
THE BRADLING STONE

THE NORTON IN HALES MAGAZINE



Issue 12—March 2020

12 Not Out!!

We've made it to issue 12! This is quite an achievement, thanks in no small part to our contributors, patrons and advertisers.

I've received photos and articles from quite a few of you over the past month, including an article from Sarah Moulson on her love of doll's houses and one from Richard Jones on his passion for Goshawks. I'd love to be able to share more of your stories, so please keep them coming.

This month's cover photo was taken by Carol Swales. Please send your ideas for cover photos to: editorbradlingstone@gmail.com. As ever, the quirkier, the better!

What's On In March?....

| Date | Event | Where | Time | Extra Info. |
|--------|------------------------|-------------------|-----------------------|---|
| Sun 1 | Praise and Worship | St. Chad's Church | 11.15 am | Lent – no flowers Cleaning – Mrs E Rowley |
| Mon 2 | Friends of Norton | Hind's Head | 7:15 pm | New volunteers always welcome |
| Tue 3 | Norton Coffee Bar | Jubilee Hall | 10.00 am— 11.30 am | Come and meet old and new acquaintances |
| Wed 4 | Mucklestone WI | Jubilee Hall | 7:15pm | Bring and Share Supper Competition – An item representing Wales |
| Thu 5 | In Bloom Meeting | Hind's Head | 7:30 pm | New volunteers always welcome |
| Sun 8 | BCP Morning Prayer | St. Chad's Church | 11.15 am | Lent – no flowers Cleaning – Mrs E Rowley |
| Mon 9 | Norton News AGM | Hind's Head | 7:15pm | |
| Tue 10 | Norton Coffee Bar | Jubilee Hall | 10.00 am— 11.30 am | Come and meet old and new acquaintances |
| | Parish Council Meeting | Jubilee Hall | 7:15pm | |
| Sun 15 | Family Service | St. Chad's Church | 11.15 am | Lent – no flowers Cleaning – Mrs E Rowley |
| Tue 17 | Norton Coffee Bar | Jubilee Hall | 10.00 am— 11.30 am | Come and meet old and new acquaintances |
| Sat 21 | Table Top Sale | Jubilee Hall | 9: 30am- 12:20pm | Funds in aid of the Jubilee Hall & Carillon |
| Sun 22 | Mothering Sunday | St. Chad's Church | 11.15 am | Lent – no flowers Cleaning – Mrs E Rowley |
| Tue 24 | Norton Coffee Bar | Jubilee Hall | 10.00 am— 11.30 am | Come and meet old and new acquaintances |
| Sun 29 | BCP Holy Communion | St. Chad's Church | 11:15am | Lent – no flowers Cleaning – Mrs E Rowley |
| Mon 30 | Friends of Norton | Hind's Head | 7:15pm | New volunteers always welcome |
| Tue 31 | Norton Coffee Bar | Jubilee Hall | 10:00- 11:30am | Come and meet old and new acquaintances |

Further Ahead....

| | | | | |
|-----------|--|-------------------|---------|--|
| Apr 1 | Mucklestone WI | Jubilee Hall | 7.15 pm | Rebecca and Hypnotherapy |
| Apr 11 | Easter Egg Hunt | | | |
| 15 May | Audley Male Voice Choir | St. Chad's Church | 7:30 pm | Funds in aid of the Carillon Contact Alan Dutton & Mel Rees for Tickets @ £12 |
| Reminders | Date for the next month should be sent to secretarybradlingstone@gmail.com by the 15th of the month at the latest. Future events can be flagged up as required. Articles/contributions should be sent to editorbradlingstone@gmail.com by the 18th of the month. | | | |

Patrons have contributed to the annual cost of the magazine and we wish to thank them for their valuable contributions. If you would like to become a patron then please contact the secretary: secretarybradlingstone@gmail.com

A View From The Vicarage



Lent is an interesting season in the church calendar. It is seen as a time of reflection whereby we self-examine our lives and acknowledge our sins—our wrongdoings in the eyes of God. We consciously declare our shortcomings and how we have failed in our relationship with God. It is seen as a downer kind of season. After all, who really enjoys listing all our faults and failures?

Perhaps this year there is a new way of looking at Lent. The purpose of the self-examination and acknowledging of our faults is to remember our need for a Saviour. To stand before God and be acceptable to enter his eternal Kingdom, we must be as pure and clean as He intended us to be from the beginning of Creation. Clearly not one of us can achieve such perfection based on our own merits; hence we need a Saviour—someone who could redeem us. That Saviour is Jesus Christ, the Son of God.

Jesus came with the sole mission of dying on the Cross to be followed by His Resurrection to new and eternal life. His selfless sacrificial act on the Cross was a means to atone for all the sins of humankind. He took the punishment our sins deserve—death! When He died on the Cross and was buried in the tomb, He took our sins with Him into that death and burial. But when He emerged from the tomb on Easter Sunday morning, He left those sins dead and buried in the tomb, never to be seen again by our heavenly Father. What a wondrous act of love!

Therein lies the new perspective. Let's use this season of Lent to ponder anew God's gift of love. Could there be any greater act of love than the sacrifice of one's only Son so that others might live forever? I can't think of one. Who would you be willing to die for? For whom might you be willing to die in order that they might live? Most of us would have family and even some close friends for whom we'd be willing to make the ultimate sacrifice, but would we for strangers? Would we for those who hate and oppose us? Probably not! Yet Jesus died on the Cross for everyone throughout history, with no exceptions. That doesn't mean everyone will automatically be admitted to heaven. Only those who believe in Jesus and His act of love on the Cross will inherit His eternal life. What love!

In the middle of Lent, on Sunday 22 March, the folks of St Chad's will gather to celebrate mothers in a special Mothering Sunday service at 11:15am. We have this image of motherhood being the symbol of love between a parent and a child. There isn't anything a mum wouldn't do for the health and well-being of her child. Most of us probably have/had such a mum, though sadly not all. We take this time in Lent to celebrate a mother's love, but that love is only a reflection of our heavenly Father's love for us.

So why not contemplate love this Lent? Take time to focus on where we have not measured up to God's ideal of love—for God and one another as Jesus commanded us. Focus on the supreme act of love Jesus will make for us on the Cross on Good Friday. Focus on the Father's love for us in raising His Son to new and eternal life on Easter Sunday morning. That sacrifice was made for you and me. We are all loved and precious in our heavenly Father's eyes. Don't neglect the self-examination but view it with an eye on the wondrous gift of love we have in Jesus!

Rev. Don Alcock—Telephone: 01630 647 911—Email: dga952@hotmail.com

Nature Notes

There haven't been many reported nature sightings over the past month, so this month Nature Notes is given over to Richard Jones, King Birder of the Parish, to share his passion for the Goshawk—the Phantom of the Forest.

As a kid growing up in sixties Barlaston, Staffordshire, I was always fascinated by wildlife. Much of my knowledge was gleaned from books, particularly Ladybird books and the tiny Observer series. My early interest in birds of prey in particular was fuelled by a visit to the Welsh Mountain Zoo, near Colwyn Bay, where I saw my first falconry display. Seeing raptors flying to the lure made quite an impression on me and to this day, I relish the prospect of a good falconry display.



My first-hand observation of wild birds stepped up a notch when Sue and I moved to Norton in 1990 and we have been blessed with a variety of birds showing in and around our garden ever since. On the raptor front, these have included nesting Hobbies, Kestrels, Barn Owls and Little Owls, but my obsession with the so-called Phantom of the Forest dates back to a weekend in May 1994 when we were staying in a hotel in mid-Wales near Llandovery. On hearing of my interest in raptors, the hotel owner pointed out to me on a map precisely the spot in Caio Forest where Northern Goshawk were sometimes seen. I wasn't sure whether to believe him, but the walk looked a good one on the map, so the next day, off we set into the vastness of Caio, one of many commercial conifer forests in mid-Wales. I didn't know too much about Goshawk; many of my older books didn't even list them as a British bird since they had effectively been persecuted to extinction by the start of the twentieth century. The population has recovered somewhat due to "unofficial" informal releases of continental birds in the sixties and seventies. Anyway, the descriptions I read were of a huge Sparrowhawk, so I knew roughly what I was looking for, being familiar with Sparrowhawks from home.

As we neared the spot marked on the map, to my delight and astonishment I heard from the nearby trees a call that has since become very familiar to me, a ghostly scream followed by a scolding "Gek, gek, gek...". A large bird, apparently irritated by our presence and that of a nearby soaring Buzzard, broke cover and started climbing with powerful wing beats. My first Gos, and still one of the best sightings I've ever had of this, the world's largest true hawk.



In the following 26 years, I've driven and walked more miles than I care to say in pursuit of British Goshawks. And I don't regret a single trip, even though many have been in vain (if a walk in the woods can ever be "in vain"). In truth, their elusiveness is part of the appeal for me. Not only is the Gos still a rare bird in Britain (estimates are round the 600 pairs mark, similar to the Golden Eagle, much lower than 79,00 pairs of Buzzard or even 1800 pairs of Red Kite) but it is prodigiously shy, in Britain at least. Goshawk have evolved to live and hunt in woodland and favour substantial conifer woods containing mature trees

large enough to support their substantial nests. Unlike north American birds (the same species) which routinely attack humans approaching a nest site, our Goshawks will usually slip away quietly. They don't hunt by soaring high looking out for prey below (like the Buzzard, Red Kite or Peregrine Falcon) and are just very difficult to see, even if you are in a wood where you know there are Goshawk. Some individuals are noisier than others but it is impossible to predict with confidence that you will see Goshawk on any particular trip. The only time they routinely "show" is in breeding season displays over the nest site, typically on still, sunny mornings in February or March. And there aren't many such days, trust me!

Please continue to share your nature sightings to:

A Passion For Gos.....

Although protected by law, the Goshawk is, along with the Hen Harrier, one of our most persecuted birds of prey. Egg collectors doubtless play a part in this, but a perceived threat to shooting interests brings this magnificent hawk into conflict with man, a conflict in which there can only be one winner. There is certainly no shortage of prey for the Gos, or habitat for that matter. They should be more common than they are, but they are still heavily persecuted, especially outside the comparative safety of Forestry Commission land.

The female Goshawk is a heavier, more powerful bird than a Buzzard, albeit with shorter wings. The male, as in most hawks and falcons, is significantly smaller. Prey varies depending on what on availability, but typically consists of about 75% birds (especially crows, magpies and pigeons) and about 25% mammals (grey squirrels and rabbits). They will not hesitate to take other raptors if the opportunity arises, particularly Sparrowhawk as well as Barn Owls and Kestrels. They are fearless and indiscriminate hunters, which has made them many enemies.

Leaving aside the maddening elusiveness and the rarity, an adult Goshawk is (to my eyes anyway) an absolutely stunning bird. From the beautifully barred, broad chest to the menacing eye stripe and, in mature birds, orange or blood red pupils, the bird exudes power and aggression.

Oddly, not everyone seems to share my fascination with the Goshawk, but Sue certainly does and we spend many happy hours traipsing through woods listening for the distinctive call, looking for shed feathers, prey remains or plucking posts, sometimes even catching a brief glimpse (rarely more than that) of a hawk. Often we draw a blank, but the areas we are searching are invariably beautiful and of course, there is plenty of other wildlife to spot. I sometimes wish I didn't have to drive so far on my quest – but then if there was a pair of Gos regularly nesting in the middle of Norton, above the bus stop, perhaps the bird wouldn't have quite the same magical allure? Nice thought though, unless you are a crow, magpie or pigeon.



Richard Jones (Captain Falcon)

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Norton to Enter Heart of England in Bloom in 2020

The village won a gold medal in the Britain in Bloom competition last year, which was at the national level and the rules say that we have to revert to the regional, Heart of England, competition in 2020 to enable others to have a go at gaining a national accolade. There was debate at the last group meeting whether a year should be taken off or to continue competing. The competition does concentrate minds and physical effort in keeping the village looking its best, regardless of the level of competition success, and so it was decided to go for it.

There was a good turnout for the last meeting as the photograph shows, and new people are always welcome, particularly with the competition on the horizon. So come along and join in!



Events taking place this year are the Easter Egg Hunt on 11th April, which was much enjoyed by the youngsters this year, the Plant Sale on 6th June and the village show on 12 September. Other events being planned are a wreath making course and a talk by a professional gardener, so watch this space.

Some points of interest that come from the meeting are that; Chris Green has kindly offered his 'serve yourself' box opposite the school for the use of anyone with surplus flowers or produce on a Friday morning to leave in aid of charity. Sarah Moulson said that she was pleased to report that the PC has agreed to fund a village interpretation board. She is preparing costings and content. The group agreed to contribute an extra £50 towards the stretched funding of the Bradlingstone magazine.



There was a good turnout at the pool working party in early February when the path was cleared, dead growth removed, excess brambles removed and external boundaries strengthened with wood from the removed excessive tree canopy. Refreshments provided by Gail were much appreciated and everyone had a good time! Thanks go to all who took part and for such a lovely spot being made available for village use. It can now be left to grow wild the rest of the year, but for now, as the photograph shows, it is very tidy!

Garden Notes For March

There is a lot to do in the garden this month. Here is a list of just a few things as a reminder.

- Protect young shoots from slugs, and plant summer flowering bulbs.
- Lift and divide clumps of perennials (Saving some in pots to give to the Bloom plant sale?)
- Mow the lawn if you have not yet started that chore. I even gave mine a trim early February! Grass has not stopped growing all winter.
- Cut back stems grown for winter colour, like dogwood.
- Hoe and mulch weeds to keep them under control early on. Hairy bittercress always seems to be a problem in the spring and if they are not pulled out, there will be 10 times as many next year because they seed like mad!
- Start feeding pond fish as the water warms up and it's the last chance to prune bush and climbing roses.

Next In Bloom Meeting :7.30 pm — 5th March 2020 — Hinds Head

Garden Notes For March

This year, the Norton in Hales Village Show will be held on Saturday 12 September. As usual, the Fruit and Vegetable Show is bound to attract a lot of entries in the following categories:

| Class | Vegetable | Number | Notes |
|-------|------------------------------------|---------|-------------------------------|
| 1 | Onions | 3 | Tied off, on sand, on a plate |
| 2 | Courgettes | 2 | On a Plate |
| 3 | Beetroot | 3 globe | On a Plate |
| 4 | Marrow | 1 | |
| 5 | French Beans (runner or dwarf) | 5 | On a Plate |
| 6 | Runner Beans | 6 | |
| 7 | Bunch of herbs in water | 4 | In water |
| 8 | Tomatoes - Standard | 6 | On a Plate |
| 9 | Tomatoes - Cherry | 6 | On a Plate |
| 10 | Cucumber | 1 | |
| 11 | Potatoes | 4 | White or Red |
| 12 | Carrots | 3 | |
| 13 | Peppers (Sweet or hot – chillies) | 3 | On a Plate |
| 14 | Selection of Vegetables | 6 | Different varieties |
| 15 | Longest Runner Bean | 1 | |
| 16 | Heaviest Onion | 1 | |
| 17 | Unusual Shaped Vegetable | 1 | |
| Class | Fruit | Number | Notes |
| 18 | Eating Apples | 5 | On a Plate |
| 19 | Cooking Apples | 5 | On a Plate |
| 20 | Plums | 5 | On a Plate |
| 21 | Damsons (unripe entries permitted) | 9 | On a Plate |

One or two pointers given as encouragement are as follows:

- Potatoes are judged on appearance, so choose a variety that has a good skin (I use Casablanca) and try growing the odd tuber in a bag of old compost left over from last year with a bit of fertiliser added. It keeps the skin clean and unmarked.
- Carrots can be tricky to grow unblemished. They really need to be grown under fine netting to keep the carrot fly away. Alternatively try a variety such as Flyaway or Resistively. These are not foolproof but it helps to also grow another variety that the fly can go and eat! They are not show varieties but should be reasonably blemish free, which is what really counts.
- A nicely marked marrow looks good on the show bench, but it has been known for an overgrown courgette to win. (No names!). They are easy to grow.
- In the flower section there will be classes for dahlia and gladiolus. It pays to spend a little more for a few good-quality gladiolus tubers. They give more flowers per spike.

Hairy Bittercress should be removed from the garden now before it seeds. It is in the mustard family so you can always eat it!

Lastly, don't be in too much of a hurry to sow seeds into open ground. They will not grow when the soil is cold, so wait until the hawthorn is coming into leaf – that's nature's thermometer.



Tabletop Sale



Here are some pictures from the recent tabletop sale at the Jubilee Hall. There were lots of stalls including Ashley Methodist Chapel, raising money for their organ, our church, for the carillon fund.

Mucklestone W.I, and St. Chad's Church ran the kitchen selling bacon buns (Shepley's bacon), tea, coffee and cake in aid of the church. The event was very successful, and the next one will be held on Saturday 21st March between 9.30am and 12.30pm. Anyone wanting a stall please contact Carol or Bev on 658983.

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Saturday 14th March 2020 from 1pm at the club

Not much is happening on the sports front at the moment, which is not surprising given the recent winter weather. However, a sure sign that Spring is just around the corner is that the cricket club is gearing up for the 2020 season.

A membership and pre-season social event is being held on Saturday 14th March at the cricket pavilion. As well as checking out the cricket club, you'll be able to watch, in the company of like-minded sports fans, the Six Nations rugby matches being played that afternoon while enjoying food and drink from the bar. You can let out your loudest 'sofa-roar' without the fear of complaint from your husband/wife/child/pet (delete as appropriate)!!

Publicise Your News Or Event

Have you some village/parish news, or are you organising an event that needs publicising? If so, there is an easy way to communicate with various Norton in Hales media. Just send an email to info@nortoninhales.org with your information and it will be received by the editor of the Bradlingstone magazine, the village website editor, the Facebook editor and community email administrator. They will decide if your item is appropriate for their media outlet. So if your cat has gone missing it might be appropriate for the Facebook page, or, for an event to raise money, for all the media. Let's keep everyone informed of what's going on. It's now so very easy!

Audley Male Voice Choir

A great opportunity comes to Norton in May when **Audley Male Voice Choir** stage a concert at St. Chad's Church.

The concert is in aid of the Carillon Restoration Fund and will feature instrumental and vocal soloists, as well as the widely known and well-loved Choir, which is North Staffordshire's premier Male Voice Ensemble, renowned for their annual Victoria Hall Hanley concerts and their very wide-ranging repertoire.

The Choir's 50-strong members perform locally and nationally and have appeared at Llandudno, the Royal Albert Hall, Loggerheads, Newquay, Oban and Market Drayton. Regular appearances all around the local area help to raise lots of money for good causes, and they are looking forward to their Norton visit.

The Musical Director, Sue Hallam, is busy preparing the Choir for this performance at St Chad's church in May, with a collection of songs, both old and new, to show off the Choir's talents. An enjoyable and not-to-be-missed evening in an intimate setting awaits.

This concert is a great chance to hear the best in local music making and also to support the Carillon Appeal. Make a date in you diary now for a 7:30 start **on Friday May 15th: Tickets are £12**, including a half-time glass of wine, and are available from Alan Dutton (654844) and Mel Reese (657723). There will be a raffle on the night and a 'lucky programme' draw will win £20. Only 100 seats are available, so get yours now!



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Spring Comes Early? Or Not?



Richard Jones has shared a few photos. The first is an unremarkable shot (his words) of Hawthorn leaves emerging - except taken on 31 January - which is extremely early. The second is Wild Primrose taken on same date. Not at all remarkable - the clue is in the name, Prima Rosa - but pretty nonetheless.



The third is a sunset under cloud, taken on 29 December, and the final shot is a wintery scene taken on 10 February



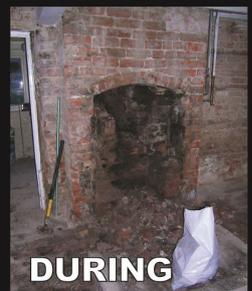
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Sarah Moulson's Passion for Doll's Houses

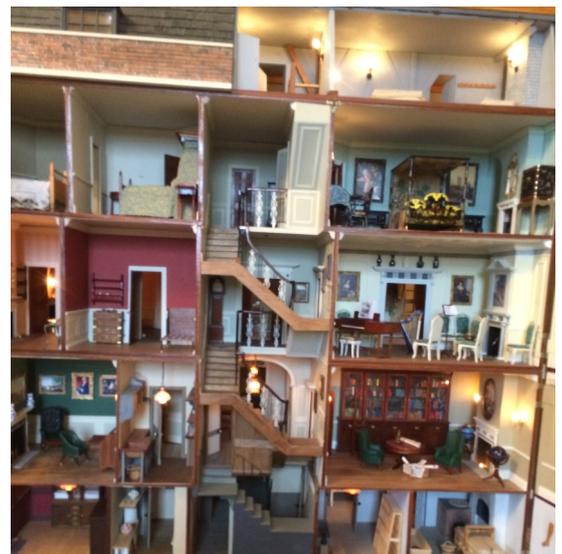


Many years ago, my father built me a doll's house and made all the furniture to go in it. He is now 88 years old and has sadly hung up his tools, so, reluctantly, I now buy furniture and furnishings for the house. I often come home from doll's house exhibitions having spent an absolute fortune on something no bigger than my thumb nail.

Dad and I made a good team. He could make anything out of wood and with his career as a dentist, he was extremely skilled working in miniature and was blessed with very steady hands. I love working with antique fabrics so all the curtains and upholstery I, rather clumsily, made. It is a 30-room house, with front and back, on five floors. It took him three years to build and we had great fun designing the layout of the house. We did extensive research, going to look at old houses in Cheltenham and Chichester and worked to a very particular period of late 18th century and a scale of 1/12th



These few pictures give you a flavour, but they do not do justice to the extraordinary skill my father had and the wonderful legacy he gave my family.





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In The Fields With The Curious Raven

How are those New-Year resolutions coming along? One of mine was to stop grumbling about the incessant rain and muddy fields, which are not the most rip-roaring fun. In all we soaked up 803mm (32 inches) in 2019, which is 135mm above our average of 667mm, normally split similarly between April to Sept values of 417 and 386mm for October to March. Early morning field walking is now often accompanied by the heady odour of silage as the clamps are disturbed for stock feeding; not to everyone's liking but certainly mine. Those same stock are also producing slurry, which is being applied to fields now, and manure, which is being heaped up as middens, muck heaps in the fields, ready to add valuable organic nutrients to the soil for spring-planted crops and mostly for May-sown maize. Oddly enough, maize is a sub-tropical crop with varieties adapted to our temperate climate. A few maize fields have also been ploughed, letting the weather break down the heavier clay soils to make seedbed preparation less arduous. Few other field operations are underway as temperatures are too low and daylengths too short, but the seed for spring-sown crops is already in the barn. The grass is still growing, albeit slowly, along with the snowdrops and an odd daffodil out along footpaths and in woodland. The landscape is a little bleak at present, as shown by the February tree pictures, but soon it will pass into April and the whole scene takes on a softer hue.



1: February, 2: April, 3: June and 4: November

In The Fields, On Our Pavements and On Our Shoes

As previously reported in these pages, there has been a persistent but relatively limited problem with dog fouling on the footpaths and in the fields around the village. Dog waste on pavements was a relatively rare occurrence, but recently this has become much worse and the overall incidence of dog waste is much increased. The parish council is determined to tackle this unpleasant problem and an article in next month's magazine will details its plans.

Apologies for the rather graphic photo accompanying this article. It's a plastic 'joke' item, but as many of you will have found to your cost, dog waste really is no laughing matter.

