

ISSUE 43 | SUMMER 2018



DELAMERE  
& OAKMERE

# NEWS

## IN THIS ISSUE

BIRDS AROUND THE PARISH  
EDDISBURY HILLFORT  
WW1 CENTENARY - CALL FOR PHOTOS



## IN THIS ISSUE

FORTHCOMING EVENTS	03
FOREWORD	07
LETTER FROM THE RECTOR	09
ST PETER'S NOTICEBOARD	10
OAKMERE METHODIST CHURCH	11
BROADBAND IS HERE!	12
COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION NEWS	13
THE CHAIRMAN'S LETTER	14
DELAMERE WI	16
THE EDDISBURY HILLFORT	17
WILDLIFE IN THE PARISH	21
BADMINTON SUCCESS	22
WILDLIFE SURVEYS	23
LISTENING TO BIRDSONG	24
OUR AMAZING BIRDS	27
ANSWERS TO THE QUIZ & CROSSWORD	27
WW1 CENTENARY	28
MAGISTRATES' COURT UPDATE	31
A SPLENDID VISITOR	32
CROSSWORD	33
QUIZ	34

# Forthcoming Events

## THE WOMEN'S INSTITUTE

Date	Speaker	Title	Competition
Jul 10th	Ed Abrams	The Civil War in Chester	-
Sept 11th	John Benson	Family History	Group Comp.
Oct 9th	Elaine Ollman	Christmas Decorations	-
Nov13th		Annual Meeting	-
Dec 11th		Christmas Party	Home-made Father Christmas

*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>*

## DELAMERE AND DISTRICT GOLDEN CLUB

**July 11th - 1:30pm**

Speaker John Baddley: "Music from the 50s and 60s."

**July 25th - 1:30pm**

Strawberry and Raspberry Tea.

**September 5th - 1:30pm**

Garden Party at The Paddock, Stoney Lane.

**September 19th - 12:30pm**

Birthday and Harvest Lunch

**October 3rd - 1:30pm**

Harvest Service with Rev. Elaine

**October 17th - 1:30pm**

Speaker Peter Turner "Sleight of Mind"



*Golden Club outing to Llangollen Steam Railway in May*

**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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Chester Road, Delamere Northwich CW8 2HB

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Much of this issue seems to have been taken over by birds. Towards the end you will find some stunning pictures sent in by Jeffrey Hall of 'Percy Peacock', who came to visit at the end of May. Kay George tells us about the local birdsong walks that were started by Joan Fairhurst back in the 1980s, and some of the amazing number of different species that have been seen and/or heard on their walks this year. David Keogh expresses his wonderment at the three-dimensional lives of these special creatures, and in his regular update David Wright gives us the latest news on all the varieties of wildlife seen around

the parish, birds included. There is more on local wildlife from the Cheshire Wildlife Trust as well, although in this case, it's not about birds.

We have more on local history too, with a summary of the long and varied history of Eddisbury Hillfort, taken largely from the latest report on the archaeological excavations. Also, Don Wilson puts out a call for photos of relatives who took part in the First World War, and gives us one of his own.

And once again a big thank you to all our other contributors.

Clive George and Phil Neave

## STONYFORD COTTAGE

### GARDENS - NURSERY - TEA ROOM

Stonyford Lane, Oakmere, Northwich. Cheshire. CW8 2TF Tel: 01606 888970  
[www.stonyfordcottagenursery.co.uk](http://www.stonyfordcottagenursery.co.uk) Open – Tuesday to Saturday 10am - 5.00pm

### National Garden Scheme Day

Sunday 29<sup>th</sup> July. Gardens open for charity

11am – 4pm (with live music from Pianist Steve Lucas)

### Stonyford Plant Fair

Bank Holiday Monday 27<sup>th</sup> August. Nurseries from around the country selling a good choice of garden plants. Free entry. (10am to 4pm).

### Open Air Theatre Plays – Bring a Picnic

Tuesday 14<sup>th</sup> & Wednesday 15<sup>th</sup> August 'Love Labours Lost' Performance starts 7pm

Tuesday 21<sup>st</sup> & Wednesday 22<sup>nd</sup> August. 'The Princess and the Giant'

Starts 6.30pm – Family performance.

Buy tickets through the Nursery or visit [www.folkystheatre.co.uk](http://www.folkystheatre.co.uk)



# 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 November!

## ADVERTISE WITH D&O NEWS!

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](mailto:do_newseditor@yahoo.co.uk)

Advertising: [info@neavecreative.co.uk](mailto:info@neavecreative.co.uk)

## SUPPORT US

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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# LETTER FROM THE RECTOR

Dear Friends

I am writing this on a glorious sunny morning on (according to this morning's weather man) the meteorological first day of summer. I was reminded of an incident many years ago when I was asked by the church Minister to hand the list of hymns for the following Sunday to the organist. It read – "1st Hymn – 'Summer suns are glowing' (if wet 'Praise my soul')".

I have been thinking about this letter for some time wondering what to write, I decided to look on the web to see what other parsons had written. One wrote all about a tea party that was soon to be held – 'china cups and saucers, home made cake not a tea bag in sight' – they were trying to raise £5,000 to repair the church wall that had fallen, I thought, that's an awful lot of tea and cake. Another was a lively piece about the 'most famous short story ever written', all about Jesus' parable the Prodigal Son. Perhaps I'll save that idea for another time.

I have to raise the stultifying subject of GDPR – General Data Protection Regulation. A topic that nearly all must have heard about. All organisations that keep personal information about people have to comply with the new rules. The information has to be respected, kept safely, shared only as necessary and with the agreement of the person concerned, available for inspection and so on. Mindful of this I have not included in this issue of D&O News the usual feature 'From the Registers'. I hope that this will be in the next issue as it is an important part of the social

history of our village.

I can without contravening the rules at all say that there have been no weddings at St Peter's since the last magazine!

I'm so glad our loving Father God doesn't need GDPR to ensure our data is confidential. He loves us unconditionally just as we are. He promises that we are precious to him, he has written our names on the palms of his hands, we are the apple of his eye, he sent his Son to show us how to live. He promises to be with us always on the bright sunny days and when it is dark and cold.

We warmly invite you to worship with us at St Peter's, each Sunday there are services at 8am and 10.30am. Usually on the 3rd Sunday of each month at 10.30am, we have a service for all ages. Children are welcome at all our services and we provide story-bags for the younger ones.

Do contact me by telephone or email if you would like me to visit or pray for you.

Brian joins me in sending you good wishes.

With all good wishes

Revd Elaine

Bible references: Psalm 139:1-18; Isaiah 43:1-4a; Isaiah 49:15-16; Psalm 17:8; Romans 8:32; Matthew 28:20b

If you don't have a Bible of your own and you would like one please get in touch with me.



# *St. Peter's Notice Board*

## **NOTICES:**

Children are welcome at all our services and we provide Story Bags for the younger ones.

Coffee is served in the Church Room after the 10.30am service.

Weddings, Baptisms and Funerals by arrangement with the Rector.

## **REGULAR SERVICES**

### *Every Sunday*

8am - Holy Communion

### *Every 3rd Sunday*

10:30am - Family Service

### *Every 1st Sunday*

10:30am - Holy Communion

### *Every 2nd, 4th & 5th Sunday*

10:30am - Morning Worship

### *Every 3rd Tuesday*

10:30am - Holy Communion

If you are in pastoral need or wish to share something in confidence or would just like someone to visit then please contact the Rector.

Reverend Elaine Ollman

The Rectory,  
Chester Road,  
Delamere  
01606 88 2184

[rectorstpeters@btinternet.com](mailto:rectorstpeters@btinternet.com)

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

# 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: Ann or Eric Wright (01829 732950) or Rev Andrew Emison (01928 733180).

In February the Chapel was pleased to help Roseanne Joyce to raise money for Delamere School.

The Chapel will be joining St Peter's Church for the Remembrance Day Service in November.





## Broadband

Fibre broadband has finally arrived at Stoney Lane and Watling Street!

Our local MP Antoinette Sandbach came to switch it on, assisted by Ward Councillor John Leather.



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The Community Association held its Annual General Meeting on 2nd July. It was good to welcome a good number of local residents to the meeting, but we are never satisfied! Next year we will be holding the AGM in September to try and attract an even better turnout.

The Treasurer reported an operating surplus during the previous year of around £5,400, with spending on renewals and refurbishments of over £11,000, mainly on refurbishments to the Pump House roof and door and the installation of acoustic panels to the ceiling. The panels have been very well received and Centre Users, especially those with hearing problems, have commented on how much better sound is in the Main Hall and the Bowling Room as a result. The Association had over £21,000 in reserves at the end of April.

As is well known by now, the Association will receive £50,000 from Trafford Housing Trust when the Marley Tiles site development is finished. After consultation with local residents via the Newsletter, we will produce and publish a prioritised list of how we intend to spend both our surpluses and the additional funding over the next few years.

We face a difficult couple of years in having to comply with new regulations around Safeguarding and GDPR (General Data Protection Regulation); this will

involve ensuring that we are compliant and producing the requisite policies and procedures. The Management Committee is small (and we still have a vacancy for a Secretary) and does not currently have the expertise to do all this extra work. We will, of course, set about rectifying this by getting the right advice and help; if you think you can help us with this work we would be delighted to hear from you!

The Centre continues to be well used during the week but is available for hire at various times and at weekends. If you think you might want to hire it (at very competitive rates!) then please contact the Booking Secretary, Lorraine Roberts, on 01606 889188.

Paul Dean, Chairman  
*pauldean02@yahoo.com*

Steve Lacey, Treasurer  
*steve@slamonline.co.uk*

It's about this time of year when I remember how lucky we are to live in one of the most beautiful areas of the country. Leaves are coming out, the daffodils planted by the parish council have been (and gone, unfortunately) and the nests are full of cheeping birds. Lovely. Also had Gary Barlow and Paloma Faith pay us a visit in the forest this year, which was quite exciting (especially for my 6 year old son at his first concert!)

Lots of projects on the go currently, which as Chairman I am pleased to support fully. Firstly the Frith Avenue project is ticking over and we're hoping to be able to pitch for some funding over the summer. The wheels move slowly unfortunately, however I would be pleased to talk about some real progress by the next newsletter. Beyond this we're getting regular updates from the new development on the Marley Tiles site. Hopefully we will be able to reach out to new residents and continue to grow the heart and spirit of the community in Delamere and Oakmere. Certainly

pleased to also see the increased social activity from the Abbey Arms as well; by the time you read this letter they'll hopefully have hit their target for the defibrillator (fingers crossed!)

The parish council wants to make sure we're as active as possible in supporting projects across Delamere and Oakmere. Sometimes this is taken on by individuals (such as the change in route for the gas pipeline to the new development), and sometimes it is taken on by the council as a whole (such as the recent bluebell planting). If you have any ideas you'd like to run past us, just come along to a parish council meeting and share. Who knows what we can achieve together.

As ever, thanks to Clive and his team for this excellent newsletter, and thanks to the rest of the parish council team for your continued endeavours.

Keep safe and be happy

John Edwards  
Chair, D&O Parish Council

## GET IT FIXED

Now that the government has come up with a bit more cash CW&C have at last filled in many of potholes that have developed recently. If they have missed one, tell them. They same applies to litter, dog fouling, or any other problem they need to fix. It is easy to do on line at [cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk/residents/contact-us/report-it/report-it.aspx](http://cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk/residents/contact-us/report-it/report-it.aspx).

There are forms for each of: Missed bin collection, Road or pavement fault, Council tax change, Street light fault, Grass, trees and hedges by a road, Fly tipping, Dog fouling, Litter and litter bins, Lost and stray dogs.

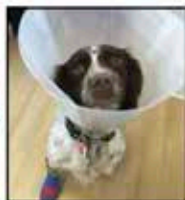
If you are not on line, ring them on 0300 123 8123.

If you are not happy with the response you get, contact a parish councillor or one of our CW&C ward councillors.

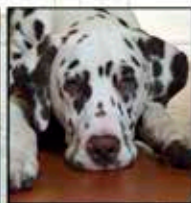


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Here we are in June already – the first half of the year has flown by. At our WI meetings we have learnt how the Blood Bikes charity works with Chris Prior, we have travelled along the Pembrokeshire coastline with stunning photography by David Cummings and in May we discussed the 2018 WI Resolution ‘Mental Health Matters’. The very serious subject of the different aspects of mental health was discussed in depth and we agreed unanimously to accept the Resolution which was discussed further at the NFWI AGM in Cardiff. The mood was lightened afterwards when we celebrated our own royal wedding. Although we didn’t have a bride and groom, royal or otherwise, we did have a delicious ‘finger buffet for a royal wedding’, provided by members and whilst we were sampling the splendid variety of dishes, we dug deep into our memories to try to answer questions to a royal wedding quiz. Some of us did quite a lot of guessing!

Our June meeting was different again

when Gill Adlington came to show us how to paint a picture. As she worked she told us how she came to start painting and explained her methods. As she talked and the picture developed into a superb landscape, you could have heard a pin drop in the hall – we were all so fascinated. Gill very kindly donated the painting for our raffle.

We will welcome Ed Abrams to our July meeting and he will be talking about the Civil War in Chester. We have our garden meeting in August and in September John Benson’s subject will be family history. In October Elaine Ollman will talk about Christmas decorations – a history, November will be our Annual Meeting followed by a short talk by Barry Green on one of the projects carried out by the Canal and River Trust, and then it’s December and Christmas Party time. Another year sorted and before you know it it’ll be 2019 and you’ve not been to visit us yet. Where are you?

Lorraine Roberts, President

## DCA'S COFFEE MORNINGS

All are welcome to come along for a leisurely chat with neighbours at the DCA’s monthly coffee mornings in the Community Centre, usually on the last Friday of each month.

*Picture: Margaret Harrison’s surprise birthday cake disappeared fast at the June coffee morning. Carol Jordan beats the rush.*  
*Photo Gloria Ackerley*



# THE EDDISBURY HILLFORT

It is a long while since the newsletter paid much attention to what is arguably the most significant feature of the parish, the prehistoric hillfort around which we all live. In issue 23 Dan Garner gave us some preliminary findings from archaeological excavations being undertaken by the Habitats and Hillforts project, following up the earlier work by William Varley in the 1930s. A preliminary report was published in 2012 (Hillforts of the Cheshire Sandstone Ridge), followed by a full report in 2016 (Hillforts of the Cheshire Ridge). This provides the main source for this brief review of what we now know about Cheshire's foremost prehistoric monument.



*Artist's impression of the Eddisbury hillfort by Dai Owen ([www.dai-owen.co.uk](http://www.dai-owen.co.uk))*

Dai Owen's picture of the eastern entrance, which appears on the information board at the foot of Merrick's Hill, corresponds to what the hillfort is thought to have looked like in its prime. The evidence for the impressive timber gatehouse comes from the huge postholes uncovered during the excavations.



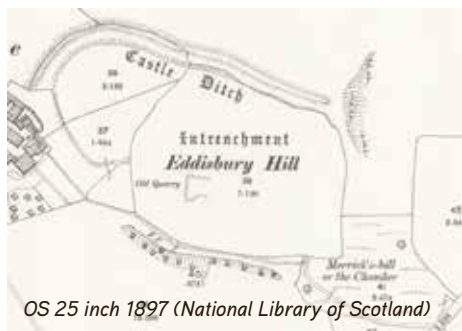
*Gatehouse postholes*

When the eastern entrance was reconstructed by local volunteers as part of the project, the original postholes were used to house the supporting pillars. The stones that were used might well have been originals too. They had been set aside during the excavations, so that those of us who chiselled them into shape and put them in place under the expert tutelage of Dan Garner's team may well have been handling the very same stones as the iron age builders who laid them over two thousand years ago, using much the same dry stone walling techniques.



*The eastern entrance during reconstruction*

In its original form the hillfort consisted only of an enclosure defended by a wooden palisade in the south-east corner of the site on Merrick's Hill, built in the later part of the Bronze Age (2000 - 750 BC). It was extended considerably during the Iron Age, between 500 and 400 BC, with a single rampart and ditch enclosing the entire hilltop (including Merrick's Hill). The gatehouse and outer rampart were later additions, built between 400 and 200 BC. A semi-circular guard chamber on the southern side of the entrance appears to have been destroyed by fire between 360 and 160 BC.



People occupied the hill long before the hillfort was built. The first sign of human activity is a small flint bladelet made about 6000 years ago (4000 BC), around the time when Mesolithic hunter-gatherers were giving way to early Neolithic farmers. Other finds of worked flint indicate continuing activity

during the Neolithic period (4000 - 2000 BC) and into the early Bronze Age.

The Bronze Age and Iron Age people who built the hillfort may have been descendants of the first hunter-gatherers who arrived in the country after the end of the last ice age, or of later arrivals from mainland Europe, or a blend of any or all of them. There was a great regional diversity of culture at the time, with many tribal identities. These ancient Britons of Eddisbury would have spent most of their time farming the surrounding fields, relying on the hillfort's defences in times of conflict, but mostly using it as a centre for markets and social contact.

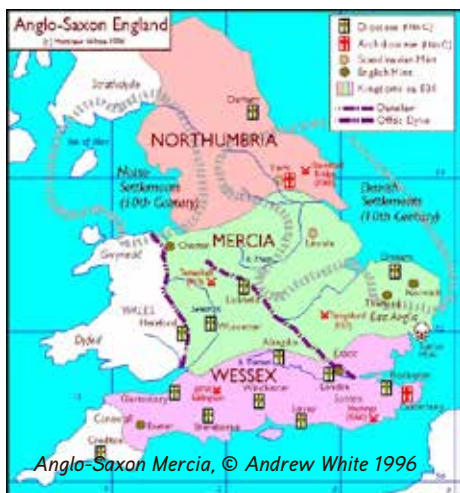
The ramparts were reinforced around the time when the Romans came to Britain in 43 AD, possibly by the indigenous people in an attempt to fend them off, or else by the Romans themselves. The site continued to be occupied during the Roman period, quite possibly as a military garrison, with its strategic position overlooking the Roman road from Chester to Northwich, whose route followed the present road (Eddisbury Hill) under the south-east corner of Merrick's Hill.

Shortly after the Romans left in AD 410 the Anglo-Saxons arrived, invading from their homelands in what are now Germany, Denmark and Holland. A piece of early Saxon pottery found in the excavations suggests that they had occupied the hillfort by the 5th or 6th century.

Whereas the Romans had come to rule, the Anglo-Saxons came to settle. Some

of the original inhabitants may have stayed to make their peace with the incomers, but many others would have fled west to join their cousins in what became Wales. King Offa of the Anglo-Saxons lent his name the dyke that was built along the newly established border to stop them coming back. The Welsh word for England, Lloegr, is widely believed to mean 'the lost lands'.

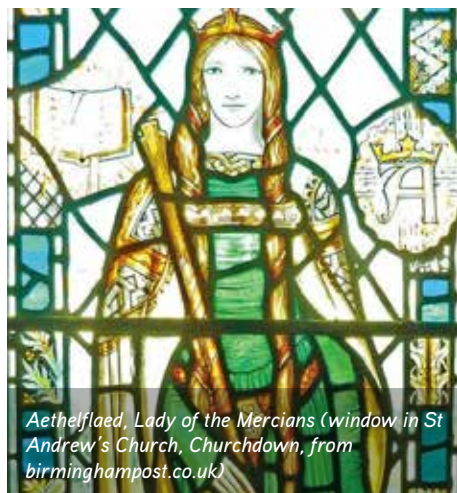
The next chapter in the hillfort's history brings in Aethelflaed (or Ethelfleda), the 'Lady of the Mercians'. She was a remarkable woman, the daughter of Alfred the Great of Wessex and Ealswith of Mercia. As the Anglo-Saxon rulers jostled for power among themselves the three main kingdoms or sub-kingdoms of Wessex, Mercia and Northumbria came to dominate.



A strategic alliance between Wessex and Mercia was forged when Alfred arranged the marriage of Aethelflaed to the ruler of Mercia, Aethelred. When Aethelred became ill Aethelflaed assumed increasing power herself, and

when he died in 911 she ruled Mercia on her own until her death in 918 (in alliance with her brother Edward, who had inherited the throne of Wessex from Alfred).

During this time the Anglo-Saxon dominance was being threatened by yet another group of invaders, the Danish Vikings, pushing south from their strongholds in Yorkshire, and capturing much of eastern Mercia as far as the diagonal line shown on the map. Aethelflaed led a series of successful campaigns to push them back, building fortresses at Bridgnorth, Tamworth, Stafford, Warwick, Chirbury, Runcorn, and on the approach to Chester at Eddisbury. The name Eddisbury, or Eades byrig, means 'Ead's stronghold'.



The only historical record linking Aethelflaed to the Eddisbury hillfort is a single line in the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle, which reports that in 913 she went to Tamworth, 'and there built the fortress, and after this, in the next year, that at Eddisbury'. There is a second Eddisbury in Cheshire, near



Macclesfield, and although most historians have concluded that the Chronicle was referring to the Delamere hillfort, there has been no clear evidence of it until now. A key find from the excavations was the base of a clay oven dated to AD 750-1000, providing the first tangible evidence for occupation during the Mercian period.

The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle's suggestion that Aethelflaed actually built a fortress at Eddisbury is something of an exaggeration, since the hillfort was already there. However, the archaeological work identified several features of the ramparts and the outer ditch that may well have been part of a 10th century re-fortification.

A century and a half later the Normans arrived. The record of their conquests, the Domesday Book, identified Eddisbury as a land for six ploughs that 'was and is waste'. It may well have been the Normans themselves who had laid it waste, a decade or so earlier in the 'harrying of the north'. William the Conqueror assigned it, along with the whole of Delamere Forest and the adjoining Forest of Mondrem, to Hugh d'Avranches, the first Earl of Chester, in recognition of his father's contribution of sixty ships to William's invasion fleet. Earl Hugh adopted the twin forests as a hunting ground for deer and wild boar. After the earldom lapsed the forest rights passed to the Crown, and in the 14th century a royal hunting lodge was built on Merrick's Hill. This must have been an impressive building or group of buildings, shown prominently on many old maps as 'The Chamber' or 'The Chamber in the Forest'.

The lodge remained the residence of the chief foresters until the middle of the 17th century, when the Civil War brought the royal hunts to an end. No remains of the original lodge have been found, but the archaeological study revealed evidence of occupation of the site from the late 16th century to the early 19th century, when it was used as a farmstead. The site takes its name from the last tenants of the farmstead, the Merrick family, who left after the Enclosure Act of 1812. The centre of the hillfort continues to be farmed, but most of the ramparts and the slopes below them are now in public ownership and open to public access, having been acquired by the Forestry Commission in 2000 as part of the Old Pale Community Woodland project.

The only part of the hillfort's interior that has not been subject to modern agricultural ploughing is Merrick's Hill, which has considerable potential for further archaeological finds. Dan Garner's team have called for serious consideration of a full re-excavation, which could tell us yet more about the people who lived here up to 6000 years ago. Let us hope they get the go-ahead to do it.

The late cold weather and freezing conditions in March may well have interrupted amphibian breeding in local ponds. Frog and newts made it to the ponds to mate and lay eggs but toads seem to have missed their chance. I have not seen one toad since last year. There was no toad spawn in any of the ponds I usually see it in. Newts were frozen and killed at Lob Slack ponds on the forest nursery at Oakmere. 'The Beast from the East' has also been blamed for the lack of butterflies and the failure of certain birds to nest. Peregrine Falcons, for instance, have not nested at several locations around the country. And now we are in a period of drought, with very little rain for several weeks. This has not helped wildlife at all.

Redpolls have been seen regularly on the seed feeders at Organsdale. Two young birds were seen in mid-June

which leads me to believe that they have bred locally in the forest. It is unusual to see them in summer. To me they are a winter visitor appearing in large numbers in cold weather.

The resident species in the British Isles is the Lesser Redpoll and the continental species is the Mealy Redpoll or Common Redpoll, which visits the British Isles in winter. There are also several races of the Arctic Redpoll which are larger with whiter plumage and feathery legs. Such birds were seen at Organsdale a few years ago. A wonderful sight!

Two young fox cubs were seen playing in the recently mown silage field next to Stoney Lane. They must have been born nearby. The resident cock pheasant was very upset by their antics and after a lot of crowing and strutting around left the field for the safety of Watling Drive.

(More on foxes in the next issue.)



*Arctic Redpoll, Ron Knight, Wikimedia Commons*

# A TROPHY AT LAST

By Steve Lacey

Delamere (Thursday) Badminton Club was founded in 1976 and first entered the Chester and District League 9 years later. The Club has been best known in the League for its friendly atmosphere and top notch refreshments – not to mention the low ceiling that can produce a few unfavourable comments! Despite a few promotions (and relegations!) and cup final defeats, it has taken 33 years to finally get our names on a trophy, which we did by winning Division 4 last season. We managed it by winning all 12 matches, finishing 36 points ahead of the runners-up, and securing promotion to Division 3. Together with our supporters we were delighted to attend the end of season Presentation Evening to collect the cup, as you can see!

The team was led, as always, by founder member Jane Wright and featured her daughter, Claire Smith, and sister-in-law, Jayne Bettley. Also in the team were Delamere residents Helen Roberts and Toby Lowth, whilst Helen Hornby was a more than able reserve in times of need. The team was completed by Dave Sommerville, Andy Price and Steve Lacey, with Tim Mee as captain and reserve.

Next season promises to be a tougher prospect, but we are all looking forward to the challenge. If there are any local residents who want to join our merry band then why not give Jane a ring (details in the Community Centre and on the website) and come along one Thursday evening to give us a try? We start again in September and you would be made most welcome.



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# WILDLIFE SURVEYING AT DELAMERE

Kevin Feeney, Living Landscape Officer,  
Cheshire Wildlife Trust

Take a short walk from Barnsbridge car park into Delamere Forest and looking left you will see Doolittle Moss. Do this on a sunny day midweek and you will catch a rare glimpse of the Cheshire Wildlife Trust volunteers. During May and June our dragonfly monitoring volunteers will be chest deep in the peaty waters of the moss, sliding through swathes of soft rush and sphagnum moss rafts. Searching for what?



*Volunteers undertaking exuviae counts  
(by Kevin Feeney)*

The signs are clear once you get your eye in, when a dragonfly emerges from its watery world it leaves behind an exuvia. This is a dry shell, much like a snake skin, that is left behind clinging to vegetation. Each exuvia is as distinct as the dragonfly that emerged from it allowing for easy identification and good estimation of numbers. One particular species in mind is the white-faced darter dragonfly, which was reintroduced here between 2013 and 2016. This was one of only two white-faced darter re-introduction projects in the UK - raising the number of populations in England to five. The small dragonfly is easily confused with a damselfly and lives a two-year life cycle beneath the

surface of the water. This means that our 2018 dragons are the first true Cheshire white-faced darters for some years.



*Four-spotted chaser dragonfly emerging and  
leaving behind its exuviae (by Kevin Feeney)*

For volunteers, being so deep and engaged with the moss is eye opening. The number of species that inhabit and rely on this sensitive and important habitat are brought close to eye level. The diversity of spiders and other insects is fascinating, often meaning the route taken through the moss usually an hour and a half, can take up to three! Time well spent standing still and admiring the many spectacles until the cool waters numb your legs.

Where else can you find Cheshire Wildlife Trust volunteers? On the mosses of Delamere Forest or on the numerous Cheshire Wildlife Trust nature reserves in the area such as Hatch Mere, Abbots Moss and Black Lake. The variety of tasks has something to suit everyone from improving wildlife habitats through to working on nature reserve paths and boundaries.

See [www.cheshirewildlifetrust.org.uk](http://www.cheshirewildlifetrust.org.uk) for more details on how you can get involved.



# LISTENING TO BIRDSONG

Kay George

In the 1980s when Dr Joan Fairhurst was warden of Fox Howl Outdoor Education Centre, she started up an after school course for teachers on birdsong, so that they could share their knowledge with their pupils when out and about in the countryside or even in the playground. We met three or four times in the breeding season and usually concentrated on the same area in Delamere Forest, learning to recognise birdsong and even map the breeding bird territories. Many of us returned year after year, wanting to refresh our knowledge and learn more. When Joan left Fox Howl, the evenings continued on an informal basis welcoming non-teachers as well. Later we operated for some years as an activity of the Mid Cheshire Branch of the Wildlife Trust. Now we meet informally as a group of friends, once a week throughout the season and visit many different locations. This year the group have gone for 16 walks, including a couple of pre-season winter ones, and during the season we have seen or heard 92 different species. Over the years we have been fortunate to have the help of several experts, and now we have our own home grown one in John, who started out with us back in the eighties. In fact there are four of us from those early days. I'd like to share with you two of our days this season.

## *An early evening walk in Oakmere in April*

This year we decided to include a new walk, taking in two relatively new routes in Oakmere.

True to the month, a heavy shower marked the beginning of our walk from the footpath off Farm Road, Oakmere. We nevertheless enjoyed the wide grassy path

which replaces the previous one, re-routed due to the workings in Crown Farm Quarry. Before long we were surprised to observe a male brambling. This winter visitor would usually have left for forests in Scandinavia and NE Europe by then. Indeed it was pretty much in full breeding plumage, so was probably on its way.



*Male Brambling, mimbplek, Wikimedia Commons*

The rain soon stopped and we were able to fully enjoy this quiet secluded walk with fields on one side and woodland on the other. We were serenaded by newly arrived summer visitors: chiffchaffs, willow warblers and blackcaps. Their songs make you feel that summer is really on its way.



*Male Blackcap, Ron Knight, Wikimedia Commons*

Before long the path took us alongside the Marley fishing lake where as well as an abundance of waterside vegetation, we saw familiar resident birds - coots, mallard, tufted ducks and great crested grebes.



*Great Crested Grebe, JJ Harrison, Wikimedia Commons*

Skirting the building site where Marley's buildings used to be located, we watched a buzzard overhead being harried by a crow, then joined the Oakmere Way and walked east towards, but not as far as, Stonyford Lane. Overlooking the quarry, we spent some time watching flocks of linnets and goldfinches. On this occasion only one person caught a fleeting glimpse of one of the sand martins that nest in the quarry, another welcome summer visitor. We all enjoyed the skylark singing above us and the cheerful sounds of swallows. We then retraced our steps heading for Station Road, and in the woodland there saw a jay and heard the green woodpecker 'yaffle', a true sound of the English countryside.



*Green Woodpecker, Charles J Sharp, Wikimedia Commons*

A small group of greylag geese flew over us on Station Road at the end of our walk. These footpaths are both well worth walking and I have only picked out a few of the forty one species we saw and/or heard on our (leisurely) two hour walk. Unfortunately it is a linear walk and was achieved with the help of a shuttle service laid on by spouses. However there is a good circular walk taking in the whole of Oakmere Way: Start at Delamere Station, follow Oakmere Way to Stonyford Lane and turn left. We like to have lunch at this point at Stonyford Cottage Gardens! Then proceed north along the lane, and turn left into Gallowsclough Lane. Continue till you get to the path into the forest. Then walk through the forest to Station Road and turn left, back to the station and perhaps an ice cream or cup of tea at the station café! About 5 miles in all.

#### *Early birds and later morning in Delamere.*

Meeting at six in the morning on Ashton road on a beautiful Saturday morning in mid May, a group of us set out to see what could be heard and seen. Of course although early for us, it was already long after dawn and many birds had been singing for a while. Song thrushes, blackbirds, robins and wrens in full voice didn't succeed in drowning out the warblers – many chiffchaffs and blackcaps, willow warblers – are the latter less numerous this year? More uncommonly, we listened to a number of garden warblers. We were delighted to be serenaded for a large part of the walk by the Delamere Forest cuckoo and even saw him flying overhead.



*Cuckoo, Chris Romeiks, Wikimedia Commons*

After a breakfast of sausage and mushroom rolls, we set off once more and walked up to Old Pale to the 'standing stones'. An early sighting was a dispute between a pair of kestrels and some jackdaws, which we interpreted as the jackdaws getting too close to the kestrel nest. Lots more warblers were heard including whitethroats, as well as the familiar resident birds. As we left Pale Heights for Eddisbury Hillfort ramparts we saw the linnets that often frequent the area near the top of the hill.



*Kestrel, Steve Waterhouse, Cornwall Wildlife Trust*

Once up on the ramparts we were delighted to hear the familiar "little bit of bread and no chee-ee-se" or just "little bit of bread" from the yellowhammers that like the gorse bushes there. We also had wonderful views of a male singing, its yellow and bronze plumage reflecting the bright sunshine we were blessed with that day, and on many other of our walks this year.

### *Change over time*

Over the years we have seen the decline of certain birds that used to be familiar, though not common, in Delamere Forest. Examples are tree pipits, pied flycatchers (still occasionally seen), turtle doves and wood warblers.

However, there are other birds which are now familiar, though absent or rare when we started out. Buzzards are the most dramatic example. Blackcaps used to be quite rare and now the forest can be full of their song and garden warblers also seem to be on the increase. There are also many more water birds in the forest. Some of this change has been to do with birds being on the edge of their range at a time of changing climatic conditions.

Another strong influence, particularly on the increase in water birds, is habitat change. This is partly down to climate change, but largely due to changes in forest management at Delamere, particularly of the peat bogs, or mosses as they are known in this area.



*Yellowhammer, Andreas Trepte, Wikimedia Commons*

Virtually all species of birds have something unique about them. It may be the song, plumage, character or some other aspect of its nature. A Robin is friendly, a Song Thrush sings beautifully, a Pheasant looks gorgeous and the chirpy House Sparrow is often our nearest neighbour.

Flight is what makes birds the world champions. Living in every place on the planet. Not only living but surviving, be it in freezing wastes, hot deserts, in high mountains and even in dark caves. In Britain, they live through changing seasons, each bringing its own demands. Imagine a Goldcrest or Wren and many other birds, weighing a few ounces, (a few teaspoons of sugar), sleeping alone in freezing temperatures; they eat insects! How do they survive? Do we see dead birds lying around after weeks of cold weather?

What other living things have to live outside for most of their lives? Mammals don't, nor amphibians, or insects, spiders or anything else. Fish might be an exception but then they are cold-blooded. Birds are high energy, warm-blooded

creatures like us and we know all about the weather!

So, birds are unique in every way. But there is something, for me at least, beyond understanding and marvellous. It's to do with flight. How do birds land in a bush, tree or anywhere else for that matter? Watch a Blackbird whizz across the garden and land perfectly on a branch. It must be doing around 30mph! Or, a Robin flying at speed through a trellis or a nuisance Magpie dropping on to your tv aerial. And the majestic Peregrine falcon waiting high up to track a fast-moving pigeon far below. At upwards of a 100 mph it connects with the pigeon as if it was flying behind it! Of all our British birds, a few stand super special in the world of flight. The Peregrine and the Swift. Both are the essence of being a bird. One, the supreme hunter, the other the glory of flight.

For me, a jet fighter in flight, yet can cruise with hardly a wingbeat, with the eyes of a dragon, sleeps on the wing and yet such a majestic bird wishes only our roof space to make its rare touchdown. The Swift.

## QUIZ & CROSSWORD ANSWERS...

### Answers to quiz

1. Robert Robinson, 2. The Chase, 3. Richard Whiteley, Des Lynam, Des O'Connor, Jeff Stelling and Nick Hewer, 4. Anthea Redfern (married Bruce Forsyth), 5. Round Britain Quiz, 6. Blockbusters, 7. Anne Robinson, 8. Fifteen, 9. Fulham, 10. A bendy bully and their BFH (Bus Fare Home!)

### Answers to crossword

Across: 1. fire escape, 6. coin, 7. antenna, 8. dim, 9. Kettle, 11. ibis, 12. eta, 14. coil, 15. clever, 16. doe, 19. waffles, 20. worm, 21. crosswords  
Down: 2. rail, 3. coat, 4. eventide, 5. mainstream, 6. corkscrews, 8. Dee, 10. terrific, 13. ace, 17. oasts, 18. moor



To commemorate the centenary of the end of WW1 in November, we thought it would be good to remember our family members who served their country in those dark days.

It is planned to have a small exhibition of photographs in St Peters of our relations who served, from whatever service, including the home front, or whatever contribution they made. We would like to include as many photographs as possible, from any part of the country, so that their memory can be shared.

If you would like to contribute a

photograph, please contact Don Wilson on 01829 752710, email: [dontravcon@hotmail.com](mailto:dontravcon@hotmail.com)

We appreciate these photographs are very precious and treasured, so I would photograph them in your home, and later print them for the exhibition. If the photographs are tiny or faded, no matter. This photograph (which is itself quite small) is of my Great Uncle, Harry Stokes, 3rd from the left of those seated at the table, having lunch with his comrades.



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# MAGISTRATES' COURT UPDATE

The main framework of first of the semi-detached houses on the courthouse site has now been constructed. The architects tell us this was a 'buildability exercise' for the steel frame superstructure and the insulation material with which it has been wrapped.

The main benefits of steel frame over traditional bricks and mortar are reduced consumption of materials and a faster building programme. Further progress still awaits a decision from CW&C on the revised plans and the issues raised by

nearby residents. The new plans were submitted in December last year.

The developers hope that the new houses will be complete by Christmas 2018, and the courthouse not long after, provided there are no complications. At the moment it's not looking good. A bat survey conducted in early June reports that the structural condition of the building has continued to degrade. Only the bottom floor could be inspected, because most of the second-storey flooring has collapsed.



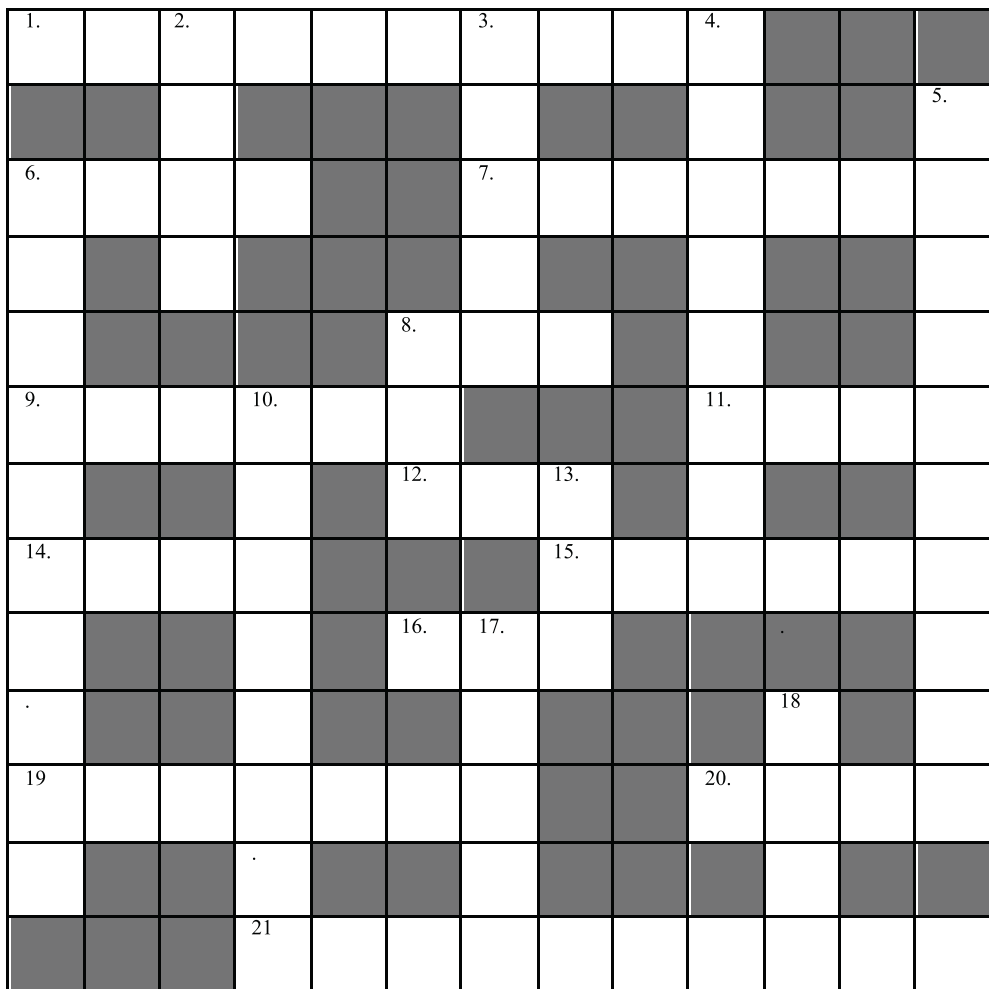


# A SPLENDID VISITOR

This splendid visitor (christened Percy Peacock by the locals) spent a few days at Eddisbury Hill Park at the end of May, having first been spotted on the United Utilities field. Does anyone know where it came from or where it went?

Thanks to Jeffrey Hall for the photos.





## Down

2. Storyteller reversed track (4)
3. Coating includes American mammal (5)
4. Movement of the sea is not odd before bedtime (8)
5. Confused master follows chief to be conventional. (10)
6. Stoppers lead teams to open bottles with these (10)
8. You'll find this water in both Cheshire and indeed Scotland (3)
10. Endlessly frighten, then in charge. That's great (8)
13. Headless spice, it's a one (3)
17. Roman soils evenly for this spot in the desert (5)
18. Space up for one at Ilkley say (4)

**Across**

1. Safe recipe mixed for hot emergency use (4,6)
6. Company enter, if you pay with this (4)
7. Following insect girl to come back. It should have two! (7)
8. Centre returns a bit gloomy (3)
9. Disparaged by pot, nevertheless whistles (6)
11. Initially I bring in sopranos, but this bird doesn't sing (4)
12. Rimless metal for this letter (3)
14. Group of singers loses gas to get fibre (4)
15. Skilful chopper lets article go (6)
16. You could make bread from it I hear, but this female wouldn't eat it (3)
19. Carries on talking while eating Belgian snacks(7)
20. Studious fellow loses book and becomes lowly gardener (4)
21. Angry talk. More like this! (10)

## A QUIZ ABOUT QUIZ SHOWS *by Steve Lacey*

*(Answers on page 27)*

1. Who 'Asked the Family' in the 1960s?
2. On which quiz show might you encounter The Beast, The Sinner Man or The Vixen?
3. Can you name the 5 hosts of Countdown?
4. Which Generation Game hostess married the host?
5. Which quiz was first recorded in 1947, making it the longest running radio quiz still broadcast today?
6. On which show would contestants often say 'I'll have a P please Bob'?
7. Which quiz host was nicknamed 'The Queen of Mean'?
8. How many questions do you have to get right to win £1million on Who Wants To Be A Millionaire?
9. Which football team does Pointless presenter Richard Osman famously support?
10. What did the losers on Bullseye get as consolation?

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# NEWS

ISSUE 43 | SUMMER 2018

Cover Photo:  
The reconstructed entrance of Eddisbury hillfort