 years and had only recently returned home after breaking her hip in early November. Her frailty and Alzheimer's meant that she had carers visiting four times a day. It was one of those carers, 21-year-old Natasha, together with the Swain's son, Jules, who first became aware of the fire at lunchtime. With great coolness and presence of mind, Natasha got Joyce out of the house and into her car. Jules phoned the emergency services and his

mother to say "Granny's house is on fire", giving Trish a thoroughly stressful journey back from Chesham where she had gone shopping.

Fire takes hold quickly

Leaving the car at the Old Swan car park Trish could see flames rising five or six feet high from her roof and as she approached she could hear the tiles pinging off it. She dashed into the smoke-filled house and retrieved the family's photo albums from the snug, reflecting afterwards that the old cliché that you save your photo albums turned out to be true. Jules told her that Joyce and Natasha were at the pub and their dog Phoebe was safely tied up outside in the garage.

It was well over half an hour after Jules had called the fire brigade that two tenders arrived and went on to block the single track between Kingswood Cottages and the next village for the next five hours or so.

Meanwhile Jon Swain was on his way back from court in St Alban's and encountering the tenders, became frantic with worry, not knowing whether the family was safe and unable to contact them because of

patchy mobile reception. In the end he had to detour about six miles via the back route into Wendover, and, adding to his frustration, got stuck behind a flock of sheep going down The Hale, one of the narrowest lanes in the Chilterns.

With the flames continuing to rip through the 500-year-old timbers the fire crews summoned more help. The family, finally re-united, stood on their drive where Jon and Jules had the traumatic experience of watching their respective childhood homes go up in smoke. By now Joyce was well ensconced in the pub, enjoying a glass of something sparkly bought by a kindly customer!

De-cluttering opportunity!

As Trish remarked afterwards with her sense of humour still somehow intact: "I had been needing to de-clutter for some time and now we can throw away nearly all of our books as they are sodden, sooty and smelly, and much else besides!"

The fire crew were at the property all night but the family were allowed to retrieve some overnight essentials before going to stay with kind friends.

Next day in daylight the full scale of the devastation was revealed – the total destruction of Joyce's home and one-third of Jon and Trish's, with another third having suffered serious water and smoke damage. But it also brought home the realisation of how fortunate they had been that everyone – including the dog! – had come through the nightmare safely.

However, very sadly, Joyce Swain died on 18th January after a short stay in a nursing home.

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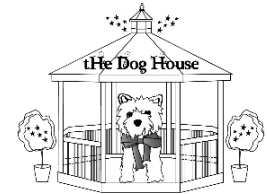
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Dear Diary

The fastest way to let everyone in the Parish know about an event you are arranging is to publish it right here in the Newsletter. Contact the Editor by the 12th of the previous month (see contact details on page 1).

February

Thursday 2nd. The Lee Walking Group. On the Green at 9:30 am.

Saturday 4th. Coffee Morning at Lee Common Methodist Church.

Saturday 9th. CRAG Meeting at The Lee Parish Hall: 8:00 pm.

Thursday 16th. Closing date for expressions of interest in Parish Councillor role - see page 5.

Thursday 23rd. Ballinger DFAS. A Longer Look: Hieronymus Bosch's 'Christ Mocked'. Ballinger Hall 8:00 pm. Guest tickets £8.

Coming soon

Thursday 2nd March. The Lee Walking Group. On the Green at 9:30 am.

Thursday 2nd March. No Dig Gardening. Ballinger Horticultural Society. Ballinger Hall 8:00 pm.

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Saturday 4th March. Coffee Morning at Lee Common Methodist Church.

Tuesday 14th March. The Lee Parish Council Meeting at The Lee Parish Hall 7:30 pm.

Saturday 18th March. Parish Council Drop-in-surgery. 10:00 am to 12:00 noon at the Parish Hall - see page 4.

Thursday 30th March. Ballinger DFAS. 'Cartier 1900-1939: Jeweller of Genius. Ballinger Village Hall. 8:00 pm. Guest tickets £8.

Thursday 6th April. Spring Show at 8:00 pm. Ballinger Horticultural Society at Ballinger Village Hall.

Sunday 5th November. Bonfire night at 5:30 pm - early notice!

Saturday 18th November. Roving Supper - ditto!

Bonfire and fireworks

By Tony Lea

Once again we were lucky with the weather and this meant a great number of adults and children turned out on 5th November. Judging by the amount of money taken on the night it must have been the largest numbers we have had in recent years. Many thanks to Trish and Barnaby Osborne for allowing the use of their paddock once again. Also we are grateful again to Trevor Pearce and Steve Humphreys for constructing and lighting the bonfire and for launching the fireworks.

Thank you to the members of the Committee and passing Duke of Edinburgh volunteers for their work on the marquee, food and drinks. Once again mulled wine was the hit of the

evening as well as a great fireworks display. In case you did not notice, we replaced Guy Fawkes with Donald Trump last year. Who will it be this year!

Thank you to all of those who turned up on the night. As 5th November 2017 is a Sunday we propose to start at 5:30 pm - so a note for your diaries.

Roving Supper

By Tony Lea

Once again the Roving Supper proved to be a great success and it goes from strength to strength with 130 people attending last year's event. A great vote of thanks goes to those who volunteered to host the main course of whom there were 16 this year. They were Simon and Russell, Pippa Bannister, Judy Hart, Lynne Exley, Debbie Sim, Sue Jepson, Emma Glasgow, Anthea Hartley, Jane Vaughan, Sue Cottam, Gerry Spence, Alison Weir, Liz Ford, Kathryn Dickenson, William Rowe and Ann Barnett who hosted a table of ladies. Without them this event could not take place so, if you have not hosted before, then please consider it for this year.

Many thanks go also to those who provided canapés and desserts and to Pat Mitchell and Jane Brown for coordinating this work. From the comments that we heard everyone had a really great time and we can look forward to this year's Roving Supper on 18th November. The monies raised from this and the Bonfire and Fireworks have been put towards redecorating the Parish Hall inside and outside, re-polishing the floor and replacing the lighting. We hope also to be able to resurface the car park in the near future.

The Newsletter

The Lee Newsletter is published 10 times a year and distributed free to all households in the parish. The views expressed in it are not necessarily those of the Editor.

We welcome original letters and articles of general interest and relevance to The Lee. Copy should be sent to theleenewsletter@googlemail.com or, if on paper, to the Editor of the month (see page 1) by the 12th of each month.

Letters should ideally run to no more than 200 words and articles to 700 words; material may be edited and may also appear on the village website www.thelee.org.uk unless consent is specifically withheld. Anonymous contributions are not accepted.

To advertise or place an insert, please contact Paul Apicella on 837377 by the 12th of the previous month.

If you have photographs for publication please contact Jonathan Batten on 01494 837450 or email battenjonathan@hotmail.com.

Other members of the Editorial team: Peter Archer, Jen Ogley, Viv Robins, Adam Speller, Trish Swain, Colin Sully and Barnaby Osborne.

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To book the Parish Hall or Scout Hut

'phone Anne Barnett on 837796

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