

# DNL *Dockenfield newsletter*

**News and events from in and around the village of Dockenfield**

**Issue 294**

**Published**

**23 March 2023**



**Trivia:** With 2023 being Year of the Rabbit, who are these well-known rabbits?

- (a) You will find me talking to Bambi
- (b) I was created in the late 1930s and am a main player in the Looney Tunes gang
- (c) I wear a blue bow tie with yellow polka dots; yellow gloves and red overalls
- (d) I'm late .....I'm late ....for a very important date
- (e) I was written about in 1902 and live with my mother Josephine and my sister Cottontail

Answers somewhere in DNL !

## **DONKEYS NEAR DOCKENFIELD**

It was lockdown that made us think we should do something constructive with our overgrown paddock and having visited The Donkey Sanctuary for years on just about every family holiday to Devon, they were always something we had wanted to help. So, the decision was made, we would apply to be Donkey Guardians and we set to work putting in 100 poles for fencing, cleaned, repainted, re-roofed the existing stable and spent days pulling out ragwort which is poisonous to equines.

**Meet Bran and Tucci: two male donkeys age 8, who have lived just behind Abbots Wood in a paddock with my family for a year**

Bran and Tucci were born in Ireland and ended up at the Irish Donkey Sanctuary when they were less than a year old. Donkeys choose their friends and form strong and long-lasting friendships. It was in Sidmouth that Bran and Tucci became 'bonded friends', and if separated now this could cause extreme distress in the form of pining behaviour, and loss of appetite. As they were young healthy bonded donkeys, they were then suitable for the Rehoming Scheme, so they were taken to the Manchester Centre where they underwent training to be rehomed. When they arrived a year ago, they were very nervous, but after a few weeks would have a head collar put on, were happy to be groomed and have their hooves picked out.

Currently, loving Guardian families care for over 1,500 of donkeys in the Rehoming Scheme, this allows the Sanctuary to free up vital space on the farms and offer specialist sanctuary care to those donkeys who need it most, mainly elderly and those with health issues. If anyone is interested in becoming a Guardian, there is all the information you need on the website or I am happy to speak to anyone who might be considering it and has any questions or would like to come and meet Bran and Tucci.

[www.thedonkeysanctuary.org.uk/support-us/rehoming-scheme](http://www.thedonkeysanctuary.org.uk/support-us/rehoming-scheme)



**Lisa McPherson**

**Lambing season** on a farm is like a rollercoaster ride - full of ups and downs, twists and turns. It is a time when a farmer puts their midwife cap on and prepares for the onslaught of late nights, early mornings and everything in between.

Once the lambing season begins, the farmer will keep a close eye on their pregnant ewes looking for signs of labour like restlessness and nesting.



When labour starts, the ewe will typically separate herself from the flock and start to push. All being well, a lamb should arrive within an hour. However, if matters become prolonged, then the farmer will intervene and assist to ensure the safety of both the ewe and the lambs.

Once the lambs are born, the farmer will check that they are healthy and that the ewe has milk to start feeding them. It is really important that the lambs get colostrum from the ewe within the first six hours of life to ensure they get the much-needed antibodies from their mum.

As the lambing season continues, the farmer will keep a close eye on new-born lambs, making sure they are growing and developing properly.

Despite the chaos and the occasional poop-covered overalls, lambing season is also a time of great joy. There is nothing quite like watching a lamb take its first steps, bleating with delight as it discovers the world around it. And when the farmer finally collapses into bed at the end of a long day, still covered in bits of straw and smelling like sheep, they know that they are doing something truly special - bringing new life into the world, one lamb at a time.

**Megan Hogg**



*Egyptian Geese*

## **Geese in our locality**

We see several species of geese locally, some more frequently than others. Most common are **Canada geese**, which have become so numerous and messy that they are regarded in some quarters as pests, and are therefore culled by licensed farmers, landowners, and owners of fishing lakes. They graze on grass and arable crops, and their droppings foul not only lakesides and parks, but also the water in the lakes and rivers beside which they like to live and breed. Canada geese originated, unsurprisingly, in Canada and North America. They were first imported here by Charles II, who added them to his wildfowl

collection in St James's Park. Inevitably some escaped and bred, and rapidly became widespread. A Canada goose is a large, handsome bird, with a grey-brown back and lighter underparts, a black head and neck and a white 'chin-strap.' We often see them by the river near the Mill, and by lakes and in fields throughout the locality.

The first native species of goose in the UK is thought to have been the **Greylag goose**. These were the traditional farmyard geese, which were often reared for their plumage as well as their meat. Their feathers were considered the best for arrows, and for quill pens, because they were strong and flexible. The Greylag has brown-grey plumage, pink legs and feet, and a large orange bill which some birders call the carrot in its face. If you see a white farmyard goose it is probably a descendant of a Greylag which has interbred with a goose of a different species. Greylags are less common in southern England now, though they do occur locally from time to time. They are more numerous in East Anglia, the Lake District and southwest Scotland.

The **Brent goose** is the smallest goose seen in the UK. They are unpoetically named Pale-bellied and Dark-bellied. The Dark-bellied Brent is usually a winter visitor from Russia to southern and eastern coastal areas in England, while the Pale-bellied Brent comes in from Greenland to winter on the Irish coast. It is the **Dark-bellied Brent** we occasionally see hereabouts.

**Cont/**

It has a small dark head, a dark neck and breast, pale flanks, and a dark belly, with white underparts. Brent geese used to be hunted vigorously and were apparently regarded by some as good eating. Not everyone agreed: some said that to get a good meal from a Brent goose you should boil it in a pot for three days with an old boot, then throw away the goose and eat the boot.

One of the most exotic geese to be seen in the UK is the **Egyptian Goose**, a strikingly handsome bird. We see the occasional pair or a singleton locally. The Egyptian goose has a whitish head and neck and spectacular dark eye make-up reminiscent of images of Cleopatra. Its breast is orange-buff and its back is dark grey-brown. The wing feathers are chestnut, white and green. Its legs and feet are pink. The Egyptian goose probably originated in north Africa, and has been introduced into the UK at intervals since the late 18<sup>th</sup> century. Initially it was seen mainly in East Anglia, especially Norfolk, but has now spread widely and is on the official British list. A few years ago I saw a pair of Egyptian geese on the banks of the Thames near Laleham, the male standing protectively beside the seated female. When she stood up *fourteen* fluffy goslings emerged!

However beautiful geese look on land, they are of course water birds. When they are not swimming, they look their best in flight. A skein of geese flying overhead, their wings beating powerfully and their voices sounding in unison, is a stand-still moment which lifts one's spirits.

**Val Lewis**

## **Candle Candle Burning Bright.....but are they good for your health?**

Candles are a popular addition to many homes, adding a touch of warmth and ambiance to any room. However, not all candles are created equal. Many high street candles are made from a blend of mineral wax, which is a combination of plant-based wax and paraffin wax. This may not be the best choice for those looking to reduce their exposure to potentially harmful chemicals.

Mineral wax, as mentioned, is a combination of plant-based wax and paraffin wax, which is derived from petroleum. Paraffin wax is commonly used in candle making due to its low cost and ability to hold fragrance well. However, it has been found to release toxic chemicals when burned, including benzene, toluene, and formaldehyde. These chemicals can have negative health effects, including respiratory problems and even cancer.

Plant-based waxes, on the other hand, are typically made from renewable resources such as soy, beeswax, or coconut. They are often seen as a more natural and eco-friendlier alternative to paraffin wax. Plant-based candles burn cleaner and produce less soot than paraffin wax candles, making them a healthier option for you and the environment.

So, why do companies continue to use mineral wax in their candles?

The answer is simple - it's cheaper.

While plant-based waxes may be a bit more expensive, they may be a better choice for those concerned about their health and the environment.

Unfortunately, many people are not aware of the potential dangers of burning paraffin wax candles, and they continue to be a popular choice on the High Street.

If you are looking to switch to a healthier option, look for candles made from pure plant-based waxes such as soy, beeswax, coconut, or rapeseed. These candles are often more expensive, but they are worth the investment being better for your health. They also may burn longer and more evenly than mineral wax candles providing more value for your money.

Whilst High Street candles may be a more convenient and/or inexpensive option, they may not be the best choice for your health. Choosing candles made from pure plant-based waxes such as soy or beeswax offer a safer and more eco-friendly option. When next shopping for candles why not read the label and opt for a healthier and more environmentally friendly option.

**Sarah Watson, Dockenfield** [www.mawgans.com](http://www.mawgans.com) Instagram: @mawgans

**Frensham and Dockenfield** hold a **Village Lunch** every fourth Wednesday from January to November in the Royal British Legion in Shortfield, Frensham.

The lunch is run by the community in conjunction with the British Legion and the Church and gives people of all ages the chance to have somewhere to go to have a hot meal and socialise with other people, which is very important especially after Covid.

The lunch consists of a main set meal with a vegetarian alternative and seven choices of pudding with a coffee or tea afterwards for the cost of £5.00. The bar is also open. Anybody can attend and no booking is required except for the Christmas lunch which is held on the fourth Wednesday in November.

In addition to the lunch, there is a different charity that runs the stall and the raffle. In April the Charity is TARNS and in May it is the Bowls Club.

The main course for April is pasta bake and the main course for May is curry and rice.

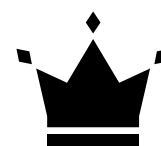
**Pam Watmore**

## **Dockenfield Day - Fit for a King!**



**Save the date**

**Saturday 3 June 2023 2-6pm**



Dockenfield Day is just around the corner and the theme for this year is

### **The King's Coronation**

Bring your crowns – there will be a prize for the best one – and meet us on  
**Saturday 3 June 2023 2-6pm at the Playing Field, Abbotts Cottages**

There will be something for everyone at Dockenfield Day – music, delicious home-made cakes, local beers as well as old favourites such as the coconut shy, annual tug of war and the legendary Dockenfield Dog Show.

Bring your friends and family and join in the fun, and if you can spare some time to help, even better!

**Dockenfield Day needs volunteers!**

If you can help out – in whatever capacity - please email

**Roly Miles** [Dockenfield.Activities@gmail.com](mailto:Dockenfield.Activities@gmail.com)

## **Anyone for Tennis?**

Frensham LTC proudly celebrated their 50th Anniversary last year with live Jazz, Prosecco and Tennis!

We are a small village club and happy to see both our adult and junior memberships growing.

We are lucky to have an excellent coaching team - Return Tennis, who provide both Junior and Adult individual and group coaching sessions.

We also offer several social sessions which are popular.

Members have the opportunity to play competitive tennis and currently we have 2 mixed and 2 ladies' teams.

We were delighted to see our mixed team receive promotion to Premier League last year.

This year we are pleased to announce an Open Day at the club on 1 April and Return Tennis will be offering free coaching for juniors and adults.

For more information regarding the Open Day please contact 07807365859 or visit our website [www.frenshamltc.co.uk](http://www.frenshamltc.co.uk)

New members are always welcomed.

**Sally Young Chairperson**

If you took part in the RSPB Big Garden Birdwatch count (we are still awaiting the results of this year's count which are due mid-April) why not consider the RSPB Wild Challenge?

Check out <https://www.rspb.org.uk/fun-and-learning/for-families/family-wild-challenge/> to find out more !

### **Answers to Trivia**

Thumper  
Bugs Bunny  
Roger Rabbit  
The White Rabbit – Lewis Carroll Alice in Wonderland  
Peter Rabbit



### **Down the Frog and Toad.....**

In the UK we only have two native species of toad – the common toad and the natterjack toad. The natterjack toad is only found in a few select coastal locations and so those we see in our gardens are most likely the common toad. Adult toads undergo a spawning migration early spring (between January and April) to travel back to their birthplace to breed. Often this journey includes crossing a road. Volunteer conservation groups collect toads and deliver them safely to the ‘other side’. The Surrey Wildlife Trust report that it is estimated twenty tonnes of toad are run over each year. The Surrey Amphibian and Reptile Group run a number of ‘toad crossings’, which are manned by volunteers for a few spring nights, every year, in late February or early March. If you know of any ‘toad crossings’ or regularly see toads you can upload your sightings of toads to the Amphibian and Reptile Conservation (a charity supporting the conservation of frogs, toads, newts, snakes and lizards) (the Arc-Trust) at <https://www.arc-trust.org>

8000 frog and toad bones were found last year (2022) at an ancient Iron Age site in Cambridgeshire. The archaeologists were baffled as to how they got there and no evidence was found that the amphibians were eaten by humans or other animals.

Toads need our help - perhaps not such an unpleasant or loathsome character after all. They are one of the great predators for slugs (and chemical free!)

**Jacqui**

### **We are excited to be starting the third year of the Frensham Peddlers**

We are an informal cycle group set up by myself in April 2021 to meet local people and explore our beautiful countryside. We meet every Thursday night from 6pm at the Hollowdene Recreation Centre in Frensham and we normally cycle 12 to 15 km on bridleways; country lanes; byways and through the odd ford. Our first meet up this year is **Thursday 13th April!** All welcome to join, moderate fitness and a hybrid/electric bike recommended. Almost forgot to add that we stop for liquid refreshment along the way!



Please do contact me if you would like to come along or have a chat - we are a mixed bunch, and the emphasis is on fun!  
[vicki.hinde22@gmail.com](mailto:vicki.hinde22@gmail.com)

## Ladies of Dockenfield

The next ladies' night is scheduled for **Thursday the 29 June 2023 from 7.30pm** onwards at the Bluebell. As before, you can order food on the night if you wish.

Please do email Joolz Miles at [joolzlmiles@aol.com](mailto:joolzlmiles@aol.com) if you would like to find out more, or WhatsApp/message on 07833355359. We have a WhatsApp group to share reminders about the evening.

p.s If you can't make that one, then make sure you get the next one in the diary: - Thursday 23 November.

## Men's Night at the Bluebell

Join us every second Thursday of the month at the Bluebell from 8pm for a convivial evening of chat, laughter and food with neighbours and acquaintances. If you are new to the village, this is a brilliant way of getting to know people. For full details please contact [sebastianfox@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:sebastianfox@hotmail.co.uk) or just pitch up at the pub.

You will be made very welcome. Our next gatherings are on **13 April** and **11 May**.

## Rain fall

January 2022, 37.2mm February 2022, 206.1mm

January 2023, 105mm February 2023, 6.3mm

February 2023 is the driest February since Dockenfield records began in 2003. April 2007 was the driest month with no rain.



**Jack Bessant**

## Jazz concert at the Good Shepherd

On Saturday **9 September 2023**, there will be a jazz concert at the Good Shepherd in aid of Friends of Frensham Churches. Now that is something to look forward to.



## Frensham and Dockenfield History Group

Janet Caiger has agreed to give a picture show on **11 April 2023** about the 100-year history of Frensham Royal British Legion Club. John Grimmond will return in November (14<sup>th</sup>) with more 'Interesting Artefacts'.

**Chris Bonner**

## Millbridge WI 2023

<b>20 April</b>	<b>Dance and Fitness 'Bollywood'</b>	<b>Annabel Brash</b>
<b>18 May</b>	<b>'Britishness' A look at some British Traditions</b>	<b>Christopher Hutchinson</b>
<b>15 June</b>	<b>'Hats off to Millinery' History, making and designing of couture millinery</b>	<b>Mrs Sophie Fryer</b>
<b>20 July</b>	<b>Garden Party</b>	
<b>17 August</b>	<b>'Oh for a slice of naughty but nice cake'</b>	<b>Mrs Kate McBain</b>
<b>21 September</b>	<b>'Mane Chance Sanctuary' The charity that rescues and rehabilitates abused abandoned and old horses</b>	<b>Abby Smart</b>
<b>19 October</b>	<b>'Cheese Please'</b>	<b>Mrs Rosemary Horton</b>

**Thank you ! .....**for all your lovely messages and I am so pleased to hear many of you enjoyed the first edition of DNL this year.

I am sorry that several wonderful photographs/pictures in this edition are in black and white. As you are aware the DNL has a budget which therefore in turn leads to a limited number of colour pages that we can offer. Please do keep sending the wonderful photographs/pictures and we will do our best to distribute the colour as best we can within the confines of budgeting requirements.

If you are a regular contributor to DNL then, please do contact me so that I can build a list of contacts. The DNL will follow Michael's bi-monthly pattern with the edition deadline being the 20th of the month being published. So going forward – 20 May; 20 July; 20 September; 20 November (which will be encompass Christmas announcements/events/schedules).

If you are a new contributor, then I would also love to hear from you – please do get in touch!

**Jacqui**

### **Cherubs Toddler Group**

**Thursday mornings 9.30 – 11.30 (term time)  
at the Good Shepherd**

**A great space for all with fun; refreshments;  
sociability and singing.**

**£2.50 per family per session**

### **Coffee Stop**

**Enjoy a hot drink and homemade cake and  
a chat at Coffee Stop at the Good Shepherd  
every Friday 10am – midday**

**Barbara Potter**

## **Knitting**

How many crafts are there that need no set space or equipment, and can be picked up and dropped, or even carried around while making something?

I've been asked to write a bit about knitting, which provides this amazing freedom and flexibility. This was one of the reasons I started my knitting business over 40 years ago, while at home with 3 small children, and spurred on by a revived interest in knitting from students at the art college in Farnham where I was teaching.

It's the fact that knitting is so portable that has made it such a popular craft: anyone can knit regardless of age or gender. I have always had help with producing my designs from outworkers, including a man who knitted my designs brilliantly for many years.

Hand knitting is slow. My designs take on average about 8 weeks after designing, including the maths and writing the pattern, which puts up the cost. I have wool spun for me and dye all the colours, creating patterning on the yarn as well as in the knitting, making each piece individual. It took much searching to find wool that seemed right: it had to be strong and long-lasting and take the dye well. I discovered a spinner with a small mill in East Sussex who spins wool for me using Romney Marsh fleece. My aim is to produce knitwear that lasts, slow-textiles not fashion, and this wool ticks all the boxes! People bring pieces back for a 30-year service and repair, so this is a strong wool and lovely to wear. You may have seen the designs at the Art and Craft exhibition in the church in Dockenfield last October, and I'll be demonstrating dyeing wool at my studio during Surrey Artists Open Studios in June (details to follow later in DNL).

Over the years, my interest has focussed more on trying to design shapes that will suit people and be a pleasure to wear for all shapes and sizes, we are all different! Such a lot can be done with knitting if you have time to explore: different stitch combinations produce not only different patterns, but affect the knitted fabric in different ways, making it narrower, thicker, thinner, shorter: all great for designing. I spent a year during lockdown working on a new book exploring this aspect of knitting: called 'Shaping Knitting', now just published (the Crowood Press).

**Alison Ellen**

**[www.alisonellenhandknits.co.uk](http://www.alisonellenhandknits.co.uk)**

## **News from Dockenfield Parish Council**

All Parish Council meetings are held in the Church of the Good Shepherd. If any residents wish to speak at a meeting there is a slot in the agenda, but please advise the clerk beforehand. The agenda can be found on the Parish Council website a week before the meeting, [www.dockenfieldpc.org.uk](http://www.dockenfieldpc.org.uk). Alternatively, if you have any questions you would like to be discussed at the meeting, please contact the clerk at [dockenfieldclerk@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:dockenfieldclerk@hotmail.co.uk)

### **Future Parish Council Meeting Dates**

Tuesdays **18<sup>th</sup> April and 16<sup>th</sup> May 2023 (Annual Parish Meeting)**, 8pm at The Church of the Good Shepherd

### **Annual Parish Meeting**

The Annual Parish Meeting is on 16<sup>th</sup> May at 8pm at the Church of the Good Shepherd. Come along to hear what is happening in the village. You will get updates on what has impacted Dockenfield in the last 12 months as well as a look at what the future may hold, for example the Surrey Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) Boundary Extension recommendations. Admission is free, there will be free refreshments and everyone is welcome.

### **Surrey Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) Boundary Extension**

Natural England (part of the Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs) have been assessing proposals to extend the Surrey Hills AONB which Dockenfield is currently just outside of. The existing AONB boundary was set in 1958 and has not changed since despite many adjacent areas, including Dockenfield, having the local Area of Great Landscape Value (AGLV) designation.

On March 7<sup>th</sup> Natural England published the AONB boundary review proposals report, importantly it is recommended to include “Dockenfield Hills” which covers most of the parish in an extended Surrey Hills AONB. The full report can be found at: <https://consult.defra.gov.uk/ne-landscape-heritage-and-geodiversity-team/surrey-hills-boundary-variation/>

A consultation is running until 13<sup>th</sup> June to seek public views on the proposed extension, you can submit your views at the same website link. Public responses will help to inform Natural England’s decision on whether to take forward our proposals and, if so, where the boundaries should be.

It is heartening to see that the Natural England AONB boundary review team recognise the value of the beautiful Dockenfield landscape. Being inside the AONB will give additional protection against inappropriate planning developments and help preserve the beautiful environment that we live in and cherish. In practice Waverley Planning have been treating the local designation Area of Great Landscape Value (AGLV), which Dockenfield is covered by, as if it were AONB hence we have been benefiting from some protection but after the boundary extension process it has been said that the AGLV will no longer be recognised hence the importance of inclusion of “Dockenfield Hills” in the extended AONB. Please add your views to the consultation.

**Paul Wood ([dockenfieldchairman@hotmail.com](mailto:dockenfieldchairman@hotmail.com)) and Jessica Hobday ([dockenfieldclerk@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:dockenfieldclerk@hotmail.co.uk))**

## **Plant a hedge for wildlife**

Hedges provide excellent natural shelter both for humans and wildlife. They protect from strong winds and provide screening for privacy.

Hedges can provide an excellent source of food and habitat for the wildlife in your garden.

Fences are quick and easy – but don’t offer much for the insects and wildlife that life in your garden.



## **Abandoned, lost or simply forgotten ? Is possession 9/10ths of the law?**

***‘a thing is said to be abandoned, which its owner throws away with the deliberate intention that it shall no longer be part of his property, and of which, consequently, he immediately ceases to be owner’***

A few years ago, a lucrative business was founded for two gentlemen who retrieved ‘lost’ golf balls for the purpose of resale, from a lake and water features on a golf course. Who did the golf balls belong to? Truly abandoned items cannot be stolen, as they do not belong to anyone. The golf club professional gave evidence, based upon the rules of the game that, if a golf ball was ‘lost’, the player was deemed to have surrendered it to be the club and it became club property. It was held that the ‘lost’ golf balls belonged to the golf club and were not abandoned and the gentlemen found themselves convicted of a criminal offence.



In another situation the person concerned had taken bags which had been left outside Oxfam and British Heart Foundation, intending to sell the contents at a car boot sale. The bags from Oxfam were taken from a designated bin and therefore could be taken to be in Oxfam’s possession at the time he appropriated them. However, the bags from British Heart Foundation were located outside the door to the shop when he removed them. In these circumstances no possession on the part of British Heart Foundation could be taken to arise from the goods being simply being left in the vicinity of the shop. However, it did not follow that the items had been abandoned. The donor had intended to gift the goods to the charity shop. Therefore, it followed that the goods still belonged to him until British Heart Foundation took possession of them and therefore a theft had occurred.

Following a fire at a flat the owner set about repairing the same and whilst carrying out refurbishment he found a metal box under an old kitchen unit. Inside the box was a bundle of £20 notes totalling £17,940.00. The owner took the money to the police. The police considered that the money was the result of unlawful criminal conduct, and they applied to the magistrates’ court for an order, pursuant to s298 of the Proceeds of Crime Act 2002 forfeiting the sum. The order was granted, and the owner appealed the decision.

On appeal the court decided that the money was because of some criminal conduct but were unable to identify the type of conduct involved. The court further found as a fact:

*‘on the balance of probabilities that the hider never abandoned his intention to recover the money, in order to use it, because it is extremely unlikely that anybody would willingly abandon £17,940, and because the purpose of hiding the money had been to make it available to be used at some time in the future’*

The money was not a historic hoard as nearly all the notes had been issued recently and were nearly all of the same denomination. No fingerprints were found on the on the money and only one smudged print was found on the box itself. The court stated this demonstrated that the person who placed the money in the box and then hid it took great pains to ensure that he could not be identified from the money or the box. It would be extremely unlikely that a person would have taken the trouble of concealing a large amount of money and then abandon it. The court held that the money was not abandoned – the hider had not abandoned his intention to recover the money.

In those circumstances if the hider spent the money it would amount to a criminal offence and any dealing with the money would also involve committing a criminal offence !

**Jacqui**

## **New Village Field Hedging**

The purchase of the Village Field arose from an idea originally floated at a past Dockenfield Day when villagers and others agreed to buy a portion of this large field to the east of the village. This was duly purchased by public subscription, but it still waits to be formally named. A list of possible names for the field will be posted at Dockenfield Day, 2023 for which villagers can vote. Don't forget to join in !

Twelve of us gathered in the field on the 4<sup>th</sup> March 2023 to tend our new hedge and prepare the butterfly bank for planting later in the year. A brisk north-easterly wind accompanied the working party, but the rain held off.

The hedge had been planted as small saplings about a year ago and, despite the hot and dry summer, most have rooted and put on growth. The netting cage proved a good deterrent to the deer, and we have only one report of a deer getting trapped inside, but soon released. The hedge is made up of native British species which will provide nesting sites and berries to support our wild birds. When the saplings arrived, courtesy of "Nature Capital" Surrey County Council and DPC monies, we saw we had a mixture of Beech, Birch, Blackthorn, Hawthorn, Field Maple, Holly, Hornbeam, Oak, Dog Rose, Spindle and Whitebeam. In addition, some larger tree saplings were planted of Oak, Cherry, Alder and Field Maple. This diversity of species ensures the greatest benefit to wildlife as a range of habitats and food are provided for our insect populations.

The hedging task was to raise the netting as, already, the saplings had reached the roof and were providing tasty morsels at about the right height for our resident Roe Deer. Once the saplings reach shoulder height and out of the reach of the deer, the netting will be removed. 4 teams of 2-3 each soon completed this task, which was followed by a welcome break for teas/coffees - thank you, Jill Trout and cake - thank you Alison Bosence.

To round off the morning, old tarpaulins were pegged out over the butterfly bank to be, to suppress this summer's grass growth prior to autumn planting of wildflower plugs in readiness for next year's butterflies.

Thanks to all who turned up and did their bit for our local wildlife.

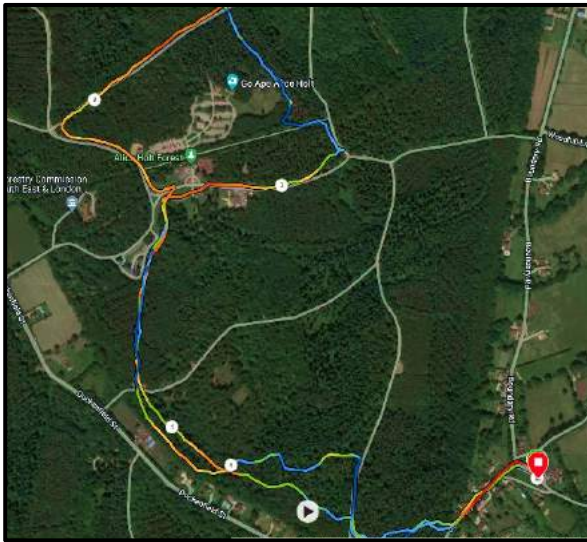
***Dan Bosence and Jill Trout (for Open Spaces Group of Dockenfield Parish Council)***



## **Don't Head for the Hills:** a flat run route from the village

Dockenfield and its surrounding area is a paradise for anyone who enjoys being active outdoors, especially runners. Routes from the village offer an infinite variety of elevation, surface choice and scenery. The only problem you may face is avoiding lots of hill running. Especially if you are starting out, coming back from injury or just don't enjoy them.

With this in mind, the route shown below might be of interest for anyone who finds the weekly Alice Holt Parkrun too undulating.



The run starts and finishes at The Bluebell, offering many in the village the chance of a power-walk uphill to warm up! The 5km distance has a total of 46m of climbing with a grade of less than 1%. It is an out and back run with lovely, sheltered loop around the Visitor Centre in the Forest

If 5km feels too much now, build up gradually with shorter versions, knowing that all of this route is flat and smooth underfoot. It's also an ideal walk route if you have 60 to 70 minutes.

Anyone looking to extend the run can find more flat territory by heading off towards Rowledge on the path at the top right of the map.

**Gary Armstrong**

## **Bealeswood Common Wildlife February 2023**

Bealeswood Wildlife Recording Group (BWRG)

Copies of this and previous notices can be found at: [www.dockenfieldpc.org.uk/wildlife](http://www.dockenfieldpc.org.uk/wildlife)

Spring, no? Well, just look and listen. Great Spotted Woodpeckers drum distantly on Bealeswood Lane and then move onto veteran oaks here. The first wild plants are in flower (Alder & Hazel catkins and Lesser Celandines). A flock of Redwing moves restlessly through the treetops bound for a North Sea crossing to Scadinavian breeding grounds.



*Bealeswood in February Lesser Celandine (left), Catkins aglow at sunset (centre), Redwing (right).*

*Alan Cox*

That “dit-dit-dit, filip-filip-filip, tererit-tererit-tererit” repeated over and over is a young male Song Thrush training his new-found voice to establish territory having survived the winter.



*Song Thrush*

*Alex Potts*

He will amuse you as he misses a note and jumbles the sequence.

The older masters reply with a finesse the youngster will have to learn, too, if he is to secure a mate. One of us stood transfixed mid-month listening to a choral composition of such complexity and beauty.

It was one song woven into another, a Dockenfield Song Thrush mimicking the lyrical falling cadence of the flight notes of a Woodlark pirouetting above Frensham Common. Harmonious order as if plucked from an avian Brahms Double Concerto. Studies have shown that such males can produce 60 different songs but what wonder when one small brain can learn and recall such perfect rhythms.

Along this footpath you tread towards Frensham Mill, last year was the first in 25 that we failed to hear a Skylark’s hovering song. In 2023 there may be no raspberry calls uttered from a Greenfinch over this Common. The bird is in catastrophic decline – it is all too evident here. Only one female has been seen by the group this year. So, we need to reset, to view this Common not just as a site of interest for nature conservation but a hub, a steppingstone, to preserve, halt decline and recover lost species here and further afield. To that end we need to record our wildlife, report to you, then promote more widely what we find. Based on our data more of us then need to work towards a conservation and recovery programme.

#### **Can you help in supporting Dockenfield’s wildlife?**

The Bealeswood Wildlife Recording Group (BWRG) was formed in lockdown to observe, study and record the wildlife on Bealeswood Common. We always seek new members who have an interest or expertise to assist with recording animal or plant groups where we currently have little expertise (such as amphibians, reptiles, mosses or lichens). If you believe you can help then please get in touch with Alison Bosence

[albosence@yahoo.com](mailto:albosence@yahoo.com)

#### **Diary Dates: 2023 Nature Walks Programme**

**Meet at Bealeswood Common noticeboard unless indicated otherwise**

**Sunday 7 May 05:00-06:30 Dawn Chorus** Guest leader

**Saturday 27 May 21.00-22.30.** Nightjars and Woodcock, Abbots Wood Inclosure. Leader Alan Cox

**Saturday 8 July 9.30 Noticeboard or 10.00 at Abbots Wood Inclosure carpark GU10 4HA.**

Butterfly walk until 11.30. Good paths. Target: Purple Emperor and certainly others along the way. Coffee stop at Alice Holt visitor centre after. Leader: Claire Jackson

**Friday 11 August 20.30 -22.00.** Bat walk. Listening and watching bats at sunset, walking to Frensham Mill and back, good paths. Guest leader

**Saturday 9 September 09.30 -11.00.** Small mammals at Bealeswood Common. Leader: Roger Trout

**Friday 13 October 11.00 -12.30.** Fungi at Bealeswood Common, adjourn to the Bluebell.

Amanda Adolph

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