

# July & August 2026

60p

FREE by email (details below)

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## The Hilltop Newsletter



### AUGUST NEWSLETTER

There will be **no newsletter in August** to give the volunteer newsletter team a holiday.

Have a great summer &  
**SEE YOU IN SEPTEMBER!**



### WE BROKE THE SOUND BARRIER!

#### Improvements at Frith Youth Centre

Last Autumn we launched a crowdfunding campaign to raise money for acoustic panels to improve the terrible echo in the main hall of Frith Youth Centre.



Well, we did it—and what a difference! Not only do they look amazing, but as soon as the panels were installed on 12<sup>th</sup> May we noticed the reduction of the echo. The panels have greatly improved the acoustics in the hall so that the folks at the Community Cafe and Friday Lunch Club can now engage in conversation and hear what others are saying. It sounds like a simple thing but, for elderly people who live alone, the opportunity to meet and chat with friends can be a lifesaver!

The generosity of our supporters and of Stroud District Council covered the cost of painting the hall, as well as purchasing and installing the panels. The improvements have made the hall feel homely and welcoming. The Parish Council held their AGM in the hall and we were so proud to see the hall looking and sounding amazing. A colourful new mural painted on the end wall makes the transformation complete.

Thank you to everybody who supported the project. We could not have done it without you!

The improvements should mean increased bookings for the hall, bringing much needed revenue for the Youth Centre.

To book for your event contact

[admin@frithyouthcentre.org.uk](mailto:admin@frithyouthcentre.org.uk)

or visit [www.frithyouthcentre.org.uk](http://www.frithyouthcentre.org.uk)

Cheryl Shears



It's **60 YEARS**  
since the first  
newsletter!

See **PAGE 8**

Looking for summer  
activities?

**SEE INSIDE!**



### REVEREND SUE MURRAY: Retirement & Last Service

On the 26th April Sue Murray announced her retirement. She and her husband Peter will be leaving us this summer and moving to Yorkshire.

Sue became Vicar of the Bisley Benefice (covering the churches of Bisley, Bussage with Eastcombe, Chalford, France Lynch and Oakridge) in 2018, with her Licensing taking place on a snowy Sunday in March of that year.

Sue and Peter's involvement around the whole parish and the community in general has been tremendous and they will be missed.

**Sue's last service will be on Sunday 26th July, 11am, at Christ Church, Chalford, to celebrate all she and Peter have given to our Benefice. Parking on the A419 outside the church.**

Ben Green



*Above: Revd Sue Murray (right) with Kim, & Rachel Trewick, Bishop of Gloucester*



**PLEASE PROVIDE WATER  
FOR WILDLIFE IN HOT  
WEATHER!**



To receive a **FREE digital copy of the newsletter every month**, please contact [adminhilltopnewsletter@gmail.com](mailto:adminhilltopnewsletter@gmail.com). Printed copies, 60p each, are available from

**Eastcombe Stores & Post Office, Frith Community Café & Chalford Sports & Social Club.**

Please send items for the **SEPTEMBER** newsletter to [eastcombnewsletter@btinternet.com](mailto:eastcombnewsletter@btinternet.com)  
**by NOON on 17th August.**

## BISLEY-WITH-LYPIATT PARISH COUNCIL NEWS: EASTCOMBE WARD

[www.bisley-with-lypiatt.gov.uk/](http://www.bisley-with-lypiatt.gov.uk/) Contact the Clerk: [admin@bisley-with-lypiatt.gov.uk](mailto:admin@bisley-with-lypiatt.gov.uk)

**Neighbourhood Plan:** The Neighbourhood Plan (NP) is now at Regulation 16. Stroud District Council are appointing an Independent Assessor from the HM Planning Inspectorate to undertake a comprehensive review of the Draft NP and its supporting documentation. The inspector will make recommendations for any amendments which the Steering Group will then consider for incorporation to the final document. This final version will then go for public referendum which we hope will be around September/October this year.

**Annual Parish Meeting:** Thank you to everyone who attended this meeting on May 20<sup>th</sup>. The APM gives the Parish Council the opportunity to inform the public of significant events over the last 12 months as well as receiving feedback from the public and organisations that have been given S137 grants.

**Gloucestershire Village of the Year Competition:** The Parish Council has entered Eastcombe into the category 'Climate and Environment Resilience'. Judges will visit the village later in the month to be shown the various projects associated with the allotments and the installation of the Swift boxes.

**Eastcombe Cricket Pavilion:** The Parish Council has taken over the running and responsibility for the cricket pavilion. This aligns it with the other pavilions within the parish in Bisley and Oakridge. The pavilion will be available for hire when not in use by the Cricket or Football clubs. Anyone interested in using this facility should contact the clerk.

**Councillor Colin Clifton:** It was with regret that Colin decided to retire from the Parish Council for personal reasons. Colin brought vast experience and was instrumental in setting up several initiatives in the Ward, including improving the mobile phone signal and accessibility to the village green. I and the rest of the Parish Council thank Colin for all his hard work and wish him and his wife Gill all the best for the future.

**Parish Council Vacancy:** There is now a vacancy in the Eastcombe Ward for a Parish Councillor. If you would like to find out more about the role of a Parish Councillor, please contact either myself or the clerk.

**Next Meeting:** Bisley Village Hall on Wednesday 1<sup>st</sup> July, at 7.30pm. All are welcome to attend.

Mike ([mike.eccott@bisley-with-lypiatt.gov.uk](mailto:mike.eccott@bisley-with-lypiatt.gov.uk))

## CHALFORD PARISH COUNCIL NEWS

Chalford Parish Centre, 50 Gerald's Way, GL6 8FJ;  
01453 887204

[info@chalford-glos.gov.uk](mailto:info@chalford-glos.gov.uk) [www.chalford-glos.gov.uk](http://www.chalford-glos.gov.uk)  
[Facebook](#)



**Chalford Playing Field Update:** As advised at the Public Meeting on 23rd April, the additional samples collected by Paul Nathaniel of LQM were submitted to the laboratory on 24th April for analysis.

While some of the results have been received, unfortunately there has been a delay with the laboratory undertaking some of the analysis and we are currently awaiting completion of the remaining results. We acknowledge that this is taking slightly longer than anticipated and, while frustrating, it is important that we have the full set of results.

Be assured that the date of the next public meeting will be announced as soon as the outstanding results are received, and an updated timetable confirmed. We will share further information with the community as soon as possible. We appreciate your patience during this process.

**Annual Parish Meeting – Frith Youth Centre:** Thank you to everyone who attended this year's Annual Parish Meeting at Frith Youth Centre. Around 40 residents joined us for an informative and engaging evening. We heard from the FYC team about the youth work taking place at the centre and the positive impact it has on young people and their families. Their presentation highlighted the wide range of support and opportunities available and the important role the centre plays within our community.

Volunteers from the Community Café and Friday Lunch Club also shared insights into their work supporting our older residents. They explained how these initiatives provide friendship, activities, practical support, and a welcoming place for people to connect.

The evening showcased the breadth of services and activities delivered through the Frith Youth Centre and reinforced its value as a key community asset. The financial challenges facing the centre were also highlighted. While we were pleased with the attendance and engagement of those present, we hope even more residents will join future Annual Parish Meetings (the Annual Parish Meeting is a meeting for residents and is not a Council meeting.)

The Parish Council thanks everyone who attended, spoke, volunteered, and contributed to a successful evening. Meeting minutes and presentations will be available on our website and Facebook page.

## FRITH YOUTH CENTRE @ CHALFEST



Do you have a spare hour or so on either day?

If yes, please get in touch!

We need a few adults in the tent at all times. We only have 1 youth worker and 1 volunteer so far (and they'll need a break!)

Could you fund an item to help us provide free things for young people to do?

If yes, you are one amazing human!

We have an Amazon wishlist on our Facebook page ('Frith Youth Centre').

We believe it's important for all young people feel included at events by offering free games, snacks, drinks, decorations and craft activities. Thank you!

[WWW.AMAZON.CO.UK/HZ/WISHLIST/LS/2NAGSZ20U9L1M](http://WWW.AMAZON.CO.UK/HZ/WISHLIST/LS/2NAGSZ20U9L1M)

[www.frithyouthcentre.org.uk](http://www.frithyouthcentre.org.uk)

## EASTCOMBE PRIMARY SCHOOL

Another busy month with **Hedgehog Class** recently enjoying a Greek Day! They learned about and tasted Greek food and was followed by the children doing a brilliant class assembly.



In English, Years 1 & 2 are writing 'instructions'. The children had to challenge themselves using different imperative verbs, adverbs and time conjunctions by orally composing their sentences whilst making a jam sandwich! Their favourite step was eating the sandwich afterwards!



In Design & Technology lessons, **Squirrel Class** demonstrated one of the school's key values, resilience. They were tasked with making puppets and explored different 'joining' techniques: stapling, gluing and pinning. They then had to design a template which they used to cut out fabric to make their final creation.

**Owl Class** had an amazing visit to PGL Osmington Bay. The children joined in a range of activities including raft building, rifle shooting, giant swing, trapeze, archery, aeroball, zip wire, survival skills and climbing. They had a great time and were fantastically behaved demonstrating each of the school's core values in abundance; a pleasure to take away!

**Farewell to Our Headteacher:** At the end of this academic year, Eastcombe Primary School will say a fond farewell to our much-valued Headteacher as she moves on to the next chapter in her career. Mrs Claire Jones has led the school for 11 years with dedication, care and a clear vision for every child to succeed. Claire's commitment has strengthened the school's place at the heart of our community, supporting pupils, staff and families alike.

Under her leadership, the school has continued to grow in confidence and achievement, while remaining a warm, nurturing environment where children thrive. Claire leaves behind a strong legacy and a school well placed for the future. While we are sorry to see her go, we are grateful for all she has given to our children and our community. We wish her every success and happiness in the future, she will be greatly missed.

## ALEX LAMBERT

It was very sad to hear recently of the passing of Alex Lambert.

Alex was a well-known and well-respected member of the local community. Together with his wife, Carol, he played an active part in the running of Eastcombe Village Hall, establishing the Eastcombe defibrillator, as well as helping to run the Frith Community Café, Screen on the Green and a number of other hilltop projects.

Our best wishes go to Carol and the Lambert family at such a difficult time.



*The Eastcombe flag at half mast in honour of Alex Lambert*

## BUSSAGE PRIMARY SCHOOL

### A Term Full of Positive Progress.

Bussage Primary has enjoyed a fantastic start to the final term, with plenty of reasons to celebrate. Rainbow Class are already making the most of their brand-new outdoor learning shelter, made possible thanks to generous PTA support.

Year 2 pupils broadened their understanding of different faiths with an inspiring visit to Gloucester Mosque and the Cathedral, while KS2 children enjoyed a hands-on Pentecost experience led by local church volunteers.

The school community deserves credit for improving safety around drop-off and pick-up times, with parents supporting parking changes that have made a noticeable difference.

In sport, pupils represented the school brilliantly at handball, athletics and rounders competitions, demonstrating excellent teamwork, resilience and sportsmanship. A standout achievement saw one rounders team reach the semi-finals and finish an impressive fourth place.

The PTA Colour Run proved a huge success, raising an amazing £1,400 in a family fun-filled community event.

# CHALFORD CAR BOOT

Discover Hidden Gems at Our Car Boot! Treasures Await at Every Pitch!

**Sunday 26<sup>th</sup> July 10am - 12pm**  
@ Chalford sports & Social - GL6 8LZ

SELLERS ENTRY - 9.30AM  
£5 PER CAR £10 VAN/BUSINESS  
BUYERS ENTRY 10AM  
FOOD AND DRINK  
AVAILABLE TO PURCHASE

For more information please contact us via facebook or alternatively [chalfordafc@gmail.com](mailto:chalfordafc@gmail.com)

Entry £1 per person  
116s FREE

**CAR BOOT SALE**

Pre booking now available (optional) [chalfordafc@gmail.com](mailto:chalfordafc@gmail.com) sellers welcome on the day

IN AID OF CHALFORD AFC - NON PROFIT ORGANISATION

Next car boot dates for your diaries:  
Sunday 30<sup>th</sup> August Well behaved dogs  
Sunday 27<sup>th</sup> September on leads welcome

## HILLTOP CAFE CHURCH

Christian worship for those of all faiths and none.

**Sunday 19<sup>th</sup> July**  
2.30pm  
**EASTCOMBE VILLAGE HALL**

BROUGHT TO YOU FROM  
THE PARISH OF BUSSAGE & EASTCOMBE

Outdoor cafe vector created by upsk8k - www.freepik.com

### INTERESTED IN LOCAL HISTORY?

Join the **Eastcombe & Bismore Local History Group** on Facebook.

## GUIDED WALKS ON THE CANAL

Looking for something to do over the summer months? Why not try a guided walk along the canal with an experienced volunteer from the Cotswold Canals Trust? Options include Stonehouse to Westfield Bridge (*the challenge of restoration*), Wallbridge to Ebley (*our industrial heritage*), Fromebridge to Saul Junction (*wildlife and water*) and Wallbridge to Stroud Brewery (*inspiration for volunteering*).

Walks take place on Wednesdays and Saturdays, starting at 10.30am. The charge is £5 per person with all proceeds going towards the canal restoration.

For full details check out the CCT website [www.cotswoldcanals.org](http://www.cotswoldcanals.org), clicking on **Guided Walking Tours**.

## BANDIT MUSIC PROJECTS

[www.banditmusicprojects.co.uk/](http://www.banditmusicprojects.co.uk/)

BandiT is a four-day songwriting and band workshop for 50–60 students aged 8 to 17.

Young people from across the community come together to form bands, write songs, and perform.

The primary aim of the workshop is to give young people from all backgrounds the opportunity to gain experience in musicianship, creative songwriting, and performance skills.

The Band and Songwriter project for young people aged 8 to 17

At Maidenhill School 27th, 28th, 29th, 30th July 2026

## BANDIT 40 daydream

Final performance  
Thursday 30th  
at Stroud Brewery

Doors open  
6.30pm  
Show 7pm  
Live streaming  
available too!

£15 for Adults  
£10 for Children  
and Concessions

Tickets will be  
available from the  
bandit music  
project.

For more information  
and booking,  
Contact Kevin Howlett  
on 07927434246 or visit  
[www.longtrainride.co.uk](http://www.longtrainride.co.uk)

[longtrainride.co.uk](http://longtrainride.co.uk)



Eastcombe WI Meeting  
Tuesday 21 July 2026  
From 7.15pm—9.00pm  
Eastcombe Village Hall

theWI  
INSPIRING WOMEN

## History of Sudeley Castle



Speaker: Phil Collins  
Visitors always welcome

For further information contact  
Jean Buxton 07817 441363 email [jeanbuxton@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:jeanbuxton@hotmail.co.uk)  
or  
Jackie Harris 07840 244803 email [jaquieboyd@hotmail.com](mailto:jaquieboyd@hotmail.com)

## The Tortoise Club

Bussage Park

## NORDIC WALKING

Slow and steady wins the race

EVERY TUESDAY  
12PM-1PM



Gentle stop & start  
walking with poles  
to get you moving again  
improving balance,  
confidence and building  
on strength



Fun and friendly  
sessions

All aches,  
pains and  
conditions  
welcome!!

This club  
is for you.

FIRST SESSION  
FREE

£5-£7  
PER SESSION  
POLES PROVIDED

Event: 07546110771

evcombs@outlook.com



Thames Head Singers present

## Glorious Gloucestershire

Music, Wine and Cheese of our great county

Hosted by Mark Cummings

broadcaster, travel writer and filmmaker  
with words from his book 'Glorious Gloucestershire'

Saturday 11th July 2026  
St Mary's Church Painswick

Directed by Andrew Hopwood  
Accompanied by Julian Elloway

6pm - Cheese and Wine

7pm - Music featuring Parry, Holst and Vaughan Williams  
and new works from talented local composers

Supporting the Hollie Gazzard Trust

Tickets £26 incl. cheese & wine  
Concert only, £19 incl. and under free!  
Available online from TicketSource  
Box Office: 0333 666 3366  
[www.thamesheadsingers.org.uk](http://www.thamesheadsingers.org.uk)



## UNIFORM SALE

in school!

THOMAS KEBLE



6pm  
14th  
July

Second Hand  
School  
Uniform Sale

Cash or  
Card

## The Lunch Club

Everyone is welcome at TLC, with a special  
invitation to those affected by dementia  
Chalford Sports & Social Club.  
First Tuesday of the month

2 course homemade lunch just £7.50  
Refreshments available from bar,

Secure your booking contact  
Ali Brady 07595 882948 or  
email [infochalfordssc@gmail.com](mailto:infochalfordssc@gmail.com)



## Social Darts

Thursday Evenings 8pm  
No experience Req  
No Charge  
Everyone Welcome



## HAPPY SUMMER, BE SAFE!

Indoor Market – Sunday 5th July



**CHALFORD  
MARKET**  
CRAFTY & DELICIOUS @ CHALFORD

10am – 1pm Free Entry

Indoor market for July – Fantastic opportunity to find  
unique and special products locally.

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| Cakes & More – Sweet Treats                | The Olive Stream – Olive Oil & Greek Treats |
| Celia's Pantry – Sweet & Savoury Preserves | Kent & Co – Local Prints & Cards            |
| Middle Hill Farm – Plants & Gifts          | Friends with Nature – Neals Yard            |
| Flingo Silver – Jewellery                  | Apples & Pears – Garden gifts               |
| Pottery – Frances                          | Gemini Glass – Jackie                       |
| Jenny Ellis – Haberdashery                 | Childrens Clothes – Rebecca Benneyworth     |
| Bags & Swags on the Hill                   | Art Therapy- Wire Art & Handicraft          |
| Caroline Sheldrick – Herbalist & Plant     | Bric-a-Brac in aid of Longfield Hospice     |

Bacon Rolls & Refreshments available from the Club Lounge  
Chalford Sports & Social Club, Highfield Way, France Lynch, Stroud GL6 8LZ

## Eastcombe Baptist Chapel

A service is held at 10.30am on Sundays at the chapel in Dr Crouch's Road, Eastcombe.

## EASTCOMBE VILLAGE GROUP

**Wine Walk:** Our popular Wine Walk takes place on Sunday 26 July from 4pm to 8pm. Thank you to the hosts and helpers and to all who supported us by buying tickets.

**Photographic Competition:** Please contact Colin Clifton for the entry form for this. We are hoping for interesting images of the wonderful and unique aspects our village. The competition closes in September when the entries will be judged.

**Newcomers Coffee Morning:** The Newcomers Coffee Morning will be at The Lamb Inn on Saturday 3 October from 10.30am All those who have moved into Eastcombe recently are warmly invited to join us for coffee and cake. We look forward to meeting you and will let you know more about events and activities within the village.

**Gloucestershire Competition for Village of the Year 2026:** We have assisted the Parish Council in submitting an entry for the whole parish under the Climate and Environment (Resilience) category.

**Next Meeting:** Monday 13 July at 7.30pm in the Village Hall annex. All are welcome and we will be discussing, amongst other topics, the Eastcombe Village Event being planned for 2027. Please come and share your ideas.

Peter Scott: [peterhscott@btinternet.com](mailto:peterhscott@btinternet.com)

To join the EVG mailing list, contact [cissons52@gmail.com](mailto:cissons52@gmail.com)

Follow [Eastcombe Village Group](#) on Facebook.

## St Michael's & All Angels, Bussage

Services this month are:

- **Sunday 12th July: Holy Communion, 9.30am**
- **Sunday 19th July: Morning Prayer, 9.30am**
- **Sunday 19th July: Cafe Church, Eastcombe Village Hall, 2.30pm (see poster on Page 3)**
- **Sunday 9th Aug: Holy Communion, 9.30am**
- **Sunday 16th Aug: Morning Worship, 9.30am**

On other Sundays there are services in different parts of the Benefice. For full details please visit

[facebook.com/BisleyBeneficeandFriends/](https://facebook.com/BisleyBeneficeandFriends/) or join our mailing list by contacting [pewslipsbisley@hotmail.com](mailto:pewslipsbisley@hotmail.com).

For weddings, funerals & baptisms, contact Revd. Sue Murray: [vicar@bisleybenefice.org.uk](mailto:vicar@bisleybenefice.org.uk)

## COOKERY CORNER

Chris Sissons shares her summery recipe for

### MANGO SALSA SALAD

A simple & popular dish for a summer BBQ.

#### INGREDIENTS:

- 1 mango, peeled & finely chopped
- 1 small red onion, finely chopped
- 1 lime - zest and juice
- Bunch of fresh coriander, finely chopped
- 1 chilli pepper (type depending on taste!), finely chopped



#### METHOD:

1. Mix all ingredients together well.
2. Serve
3. Enjoy!

## EASTCOMBE WI

Our June meeting saw us entertained with the story of the Winchcombe Meteorite.

On the night of February 9th 2021, Rob and Cathryn Wilcock and their daughter, Hannah, woke to find a pile of powder and stones on their drive. Hannah had heard a sound like breaking glass, but when Rob investigated he realised the debris wasn't anything usual and turned to Google. Everything pointed to debris from a meteorite. The Natural History Museum instructed Rob to wear rubber gloves and pick up every small piece he could, stow it in a freezer bag and send it. Cathryn's toothbrush, tweezers and kitchen scales helped. The NHM confirmed that a meteorite had been traced to the area - a rare type first found in Africa in the 1800s.

Professors and other experts arrived despite Covid regulations and surrounding areas were searched. The Winchcombe debris weighed 340g, bits found elsewhere weighed 110g and a piece in Bishops Cleeve weighed 150g.

Life became a round of worldwide media appearances. Even now, the family follow meteorite happenings, a camera on their roof part of the NHM tracking network.

**Next meeting: 21st July: Phil Collins: The History of Sudeley Castle.**

**12th July: Fundraising cream tea, 12.30-3.30pm, Eastcombe Village Hall, in aid of Allsorts. See poster, right. →**



*You are invited*

*to join the ladies of Eastcombe WI*

*For a fundraising cream tea, supporting*



OUR 2026 DESIGNATED CHARITY

On Sunday 12 July 2026 12.30 - 3.30pm  
In  
Eastcombe Village Hall

As well as our delicious cream tea priced at **£3.00 per person**, there will be a sale of books, games and puzzles and of course a raffle.  
Cash only on the day.

Join us and help support this hardworking Charity. More information about Allsorts can be found on their website [allsortsglos.org.uk](http://allsortsglos.org.uk)

For further information contact

Jean Buxton 07817 441363 email [jeanbuxton@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:jeanbuxton@hotmail.co.uk)  
or

Jackie Harris 07840 244803 email [jaquieboyd@hotmail.com](mailto:jaquieboyd@hotmail.com)



## HILLTOP GARDENING CLUB

[www.hilltopgardeningclub.org.uk](http://www.hilltopgardeningclub.org.uk)

May 2<sup>nd</sup>: Celebrating 40 years



Anniversaries are often a cause for celebration as well as moments of reflection and memories, and of course for sharing food and drink. Hosted at Ponting's Farm, France Lynch by Jane and Pete Randall, the club came together to mark HGC's 40<sup>th</sup> year.

One founding member, Robert Bryant (HGC President), gave a toast to absent friends and to the current club continuing a tradition of bringing together diverse gardeners and plant enthusiasts. There was much to learn from the historic photo-albums, scrap-books, early committee minutes, speakers, annual autumn show-winners and holidays: snapshots across four decades. Not just nostalgia however, this was a time to reflect and look forward to inspirational, funny and educative talks that bring together the passionate, quirky and plant-obsessed gardener, grower or historian to Eastcombe Village Hall to share knowledge and horticultural skills. Gardeners plant and plan for the future: waiting for the perennials to emerge after the winter and for harvests to ripen. Shared histories, good-times together and the positive power of growing are worth celebrating. And in-between rain-showers we were able to enjoy the beautiful garden and the wrap-round beauty of the Cotswolds.

Pam Meecham

**Next meeting: Eastcombe Village Hall, 7<sup>th</sup> July. Heather Collins: 'The Blackness Banks Nature Reserve'. All welcome.**

## SAVE THE DATE!

Hilltop Gardening Club  
40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary  
Annual Show

Saturday 12<sup>th</sup> September  
at  
Eastcombe Village Hall

Full details on our website  
[www.hilltopgardeningclub.org.uk](http://www.hilltopgardeningclub.org.uk)  
Schedules will be available from  
Eastcombe Stores, The Lamb Inn,  
The Ram Inn & Head First Hair &  
Beauty.

Please enter and support this  
annual event.



## ACT NOW for a GLORIOUS APPLE HARVEST!



Apples naturally drop excess fruit in 'the June drop' but in a good year there can still be far too many left on the branches, which affects the quality of the final crop.

Now is the time to thin out the fruit to improve the size and quality of apples and help them to ripen better. Thinning also reduces the spread of pests and diseases and the danger of broken branches due to overcropping. In addition, it allows more energy to go into the growth of next years' fruit buds, helping to avoid blank years where your tree may have no fruit at all. Young trees carrying too much fruit may be prevented from developing into healthy, strong trees.

Thinning can be done by hand or with secateurs or long scissors. First, remove any diseased, damaged or mis-shapen fruit. The RHS suggests thinning to one fruit every 15-23cm (6-9in) for cooking apples and 10-15cm (4-6in) for dessert apples. This can seem severe – but it does result in great apples! Any thinning at this stage will improve your final crop and help you keep your apple trees healthy.

The Eastcombe Gardener

## HHONIC HEDGEHOG TONIC

Want to support your local  
hedgehogs? Hhonic can help!



Debby, who runs Minnie's Wildlife Rescue and Hedgehog Hospital, in Bussage, has developed a special tonic to help boost the health of wild hedgehogs. 100% organic, it is made for sprinkling daily on wet or dry hedgehog food, helping to very gently reduce internal parasites and improve hedgehog health.

Hedgehogs in the UK are classified as red list endangered, meaning they are vulnerable to extinction. Hhonic can help hoggies to stay healthy in the wild, allowing them to thrive and breed without needing help.

Hhonic is already being used in seven rescue centres, with several more wanting to try it, and it is supported by Mr Brand, brilliant vet to Minnie's Wildlife Rescue.

**Hhonic can be purchased directly from Debby at Minnie's Wildlife Rescue - text 07463 592992 or email [Hhonic@proton.me](mailto:Hhonic@proton.me).**

Proceeds go towards supporting Minnie's Wildlife Rescue and Hedgehog Hospital, Bussage, helping them to support wildlife from the hilltop & beyond.

**KEEP IT LOCAL!**

TECH SUPPORT...  
ODD JOBS...  
GARDEN CARE...  
AND MORE!



Need help?

My name is James & I am a 19 year old looking to earn money before starting university.

I am reliable & have experience across a range of different jobs. References available.

So, if you have jobs that need doing, get in touch:

[jamescalverley0@gmail.com](mailto:jamescalverley0@gmail.com)

**07961 591161**

## WHAT CAN YOU DO FOR HEDGEHOGS?



HEDGEHOG HIGHWAYS –  
MAKE HOLES IN YOUR GARDEN  
FENCE SO HEDGEHOGS CAN  
GET IN AND OUT.

FRESH WATER IN  
A SHALLOW DISH

MEATY FOOD  
(CAT OR HEDGEHOG FOOD)

@DODDERETH  
©2018 WILLIAM JAY

**VILLAGE HISTORIES: NEWSLETTERS!** This newsletter continues a tradition of more than six decades. The previous version, the *Bussage, Brownhill & Eastcombe Newsletter*, ran for 54 years, notching up more than 600 editions! So, how did it start?



When Eastcombe was part of the parish of Bisley, a monthly church magazine kept villagers informed. However, in 1966, Eastcombe moved to Bussage parish. Rev Tom Gainey, vicar of the 'new' parish, was keen to start a parish magazine and three young women answered the call, two from Eastcombe and one from Bussage: Beryl Freebury, Dinah Martin and Pamela Clissold, assisted by Mrs 'Vaughney' Cowper (head of Eastcombe Primary School) and others\*. The first edition of 4 foolscap sheets was produced in July 1966.

This newsheet was initially known as *Eastcombe Newsletter*, then as the *Bussage and Eastcombe Newsletter*, with monthly updates from the WI, Guides and Brownies, and the Men's Guild alongside Sunday School news (with special



mention of the birthdays of the attendees) and notices of weddings and funerals. Editing was initially a team effort, before Beryl took on the role from Dinah Martin in the early 1970s. An editor's letter featured on the inside front cover, while the back cover listed dates for the diary and the football and cricket fixtures. By 1972, the newsletter was the *Bussage, Brownhill & Eastcombe Newsletter* (or, occasionally, the Bussage, Eastcombe & Brownhill Newsletter!).

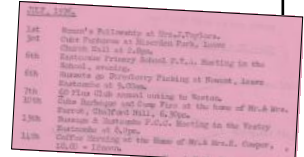
In the early days, the newsletter was produced using a hand turned duplicator donated by Mr Riddiford, teacher at Manor School. Mrs Cowper would check the content, then Beryl would cut the stencils and do the duplicating before folding and pinning the copies for Eastcombe. Pam Clissold, then, later, Brenda Dendy, was in charge of the Bussage copies, before helpers delivered the newsletter throughout the villages. One copy was also provided to the SNJ, one to the library and 3 posted.

In January 1967 the newsletter was produced in booklet form for the first time, with around 200 copies printed. Many people helped to create the front covers over the years, including children from Eastcombe Primary School and Manor School, and artists such as Pete Westley (in charge of the 'special occasion' covers) and Myrtle Baxter. Dinah Martin had the designs made into 'skins' in Bristol (a 'printing skin' was a flexible pad used to evenly transfer ink onto paper), and Mr Simmons of Brownhill printed the covers (for which he would take no payment), then, later, the whole newsletter as the circulation grew.

In December 1968, the 29<sup>th</sup> edition of the newsletter cost 6d a copy (first copy free), then 3p post decimalisation, a price held through the 100<sup>th</sup> edition in 1974. In 1978 it was 6p per month (72p a year), and in 1991 13p per copy, with 780 copies printed.

From about 1993, the newsletter was printed, firstly by the printing works owned by Mr and Mrs Simmons, then, after they retired, by Leopard Press on Selsley Common. In around 2008, technology took over; Beryl continued to collate the articles, which were then computerised by Ann Gardiner, and the newsletter emailed to the printer.

The Millennium saw the 400<sup>th</sup> edition (18p), and, in 2008, the 500<sup>th</sup> edition (20p) saw 970 copies printed. By 2018, a year's subscription of 11 copies (no newsletter in January) was £5.50, the 635 copies printed each month delivered by 42 people across Eastcombe, Bussage & Brownhill. As now, the newsletter was supported by grants from Chalford and Bisley-with-Lypiatt Parish Councils, helping to keep costs low.



In 2020, Covid struck, and Beryl retired as editor after an amazing 54 years. For around a year, Eastcombe, Bussage and Brownhill were without a dedicated newsletter. Then, in May 2021, the *Eastcombe, Bussage & Brownhill Newsletter* was born. In May 2026, this became *The Hilltop Newsletter* and expanded to include France Lynch and Chalford Hill. The newsletter was, and still is, a voluntary, community effort.

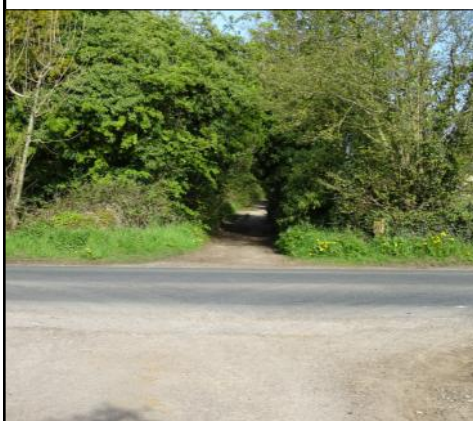
With grateful thanks to Beryl Freebury

\*Apologies to anyone inadvertently missed out.

For more local history, visit [www.eastcombearchive.org.uk](http://www.eastcombearchive.org.uk), and the [Eastcombe & Bismore Local History Group](#) and [Chalford Parish Local History Group](#)

**NAME THAT VIEW!**

How well do YOU know our area?



June's photo was the stone stile at the top of the 'Death Slide', the steep path that leads from Wells Road, Eastcombe, to Bismore.

Where was July's photo taken?

The answer will be revealed in the September issue.

**WHAT'S ON in JULY & AUGUST?**

- 7 July:** Hilltop Gardening Club meeting, Eastcombe Village Hall, 7.30pm
- 12 July:** Eastcombe WI Fundraising Cream Tea, 12.30-3.30pm, Eastcombe Village Hall
- 13 July:** EVG Meeting, 7.30pm, Eastcombe Village Hall annex.
- 19 July:** Hilltop Café Church, Eastcombe Village Hall, 2.30pm
- 21 July:** Eastcombe WI Meeting, 7.15pm, Eastcombe Village Hall
- 25 July:** Hilltop Film Club, Eastcombe Village Hall, 7.30pm
- 26 July:** Revd Sue Murray's last service, 11am, Christ Church, Chalford/Chalford Car Boot Sale, 10am-12pm, CSSC/Eastcombe Wine Walk, 4-8pm
- 17th AUGUST: NEWSLETTER DEADLINE**