

THE REDLAKE

NUMBER 54

SPRING 2021

From the Editors

Spring has well and truly 'Sprung'. It is nice to see the fields full of new life; sheep with their lambs and some beautiful brown cattle with their calves, in the field opposite us. The blossom is out, and the bees are busy harvesting the pollen to start the year off. Let's hope we can all do the same. Although, I think there might be a new 'normal' to adapt to...which might not be a bad thing. I think if we are to address the problems of the future we have to make small changes now. And from all accounts, shopping local and working from home if possible is making a big difference to the local economy and people's well-being, as it is bringing communities together as well.

Jeremy Jameson

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More information and photos of some of these articles are available on the website at <http://www.chapel-lawn.co.uk>



'New beginnings' Picture by Ken Bowen

EASTER SERVICE, & EGG HUNT



The gathering at church this Easter was amazing. Good Friday was a bright sunny day and children and parents came to hunt for Easter eggs in the churchyard. They had an 'eggciting' time! Easter gardens were also created and placed in the church along with lovely flower arrangements for Easter Sunday. It was also a great way of welcoming new farmers Steve and Casey to the village!

We are facing strange times ahead as we enter an interregnum after Revd. Annie's retirement. Not knowing whether we will have a new priest, our PCC will concentrate on leading St Mary's forward.

We have a great team of people working to keep the church open for all, which was explained in the last Redlake. We would value some help coming forward. Perhaps providing flowers for the church, helping to clean working alongside a PCC member, or helping when the churchyard grass is being cut in June and September. As we held no fund-raisers last year, we are really wanting to make the Ramble and Lunch on 12th September special and we're asking the Valley to put in a big effort to make it a great event for all.

Church is involved in the local history event in October and our theme is weddings. We are looking for flower arrangers to bring the church alive with floral displays. After the success of our Easter egg hunt with so many children and families coming along we want to build on this with other workshops (maybe a teddy bear's picnic in August?). Have you any ideas to pass on? Lastly we are really keen to offer pastoral visits in the coming Spring and Summer months. Get in touch with Christine on 530585 if you would like to book a visit or if you can offer help in any other ways.



TRIBUTE TO THE LATE RUBY HUGHES

Ruby passed away peacefully in hospital on Feb 4th 2021 aged 95 years. Her funeral took place at Old Radnor on Feb 19th. The eulogy was given by Stephen Thomas (nephew) the soloist was Del Williams.

Ruby and the family lived at Wax hall for over 40 years until David retired from work at Llynaven, before moving to be nearer their daughter Ann.

Both were well known in our area with many family and friends, and made a huge contribution to all events in Chapel Lawn.

Ruby was the organist for 25 years at the chapel in New Invention until its closure, and supported St, Mary's church, the village school and the Redlake hall.

She was an enthusiastic member of the WI always willing to be part of all activities. She very much enjoyed the fun and friendship within Chapel Lawn WI. Ruby was a talented needlewoman, and her skills helped our WI win so many competitions at local and county level. Our scrapbooks show photographs of winning exhibits and trophies.

David and Ruby will be remembered for their horticulture knowledge and satisfaction of growing prize winning vegetables and flowers, especially Dahlias. They were very competitive only exhibiting the best at all local shows including Kington, Knighton and Clun, winning so many 1st prize cards and trophies.

The family would like to thank all who sent flowers, cards and generous donations. (over £1,000) in memory of Ruby. Donations were given to St. Mary's church Chapel Lawn, and St. Stephen's church, Old Radnor.

Jean Price

WELCOME TO THE REDLAKE VALLEY

We would like to welcome the new tenant farmers at Chapel Lawn Farm. Steve, Casey, and their children Lottie & James. We wish you many years of happiness in your new home & venture.



In planning for the Celebration of the Redlake Valley in October, the Community Benefit Society and St Mary's Church PCC want this to be as much about who lives here today as what went on in the past. From the opening night on Thursday 7th October through to Sunday 10th, we hope people will take part by demonstrating or exhibiting their interests, their skills and their businesses. We already have a long list of possible topics but please work with us to add more.

- food and cookery
- flower festival
- photographic exhibition
- family history displays
- local history
- talks on wildlife
- music by local performers
- an organ recital
- children's games and competitions
- bee-keeping in action
- farming then and now
- a display of old maps
- get-together for former school pupils gathering memories and recollections
- traditional industries including a clog-maker in action using local alder
- local artists, craftspeople and other businesses offering their goods and services
- photo albums and dresses from past weddings at St Mary's
- Chapel Lawn in literature – readings by the book group

If all goes well, socializing will have resumed during the summer months, but after a difficult year and a half with so many restrictions and other difficulties, there is still the need to help

bring the community together again. Old friends can meet up who may not have seen each other for a while, and there are quite a few new faces where houses have changed hands so we need to welcome newcomers. As the event will be spread over a number of days, it will be run on a drop-in basis according to people's interests, with fixed exhibits to browse, and scheduled talks and demonstrations in the village hall and church (some out of doors if weather permits). On the Sunday morning there will be a service of thanksgiving for our beautiful valley. Funds raised will be shared equally between the two organisations.

But we need more ideas as well as help to do it all. Please get in touch with any of the organisers listed below with your suggestions. Do you have old family photos that are of interest? Does any old cine-footage exist? Can you spare an hour or so to help with the refreshment rota? What are you really good at that you could demonstrate? How could you promote your local business?

The planning team is limited to the permitted six at present as follows:

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... but we can expand it after 17th May. We look forward to hearing your ideas.



SOUTH SHROPSHIRE CLIMATE ACTION was set up in November 2019 following a large public meeting in Craven Arms of concerned local people. The group held a very successful online conference in September 2020 which strongly supported the idea of local action to combat the twin threats of climate change and biodiversity loss. Philip Dunne, local MP, attended both meetings and encouraged the initiative

which covers the whole of the Ludlow constituency including the Redlake Valley. A similar campaign is taking place in the rest of the county by Shropshire Climate Action Partnership (SCAP) and the two organisations are working closely together.

SSCA's objective is to create an action plan for the achievement of Net Zero Carbon emissions in South Shropshire by 2030 and, in conjunction with others, to implement the plan as far as possible. The report is currently being finalised (and designed right here in the Redlake valley) and will be in circulation in early May.

There are four working groups focussing on Buildings & Energy, Transport, Land & Biodiversity and Communities & Education including the creation and maintenance of a website so that materials are available for community groups and schools.

We are contacting local organisation of all kinds to see how we can learn and help with mitigating the climate and ecological crisis. If you would like to be involved in these climate emergency discussions, please get in touch at info@southshropshireclimateaction.org. Our second online conference is planned for 22nd May 2021. It's free – please join us here:

<https://southshropshireclimateaction.org/>

And we would be pleased to hear from you if you would just like to know more.

TALES FROM THE HIVE



This Spring has had a slow start. The Daffodils which in recent years appeared in February waited till well into March to blossom. This was replicated in all the flowering plants so the pollinators, awakened by the increased daylight, faced a severe shortage of both nectar and pollen.

Spring can be the most dangerous time for bees- laying has been resumed and the brood requires feeding. Starvation looms as consumed stores are not being replaced the the incoming food. I normally leave fondant on the hives which the bees will use if necessary. This spring I replaced this with a sthyn syrup in February and it was sucked down by the bees in short order. Four colonies are thriving but in two the Queens appear to be off-lay. If they dont start by next week then they will be merged with stronger colonies.

Spring also raised the Neonicatoids issue. The Sugarbeet farmers and the NUF applied for a Derogation to allow the use of Neonics' to combat the aphids which spread the Yellow Virus. The Derogation was granted and instantly a petition was raised against it. Now, beet is wind pollinated and Farmers are advised not to plant adjacent to 'flowering strips'. They also face severe rules regarding the crops which they can then rotate, only cereal crops for the next two years. No Farmer wants to pay for a dressing that is costly and restrictive. Unfortunately some published research has shown that as little as 5% of the neonics are taken up by the beet with the rest remaining in the soil or being washed out. This could possibly affect the water living larval stages of such beasts as mayfly or caddis fly and thus reducing the food for fish. Fortunately the late spring has delayed the emergence of the aphids and removed the need for the seed dressing.

This is not an easy problem to solve and livelihoods are involved. Research into pest management and gene editing to develop resistant strains of beet (and oil seed rape) is ongoing. Is it time for G.M.? I can feel a severe attack of the petitions coming on!

Steve Sherring

NOTES FROM STONY FIELD

'Ponds, deadwood hedges and a hibernaculum'

Our little 'pit' pond dug as an experiment last winter (2019/20) proved a success last summer and attracted a variety of insects from pond skaters and whirly-gig beetles to damselflies as well as frogs, birds and bees. We applied to be part of the Shropshire Wildlife Trust's Pond

Creation Scheme and were really pleased to be told our little pond was suitable for enlarging and enhancement as part of this project.

So, in late winter, a contractor with small digger chugged on site and spent a week making a mini version of the Shropshire Hills in clay and top soil 'spoil' whilst carving out a much bigger pond with lots of gently sloping edges. Most of the spoil (around 20-30 tons in all) was removed to another part of the field and will be remodelled into a crescent-shaped south-facing insect/ beetle/bee bank and oversown with native wildflower and grass seed later in the year.

As part of the project, we also created a hibernaculum (an overwintering shelter for all manner of animals, especially amphibians and insects). Built slightly above the pond where there is no danger of flooding, it is made up of layers of twigs, logs, small and bigger stones, clay pipes, old terracotta pots and leaf litter, topped with some old broken tin sheets from the barn. A cap of soil was put on top creating a snug 5-star residence next to the pond.



The first frogspawn was laid in the new wetland on 26th February in one of the deep side channels which has gained a surprising amount of aquatic vegetation (watercress, starwort, water forget-me-not, water crowfoot) over the autumn and winter months. It is amazing to see how nature regains a footing given half a chance (and in this case, some nice wet conditions). The wetland coped well with the high rainfall events this winter and we are considering installing one or more leaky dams and/or seepage barriers along the main channel to help hold back the flow a little more at times of peak rainfall. We are talking to the usual authorities about this.

My deadwood hedge of last year worked well, so I've extended it further in both directions this winter. The posts are Chestnut and from Bob James' coppice on the slopes of Caer Caradoc -

so rather grand really for my make-do-and-mend hedge, but they should last awhile especially in the wetter ground. As well as providing a mini windbreak and visual screen, deadwood hedges are useful habitats in their own right (a bit like a vertical woodpile or log stack). Apparently if you let long grass grow up to the base, it can provide very useful extra shelter for insects. The brashings I used were left over from the coppicing and hedge laying done in the small field last year. Deadwood hedges are really satisfying to make, especially on a sunny late winter's day, but good thick gloves are a must or the Blackthorn will have the better of your fingers. Ouch.

Sarah Jameson

PRODUCE STALL RENOVATION

You may have noticed the produce stall has had a makeover, thanks to Jacqueline Molony for organising it. Thank you to all who have contributed towards the cost of the renovation, and thank you to Simon Jameson for painting it all the funky colours. It will hopefully be good for a good number of years to come, and draw in customers to the produce on there.



FARMING COLUMN

(Written pre-lambing)

Well, what a winter it's been! We've gone from floods and wind with pretty mild temperatures to a mini-beast from the east! This can only mean 1 thing....lambing is fast approaching! But with a bit of luck, the weather will do as it has done the last couple of years and the fields will go from something that resembles a mud bath to something a little more favourable on the spring lambs that are fast approaching.

At this time of year, when we have scanned all the ewes and parted them

into their relevant parental groups and put all our faith into whomever is entrusted with the magical scanning device, we start feverishly feeding them all according to how many lambs they are expecting in the spring. (March 10th for us) The feeding regime usually begins with about 5-6 weeks to spare before 'D-day' (Drop day) with triplets being parted out and more or less worshipped with the farmer on a direct line for their beck and call. The twins, they go on the next field up, and are fed fairly generously with a close eye being kept on their body condition as we approach that fateful day. Then we have the singles, they're on the next field again. Now, unfortunately for these ladies they don't get the same ration of barley and endless supply of feed blocks, at least not straight away, as due to the nature of the sheep – inherently greedy – they would eat as if they were carrying 3 lambs and the lamb they are carrying would grow accordingly, and then come D-day they would come to regret their extra helpings at the trough as the mother of all lambs is welcoming him or herself into the world!! Ouch! Then of course there are those ewes that just didn't take a fancy to Mr. Ram as he strutted his stuff back in the autumn and depending on the reason for their denial, some are given another chance to impress the following year, but unfortunately some have a date with Mr McCartney down in Knighton, and from there is where the humble donner kebab originates. The ideal filler for a hungry farmer running on instinct after a heavy night on the beer in a pub....WAIT,WHAT, A PUB??!!

So hopefully by the time this message finds you, we as a nation will be well under way with our vaccinations for the dreaded covid 19. (21million and counting while writing this) and with a bit of luck...and no more new variants...we may all be allowed back into civilisation and a life that resembles normality where we can meet in groups...indoors(!) and socialise and just generally be human again! The doctors aren't the only ones doing mass vaccinations at the moment however, as the farmers are also vaccinating the pregnant ewes in the trusted theory that the vaccination is passed onto the fast growing lamb inside the ewe, for numerous conditions that can make life hard going for them and the farmer

caring for them once they are born. Perhaps the doctors and farmers should join forces on the covid vaccinations, we can get hundreds done in a day and will even change the needle between larger groups!

I guess 1 positive that has come of all the last year of hunkering down and thinking about one's actions is that life has certainly become more local, and the local small businesses have certainly stepped up to the plate – literally, as the local butchers and smaller essential stores have done everything they can to accommodate the sudden rush of needing to buy local. Let's just hope the support for the smaller family and locally run businesses continues once the planes to the four corners of the globe are resumed and the people who we relied on in the hard times aren't forgotten about in the good times.

Speaking of good times, we are now well over half way through the winter, and spring is knocking on the door. Before long, the farmers mind will be turning to the planting of the spring crops, and the feed for the animals for next winter. And the planning that needs to go into it with how many fields to dedicate to growing crops, and how many to keep for grazing the spring stock on. I'm guessing as many people as can, will be growing wheat or barley or oats this coming harvest after the straw prices we have seen this winter where you need a mortgage to litter down the cattle! Hopefully this spring will be favourable with a nice mild and sunny lambing leading into a warm spring with some sunshine and a little bit of rain, to help the crops grow but also the lambs to thrive. Fingers and everything else crossed! But for now it's back out up the fields to feed the hungry ewes!

So from here I will bid you farewell, and will see you on the other side (of lambing) when we are able to socialise again without fear of spreading the virus or coming back home to find a ewe lambing with the lamb coming backwards or with a head introducing itself without the necessary feet...Wish me luck!

Hopefully see you in the pub soon.

Steve Roberts, Purlogue