



The Window

March 2024



Ipsden Bird Count

On Thursday 15 February Gary Magill and I set off for the annual GWCT (Game & Wildlife Conservation Trust) Big Farmland bird count. This is our 5th year of walking the hedgerows and margins together to look and listen for songbirds and varied species.

The Species Variety was 'up' this year: 31 as opposed to 22 last year, and the largest total since 2020; it also includes several birds on the 'Red List'. The day was wonderfully warm and bright with a light southerly breeze; this might have helped with spotting a few more species. In 2021 we managed less than an hour owing to a biting east wind and freezing conditions!

It is noticeable how many more songbirds there are in the hedge rows near wild flower or grass margins; this is heartening, because Woodhouse Farm Partners (WFP) have put in more of these in the last few years, as well as more hedging in some field boundaries. Gary is a past master at listening and spotting all varieties; we often heard the bird before spotting it.

Vaughan keeps our bird feeders well topped up all year round, and we do have a marvellous variety who come to feed outside our kitchen window - annoyingly not on the feeders today so not on the record, but we see them! I really recommend a bird feeder near a window so you can watch the comings and goings; it is wonderful to see a whole family of long tailed tits swinging and balancing and chattering, they never come alone and have a real party!

There is an idea to try for a Grey Partridge survey, and WFP will be sowing a corner of Barley to try and encourage Corn Buntings - keep an eye out!

Susie Williams



Left: Grey Partridge, and right: Corn Bunting



View from the Vicarage



Faithfulness springs forth from the earth, and righteousness looks down from heaven. The Lord will indeed give what is good, and our land will yield its harvest. Righteousness goes before him and prepares the way for his steps. Psalm 85:11-13

“In the Spring there are the clouds which send down the precious rain, the musk-scented breezes, and life-giving zephyrs; the air is perfectly temperate, the rain falls, the sun shines, the fecundating wind wafts the clouds, the world is renewed, and the breath of life appears in plants, animals, and humans.” Spring symbolizes rebirth, renewal, and new life. Earthly beings pass from one condition to another.” *Abdu’l-Baha*

Throughout history, people have developed myths and legends to try to explain why the weather and temperature change in cycles. Ancient peoples relied on their harvests for survival, so it's not surprising that the startling transformation from harsh winter to lush and fertile spring was particularly fascinating. Some legends link winter with the grief of a powerful deity and suggest that they are reunited with their loved ones in the spring. Others believed that the return of spring was directly caused by a god rising from the dead.

Although in modern times most have a more scientific understanding of the changing seasons, there is still a lot to be learned about humanity from these ancient mythological explanations for Spring. The symbolism is one most people can appreciate. In all cultural traditions, the world over, Spring is a time of rebirth and new beginnings.

As Spring introduces warmth and light, many religions celebrate it by promoting a renewed and positive view of faith. The term “Spiritual Springtime” has become popular for this reason. For example, during Springtime, Christians celebrate Easter, after a period (during Lent), of meditation, prayer and spiritual recuperation. We thank God for our blessings, ask forgiveness for our wrongdoings, and strive to cleanse and purify our hearts and souls to feel both physically and spiritually refreshed and transformed.

Continued on page 3

View from the Vicarage (Continued)

Spring is a beautiful time of year when the winter weather subsides, and the flowers begin to bloom. No wonder Spring is often associated with hope and rebirth—two major aspects of the resurrection of Christ. So, at Easter, as the world bursts forth in blossoms, we take time to reflect on our own spiritual transformation during this magical season.

The cold Winter weather, the bleakness of the bare trees and gardens, pass away to be replaced with new life and beauty. Our spiritual senses are alive to the glory of God, the wonder of his love and grace, and his willingness to love and forgive.

Like Seasons, our lives contain patterns of ups and downs, gains and losses, new life or the death of a loved one, confusion and fear. It is the extremes of each season that can disrupt or catch us completely off-guard. Maybe, though, if we are patient enough and pray enough, our lives will come full circle just as the seasons do. Worrying less and trusting more makes it easier to enjoy each moment of the life that has been so lovingly given to us by our God. We must go through these cycles in order to blossom when Spring comes.

May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.
Romans 15:13

Happy Easter Everyone

Canon John



This newsletter is edited, published, printed and distributed by the churches of Ipsden and North Stoke. The copy deadline for the March issue will be 22 March please

March Church Services

As well as during services, both churches at Ipsden and North Stoke are open daily during daylight hours for visits and private prayer.

Date	Ipsden	North Stoke
Sun 3 March	9.30am Holy Communion	11am Holy Communion
Wed 6 March	5pm Evening Prayer Zoom Meeting Id 410 935 129 (Please wait to be admitted)	
Thurs 7 March	10.30am Holy Communion	
Sun 10 March Mothering Sunday	10am Service of the Word. Zoom Meeting Id 188 513 761 (Please wait to be admitted)	
Wed 13 March	5pm Evening Prayer Zoom Meeting Id 410 935 129 (Please wait to be admitted)	
Sun 17 March Passion Sunday	9.30am Holy Communion	11am Holy Communion
Wed 20 March	5pm Evening Prayer Zoom Meeting Id 410 935 129 (Please wait to be admitted)	
Sun 24 March Palm Sunday	9.30am Holy Communion	11am Holy Communion
Wed 27 March	5pm Evening Prayer Zoom Meeting Id 410 935 129 (Please wait to be admitted)	
Thurs 28 March Maundy Thursday	7.30pm Team Service at St John the Baptist, Whitchurch Hill	
Fri 29 March Good Friday	12.00 noon: Service of Reflection at St John the Baptist, Mongewell	
Sun 31 March Easter Day	9.30am Easter Communion	11am Easter Communion

Ipsden Village Lottery Winners

3 Feb	Colin Hives
10 Feb	Steve Atkinson
17 Feb	Lottie Rundall
24 Feb	Vaughan Williams
2 Mar	See next issue

Ipsden Village Lottery Tickets

There are numbers available for the Ipsden Lottery, which helps fund our Village Memorial Hall. A ticket is £1 per week, payable in 10-week blocks, with the winning number worth £25 each week. The winning number is the Saturday night bonus ball number in the National Lottery. If you are interested in joining, please talk to Shirley in the shop.

Clare Davis

St Mary's Ipsden Communications Meeting

The PCC will be inviting all Ipsden residents to a cheese and wine communications evening in May, exact date to be arranged, in Ipsden village hall to find out what is going on at our lovely church, St Mary the Virgin in Ipsden. This is five years on from our last communications meeting and will be an opportunity for you to make suggestions as to what you would like the church to do more or less of over the next five years, as well as hear about the upcoming projects and our current outreach events.

Clare Davis

Dates for Your Diary

9 March	Denny's Masterclass	See page 7
13 March	Ipsden coffee Morning	
16 March	Cholsey Repair Café	See page 13
23-14 March	Denny's Taster Mornings	See page 7
25 April	IPC Meeting	See page 7
?? May	Ipsden Church Meeting	See page 5

Curate's Contemplations

The Moon and Borrowed Days

I had never heard of a Worm Moon before this year. A Harvest Moon, obviously; a Blue Moon, yes, but never a 'Worm Moon'. Apparently, it's the name that's given to the full moon in March. I thought it might have something to do with ancient folklore but no, the internet tells me it's as straightforward as March being the month when the warming soil brings our friends the earthworms back up to the surface. Simple! There is obviously a whole lunar lexicon out there I know nothing about.

Whatever we call it, the full moon in March this year is going to play a decisive role in when we get to eat our Easter eggs (if we wait until Easter Day, that is!). I had some vague idea that the moon played a part in deciding the date of Easter; sometimes 'late' and sometimes 'early', but never fully understood why. One year at school it was so early, Easter was in term time which seemed a bit grim.

The rules say, 'Easter falls on the first Sunday after the first full moon that occurs after the Spring Equinox' (well exactly - that's why we let other people work it out for us!). The official start of Spring, the 'equinox', is when the Sun is directly over the equator on its way north, so day and night are the same length, and, strictly speaking, that falls sometime between 19 and 21 March. This year, the first full moon after that is 25 March, and the first Sunday after that is 31 March eh, voila: Easter Sunday 2024!

The moon may determine that Easter weekend falls on the last three days of March this year but, if folklore is to be believed, the 'Borrowing Days' will decide the weather. A rhyme, originally from Staffordshire goes: "*March borrowed of April, Three Days, they say; One rained, the other snowed, And the other was the worst that ever blowed*". A Spanish folktale has it that a shepherd promised to give March a lamb if it would lighten its winds to safeguard the shepherd's young flocks. But once March had done so, the shepherd refused to hand over the lamb. In revenge, March borrowed three days from April, and used them to produce even fiercer winds in order to pay back the shepherd for his deceit.

Easter coinciding with three stormy days at the end of March (well what did you expect – it is a bank holiday!). Personally, I always associate Easter Sunday with sunshine and bright yellow daffodils, a day that makes my heart leap like a Spring lamb because Jesus is risen from the dead. Time will tell whether folklore is right about the storms, but Easter Sunday will always be a day of joy and hope, a day of new life, and a day to come together in celebration, whatever the weather, whenever it falls.

With Easter Blessings to you all,
Rev'd Romey Poston

Capture the Arrival of Spring!

Enjoy the arrival of Spring and join me for two inspiring painting workshops on offer in March!

9 March is my watercolour masterclass, painting rivers, at Ipsden village hall. I will be teaching all the "pro tips, tricks and techniques" to paint rivers successfully. The course runs from 10am to 4pm and includes all materials, refreshments & handouts, but please bring a packed lunch.

23 & 24 March are separate watercolour taster mornings painting primroses. These courses are also being held at the Ipsden village hall, from 10am to 1pm, and include all materials, lots of supportive tuition and refreshments.

For more information about the courses and costs please check out my website at www.dennywebb.com or phone me on 01491 680942 or email redkites1@gmail.com

Denny Webb

Ipsden Parish Council

The next Parish Council meeting, including the Annual Meeting, will commence at 6.30pm on Thursday 25 April in the Village Hall. All are welcome. The agenda will be posted a few days before the meeting on the Village Website (ipsdenvillage.co.uk) on the PC Agendas & Minutes page, and on the notice board outside the village shop.

Ipsden Parish Council

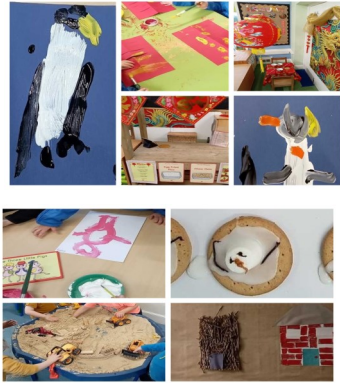
Cholsey Repair Café

Cholsey Repair Café opens its doors on the third Saturday of odd-numbered months, meaning that the next session will be on Saturday 16 March. Doors are open from 11am to 1.45pm and earlier visitors can get a nice cup of tea or coffee and home-made cakes at the Cholsey Community Café, next door, from 10am to midday. As usual, the volunteer fixers can tackle bicycles, electrical (and sometimes electronic) items, sharpening of tools, textile repairs, gluing, soldering and a good deal more. If a repair cannot be made, further advice is available. All work is free of charge although a donation towards operating costs is appreciated. More information, including contact details, can be found at www.cholseyrepaircafe.com

Ian Wheeler

Early Days Roundup

As a nursery, we have enjoyed exploring winter and polar lands in January. The children have been finding out about polar animals, enjoying sensory play and ice exploration. The older children worked collaboratively to measure and then make life size collages of a polar bear and an Emperor penguin. We were surprised by how big they are! The children also looked closely at illustrations before creating their own polar bear and penguin artwork. During cookery sessions the children made melting snowmen biscuits and winter vegetable soup. Outside the children have been on frosty walks, looked out for signs of winter on a winter scavenger hunt and then enjoyed a warming hot chocolate when returning to the nursery as a treat.



Our theme for February was Places and Spaces. The older children in the Owls have been exploring materials and their properties with their core story, "The 3 Little Pigs". They have made an interactive display of the pig's houses, where children can retell the story using character puppets they have made. We have also been exploring shape and space using a range of construction materials to make building and have been engaged in sand play with construction vehicles and wooden blocks. Just before the half term we celebrated Lunar New Year, the year of the Dragon, making dragon masks, and preparing spring rolls for a special lunch. The children all had a go at eating with chopsticks. They also practised their cutting skills making lucky red envelopes which they took home with a chocolate coin inside and participated in a dragon dance with a brilliant dragon that was made for them by a member of the staff team.

The Squirrels class have been enjoying their core story of "We're Going on a Bear Hunt". They had great fun retelling the story in the woods, out on a walk and finding a Bear that they had previously painted. Lots of the children were saying phrases from the story all afternoon. It was a lovely interactive story experience. The squirrels have also been learning about Lunar New Year making lanterns and exploring materials making dragons as well as investigating capacity with containers in a coloured rice sensory tray.

The staff in the Hedgehog baby class have been settling in some new babies. They have enjoyed play with ribbons, scarves, and natural materials as well as a variety of sensory trays. The older babies have loved some posting activities including mark making on envelopes and then pretending to post them in the post box. They continue to enjoy their song bag sessions and their core songs for February are Wind the Bobbin up and Roly Poly.

Tracey Webb