

South Leigh News



(Photograph taken by Steve Legge One Hat Design)

PARISH COUNCIL UPDATE & NEWS

We are trialing producing our village newsletter electronically to see if it is as effective as a paper copy. We would very much welcome your views. We also need to build up a bank of names and addresses of people that either don't have access to a computer or those who would prefer a paper copy. Please let us know if you are aware of someone who fits this category as we really do want the newsletter to reach everyone. The email address is newsletter@southleigh.info

Parish Council News

As things return to the 'new normal' we welcome the reopening of the pub but generally want to remind people that social distancing should still be a very important part of our lives. We're lucky to live in an area where the rate of infection is not high – let's keep it that way.

You will know that we have recruited Tammy Heavens as our new Clerk – she has started working and is proving a great success. If you want to contact the parish council she should be your first port of call – tammy@southleigh.info. All your councillors are still here to help too if you would rather. Contact details are on the website

With lock down things have been quieter on our front – but are starting to build again now – there are some consultation papers published on the proposed Solar Farm particularly to do with the planting and screening – our website has full details:

<https://southleigh.info/pc/index.php#solarfarm>

Any comments would be appreciated.

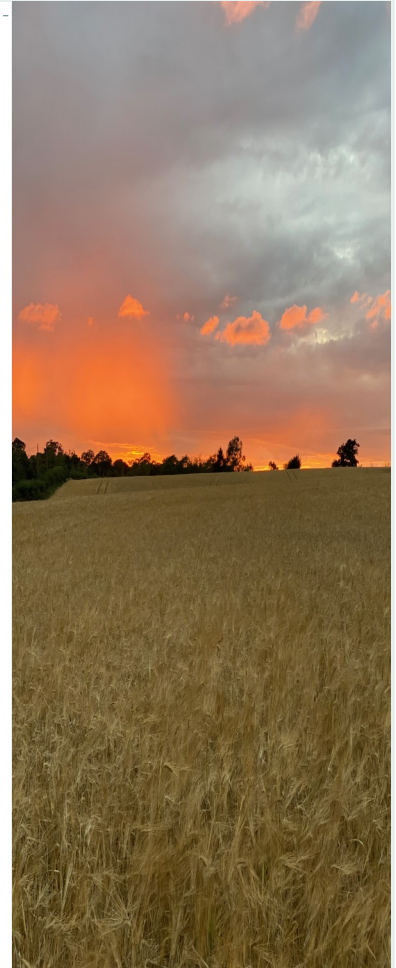


PHOTO: ACROSS THE FIELDS CHAPEL ROAD

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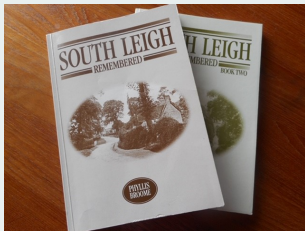
The South Leigh News Photograph Requests

South Leigh News would like to publish photos taken by villagers in each edition capturing our Parish.

We won't be able to publish everyone's however we shall chose photos that are best suited to the edition.

A star photo will be selected to go on the front page of the newsletter. Please can you email any photos to :

newsletter@southleigh.info



THE HISTORY OF SOUTH LEIGH

As residents leave the village and new ones arrive, sometimes the local history leaves with them. One of the best sources of the village history has been told by the villagers themselves and recorded in Phyllis

Broome's books "South Leigh Remembered" and "South Leigh Remembered Book 2". Many newer residents would like to find out about life in South Leigh in times gone by and so if you know of any of these books languishing unwanted in a drawer somewhere please let me know. It would be good to prevent as many copies as possible from disappearing.
Liz Ashwell - liz@southleigh.info

The annoying water leak on Station Road is still present. They came and mended it and within hours the leak was back. The drainage at High Cogges is also a continuing bugbear. Added to the list are the culverts, particularly outside the pub, the road surface in Chapel Road as well as in High Cogges and potholes generally. It has been noted that speeding is increasing yet again – hopefully it won't be long till Lysette and her team can get out again – even the presence of speed monitors seemed to make a difference.

We are following through on your replies about the poor mobile phone signals throughout much of the village – it will take time but we will keep pestering the suppliers and government departments. Dick Pears and I have a meeting with Robert Courts MP in October.

We continue to monitor the progress on plans for the Solar Farm, as mentioned above, Shores Green junction and the suggested anaerobic digester. As soon as we get more details or proposals we will let everyone know.

In the meantime, please remain safe and if there is anything Tammy or any of the councillors can help with please do let us know.

I hold a village email address list for keeping people informed of anything that's happening within the parish. If you would like your name added please let me know. If on the other hand, you are fed up with getting round robin e-mails all the time please let me know and I'll remove your name and contact details. Nicky Brooks 01993 701137 or nickybrooks@southleigh.info

There is of course the village Facebook page if you would rather.

Nicky Brooks
Chair, Parish Council

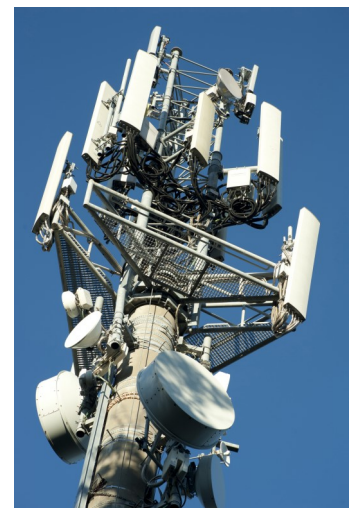
Concerns have been raised about the quality of the mobile signal in South Leigh and Robert Courts MP is assisting in investigating these issues in conjunction with village.

The problem finally came to a head when two villagers in South Leigh were unable to call for help when a deer was stuck in a fence and pulling off its leg.

Other signal issues include being cut off when talking to the police about a family problem and another villager was cut off when talking to a hospital about a blood issue.

Residents are advised to contact the four operators, EE, O2, Three and Vodafone with whom they have a phone to complain about the poor level of signal. Dick Pears is spearheading the campaign and if you have any information that you feel may be useful please get in contact with him.

The Oxford Mail ran an article on the above issue and it transpires from comments made that other rural villages have been experiencing the same problems.



VIEW FROM THE VICAR - WAITING FOR THE NEW NORMAL

Six months ago 'zoom' was a passing acquaintance that I barely knew, now I just wish I'd taken out shares in the company because most of my life seems to be spent in online 'zoom' meetings. It's been a huge relief to be able to meet people in person in the garden!

We are all speaking a new language with 'lockdown', 'PPE', 'furlough' being words that we weren't using much at all and as for 'unprecedented'.....

The reality is that there is a whole spectrum of words and feelings in play at the moment/anxiety, frustration and in some anger. You might be feeling one of those emotions or you might be somewhere in the middle of the spectrum, your garden is looking great, you're quite enjoying lockdown and while you're taking the dangers of covid seriously you're not desperate to get back to how life was before.

However, many people are grieving at the moment, grieving loss, loss of familiar routines, loss of major events, loss of holidays or other special plans, loss of loved ones through bereavement. On top of that lots of people I know are feeling tired, tired of home schooling, tired of social distancing, tired of working from home. All of this creates an environment where we can react out of our grief, out of hurt and frustration and effectively not be ourselves.

Over the past several weeks I've also met people who are feeling shaken and as a result have started reevaluating where they have been putting their trust and what they now think is important compared to the beginning of the year.

I've had a number of conversations with people who are exploring faith, some for the first time, and while church buildings have been largely closed, the number of people engaging with church online has been quite extraordinary.

Jesus told a story where he said:

"Therefore everyone who hears these words of mine and puts them into practice is like a wise man who built his house on the rock. The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house; yet it did not fall, because it had its foundation on the rock."

I do hope that you and your family have weathered the storms of the last few weeks and are all set for a good summer. We don't yet know when we will be able to worship again in St James the Great, but we continue to pray for the village and for each other, confident of our foundations and hopeful about the future.

May you know God's grace and peace at this time,

Simon Kirby

Vicar of St. James the Great, South Leigh & St Mary's Cogges



LET THERE BE MORE LIGHT AT ST. JAMES'



While our church of St. James the Great still remained sadly silent in early August, after a discussion with the Vicar and a tree surgeon, plus a walk around the graveyard to assess the work, there was a flurry of activity there during the heat-wave on the 10th and 12th.

This was the start of a number of jobs planned for the coming months, including the removal of dead trees that keep falling from perimeter hedge, and cutting back to let in light and to show off the beautiful mature specimens that form the backdrop to the church.

After further discussion with the Vicar, we hope that we will be able to create a number of subtle 'windows' through the currently over-grown hedge to allow glimpses of the church in its tranquil setting.

us, was conscious of the limited resources available and the priority of pastoral needs, and so we were all in agreement to go ahead.



(Above): 'Waste not want not': Heather trims pruned branches to make garden poles and supports for laden sloe trees in Bond's Lane.

Dick Pears said, "This is another constructive South Leigh lockdown initiative and one that will beautify even further our most treasured asset. Many thanks to Heather for her advice on what to do with the trees, and to the Vicar for supporting the project and with whom we shall continue to consult".

Dick added, "Many hands make light work and we only had six. If you would like to help in any way as we move into the next phase, please let me know. You'd be most welcome". I am at

dpea4cs@aol.com



(Above): 'Barrow Boy takes the Heat': Team Leader, Dick Pears, cleans up in 34 degrees.

There were concerns, initially, about potential delays because we thought that we might have to wait for a 'Faculty', which is a special Church licence, in order to start work. However, trees etc are within the control of the Vicar and he, like

(Far Left): 'Cool scene': The heatwave work party takes to the shade: Dick, Heather and Martin S.



“THE VILLAGE OF THE MAD”

BY A WRITER WHO LIVED IN SOUTH LEIGH—DYLAN THOMAS

By Martin Spurrier

Some extraordinary people have made their mark on South Leigh over the years.

Dylan Thomas, one of the greatest of Welsh poets, lived in our house with his family for about eighteen months between 1947/49. The Manor House had been lent to him by a doting, wealthy benefactor and, when he wasn't here writing, he was at the pub or travelling, mainly to the BBC in London for which he both wrote and read. At home, chaos seems to have reigned so, for peace and quiet, he worked in a gypsy caravan in the adjacent field.

In a letter of July 1948, Dylan Thomas describes their new digs: *'My house here, though with such a dignified address, is a pokey cottage full of old people, animals, and children. And everyone I want to meet, I have to meet outside somewhere, generally, and preferably, the pub'*. He later writes of three cows having broken into the outside lavatory.



Picture: Some of the sources for this article at The Manor House today

Under Milk Wood starts here

It is documented that while in South Leigh, Dylan wrote most of the first half of *Under Milk Wood*, his celebrated 'play for voices' for the BBC. Originally called, 'The Village of the Mad', its loony characters include Organ Morgan who dreams of playing to sea gulls; Mrs. Ogmores-Pritchard, a nutter who won't take guests at her B&B because they might not be clean; and her husband who commits suicide by drinking her disinfectant.

It is suggested that some of his characters may have been based on folk he knew in South Leigh! And while reports of Dylan's personality vary widely, interviews with local residents at the time state that this 'extraordinary little man' was 'adored' here.

Dylan Thomas' published letters written from The Manor House start on 19th Sept 1947 and end on 27th February 1949. They reveal a shambolic, brilliant, tormented, infuriating yet captivating, hard drinking smoker whose charisma could be spell-binding. He loved conversation and beer, especially with ordinary people, and his Welsh voice was hypnotic (to me, more so than Richard Burton's), and he could perform magic with ink.

Chaos reigns at The Manor House

Dylan's wife, Caitlin Mcnamara, co-directed the domestic bedlam. She was beautiful and a writer, too. And a dancer. She lived beneath a rick of flaming red hair, a fag, with feral children attached to her apron, and animals everywhere. Their relationship was passionate and tumultuous. They loved, fought, drank and she would dance on the table in the pub, and on the bus. She'd been brought up with the family of Augustus John, the eminent Welsh painter. She sat for him as a very young woman, and became his lover.

Dylan would escape to London as often as he dared 'hunting bread and butter'. Caitlin would remain in charge of the children and Dylan's sick parents, whom he had brought to the village. Finally, they relocated to Laugharne in South Wales in May 1949. How, out of this maelstrom, could come words written with such naïve calm, joy and childish carelessness as in his *Fern Hill*, is bewildering. And his moving *Do Not Go Gentle into that Good Night* villanelle, casts a spell.

Dylan Thomas was one of few poets who became celebrated in his or her own lifetime, but it seems that he was unable to assemble his life as he could his prose. When there was money, it popped with the Champagne corks. Then, while on a reading tour in the US for a decent fee, after a long night out in New York, he collapsed. He was resuscitated by a mysterious Dr. Feltenstein, who was known for his 'winking needle'. But, the second time, Dylan did not recover and died in Greenwich Village on 9th November 1953.

The life of Dylan Thomas, late of The Manor House, South Leigh, and buried in Laugharne, had been meteoric. One observer wrote that he was a poet and a performer, and that it was the performer that killed him. He was just 39.



THANK YOU



SCRAPE & PAINT PUTS A GLOSS ON THNGS

Virtually all the village's 'street furniture' has now been scraped, protected and re-painted to give a very smart and distinctly 'cared for' feel as you enter South Leigh.



Many thanks to all involved and to Graham Soame who created and co-ordinated the project that was completed despite the Lockdown.

'Village Green'

The first phase was reported in the last Newsletter. That involved scraping the Limb Brook bridges and other railings, and protecting them with primer before top coats of our new 'village green' gloss. With this done, the team pressed on with the bus shelter and then, appropriately 'distanced', the second phase saw the completion in white of the remaining bridges up towards the A40 at Barnard Gate.

New Benchmarks

Meanwhile, the hardwood benches at Margery Cross, Lymbrook Close (the Irene Kew memorial bench, 13 January 2008) and at Gunn Cottage (the Queen's Golden Jubilee bench, 3 June 2002), which have served the community so well, were unbolted and taken away by the team, repaired and the heavy Verdigris-like growth sanded off (see progress picture!). Finally, they received multiple coats of wood preservative and a silicon preservation cream. They were then re-bolted or concreted back in

position. Each bench took three or four days to complete.

The Signs are Good

And finally, the finger post and road sign at Margery Cross were de-rusted, primed and painted in white gloss, like the latest bridges.

This was an outstanding lockdown project and many thanks for Phase



II go to D'Arcy and Evadne, Martin C, Martin S, Oliver, Gary and Ajay, and Dick and Konstantin for a glittering performance... and, of course, to Scrape & Paint Team Leader, Graham.





NATURE NOTES

BREAKING NATURE NEWS!

A bird? A plane? It's a Hummingbird hawk-moth!

On the 16th August, a rare visitor was spotted in South Leigh, hovering among white phlox. Was it a baby Superman, a tiny bird, or what?

Mr. Google tells said that this amazing little imposter was a *Macroglossum stellatarum*, a 'hummingbird hawk-moth', who is a summer migrant from Southern Europe. They are abundant in Mediterranean countries and across Central Asia to Japan but come here only in the summer. That's because they cannot survive our winters - maybe that is changing as the UK gets warmer.

(Right): Pictures caught on an old iPhone. Its wings flap so fast they are a blur.

This beautiful little moth is about an inch (25mm) long and has a wing span of 2 inches (50mm). It looks more like a tiny hummingbird with large eyes. Check this out: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jg_pwC2ZbWw

To hover, the hummingbird hawk-moth flaps its wings at 80 times a second and you can actually hear them 'humming' while it collects pollen with its long 'proboscis', a nose/tongue-like protrusion that is as long as its body. The hummingbird hawk-moth flies in bright or dull weather, at dusk or dawn, and sometimes even at night. *ms*



'Stick & Flick' is the Answer

It's been said before about animal poo on our village verges, and it needs repeating to offenders about spoiling our footpaths. The likelihood is that those of us who have dogs and who read this Newsletter are not the culprits because we love and care for where we live.

Rather than bagging dog waste in plastic and leaving it for you and me to remove, owners should take it away or use 'Stick & Flick' to move it into the undergrowth. This is easier than picking it up and/or hanging it on the hedge.



Forestry England recommends this, as do many other concerned groups. See <https://www.forestryengland.uk/dog-code>.

Offenders need simply to take a stick and flick the dog waste into the foliage. It is thought to be better for the environment as it reduces plastic, it's better for the plants, and it's better for humans as it is out of sight and more hygienic. Horse owners are not obliged to clean up.

The **Keep Britain Tidy** campaign estimates that a staggering 1,000 tonnes of dog waste are produced every day in the UK. In South Leigh, we are surrounded by the most beautiful countryside and offenders are asked not to spoil it and, meanwhile, to respect the visitors, residents and dog owners who abide by the Countryside Code. See: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-countryside-code/countryside-code-full-online-version>

It's worth saying that those who leave dog poo can be fined up to £100 and, if the case goes to court, this can go up to £1,000.





NATURE NOTES **Wild Flowers - A Blooming Success**

Our Wild Flower initiative launched by Graham Soame last year, and again this year, are establishing themselves and have burst into flower.



Pictures: Wild Flowers in Station Road and at Margery Cross and below the wildlife they attract

It's not a 'given' that Wild Flower planting succeeds first time. However, very successful patches of Wild Flowers have come through along the road verges in Station Road, Chapel Road and at Margery Cross. Several others in private gardens are doing well too – including those at Wayside Cottages, Acre Cottage, Windrush Cottage and Shuttles Cottage.

Following on from this success, a more thorough seeding of verges will be organised in September aimed at producing a show next year.

If anyone would like to plant a Wild Flower strip or garden on their road verge or in their garden, please contact Graham Soame. We would also like to see more ponds being brought back to life and if anyone is keen to build or to renovate one, please let Graham know at planning@soame.co.uk





NATURE NOTES Trees – Branching Out in Chapel Road

The South Leigh Forest Restoration group has made good progress despite Corvid-19, although we have had to scale back, a little, our ambitions for this year.

In preparation for planting from September to February, we have purchased stakes, shelters and fixings (see picture) with some of the funds kindly secured for us by our County Councillor, Charles Mathew, and so are ready to go.

We await news about the Football Field lease renewal. The Parish Council has agreed to our proposed planting plan for which we have been given trees by Mike Kirk. We believe that this should not now be long.

We have met with Savills, the representatives of the Eynsham Park Estate that has granted us permission to plant at Just Cartridges, along Chapel Road and, provisionally, up Church End from Margery Cross. We await the return of our proposed legal documentation.

We have received more chestnut and oak saplings from seed and are holding them. We have about 50.

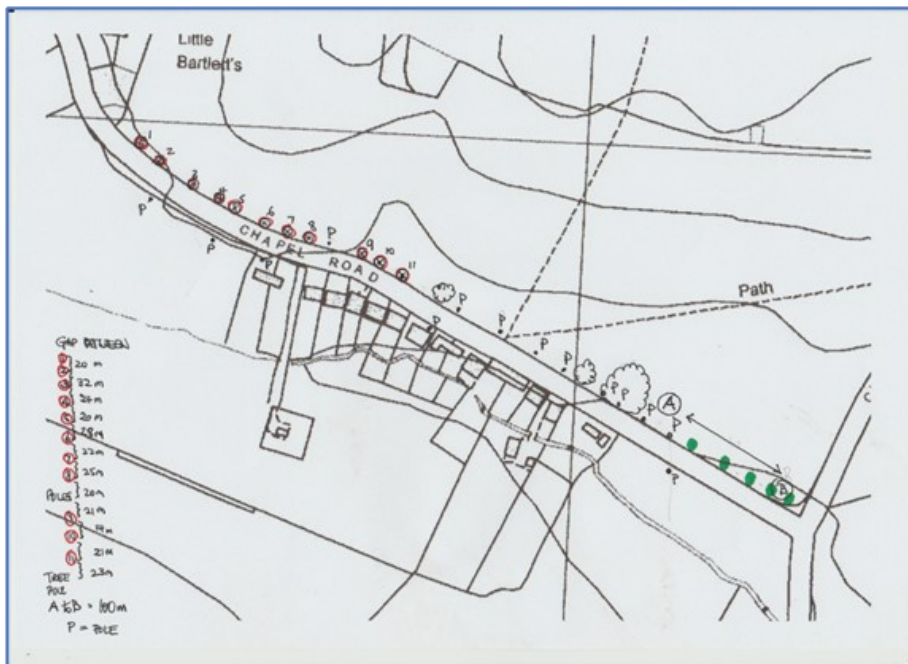
Planting along Chapel Road is getting nearer. We have written to all residents along the road regarding this and have placed stakes where we plan to plant (see pictures and the plan).

The trees will be planted in 'notches' cut into the hedgerow opposite the stakes so as not to damage the main hedge. We have asked if we may plant five more trees shown in green on the plan.

As our guideline, we shall use the Forestry Commission's **Research Information Note 195, 'The Establishment of Trees in Hedgerows'**

<https://www.forestryresearch.gov.uk/documents/4909/RIN195.pdf>

Next steps will be the Football Field, some more at Just Cartridges, and Warners Farm land in Stanton Harcourt Road.





NATURE NOTES

Get Lucky Every Day!

Your four-leaf clover hunting tips

As a child I questioned the existence of four-leaf clovers (other than Alfa Romeo's Quadrifoglio brand that was used to bring their racing drivers good luck). I thought that it was yet another deception created by adults. So, I went hunting...

My usual Nature Notes expert, Mr. Google, advised me that four-leafers are a rare genetic mutation and that our chances of finding one is about 1 in 10,000. That's better than the Post Code Lottery, I thought, so set off up Bond's Lane in search of one of Nature's nicest mutants. After ten minutes or so, I couldn't believe it. There it was, a real live quadrifoglio, so I struck before I lost it and took the picture at the top on the left, immortalising this discovery. Later that week, I thought I'd sneak up on the clovers again to see if I could find three more, one for each grandchild. Within 15 minutes, I found them, all four-leafers! (see top picture)

Panic! What to do now before they got away?

I quickly pressed them in a book between white paper for a few days and then popped them in nice cheap frames from B&Q. Hey presto, lovely presents for the children.

Happy mutant hunting! Martin S.

Quadrifoglio Hunting Tips

10,000 clovers take up about the area of an office desk, so:

- Mark with twigs an office-desk sized patch of clovers (note how they face the sun in the morning).
- Search a very small area at a time. Thus, use a wire coat hanger as shown. This gives you an 8-inch square. (I'm pointing at a four-leafer!).
- Let your fingers 'walk' through the leaves, finger step by finger step, or slowly run backwards, keeping your eyes fixed firmly on the leaves directly under your fingers. Don't let your eyes race ahead.
- When you have searched one 8-inch square, mark where you have been and move on to the next
- Beware of the mischievous clovers that deliberately stick together to look like six-leafers. They do this to disappoint you. Just keep preening and do not despair if you don't succeed first time.



PS: The Guinness Book of Records notes that the most number leaves on a clover was 56. This was found in Japan in 2009!



Dedicate a tree or some woodland?

South Leigh Forest Restoration

Our target is 200 trees a year and, despite the lockdown and the hold ups in the legal documentation, we anticipate planting in our first year at least 85 substantial trees, plus private plantings, while still nurturing our 50 saplings.

We now need to increase our fund-raising efforts as we will need about £1,000 a year even if we just plant 'whips'.

Of course the self-set saplings will cost us just the stakes and shelters. However, if we want to plant six-to-eight foot trees, we will need about £4,000 each year. There are grants available and we are examining these carefully. Help with this search would be much appreciated as would be Private Funding and/or tree/woodland dedication.

This kind of help is always most welcome. Please just contact David Brooks or Martin Spurrier at: martinspurrier@hotmail.com 07799368464

Sunflower Envy?



Mine is bigger than yours!

Chapel Road Sunflower competition winner Keith Hawton proudly stands beside his winning plants, the largest a staggering 14ft.

To those who were not aware of such a competition it transpires it was only between Keith and one of his neighbours and the prize is of course a dried sunflower head.

The neighbourly competition has been running for a number of years now and will continue brightening our skies.

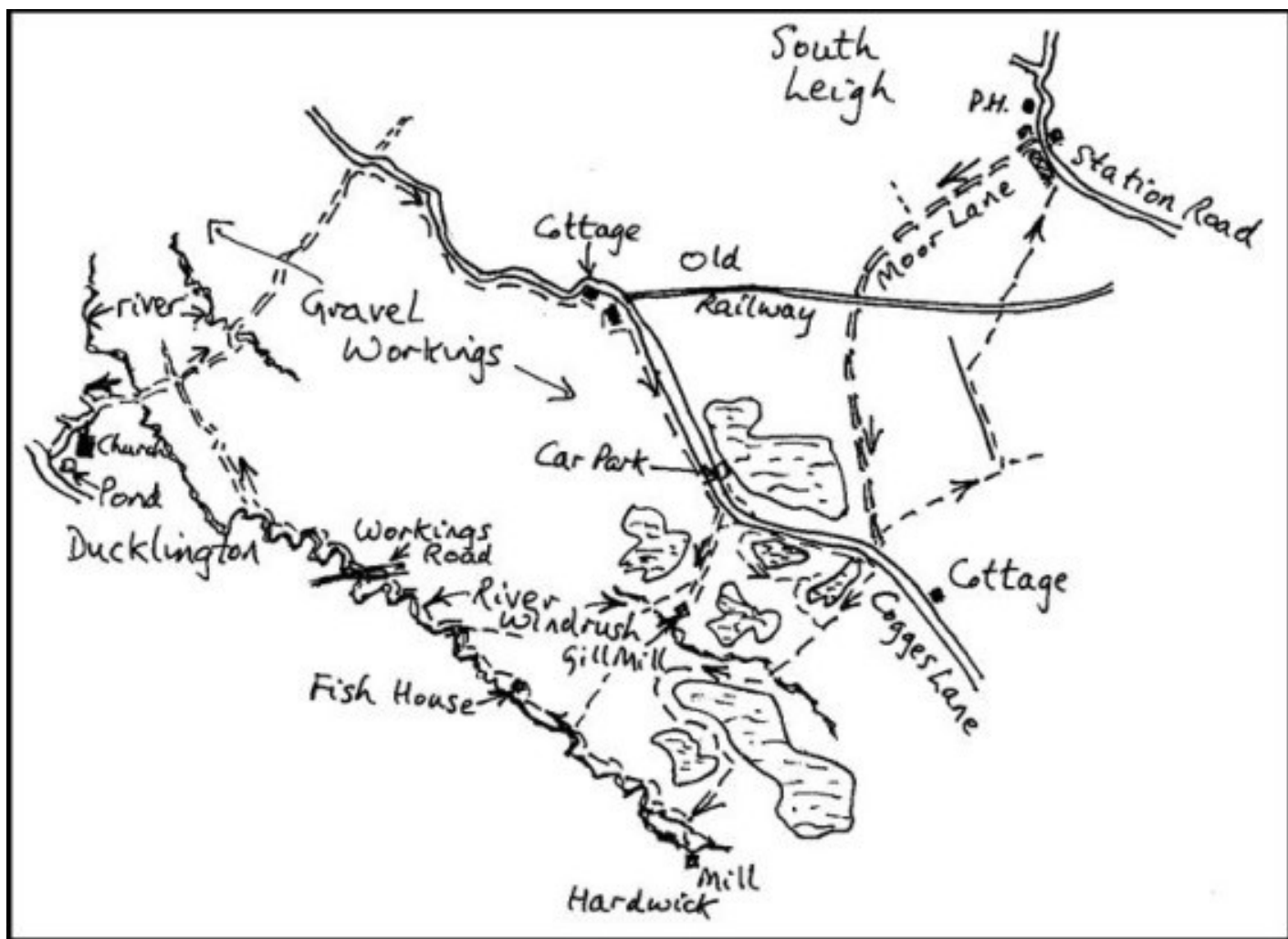
QUIZ

.....with a local theme ;

well, sort of!

Find as many words of 3 or more letters from 'SOUTH LEIGH' as you can ; and yes, all 10 letters form a word! No common names allowed, but plurals count as extra words. No 'answers' as such, but well done if you get 100 words, and over 120 words would be brilliant!

LOWER WINDRUSH VALLEY WITH TAR LAKES WALK



The gravel extraction in the lower Windrush Valley is entering its final phase with the current workings taking place towards the A40 between High Cogges & Ducklington. Here is a choice of 2 walks (1 from South Leigh), taking in 2 recently created 'Permissive Bridleways' (not dedicated Public Rights of Way), a delightful riverside path, and the now well established Tar Lakes.

Distance (incl. detours): Walk (a) 6 ½ miles (allow 3 hours). Walk (b) 8 miles (allow 4 hours). Wear stout footwear.

Start: Walk (a) Tar Lakes Car Park, Cogges Lane. G.R. SP381072. Walk (b) Moor Lane, from Station Rd.

Walk (a) Leave Car Park by gravel path, cross road & go through gate to Tar Lakes, then L. Stay in this direction to pass 2 lakes & reach hedge in corner, beyond gate on L, & follow path round to R. Now go to 3rd paragraph for continuation of route description.

Walk (b) Go along Moor Lane, cross rail bed (Fairford line from Oxford), & stay on grassy track to reach, & cross road (Cogges Lane). Go through gate then L, & follow path round to R.

Now maintain your direction on this path, passing 2 lakes then cross the River Windrush; there are 2 arms of the Windrush as it flows through the meadows between Witney & Standlake. Now bear immediately R on wide grassy track above lake, bearing L around end of lake, then just before gate go R at waymarker, to cross footbridge & now L. The path bears R to pass another lake, & from gate go straight ahead across meadow & pass through gate onto riverside path by information board.

The route is R here but it's worth making a short detour across bridge & field to Hardwick Mill.

LOWER WINDRUSH VALLEY AND TAR LAKES WALK

There has been a mill here for over 700 years, but what you now see is mostly C18 with earlier masonry & a late medieval stone doorway. In the mill floor are fragments of a large gravestone with a monastic symbol of c.1300, which possibly came from Eynsham Abbey.

Return to information board & stay on the Windrush Path (Permissive Path) alongside the river as it meanders through the meadows, to reach the Fish House—probably a medieval mill, used as a fulling mill & later a corn mill. It was also used as a fishery for Cokethorpe House (across A415 from here). A stone bears the date 1723, but this is possibly from when the square tower was adapted after Cokethorpe House was built in 1709 for Sir Simon Harcourt. The adjacent cottage is a C19 addition.

Continue on this waymarked path, cross quarry workings road, then after leaving river you are on a firm wide track. Go through gate to reach crossways. The meadow on R is an amazing sight around mid April when it is full of snakeshead fritillaries. On Fritillary Sunday you can enter the meadow, & on this day events take place in & around Ducklington Church, including Morris dancing.

The route is R here, but another detour (½ mile return) along track (public footpath) to L is worthwhile, to cross the Windrush & go on to St. Bartholomew's Church, Ducklington, & a bit further to the duck pond in its fine setting. Well placed seats here make it an ideal spot to rest.

Retrace your steps then continue on track (Permissive Bridleway), with St. Mary's Church, Witney across meadows on L. Cross 2nd arm of Windrush, pass between the latest gravel extraction workings, then just before reaching road go through gate on R & along another Permissive Bridleway. This track bears sharp R at "Cogges Bridge Cottage", where the Fairford line once ran on its way to Witney station. Continue past the changing landscape of gravel extraction to reach bridleway (& drive to Gill Mill). Here, it's worth making another short detour to see Gill Mill in its setting ; go R, over the 'hump', then bear R on grassy track at break in fence, to reach bridge across the Windrush with Gill Mill to L. There were settlements around here in both the Iron Age & Roman periods. (Oxford Archaeology are currently excavating the area towards Ducklington).

Now retrace your steps & just before the 'hump' go R on waymarked path, through trees & across field to road. Go R for a few paces & through gate to Tar Lakes. Now go straight ahead to bear L around lake then cross wide footbridge on R, to go immediately R then round to L around 2nd lake to information board, & here go L to gate by road. To return to car park go L on path.

To complete walk back to South Leigh cross road again, & beyond gatepost (with waymarkers) go R on footpath, across footbridge & straight ahead along field edge, cross 2 stiles, to reach track (paths junction). Go L, soon bearing R for just a few steps & at marker post go L by plantation & hedge. At next waymarker go R on diagonal path across field, cross old rail bed & narrow part of field, then from stile in hedge drop down to gate just to R of the estate houses on to Station Road.

RC

Village Hall

Village Hall Committee

Richard Law (Chair)

773355

Dorothy Carden – Noad (Secretary)

703840

John Ashwell (Treasurer)

703534

Debi Deacon (Bookings)

773314

David Brown

703765

Sue Washington

775574

Caroline Auger

834899

Club 100 Winners

April Terry Ellis and Anne Cherry

May Ken Brooks and Russell Cherry

June Rob Wilson and Rachel Murphy

July John Long and Dawn Ellis



HOGWATCH SUMMER

The last few months have actually been quite positive on the village Hedgehog front. We thought we only had a few visiting the feeding station in the garden, which was a decline on previous years. However, we decided to test this by marking the regular visitors with a small dot of brightly coloured nail varnish and we soon realised these and others were coming most nights for a nutritious supplementary snack.

'Hettie' as named by John and Liz, made regular appearances in the early afternoons, she had a bit of a wonky gait and it seemed to be a female gathering nesting material. She went for her daily walks over the bridge and along the stream wall, much to the horror of the anxious Ashwells, not the steadiest hedgehog on her feet but she managed it, even though we couldn't fathom why she had decided on this particular route. (Hettie Above)



Food and water was dutifully left out and much appreciated by Hettie, with it being June and July we can only hope she was a sow preparing to raise a family of hoglets. They tend to have 4-6 youngsters per litter but sadly not all survive. They leave the nest with Mum after 3-4 weeks to join her foraging for food and returning to the nest for her milk. After around 10 days of hunting with her they go it alone, they are solitary creatures and live their life without encountering their siblings.

So, donning thick gloves and with some trepidation we painted small dots on two hedgehogs, hereafter referred to as 'Yellow Spot' and 'White Spot' for obvious reasons.

Yellow Spot was a regular visitor to the feeding station, a medium sized darker hedgehog, unflustered by a strange woman wandering down the garden at odd times with a small torch. On

occasion yellow spot got there early but I was able to creep in and refill the empty feeding station bowls it was staring at with such disgust. No sign of it for the last month but I am optimistic and hoping to see an extended family at the feeding station at some point, we can but hope.

White spot is still a regular visitor to the garden, a force to be reckoned with. It is bigger, lighter in colour and much more snorty, snuffly and basically a bit of a grumpy character. White Spot doesn't like to share feeding stations with other visitors and for this reason I have decided to leave multiple food stations dotted about the garden to allow the quieter and meeker personalities a look in.

A successful move, the milder mannered hedgehogs hear White Spot coming (not difficult, it is quite vocal, grunting as it comes) they either hide or swiftly move to another location.

As a general rule we seem to get around 3 adult hedgehogs visiting the garden just before darkness. There are at least 5 in total including White and Yellow Spot plus 3 hoglets, independent of adults and eating from the food piles. The adults do not seem to challenge the little hoglets, even grumpy old White Spot, which is nice to see.



White Spot (Left)



Yellow Spot (Left)

HOGWATCH ADVENTURES

One medium sized dark hedgehog always goes through the chicken netting.



Although not ideal, to accommodate this the netting is never switched on at night time. I always check the electric fence every morning to make sure none have encountered problems and got stuck, we rescued one a few years ago that had become entangled.

So, it is looking positive on the village hedgehog front, great news, but these mammals are having a tricky time in our modern world. They are in a fragile state and are very much an endangered species.

The food we offer at garden feeding stations is only a complementary and nutritious snack. This is not their main diet, but to help them when they need to 'bulk up' a bit. This is so important in times of drought, cold weather,



breeding season (May/June) and in preparation for hibernation (October/November) or later if it is a mild winter. Hedgehogs are well and truly a gardener's friend and devour many of what we would consider to be garden pests such as slugs, caterpillars and beetles.

Don't think that if you feed them they will stop eating the grubs, they enjoy the food we provide but their main diet is what they forage for.

I leave food and water out all year round, hedgehogs wake up numerous times over the winter and need to find food to keep them going through hibernation. I leave it in a sheltered spot to protect it from the elements.

If you would like to leave food out for them they enjoy, meaty cat and dog kibble, (nothing fish flavoured) especially dry food formulated for kittens. They enjoy the wet pouch dog and cat food and always a bowl of fresh water. I have a mixture of various types of kibble in a tub, they seem to enjoy it anyway. There is of course 'hedgehog food' available from pet stores, which is lovely but it is quite expensive.

By Ally Urquhart



FEEDING HEDGEHOGS

- Use a plain, meat-based cat food, or a specialist hedgehog food (sold in garden centres), which helps to keep their teeth sharp and clean.
- If you have a problem with cats eating the food, try placing the food under a brick shelter with a hedgehog-sized gap in it.
- If food isn't eaten overnight, remove anything that will go off and replace it with fresh offerings in the evening. Research suggests that unpredictable supplementary feeding is beneficial e.g. moving the feeding spots around and scattering food in a more natural way.

Remember: it is important not to leave bread and milk out for hedgehogs as it can cause diarrhoea.

Seasonal South Leigh Recipes

More summer recipes to make the most of what's in season...

Shoestring Courgette Fritti

If you grow courgettes it is always good to find a new way to use a few up. After the excitement of finding the first couple of courgettes hiding under the plant's big leaves, it then becomes a challenge to find ways to use them all! I had forgotten just how good these thin, crisp strips of courgette, dressed with sea salt and lemon juice are, until I had them again recently. I don't really like deep frying food (you must always concentrate and take great care when cooking with hot oil) but I will make an exception for these as they taste so good.

3-4 medium sized, firm courgettes
Approx. 500ml vegetable oil, for frying
250ml milk
100g plain flour
Sea salt and freshly ground black pepper
Lemon wedges, to serve



Discard the ends of the courgettes and slice each courgette in half lengthways. If the centres of the courgettes are a bit soft and seedy, scoop this out using a teaspoon and discard, then cut the firm flesh in long, thin strips, about 0.5cm x 0.5cm. If you have a mandolin you could use this - but mind your fingers!

Pour the milk into a small, shallow dish, wide enough to accommodate the courgette strips. Place the flour in a similar dish and season with salt and pepper. Prepare a baking tray lined with paper towel. Heat the oil* in a large saucepan (it should come about one third of the way up the side of the pan) or in a deep-fat fryer.

Take a handful of the courgette strips and dip them in the milk. Shake off the excess liquid then dust the strips in the flour, giving them a little shake to remove any loose flour. Using a slotted spoon, gently drop them into the hot oil and use the spoon to separate the strips. Fry for 2-3 minutes or until lightly browned and crisp. Lift out with the slotted spoon and drain on the kitchen paper. Continue cooking the courgette in batches.

Season with salt and serve with wedges of lemon to squeeze over the fries.

* The temperature of oil for deep fat frying should be approximately 180°C. If you don't have a suitable thermometer you can test that the oil is ready by inserting the handle of a wooden spoon into the oil. If small but fierce bubbles form around it, then the oil is ready. If the bubbles are going crazy, the oil is too hot, so let it cool down a little before frying.



Roasted Raspberry Jam

I recently came across this recipe and it is SO easy and quick to make that I thought I would pass it on. If you haven't made jam this way before, it basically takes 30 minutes from start to finish and roasting the fruit seems to really intensify the flavour.

1kg fresh or frozen raspberries
900g caster sugar
Juice of one large lemon

Preheat the oven to 200°C / Gas 6. If using fresh raspberries they must be dry, so do not wash them. Place the raspberries in a large metal roasting pan and roast for 30 minutes.

After 20 minutes, pour the caster sugar into a small roasting pan and heat in the oven for the last 10 minutes of the overall cooking time.

Remove both pans from the oven and tip the hot sugar into the roasted fruit. Stir in the lemon juice then place the pan on the hob and stir for a minute or two, until the sugar is completely dissolved. Instant jam! Pour into warmed, clean jars and seal.

Roasted Vegetable Ratatouille

Roasting the vegetables before making ratatouille makes this a richer, more flavourful dish and, by deliciously caramelising the vegetables they lose some of their moisture and stay chunky when made into ratatouille. Ratatouille is perfect for freezing and is a quick and easy way to preserve some summer vegetables for use throughout the year.

3-4 courgettes,
3 peppers (red, yellow and orange)
2 red onions, peeled
3-4 garlic cloves
Olive oil
Salt and freshly ground black pepper
250g tomatoes
1 x 400g can chopped tomatoes
2 tbsps concentrated tomato purée, or
'[Bomba](#)' - a tomato purée seasoned with vegetables, herbs and spices
a pinch of chilli flakes, optional
A handful of fresh basil



Preheat the oven to 200°C / Fan 180° / Gas 6. Remove the soft, seedy, inner core of the courgettes if they are large and remove the seeds from the peppers. Chop all the vegetables into chunks so that they are roughly the same size. Peel 3-4 cloves of garlic and cut each clove in half. Put all this into a large roasting pan, making sure that the vegetables have plenty of space - if necessary, use two pans. Drizzle over 3-4 tablespoons of olive oil and season with salt and pepper.

Roast for 35-40 minutes, turning the vegetables after 20 minutes. Remove from the oven and toss in the cherry tomatoes or quartered larger tomatoes, followed by the chopped tinned tomatoes, tomato purée and the chilli flakes, if using. Return the pan to the oven and continue cooking for a further 10 minutes, or until the cherry tomatoes have burst open. Check the seasoning, adding more salt and pepper to taste, and scatter over the torn basil.

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