



ISSUE 41 | WINTER 2017

NEWS

IN THIS ISSUE

**THE MARLEY HOUSING DEVELOPMENT
THE SAND QUARRY AND ITS LAKES
A SOLDIER'S STORY**



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Forthcoming Events

ST PETER'S CHURCH, DELAMERE

SPECIAL SERVICES

SUNDAY 3RD DECEMBER

10:30am - Bi-Centenary Celebration with Bishop Peter

SUNDAY 17TH DECEMBER

6:30pm - Carols by Candlelight

SUNDAY 24TH DECEMBER

8:00am - Holy Communion

10:30am - Coffee and Carols for Christmas Eve

4:00pm - Christingle

11:30pm - Christmas Eve Holy Communion

MONDAY 25TH DECEMBER

10:30am - Christmas Day Family Holy Communion

SUNDAY 21ST JANUARY

10:30am - Plough Sunday, followed by
Ploughman's Lunch

WEDNESDAY 14TH FEBRUARY

7:00pm - Ash Wednesday

REGULAR SERVICES

EVERY SUNDAY

8am - Holy Communion

EVERY 1ST & 3RD SUNDAY

10:30am - Holy Communion

EVERY 2ND SUNDAY

10:30am - Family Service

EVERY 4TH & 5TH SUNDAY

10:30am - Morning Worship

EVERY 1ST TUESDAY

10:30am - Holy Communion

THE WOMEN'S INSTITUTE

Date	Speaker	Title	Competition
Nov 14th	-	Annual Meeting	-
Dec 14th	-	Christmas Party	Home made table Christmas Tree
Jan 9th	Ellen Piercy	Cycling the pilgrim's road to Santiago de Compostela	-
Feb 13th	-	Games and pancake evening	A Valentine in Flowers
Mar 13th	Chris Prior	Blood bikes	-
Apr 10th	David Cummings	An Illustrated Talk	-

President: Lorraine Roberts. Meetings are held at 7.30pm, every second Tuesday in the month except for August, at Delamere Community Centre.

*<http://delamereandoakmere.co.uk/delamere-womens-institute/>, <https://twitter.com/delamerewi>,
<https://www.facebook.com/DelamereWI>*

OAKMERE METHODIST CHURCH

In the main church at 10.45am every Sunday morning for a service led by a Methodist Local Preacher or Minister. One service a month includes the sacrament of Holy Communion, led by a Minister (Presbyter). Contacts: Anne or Eric Wright (01829 732950) or Rev Denise Harding (01928 733180).

DELAMERE AND DISTRICT GOLDEN CLUB

NOVEMBER 15TH, 1:30PM

Delamere Academy Choir entertain

NOVEMBER 29TH, 2PM

Lorena Anderson cookery demonstration with a Christmas theme

DECEMBER 13TH, 1PM

Christmas Lunch followed by the Concordia Choir at (2.15pm)

JANUARY 3RD, 1:30PM

Skittle Bowling Table Tennis and Crumpets!

JANUARY 17TH, 1:30PM

Burns Night Celebrations with the Kelsall Scottish Dancers

JANUARY 31ST, 12:30PM

Hotpot Lunch and Beetle Drive

FEBRUARY 14TH, 1:30PM

Fun Exercises and Chairbics with Sheena Stallard

FEBRUARY 28TH, 1:30PM

Delamere Derby Race

MARCH 14TH, 1:30PM

Speaker: Sam Smith and friends (Exotic Pet Rescue) "Sam's Scales and Tails"

MARCH 28TH, 1:30PM

Lorena Anderson: Cookery Demonstration plus Easter Bonnet/Hat/Cap Parade

APRIL 18TH, 1:30PM

Speaker from Age Concern: Money Matters and other topics

MAY 2ND, 1:30PM

AGM followed by high tea and singer Sheila Callaghan contestant in "Britain's got Talent"

MAY 16TH, 1:30PM

Speaker: Clare Mather-Dodd B.Sc.D.C. Doctor of Chiropractic (Please bring your own aches and pains!)

MAY 30TH

Summer Outing (to be announced)

JUNE 13TH, 1:30PM

Card Bingo

JUNE 27TH, 12:30PM

Summer Lunch

NEW MEMBERS WELCOME!

We meet every fortnight on Wednesday afternoons, except August, at the Community Centre. No upper or lower age limit! For further information please contact Gloria or Robin Ackerley tel: 01829 752723.



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Wishing all a very Merry Christmas and a fantastic 2017

Since the last issue the detailed planning application for the new housing development on the Marley site has been approved. It can hardly have escaped anyone's notice that work has now begun, with the demolition of the old tile-works buildings and the removal of trees to make way for the entrance road. Alongside all this activity the Tarmac sand quarry has broken through Farm Road and is heading west. In this issue we have articles about each of these, and a third which looks at the various names given to the quarry lagoons. We ask whether they should now be called something else, and if so, what? Don Wilson has been looking into the history of a young Delamere man who

lost his life a hundred years ago in the battle of Passchendaele, while David Keogh has been delving into local history too, unearthing (literally) the remains of some of the old corn mills in the vicinity. Once again we are indebted to Steve Lacey for another quiz, the reclusive "Yeti" for another crossword, David Wright and the Cheshire Wildlife Trust for their news on local wildlife, all our other regular contributors and our willing team of volunteers who get the newsletter out, and our advertisers whose support pays for it to be printed. As another year draws to an end, we wish all of them and all of you a very Happy Christmas!

Clive George and Phil Neave

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ABOUT THE NEWSLETTER

Delamere and Oakmere News is published three times a year with the support of the Parish Council. The next issue is due in March!

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Articles, ideas for articles, news of recent events or forthcoming ones, advertisements, photographs and any other contributions relevant to Delamere and/or Oakmere are all very welcome (inclusion subject to editorial discretion).

The newsletter is available to view on the Delamere and Oakmere Community website and you can also get a PDF file by email (contact us if you would like a copy).

CONTACTS

Editorial: do_newseditor@yahoo.co.uk

Advertising: info@neavecreative.co.uk

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All proceeds from advertisements go into the printing of the newsletter, so we really couldn't do this without you. Thank you!



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Dear Friends

Thank you to everyone who supported the Harvest Festival Celebrations on 1st October. An amazing array of dried, tinned and packet foods and toiletries was donated by Delamere Primary Academy, the Golden Club and St Peter's and this was taken to the Foodbank at Winsford to help local people who are in need.

This year as well as preparing and planning for all the special events and services for our bi-centenary celebrations the usual services of the church year are taking place; at the beginning of November the church celebrates All Saints Day and All Souls Day and the nation comes together on Remembrance Sunday to remember the fallen in both world wars. Elsewhere in this newsletter you will find the list of services that will be held over the Christmas season, not forgetting of course the bi-centenary service on 3rd December at 10.30am when Bishop Peter will be preaching.

Thinking about All Saints I recently found this piece:

There was a group of early 18 century Christians who lived on the bleak North Yorkshire Moors and they had a small chapel on one of the highest points of the moor. Each Sunday the people would come from the outlying farms and hamlets for evening service. The worshippers had to contend with rough unmade tracks and a stiff wind; in the winter it was particularly harsh and it was a real struggle to reach the top of the moor. But the faithful ones met regularly for worship.

When the service was over each group of worshippers would light their lantern and set off back to their lonely

farms. It was as though the chapel was the centre of a web that spread outwards, the lantern lights visible travelling to each dale, to farms and homes. The light was a symbol of how they sought to live by the light of Christ. These folk were known as 'Lantern Saints'.

These Lantern Saints were ordinary people - they didn't feature in stained glass windows, they didn't have a visible 'halo' of light around their heads, and they didn't look any different to anyone else. Sometimes they failed, sometimes they made mistakes; they were ordinary people who had the light of Jesus shining within them.

When Christ was born in Bethlehem there was no room at the inn; the only space was in the cattle shed, as we prepare to celebrate the birth of Jesus the light of the world, may he find a welcome in all our hearts so that we too will shine with the light of Christ.

As you gather in your homes with friends and family or with your well-loved pet may the joy of the angels, the eagerness of the shepherds, the perseverance of the wise men, the obedience of Joseph and Mary and the peace of the Christ child be yours this Christmastide.

I look forward to welcoming you to St Peter's over Christmas; Brian joins me in sending you good wishes for a happy Christmas and a peaceful New Year.

With all good wishes
Rev'd Elaine



St. Peter's Notice Board

From the Registers July - October 2017

We welcomed by Baptism:

July - Willow Rose Houston, daughter of Martin & Elizabeth

August - Sophia Jane Garton, daughter of Andrew & Sarah
Mason Nicholas Hurley, son of Nicholas & Jenny

September - Cordelia Dorothy Vernon Brock, daughter of David & Charmian
Miranda Frances Kay Brock, daughter of David & Charmian

We celebrated the Marriage of:

July - Karl Atkinson & Hayley Jones

August - David Kay & Elizabeth Broderick

We said farewell to:

July: Enid Alexander, Freda Mary Gore, Kenneth Paul Craven

October - Derek Fowles

Forthcoming Events

Sunday 3rd December at 10:30am

Bi-Centenary Celebrations with Bishop Peter

Plough Sunday

We will be celebrating Plough Sunday with a special service on 21st January 2018 at 10.30am. After the service there will be a Ploughman's Lunch at The Rectory.

Lent & Easter 2018

Lent begins on Ash Wednesday – 14th February, Maundy Thursday – 29th March, Good Friday 30th March and Easter Day 1st April.

There will be a service of Holy Communion at 7pm on Ash Wednesday and commencing on 22nd February Compline (Night Prayer) will be said each Thursday evening at 7pm. The bell will be rung before the service as a reminder that the service is taking place and that prayers are being offered for the local community.

Details of the Easter Services will be in the next newsletter and on the web-site.

For those who like to plan ahead! Easter Day in 2019 is 21st April. (DV)

St Peter's Churchyard

In common with other local churchyards and cemeteries any Christmas wreaths and floral tributes remaining in the churchyard will be removed at the end of February 2018

Details of all our services are on the web-site

<https://www.achurchnearyou.com/delamere-st-peter>

It's all change at the Community Association as, sadly, Pat Wheeler has stood down as Chairman of the Management Committee due to ill health. Pat's guiding hand will be missed, but she has promised to stay on as a Trustee and attend Management Committee meetings; we all hope she is back to full fighting fitness soon.

As a result, Paul Dean from the Bowling Club has stepped up to become the Chairman, and Cynthia Green, doyenne of the Womens Institute and Tuesday Badminton, has been elected Vice Chairman.

The Community Centre was full on the morning of 29th September or the Annual MacMillan Coffee Morning. A delicious range of scones, cakes, biscuits

and tea loaves were enjoyed and a total of £281.73 was raised – thanks to Reverend Elaine and her team for all their hard work and to everyone who donated to the excellent cause.

The Centre is available for bookings, although it is generally fully used from Tuesday to Thursday. We are currently checking that the bookings details are up to date on the Parish Council website; this should be completed by the end of the month. However, if you want to use any of the rooms at the Centre, please ring Lorraine Roberts, Booking Secretary, on 01606 889188 to check availability.

Steve Lacey, Treasurer

ANSWERS...

Answers to quiz

1. Gone With The Wind, 2. John Wayne, 3. Liza Minnelli (daughter of Vincente Minnelli and Judy Garland), 4. Jane Wyman (for Johnny Belinda); John Mills (for Ryan's Daughter); Holly Hunter (for The Piano), 5. Italy, 6. George C Scott (for Patton) and Marlon Brando (for The Godfather), 7. Katherine Hepburn, 8. Tatum O'Neal at 10 years old (although Shirley Temple won a special Juvenile Academy Award when she was 5 years old), 9. Bob Hope, 10. A reel of film

Answers to crossword

Across: 1. garden, 2. fracas, 7. ami, 8. USA, 9. suit, 10. bust, 11. anode, 12. dishy, 14. lyre, 15. pool, 16. eft, 22. abstinent, 23. dog, 24. ado, 25. Agincourt
Down: 1. graze, 2. raisin, 3. neither, 4. forlids, 5. clutch, 6. shake, 11. able, 13. yolk, 16. eaten, 17. tanglo, 18. made, 19. saga, 20. stat, 21. loot

A recent update on Delamere and Oakmere parish council.

We have a very interactive team working on the Frith Avenue site. They have nearly all their plans up to date, and more information will follow early next year. The plans look very exciting, so hopefully this area will soon start to take shape.

United Utilities have at last finished work on the A556 updating the new sewage pipeline .

The Marley tile site is beginning to take shape with taking down the offices etc.. It looks like early spring when the houses will start to be built.

One main concern in the parish at the

moment is parking. Please remember to park safely, but not where it can cause damage to the grass verge or where it can be dangerous to you and other road users.

We welcome back Mrs Katherine MacVicker to the Parish Council so we are a full council. Many thanks to the rest of the councillors for all of their help and to our clerk for her attention to detail, and also to Clive and team for putting this magazine together.

Have a Happy Xmas and prosperous New Year!

Many thanks, David Rutter
Chair, Delamere and Oakmere Parish Council

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DELAMERE WI

Lorraine Roberts, President

The second half of the year has been a busy time for us at Delamere WI. We enjoyed a very interesting and entertaining talk about 'An English Woman at the White House' in July by Susan Leicester, a member of Middle Wyches WI. In August we usually have our Garden meeting and are, more often than not, quite lucky with the weather. Not so this year – the heavens opened just as people were arriving, so it was more of a 'look through the window at the garden meeting'! We thank our hosts, Cynthia and Barry Green, for sharing their home and garden with us. Everyone who braved the elements had a very enjoyable time.

In September, we had lots of fun and laughter as Peter Turner entertained us

with 'sleight of mind' which certainly set us thinking and our speaker in October was Ed from Delamere Dairies, who told us the history of the company from its humble beginnings with three goats in Delamere to the very successful firm of today. He also brought some very delicious samples for us to try!

In November we have our Annual Meeting and it is party fun and food in December as we bring another successful year to a close.

We will welcome in the new WI year with our first speaker, our own Ellen Piercy. She and her husband have recently returned from their cycling pilgrimage to Santiago de Compostela. So why not join us and hear all about it?

GOLDEN CLUB

Our Harvest of Talents table formed part of the Golden Club Harvest Service led by Rev. Elaine in Delamere Community Centre.



*Harvest of Talents
Photo Gloria Ackerley*



*Summer Outing on the River Mersey
Photo Gloria Ackerley*

THE MARLEY DEVELOPMENT



Most readers will be well aware that work has begun on the new housing development at the former Marley tile-works site. After Crown Estate obtained outline planning approval in 2014 they sold the land to Laurus Homes, a “profit for purpose” subsidiary of Trafford Housing Trust. They are developing the site in partnership with a London-based housing association, L&Q Developments, with the construction work being done by Lane End Developments of Stockport.

The development has been given the name “Earlsbrook”, in reference to the Norman Earl of Chester who established the forest for hunting deer and wild boar, and Fir Brook, which borders the eastern side of the site. Did the Earl use the brook for watering his horse? Let’s assume he did.

The Oakmere Way bridleway and footpath runs along the northern border of the site, and on between the golf course and the quarry lagoon. Public footpath 5 branches off it at the north east corner of the site, to go south of the Marley fishing lake. Both paths will be unaffected except for small changes of route near where the paths diverge.

All the woodland around the site will be retained, except for the trees that have been cleared to make way for the entrance road and roundabout on Station Road.



A total of 166 houses will be built. The outline planning consent allowed for up to 180, but some of these would have required building on the thick layer of peat in the southern corner of the site. This area will become a recreational space.



Of the 166 houses there will be 45 with two bedrooms, 54 with three, 55 with four and 12 with five. All of the 5 bedroom houses and some of the 4 bedroom ones are detached, and the rest semi-detached or short terraces.



Fifty one of the houses are categorised as “affordable homes”, 25 for rent and 26 for shared ownership.

There will be four phases of house-building: phase 1 (47 houses, closest to the entrance road), phase 2 (39 houses, the central part of the site), phase 3 (41 houses, the southern corner)

and phase 4 (39 houses, the eastern corner). According to the planning documents Phase 1 is due for completion in March 2019, Phase 2 in July 2019, Phase 3 in December 2019, and Phase 4 in May 2020. Laurus Homes tell us they are running about 4 months late on these dates.

Work on the roundabout is expected to take place in December or January, with traffic lights controlling the traffic on Station Road. Work will also be done to improve pedestrian safety around the station, which is expected to include transferring the footpath from the eastern side of the railway bridge to the western side.

Other off-site work will include installation of a new water supply from Stoney Lane and a mains gas supply down Station Road from the Four Oaks development. We believe that other residents in the vicinity will be able to apply for a gas connection, though no details are available yet.

As part of the planning agreement the developer is due to contribute over half a million pounds to local schools and £50,000 for the Delamere Community Centre. Half of the Community Centre funding is to be paid on completion of 45 houses, and the remainder on completion of a further 45.

Full details can be found on <https://pa.cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk/online-applications> (reference 17/01539/REM). House pictures from <http://www.andertongables.co.uk>



The Oakmere sand quarry operated by Tarmac is one of the two most significant commercial activities in the parish (along with the Forestry Commission), yet it has received relatively little attention in the newsletter. The last time the quarry had a mention was when public footpath 5 was diverted from its route alongside the golf course and down Farm Road, to pass round the south of the Marley fishing lake. Since then sand extraction has ploughed through Farm Road and is making its way along the southern edge of the quarry lagoon.

The quarry is one of four that are known by Tarmac as Cheshire Sands - Fourways quarry (now worked out), Crown Farm quarry, Delamere quarry (the former Marley quarry, which is actually in Oakmere!), and Cobden Farm quarry (north of the A54 in Little Budworth). Crown Farm quarry and Delamere quarry are now operated as a single unit accessed from Stonyford Lane, having received planning permission in January 2015.

As can be seen by comparing the aerial photo with the map below, the current extent of sand extraction corresponds closely to what was projected in the planning application for the end of Phase 1 of the operations.



Phase 1 operations

In phase 2 further dry extraction will take place to the south of the lagoon, almost as far as the fishing lake, while wet extraction is planned to extend the lagoon by about 125 metres to the south east. On the opposite side of the site, dry working will continue towards Stonyford Lane.



Phase 2 operations

The final phase will complete the dry extraction at the south of the site, and go northwards on the western side towards Crabtree Green Court. Construction of a soil bund planted to woodland is expected to minimise noise disturbance to Crabtree Green residents.



Phase 3 operations

At the end of phase 3 the restoration plan will be completed, to leave an unspoiled rural landscape whose ecological and amenity value should be considerably greater than it was in the first place.

The restoration masterplan (see map on page 21) shows footpaths through or alongside woodland around the whole periphery of the site, and several footpaths across the central area. These include footpath 5 along its original route north of the lagoon to Farm Road, as well as its current route around the south of the fishing lake. The central area is shown as a mixture of agricultural fields and species-rich grassland, with another footpath passing south of the Gig Hole shallows at the

north of the site to re-join the Oakmere Way near Stonyford Lane.

There are two designated Local Wildlife Sites immediately adjacent to and partly within the site: the Marley fishing lake and Leech Mere, an adjacent area of wooded peatland and swamp. Neither will be directly affected by the quarrying, and the planning permission includes specific measures for their protection. The restoration plan provides for habitat enhancement in many other parts of the site.



The site is already a haven for many forms of wildlife, and if you walk the Oakmere Way you may well have spotted sand martins flying across it. A habitat survey undertaken for Tarmac revealed that the birds have established a colony on the edge of the quarried area, of sufficient size to be of county or even national significance.

In order to preserve and enhance some of the most ecologically important features of the site, Tarmac have developed a habitat management plan with the Cheshire Wildlife Trust, initially for two years.

All of this looks very promising, but there are a couple of hitches. Apart from footpath 5, which is a public right of way, access to the central area of the site is identified as “permissive”, so public access isn’t guaranteed for all

time. The other hitch is a bigger problem for those of us who are getting on in years. The planning permission doesn't expire until 2042. It could in theory be two and a half decades before the whole

area is restored, although in practice it is unlikely to take quite that long. At the current rate of extraction the sand is expected to last for another ten or fifteen years.



Restoration masterplan

For more information see <http://www.tarmac.com/cheshiresands>. For the planning documents go to <https://pa.cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk/online-applications/> and enter "crown farm quarry" in the search box. To attend one of Tarmac's six-monthly liaison meetings contact Sandra Mitchell, sandra.mitchell@tarmac.com

MAJOR DEVELOPMENT PROPOSALS LATEST NEWS

The Magistrates' Court

The architects have told us they are re-working their plans, particularly in relation to the access road. Meanwhile, the recent work on the courthouse has been undertaken in order to stop the planning application from lapsing.

Forest Holiday Cabins

The Forestry Commission and Forest Holidays have appealed against Cheshire West and Chester Council's refusal of their planning application to build 67 holiday cabins in the forest and to replace the Linmere visitor centre. No news yet on when the appeal will be heard. See: <https://www.forestry.gov.uk/forestry/bee-h-abtbtz>

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WHAT'S IN THE NAME?

The articles on Cheshire Sands and the Marley development refer repeatedly to the two water bodies in the area as “the Marley fishing lake” and “the quarry lagoon”. They are not the best of names, but what else should we call them? If we can come up with something better we could get Ordnance Survey to make it official and put it on the map.

The fishing lake in particular deserves a better name. It stopped being quarried a long while ago, and along with the surrounding woodland has become so thoroughly embedded in the natural landscape that it has been designated by Cheshire West and Chester Council as a Local Wildlife Site.



The fishing lake

CWAC have given the wildlife site a name, taken from current Ordnance Survey data. They call it Marley Tile Works Lagoon. The Prince Albert Angling Society, who manage the lake, are a little more imaginative. The access is off Station Road, opposite the station, so they call it Station Lake.

Local people who have known the lake since it was dug out tend to refer to it as

Marley Lake. That could well be the best name for it, with a simple historical meaning. Marley made it, so it's Marley Lake. Or is it? Several other possible names have been suggested, some of them based on the fact that it was dug out of Long Ridge on Relick's Moss.

Relick's Moss is shown on the current Ordnance Survey map as just the small patch of woodland between Golf Course Road and the railway. However, pre-Marley OS maps (and the older 1848 map by Fuller and Palin) all show the moss extending across what became the tile works, around the area that is now the lake, and beyond it as far as Watling Street (the Roman Road that crosses Station Road at the foot of Eddisbury Hill).



Relick's Moss, Ordnance Survey 1947

Some of the wooded moss is on a layer of peat, while part of it is (or was) on a ridge of sand called Long Ridge. This was probably a glacial meltwater channel (or esker) that was laid down at the end of the last ice age. The ridge goes along Golf Course Road and turns south to wind its way through the moss towards Leech Mere and Hall Wood. The 1947 OS map

marks the most prominent stretch of the ridge as an embankment, precisely where the first of the Marley sand quarries was cut resulting in the lake.

Relick's Lake is one possible name, except that the Relick who gave their name to the moss didn't give it to a lake. Long Ridge Lake is another possibility, but the same name could also be used for the second of the quarry lagoons, which was cut out of Long Ridge Allotment (so-named when the 1812 Enclosure Act allotted the land to the Crown).

Other possible names that have been suggested for one or other of the lagoons include Crown Lake, Mara Lake, Eddisbury Lake or Roman Lake, all of which relate to the area more generally rather than to the specific location.

Another possibility is to treat the two lagoons as two parts of the same lake. When Marley started working the second lagoon they left a causeway separating it from the first, so that the first could be restored while the second was still being worked. The only public access to the causeway is for angling society members, so if it weren't for the maps, most of us wouldn't even know it was there.

It will be a good few years before Tarmac finish working the second lagoon, so for now we might just continue to call it the quarry lagoon. But the first one is no longer a lagoon within a quarry. It's a lake.

Or is it a mere? The rest of Delamere and Oakmere's meres were created in the ice age, but in other parts of the



Ordnance Survey circa 1980, from oldmaps.co.uk

country, so were a lot of lakes. Some of Cheshire's former quarries are called lakes, some are called meres, and some are called ponds.

What do you think? If you favour any of the names suggested here or would like to propose another, please do contact the editors. If there is a reasonable measure of agreement, we could ask the Parish Council to contact Crown Estate (who own the land) and the landscape team in CWAC, asking them to have a word with Ordnance Survey.

(Yet another question has come out of this. Who was Relick? It's an unusual name, but the word was once commonly used to mean widow. Was the moss "the widow's moss"? If so, who was the widow? Does anyone know?)

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After spending the summer evenings watching breeding Peregrines, nesting Little Owls and a family of Brown Hares in a neighbouring parish, it was nice to see all three species in our own parish.

Peregrine Falcons are regular visitors to the Old Pale and Plovers Moss. Brown Hares used to be fairly common along with Grey Partridge on the Pale but tree planting has put paid to the open habitat. Brown Hares do still frequent the Organsdale and Fishpool fields, but Grey Partridge are long gone.



Peregrine Falcon, Dennis Swayze, cbc.ca/news

Little Owls were quite common at one time, along the parish boundaries at Cotebrook, Utkinton and at Waste Lane, Kelsall. There are still some around but you would now be lucky to see one.



Little Owl, Arturo Nikolai, Flickr

Barn Owls were seen in early October along Middlewich Road, Organsdale and Summertrees and Tawny Owls bred in the wood at Gresty's Waste.



Barn Owl, Peter Trimming, wikimedia commons

On 2nd October, at Lobslack Woods there were five Comma Butterflies after nectar on the last of the flowers of the Alder Buckthorn, which were planted for the Brimstone Butterflies, as it is the caterpillar's food plant. Red Admiral were also out in good numbers.

Common Darter Dragonflies were still flying around the ponds along with two Migrant Hawker Dragonflies. This is a new species that is colonising in the British Isles and is becoming quite common. This is the only Hawker Dragonfly to be seen flying so late in the year.

After last year's multiple sightings of grass snakes, I have not seen one this year. Apparently I am not alone in noticing that snake sightings have been few and far between this year.

Over the last few months Cheshire Wildlife Trust has been delighted to hear about the results of surveys carried out by the Tanyptera Trust at Delamere, which have revealed some exciting discoveries. The Trust has also celebrated winning a leading environmental award for their Delamere Landscape project.

Having previously discovered the nationally-rare spider, *Sitticus floricola*, at Delamere, or as the Trust likes to think of it the 'Delamere jumping spider' – it has now been discovered at two additional sites. The spider is quite tiny, between 3½ and 7½ mm across, and is found on and around Sphagnum bogs. All the records are currently being verified by Richard Gallon from the Tanyptera Trust and the Trust hopes that the spider survey will also reveal further observations for the sites. Watch this space!



Sitticus floricola – 'the Delamere jumping spider'

During the Summer, high numbers of bog bush crickets were recorded at Abbots Moss Nature Reserve – the first officially recorded in over three decades. The area the crickets were sitting was

located using a bat detector but locating the actually crickets themselves needed a keen eye. Currently the only other known records for this species in Cheshire come from the Holcroft Moss Nature Reserve.



Bog bush cricket, photographer Katie Piercy

The Trust have been delighted to receive a CIEEM (Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management) Best Practice Award this year for their Delamere Living Landscape Project. The project had been entered into the Large-Scale Practical Nature Conservation category and competed against multi-million pound projects from across the UK.



The Cheshire Wildlife Trust and Forestry Commission team collecting the award

Over the last four years, Cheshire Wildlife Trust and the Forestry Commission along with an army of volunteers, have restored 110 hectares of mossland habitat through scrub-clearance, rewetting areas of peatland to create pools, and controlling invasive species. The project is supported by Natural England, WREN's FCC Biodiversity Action Fund, Heritage Lottery Fund, the British Dragonfly Society and Cheshire West and Chester Council.

Species are now flourishing as a result of the habitat work from nationally rare

mosses, through to woodland birds, rare insects and amphibians. Nowadays green hairstreak butterflies are a more common sight, along with common lizards, and the improved bog areas are also home to one of only five populations of bog myrtle in Cheshire.

The project comes to an end in January 2018 and a special event to mark its achievements is being held on Saturday 20th January, from 2.30pm until 5pm at the Delamere Community Centre. All welcome, if you would like to attend please e-mail kpiercy@cheshirewt.org.uk



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PRIVATE WILLIAM ATHERTON

By Don Wilson

22nd October 2017 was the 100th anniversary of the death of one of our Delamere soldiers. He was just 20 years of age, killed in the carnage of Passchendale.

William Herbert Atherton was born in 1897 and lived with his parents and siblings in Primrose Cottage, Kingswood. At 19 he was called from the reserve list to join the army, and after passing a medical examination was enlisted with the Cheshire Regiment on 3rd November 1916. His medical records say he was a labourer at a cable works, (Helsby Cable Works), but at just 5 feet 3 inches tall, and weighing just 102 pounds must have appeared as a very slight figure and younger than his age. His mother Elizabeth must have been very anxious for him, and I wonder how he coped with all the equipment he would have had to carry on his back, but no doubt he was strong and wiry.

On 11th January 1917 he was posted to France as part of the Expeditionary Force, in the 16th Battalion of the Cheshire Regiment, called the "Birkenhead Bantams", a battalion set up for men of small stature. He embarked at Southampton for Le Havre, and being his first time in a foreign country, was no doubt nervous and excited.

At the time his battalion was under strength, but by the end of the month it was up to sufficient numbers with 33 officers and 946 other ranks. This included many raw recruits and others from other depleted battalions joining with William, for a period of training in musketry skills and infantry tactics. Within a short time, with shortages of men at the front, William and his comrades were off to the Somme, for whatever awaited them there.

No doubt they would have been ill prepared

for the experiences awaiting them.

As William marched off, enduring long exhausting marches by day and night in all weathers, he would no doubt be buoyed up with singing and feelings of patriotism and excitement. He would soon develop a very close bond with his comrades, his new "family". Sleep would be intermittent, often in the open, if they were lucky sometimes in tents, or in ruined buildings. In the background the noise and flashes of gunfire and explosions, getting ever louder as they marched nearer to the front.

They were tasked with rebuilding roads, removing damaged machinery and dead horses, interspersed with further training, all to the background noise of gunfire. All too soon it would be time to go the front line.

As they made their way to the front, the new recruits would have been in awe of the maze of communications trenches, taking care not to fall behind and be lost in the confusion of different trenches. As they came ever nearer to the frontline trenches, they would experience sporadic bombardment, and careless comrades falling victim to sniper fire. Once in their allotted trench, William would endure long hours of boredom and inactivity just waiting for something to happen, his mind no doubt drifting back to his family in Delamere, the quiet lanes and woods, his church and his friends all a lifetime away, in a different world. Soon the feelings of excitement would evaporate, as he experienced first hand the reality of his situation. The pre-dawn bombardment of the German lines heralded the shrill noise of the whistles which would have made his heart leap, as his officer counted down the seconds as it was time to go "over the top" to his first view of No Mans Land, littered

with shell holes, mud, destroyed equipment, charred stumps of trees, barbed wire and decomposing corpses. The headlong rush forward, following others, following orders, not really knowing his objective. William would see some of his friends fall under a hail of bullets from the chattering enemy machine guns, soldiers stuck in barbed wire struggling to extricate themselves, only to be shot by sniper fire, then taking cover in a shell hole to find corpses from previous engagements as company. No doubt black humour with his comrades helped to keep them going. Then the order to retreat to the comparative safety of the trenches, another stalemate, a fag and a cup of tea and a shot of rum if they were lucky.

After a few days, they would be relieved by another fresh company, for a rest away from the front. Sleep would come quickly, wherever they were, followed by a trip to a local town for a raucous evening in a bar helping to block out their experiences, then time for yet more training, with the undercurrent of the dread of the inevitable return to the front.

The worst part would be waiting in reserve, time to brood, just waiting to be called forward at a moment's notice, an hour, a day or not at all.

William would see fresh soldiers eagerly marching to the front, singing and cheering as they go by, only to see them return a few days later, exhausted, bedraggled, silent and numb in their depleted numbers.

William's only thoughts would be just to get it over with, whatever the consequences, if it was death, so be it, at worst a life changing injury, at the very best a wound not serious, but enough to be sent back home, or to get through it, just to do it all over again.

Throughout the summer of 1917, all this would have become "normal" to William, he would go on to endure being stranded in No Mans Land, gas attacks, noise, squalor, loss of friends and the inevitable mud. The relationship between friends would help them all to retain their sanity amongst all the carnage.

October 1917

The Passchendaele Ridge overlooked the town of Ypres, from where the enemy could observe movements within the Ypres salient. It was vital therefore to take control of this ridge, to prevent the enemy sweeping forward to take the Channel ports and cutting off supplies to the allies.

The area was of heavy clay, and prone to flooding, and was protected by a system of dykes and drainage ditches, however these were destroyed by constant bombardment, and with the very wet summer of 1917, streams overflowed, waterlogged shell holes became ponds, and the clay like solid earth turned into a sea of liquid mud. The military leaders thought it would take four days to take the ridge, but this turned into four months. The main offensive began on 31st July.

By mid October, William and his comrades, found themselves in an area of saturated ground prior to another offensive towards the ridge. On 17th October 400 men were employed carrying wooden duckboards towards the front, to be laid across a sea of mud around putrid water filled shell holes. One officer and 50 men were tasked to clear the roads of destroyed wagons and countless dead horses in various state of decomposition.

Because of the nature of the ground, neither side had the traditional trenches. The Germans had a system of concrete

pillboxes, spitting fire and bullets.

On 21/22 October, a diversionary attack was planned for our Cheshires and others to distract the Germans away from the main thrust, by advancing towards the remains of Houthulst Forest, an area of 600 acres of mangled tree stumps and sodden ground. The evening of the 21st was wet and cold, most had colds and some influenza. Throughout the night they suffered bombardment and heavy rain showers, soaking the men as they moved forward, past a collection of pillboxes and along the duckboards, or stepping into puddles which turned out to be flooded shell holes. The advance was guaranteed to deplete the soldiers, with no military gain.

At 05.30, bombardment of the German front began, William and his 16th Battalion, along with the Gloucesters and the Sherwoods behind advanced over this alien world. It was expected to take 8 minutes to advance 100 yards, impossible to achieve. The German pillboxes dominated the landscape, spitting fire towards our soldiers causing heavy casualties, however some pillboxes were neutralised. Enemy aircraft flew low, strafing the soldiers, but some ground was gained.

By 4.30pm a strong counter attack by the enemy began, breaking through our lines, and firing into the woods held by the remnants of the 16th, causing them to withdraw.

Conditions during the attack were beyond belief. Many exhausted men took shelter in flooded shell holes, waist deep in cold putrid water. With the heavy rain, these holes gradually filled, and with rising water

levels drowned those who were wounded or lacked the strength to climb out.

It was sometime during this dreadful day that William lost his life.

We do not know exactly where he died, but he would have died with his beloved comrades. Their bodies were never recovered, but lie today somewhere in what was the mud of Passchendaele.

Amongst the many, many casualties that day, were around 125 comrades from the 15th and 16th Battalions, only a handful were buried in a cemetery, the rest having no known grave. William is commemorated on the Tyne Cot Memorial, also in St Peters Delamere, and also in 1921, the Helsby Cable Works and BICC commissioned an ornate bronze plaque naming all their employees killed in WW1. This plaque is now in St Marys Church, Prescott.

We do not know how and when the news reached William's family, probably by telegram. No doubt they were supported by other family members, friends and their church.

In May 1918, William's effects were returned to the family. "One pocket case and letters" with a rather curt form "acknowledge receipt of same on the form opposite." His original enrolment form was rubber stamped with the word "DEAD".

In 1920 his mother applied for a memorial scroll or plaque, and after some form filling and a declaration confirming she was entitled to a plaque, certified by a "magistrate or priest", it was delivered in 1921.

History Web Page

More resources have been added to the D&O website's history page: an account of Delamere Forest in 2003, and a new sub-page with 16 historical maps from 1577 to 1912.



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In June 2016, I was bird-watching in Darnhall, near Winsford. What drew me there was the wooded valley of Ash Brook. The flowing brook screamed Kingfisher, but the barbed wire and rampant undergrowth proved a challenge. I ploughed on and came upon a real treasure, a step back in time; a derelict watermill. It opened up a journey into the watermills of Cheshire, especially the 'lost' ones.

At one time there were hundreds of corn mills in the county, though there are none that I know of in Delamere and Oakmere. This is probably because there was little or no arable farming in the forest until the parish of Delamere was created through the Enclosure Act of 1812. Two of the nearest are Oulton Mill near Cotebrook, and Willington Mill at the end of Willington's Mill Lane, both of which lie outside the old forest boundary.

Then came another revelation, discovering the remains of the lost mill at Utkinton. This too lies just outside the

old forest boundary, in a gorge below the mill pond at Mill Lane. All that could be found were the sandstone and brick foundations of the mill building, one of the millstones, and the bearing at the end of the waterwheel shaft, known as a gudgeon (see photo).

The story of the mill is virtually unknown, but its significance is gradually emerging. With the help of Frank Tunney, chairman of Utkinton and Cotebrook parish council, hopefully its story will be recorded in some form. What we have discovered so far is on the Utkinton and Cotebrook website (<https://utkintonandcotebrook.com/utkinton/>)

So, if you have any information of any kind about any Cheshire watermill, particularly Darnhall and Utkinton, please let us know: David: 01606 889133, 07947 741629, dbkeogh@hotmail.com; Frank: 07860 917446, ftunney@me.com

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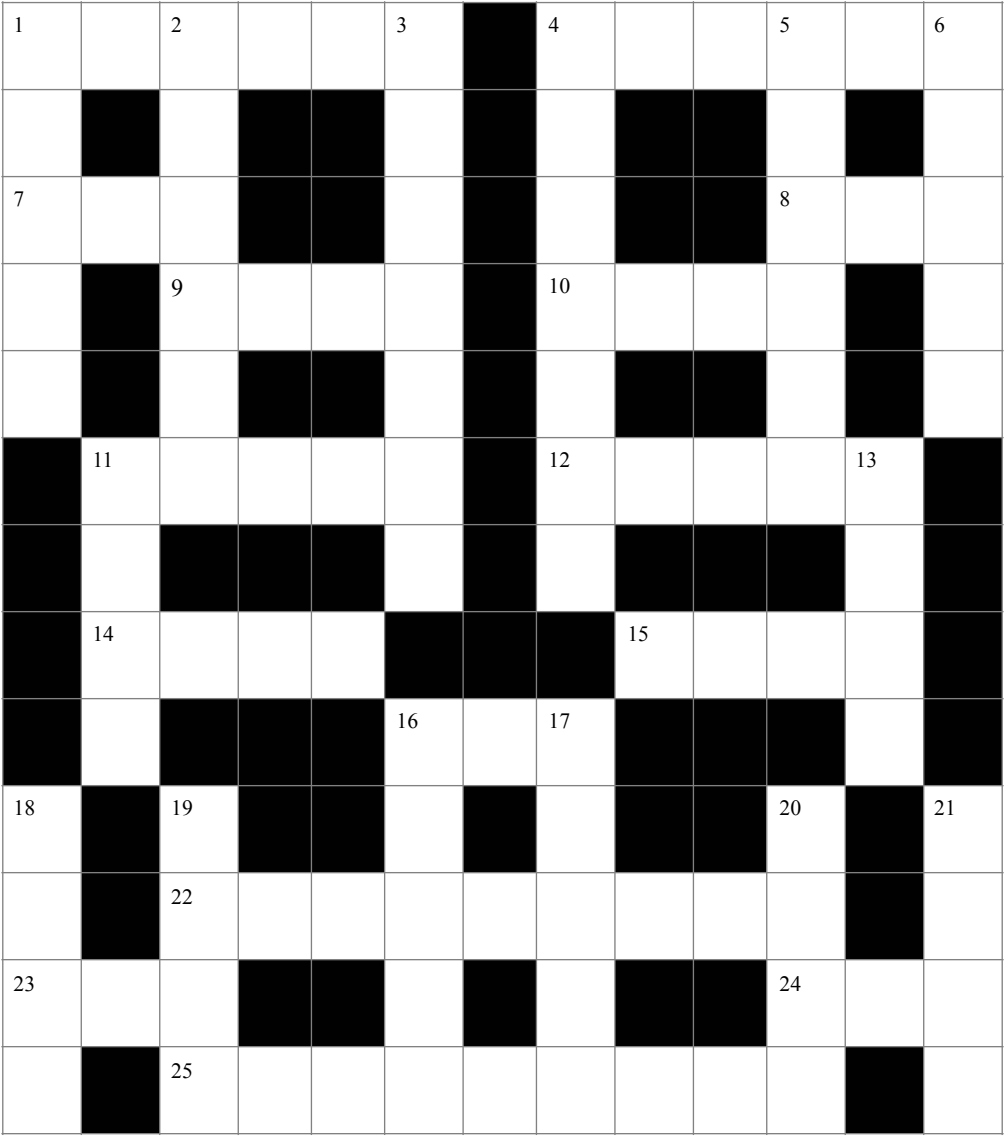
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(Answers on page 13)

Across

1. Danger wandering behind house (6)
4. A scarf, tangled, causes uproar (6)
7. Is setter friend in France? (3)
8. You and me, starting again across the pond (3)
9. Is outfit appropriate? (4)
10. Broken if transport is on time (4)
11. Electricity runs through a poem (5)
12. Detective is reserved but attractive (5)
14. Untruthful sounding instrument (4)
15. Circle by plane over lake (4)
16. European measure newt (3)
22. Not present without can is temperate (9)
23. Animal or fallen deity (3)
24. Much of this about nothing – a party (3)
25. Battlefield where a spirit trial takes place (9)

Down

1. Eat or scratch (5)
2. Endless lifting good in cake (6)
3. Name one of two – no, the reverse (7)
4. Prohibits auctioneer's call? (7)
5. Cling to foot pedal (5)
6. Agitate small fish (5)
11. Skilful but a murder victim I heard (4)
13. Runny breakfast food carries a heavy load audibly (4)
16. Consumed school on the radio (5)
17. Dance with energy after beat (5)
18. Created a servant, did you hear? (4)
19. A gas features back in old story (4)
20. Right left start, leaving abbreviated fact (4)
21. Stolen item – instrument upended (4)

WINTER QUIZ *by Steve Lacey*

(Answers on page 13)

OSCARS TRIVIA

1. What was the first colour film to win the Best Picture Oscar? It was based on a novel by Margaret Mitchell.
2. Who is the tallest actor to have won the Oscar for Best Actor? He was 6' 4" tall and was born Marian Morrison.
3. Who is the only Oscar Winner whose parents were both Oscar winners?
4. Name one of the three people who have won an Oscar for portraying a dumb person.
5. Which country's films have won the most Oscars for Best Foreign Language film? Is it France, India, Iran or Italy?
6. Which 2 winners of the Best Actor Oscar refused to accept the award?
7. Who is the only actress to have won 4 Oscars for Best Actress?
8. Who is the youngest person to win an Oscar?
9. Who has hosted the Oscars the most often, a total of 18 times?
10. What is the Oscar statuette standing on (other than your mantelpiece!)?

If you enjoyed answering these questions, why not come along to the next quiz at the Community Centre? Details at the Centre or from Steve Lacey on 01270 780777.

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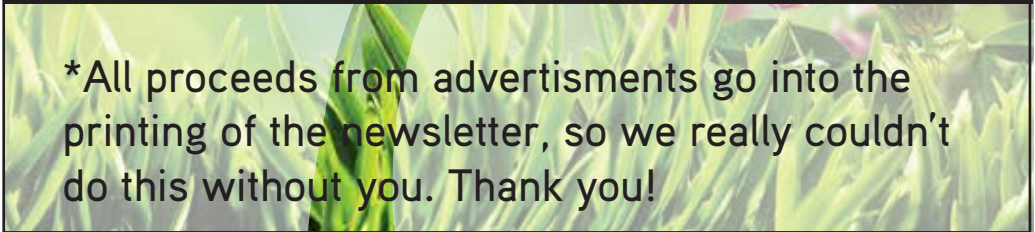
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NEWS

ISSUE 41 | WINTER 2017

Cover photo:

An October Sunset captured by Gloria Ackerley