

# The Welwyn Magazine

with Woolmer Green



**April 2022**

*[www.welwyn.org.uk](http://www.welwyn.org.uk)*

60p

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April 2022

## **PUBLISHERS**

St Mary's Churchwardens

## **COVER**

*Ukraine's national flower "A sunflower"*

## **MAGAZINE ARTICLES**

Send by 1st of preceding month.

Include your contact details.

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## **Editor Note**

We normally publish reports on activities and meetings occurring in Welwyn village and the immediate areas. If any reader would like to submit an article on local matters then please send the details by email to: [magazine@welwyn.org.uk](mailto:magazine@welwyn.org.uk) or contact St Mary's church office on **01438 840964**.

## **EDITOR'S NOTES**

**Articles by the 1st of the month preceding publication, see details above.**

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# The Rector's Letter



April is a time for fools.

Fools are nearly always quite serious. I once met a Christian clown who was doing his act at a service at the Cathedral. I don't think I have ever met a more serious, but also kind and interesting character.

Fools in Shakespeare are always the ones, and often the only ones, who speak truth to power. Their foolishness gives them licence to tell truths, concealed within their foolishness. Things may well have changed by the time you read this (for better or worse), but at the moment a former comedian (also incidentally a first class law graduate) is leading the resistance to the most evil acts of aggression and violence.

St Paul in the first chapter of his first letter to the church in Corinth, reminds us that the cross of Christ is foolishness. It is not the rational explanation of the order of the universe which Greek philosophy sought. Neither can it match the power and brutality of the Roman Empire. It appears simply the disgraceful end of a dejected criminal.

But God's wisdom displayed in this foolishness every year on Good Friday, is deeper than the wisdom of the philosophers. God's power displayed in the weakness of the cross, is more powerful than the might of the Roman Empire which disappeared within half a millennium of Jesus.

Of course, it is foolishness to believe that the whole power and wisdom of God lies within that shattered body upon the cross. And yet it is true.

Yours

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "David". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.



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## Jessie - The Rectory Dog

April fool ....

The ways Master fools me in a really annoying way:

Pretending he has some food in his hand when he hasn't really.

Pretending he has thrown a ball when he has kept hold of it.

Pretending there is an invader at the door when it is just really him.

Pretending he's a bit sad when really he just want attention,

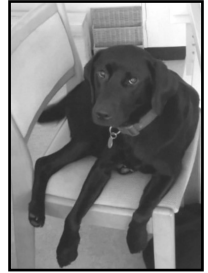
The ways I fool Master in a really annoying way:

Going off and sniffing stuff when I should be paying attention on my walk.

Sneaking up behind him so if he turns round quickly, he falls over in an embarrassing way.

Attacking him like an invader at the front door, when all along I know it's him.

Pretending I'm a bit sad when really I just want attention.



*Jess*

## Fellowship

There was a very good attendance at the February meeting which was very reassuring after so many cancellations during the past year.

Barney Leith O.B.E. came to talk about The Baha'i Faith. This is a relatively new religion, teaching the essential worth of all religions and the unity of all people.

Established in the 19th century by Bahá'u'lláh it was initially developed in Iran and parts of the Middle East. It is a world religion with many backgrounds. It is considered to be the latest of Divine messengers.

The Welwyn Baha'i community, having no place of worship, meets regularly to worship in the homes of the community members. The emphasis is on prayer and meditation. The Baha'is do not reject other religious teachings believing there is only one God.

Unfortunately the display equipment which Barney had was not compatible with the one in Church House so his talk was compromised.

Five years ago (October 2015) Barney contributed to this magazine a very detailed article about the Baha'i Faith. There is a lot of information on the internet if you interested to learn more.

It was quite a lively afternoon with questions and discussion. Tea was very hurried!

Marjorie Lyon



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## The Invasion of Ukraine

At the end of January the Government advised we were moving into the 'Living with Covid' phase and the remaining mandatory restrictions were being removed. This was a welcome light at the end of a long tunnel. However, we were also hearing in the news that President Vladimir Putin was amassing Russian troops on the Belarusian border with Ukraine to carry out 'military exercises', whilst denying any intention to invade Ukraine. On 24<sup>th</sup> February the world woke up to the news that Russia had indeed invaded Ukraine and the humanitarian disaster that has followed has been heart-wrenching, and still the appalling news keeps coming.

Within ten days 1.5 million citizens had fled to countries on Ukraine's western flank with barely the clothes they stood up in. It has become apparent that Ukrainians are strong, resolute and resourceful people, powerfully led by President Volodymyr Zelensky who has only been in post since 2019, following a career as an actor and comedian. What they are having to endure is shocking, shades of other war-torn countries.

Locally, people who are horrified by what is happening 1500 miles away, have donated money and goods that are being taken by van to Poland, Romania, Hungary, Slovakia and Moldova to help the many who need it. A candlelit vigil on 1<sup>st</sup> March filled St Mary's Church.

Bequi and Graeme Innes are Christian missionaries serving in Chişinău, the capital of Moldova. Bequi went to school at Welwyn St Mary's and her mum, Wendy lives in the village. In a powerful interview with Jeremy Vine on 4<sup>th</sup> March, Bequi described how they had already welcomed six families into their home for a night or two as a staging point to receive food and have their clothes washed before moving on to Romania. People from their church had been taking hot food across the border to feed those who had waited two days or more in their cars in freezing conditions to cross from Ukraine. Many children don't have passports or any documents, so

*continued on p9*

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## The Invasion of Ukraine

progressing further west will be extremely difficult.

This is a picture we are seeing from the news that is being replicated in so many places.

Dr Jo England a trauma surgeon from Woolmer Green is heading to Western Ukraine to set up a field hospital to treat the badly injured as part of the group of volunteer doctors under the banner MedicAidUkraine. The Reverend Susannah Underwood writes: “Jo has much experience operating in conflict zones and this is a professionally run organisation. Any donations you can make to support this project will directly help those suffering the trauma of this war”. Their crowd-funding page can be found on the JustGiving website by searching medicaidukraine.

Undoubtedly there are other local heroes we don't know about. We wish them all well and pray for their safety.

Meanwhile in Russia the news is being controlled by state media and the average person on the street has no idea what is going on in their name and would be appalled if they knew. What they do know is that sanctions imposed by the west are biting, the rouble has plummeted and their stock exchange remains closed. Sadly this is a lose-lose situation for the people of Ukraine and Russia.

Jane Carr

## Welwyn Village Dates for your diary

**Sunday 30<sup>th</sup> October**

Halloween Float

**Saturday 5<sup>th</sup> November**

Welwyn Light, Sound & Firework Display

**Saturday 26<sup>th</sup> November**

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**Saturday 3<sup>rd</sup> to**

**Monday 5<sup>th</sup> December**

Christmas Float



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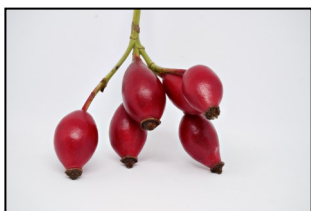
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# The Importance of Plants

In the article 'Plants of the Bible', published in the March issue, at least a dozen uses of plants to mankind were mentioned, all of which were recognised in Biblical times. However, in the light of modern science, there are a few additions to the list which make them even more important.

During the early 1940's the public was encouraged to gather hips which could then be processed into Rose Hip syrup and was a valuable source of vitamin C. The importance of vitamins in our diet would not have been appreciated in biblical time.



Rose hips

Although wine made from grapes was known, many other drinks we now take for granted, such as gin from grain, flavoured with juniper berries and rum, fermented from sugar cane or molasses are not mentioned in the bible. Nor is there any mention of tea or coffee, neither of which were introduced to this country until about the 16<sup>th</sup> or 17<sup>th</sup> century – tea imported by Dutch traders came from tea plantations in India and coffee from the Yemen.

But perhaps the most important use of all is the process carried out by plants called photosynthesis. Using carbon dioxide from the air, taken in through

small pores in the leaves and water absorbed through their roots, these two items, in the presence of the green colouring in leaves, (called chlorophyll) are synthesised into sugar: if there is a surplus for immediate use, this can be further synthesised into starch for storage. The by-product in photosynthesis is oxygen, most of which is released into the air.

Respiration is the process which requires oxygen in order to release energy from food. Both plants and animals need oxygen for respiration, although the requirement by animals far exceeds that of plants. The waste product from respiration is carbon dioxide which is released into the atmosphere.

So, to summarise, plants require carbon dioxide and give out oxygen, whereas animals need oxygen and give out carbon dioxide. Thus it is vital not only to maintain city parks and Green Belts, but to plant trees to replace those which have died or been cut down, especially as they take years to mature. Cutting down huge forests, such as happened in the Amazon basin several years ago was a disaster for the delicate balance of gases in the atmosphere.

The Woodland Trust does a sterling job in this country encouraging people to plant trees. Heartwood Forest, near Sandridge, is managed by the Trust and is easily accessible.

Daphne Skinner

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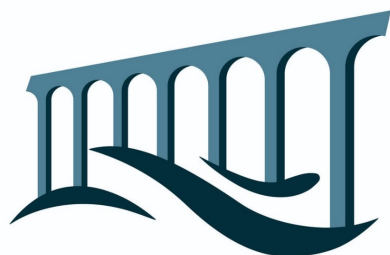


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After pausing our awards in 2021 due to the pandemic, we are delighted that the CPRE Hertfordshire Awards are back. With a closing date of 31st May 2022, we would love to receive nominations for projects which

- connect people with the countryside and their local green spaces
- promote rural life and ensure that communities can thrive, improve or protect the environment

Nominees might be volunteer-based projects or events, community groups, individuals, or small businesses.

And we have an exciting new category, 'Made in Herts' which will recognise excellence in sustainable farming and local foods, products using local materials, or traditional craftspeople and artists, in particular working in rural areas or with rural themes.

We also hope to make an Award for an outstanding project or activity run by or on behalf of young people (up to the age of 21) in the categories above.

Find out all the details by visiting our website: [CPRE Hertfordshire Awards - CPRE Hertfordshire \(cpreherts.org.uk\)](https://cpreherts.org.uk), be inspired by past Award recipients, and make a nomination today!



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# Mardley Heath WI

## REPORT FOR FEBRUARY 2022

After an eighteen month break and a bout of Covid, I am delighted to be back to contribute to this column.

Our speaker in February was Caroline Cuerden and she entertained us with her talk about Victorian times entitled “Not in front of the servants”. Caroline is a delight to watch and to listen to. She takes the audience into a different world. We travelled to the mid-Victorian era (around 1869), to a country house where a family of twelve resided. She told the story of the different levels of service provided for the family. It was a time when the butler and the housekeeper reigned supreme and the other levels of service had their own tasks to perform – with high standards set for all.

Caroline brought with her a huge number of artefacts. There were bowls, water containers, clothes and feather dusters to name just a few. Caroline showed us how a feather duster was used by the parlour maid to dust around the fire place without moving the fire irons as the noise of them jangling was not permitted. She brought a delightful china tea set and demonstrated how tea would be poured and served. We learned how to fold napkins (sadly my effort was an abject failure!) and we all finished with homemade seed cake provided by our speaker!

Our WI is as eager as ever to meet and have fun, although we will make sure we always give due regard to our safety. We have so many more delightful times planned for this year. Our next monthly meeting will be on Thursday 17<sup>th</sup> March at 7:00 for 7:30 and our speaker will be Lynda Styan, a singer, who will talk about and sing some of the songs of the 1920s to 1940s

Most meetings are held on the third Thursday of the month at 7:30 pm at the Oaklands Primary School, Gt North Road, Welwyn. For any additional information, please contact our Secretary by e-mail at:

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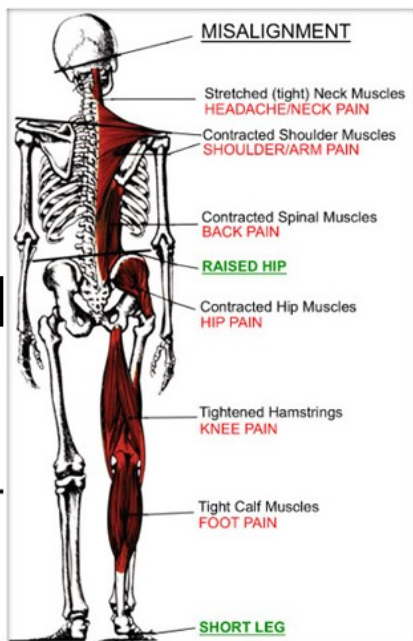
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## A Visit to Shaw's Corner

Shaw's Corner at Ayot St Lawrence, (AL6 9BX) has been in the hands of The National Trust since the death of the prolific author and playwright George Bernard Shaw. Born in Dublin in 1856, Shaw relocated to London when he was 20 and in 1906 moved to his country home, Shaw's Corner, with his wife Charlotte, where he remained until his death in 1950.



Shaw's Corner © National Trust

Shaw is one of only two people to have won both the Nobel Prize in Literature and an Oscar, and both are on display in the house at Shaw's Corner, which is full of other fascinating artefacts including a bronze bust of Shaw by the renowned sculptor Auguste Rodin. The Nobel Committee commented that his work was "marked by both idealism and humanity, its stimulating satire often being infused with a singular poetic beauty". Amongst his many works Shaw wrote 'Pygmalion' which he later adapted for screen, and it was for this he won his Oscar. In later years Lerner & Loewe created 'My Fair Lady' from the screenplay.

Shaw's Corner is a small Edwardian villa, surrounded by three and a half acres of gardens and a wildflower meadow. Tucked away at the bottom of the garden amongst the trees is Shaw's revolving writing shed, built so he could follow the sun throughout the day. It was here in peace and quiet that he wrote many of his works.

The house and gardens are open to the public on Fridays, Saturdays and Sundays until the end of the summer. Entrance to the house is by booking only and a team of well-informed volunteers give guided tours. The gardens can be visited without pre-booking and visitors are welcome to bring a picnic. Details and ticket prices are available from the National Trust website.

In case you were wondering, the other person to be awarded both a Nobel Prize and an Oscar is Bob Dylan.

Jane Carr

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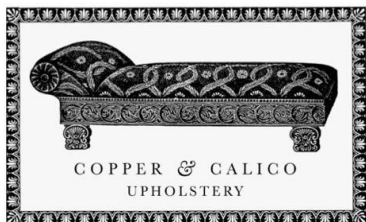
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## The Friends of Danesbury & QVM

2022 has, so far, proven to be a challenging year, with COVID slowly being controlled and becoming less of a threat, we have now had to contend with erratic weather conditions and even worse the terrible situation in Ukraine. It is now more than ever that we need to support each other. With Easter upon us it is the perfect time to get together and give thanks for all we do have. So, crack open those chocolate eggs, roll out the hot cross buns and pour yourself a cuppa, take a deep breathe and enjoy spring in all its glory.

Our shop in Welwyn High Street is all geared up towards the upcoming Easter festivities, and there are many bargains to be had. With all the wonderful donations we have been receiving we are certainly not short of items. Do pop by to see us, you never know what bargains you may find!

Up at Danesbury and QVM hospitals we are so pleased to announce that Clock Cricket is now embedded in our Community Hospitals. Richard Hill, MBE, from Clock Cricket, officially handed over the Cricket equipment to us on the 9<sup>th</sup> of February this year. The equipment was funded by The Friends of Danesbury and QVM. Thank you to Sean and Richard from Clock Cricket for bringing laughter, and so much more, into our units. They are still looking for volunteers to help with this activity. If you are interested in helping, then please do contact Rachael Ellis at [rachael.ellis2@nhs.net](mailto:rachael.ellis2@nhs.net) / 07825930640.



QVM has been undergoing a refurbishment, while still open and taking in patients which is challenging for all. But they are all working hard to ensure that patients are receiving the best care possible during their stay at QVM.

There are more happy times ahead with the Queen's Jubilee taking place in a few months, I know there are lots of events being planned in the background to celebrate this momentous occasion. Without doubt both Danesbury and QVM will be doing their bit to mark the event.

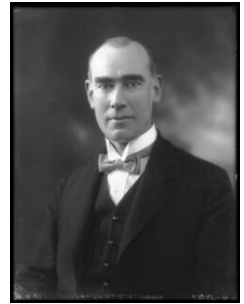
Wishing all a very happy Easter.

Friends of Danesbury and QVM

## Romans on the Hillside

The largest development in Welwyn in the late 20<sup>th</sup> century was what we now call Danesbury, but originally this was two separate developments begun in 1967. To the west, on the hillside above the Codicote Road was the Grange Estate, to the east on the slopes behind the Clock was the Danesbury Park Estate. These are now generally considered to be one development north of the Link Road. However in 1967, there was no Link Road. Grange Hill met the Codicote Road a little nearer the village than the present roundabout and Carleton Rise, which joined the two estates together, met Church Street near its present junction with the Link Road.

On the Grange Estate, Contemporary Homes Ltd originally aimed to build 4 types of house, 44 in total. Grange Hill is named after the nearby house which stands in the Codicote Road, originally a farmhouse. The Grange was the residence of a number of Welwyn's dignitaries including for a time after WWI, Guy Molesworth Kindersley, who became Tory MP for the constituency of Hitchin and thus Welwyn in 1923. Kindersley was involved in the matter of the Zinoviev Letter when he leaked a letter, possibly forged, supplied by MI5 to the press helping to cause the devastating defeat of Labour in the 1924 election. He is perhaps less controversially remembered in the name of Kindersley Close.



Guy Molesworth  
Kindersley

During construction work on the slopes towards the Codicote Road, the developers uncovered a Roman cemetery, much reported in the press. Over 100 cremation urns were recovered and a large archaeological examination conducted. This event provides the name of the next road as we progress up Grange Hill – Roman Way.

At its summit, Grange Hill joins what might be considered the spine of the Danesbury Estate – Carleton Rise. Anthony Carleton was a 16<sup>th</sup> Century land owner and MP with a minor role in the household of Elizabeth I. He married Anne Peryent, daughter of Thomas Peryent of Lockleys. Some have attributed the building of Church House to the Carletons, and certainly in his will Anthony Carleton established a charity 'for the benefit of the poor of the ancient parish of Welwyn generally or such deserving and necessitous persons resident therein', including Church House let at £12 per annum. This is still in existence as part of the Welwyn United Charities.

On the eastern slopes of the Danesbury estate a second development was simultaneously being started by Wembley Properties Ltd, who advertised that they



## Romans on the Hillside

would be building 124 'Detached Executive Houses'. Some of the street names in this area reflect the history of Danesbury House itself.

The original house, named St John's Lodge, was built in 1775 by the wife of Captain Henry St. John, Mary Schulyer. The Captain was killed in action two years later and Mary died just six years later. The house was inherited by a cousin Cornelius Cuyler or Cyler. After his death in 1819 the house was leased to William Blake, whose family stayed in residence until 1902.



Danesbury House in use as a hospital

From these families come three more of the street names – St. John's Close, Cyler's Thicket and Blakes Way. The last private resident of Danesbury before it became a hospital was Michael Bruce Urquart Dewar, a Cheltenham born engineer who rose from being an apprentice at Vickers to Director of National Projectile Factories in WWI and worked with the US Ordnance in WWII on the design of the Sherman Tank.

Perhaps he is best remembered in Welwyn as the sponsor of the Dewar Cup, a Junior Football Competition to stand alongside the Hospital Cup. He of course gives his name to Dewar's Close.

The only road on Danesbury which dates from before the 1960s development is North Ride, although only a section is still in existence. Originally this was the ride north from

Welwyn to Danesbury and it appears on maps back to 1830. At that time it started its route to the house from near to the present day junction of Carleton Rise and the Link Road, where a Lodge House stood.

But the need to alleviate traffic in Welwyn led to its loss with the construction of the Link Road in 1972 - there seems to have been little imagination behind that name!

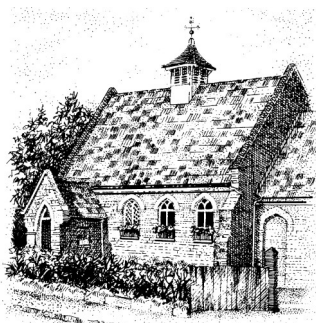


North Ride Lodge 1921

Paul Jiggins

## St Michael's School Woolmer Green

*In 2000 "The Book of Woolmer Green" was published. The book is a fascinating illustrated account of the development of Woolmer Green over the years. Unfortunately the book is out of print but the editor and copyright holder, Judith Watson, has kindly given permission for extracts to be published in the parish magazine.*



Drawing by Deborah Rehmat

In 1874 Miss Jayne Payne was given a farewell present by the people of Woolmer Green to mark the end of her 35 years as a schoolmistress, so we know there was a school in the village as far back as 1839. Jane was the daughter of a farmer, William Payne, whose farmhouse became a private residence many years ago, and it is probable that she used a room there as a schoolroom. Later in life she was a founder of the local Mothers' Meeting. She lived until she was 88 and is buried in the churchyard.

Woolmer Green was very fortunate to have had a school for 30 years before the establishment of school boards in 1870. It was not until 1876 that Parliament made education compulsory for all children between the ages of five and fourteen, although even then, in rural areas, the youngsters were often excused from lessons to help in agricultural work, especially at harvest time.

The first of the two school buildings at Woolmer Green was built in 1859 on land given by William John Blake, of Danesbury. In the previous year he had caused a trust deed to be drawn up conveying 'all that close or parcel of land called Chequers Meat, containing two roods or thereabouts situated near Woolmer Green in the Parish of Welwyn to the rector and churchwardens of the parish of Welwyn in the county of Hertford. This parcel of land was 'bounded on the North by the Public House called the Chequers and the ground thereto belonging to Sir Edward Earle Lytton, Baronet, on the East by the Turnpike Road leading from Welwyn to Stevenage and on the South by a Cottage and Garden belonging to me the said William John Blake.

When education became compulsory, all schoolmasters and mistresses were bound to keep a log-book, and all schools had to be inspected annually by a qualified inspector appointed by the board. The first inspector was the Revd C.T. Robinson, and he reported that there was 'a very fair beginning in both discipline and instruction'. He was not without criticism, noting that the arithmetic was 'very backward'.

In 1901, the report for the mixed school included the comment: '*The*



## St Michael's School Woolmer Green

*discipline and instruction of this excellent school deserve the highest praise, and the progress made in all the subjects of instruction is most satisfactory.' Again, for the infants. 'The discipline is very praiseworthy, and the instruction is sound and careful, and the general efficiency of this division is decidedly good.'*

In the early days of the school, the churches nearest to Woolmer Green were St Mary's at Welwyn and All Saints' at Datchworth. The long walk to services along the primitive roads of the period could not have been very pleasant in bad weather, so the villagers must have been extremely pleased when in 1878 'the wall which divided off the classroom at the end of the school was pierced with an arch and the room at the end fitted up as a chancel'. This was dedicated by the rector, the Revd Charles Lee Wingfield, and services were held here until St Michael's Church was built in 1900.

---

*Woolmer Green School, c.1910. The schoolhouse had just been built.*



From time to time additions had to be made to the school to cope with the increasing population. It had to cater for the educational needs of Woolmer Green as well as those of several surrounding hamlets. The situation changed, when a school was built in Knebworth in 1911.

The Parish Magazine for October 1901 contains the following entry under the heading which records 'School Attendances'

Continued on page 26

# St Michael's School Woolmer Green

*In 1900 there was an Act passed raising the age up to which children must attend School, and the Local Attendance Committee have now issued their new bye-laws. Attention is drawn to them as they are of great importance. The main rule is that every child between Five and Fourteen must attend school whenever school is opened, unless prevented by a reasonable excuse.*

Woolmer Green school accounts from 1899. In its early days the school was for the most part financed by a Government grant and by donations from the landowners of the district and the Great Northern Railway Co. Another source of income was 'school pence'. Each child was expected to bring 1d. to school every Monday as a contribution to their education. This was abolished in 1891, but the children were told they could still bring their money which would be paid into a boot club. When a child had enough in his/her account he or she was given an order to a local tradesman to buy a pair of boots or some other article of clothing which was required. There was also a 'coal and clothing' club in the village .

## WOOLMER GREEN SCHOOL.

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Balance from 1898.....	18	9	0½	Salaries .....	106	13	12
Government Grant.....	107	12	0	Fuel, Light, and Cleaning	17	19	6
Grant in aid .....	15	0	0	Books, Apparatus, etc.....	21	15	6½
Subscriptions .....	23	12	0	Repairs .....	0	4	0
Private Individual Subscrip-				Rent.....	12	1	0
tion, G.N.R. ....	5	0	0	Insurance .....	1	5	0
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There is insufficient space here to include all the information about the school which is in the "Book of Woolmer Green". The book is out of print but second hand copies can be bought on line and also there is both a reference copy and a copy you can borrow in the Welwyn Community Library.

Next month "St Michael's Church and churchyard".

Tony Keach

# Welwyn Natural History Society

At the Natural History Society we try to have as varied a programme as possible and this month's talk is a little different and immensely important. In the Welwyn area we are all very conscious of the problems when there is not enough water flowing down our rivers, whether it be because there has been too little rain, or too much has been abstracted.



River Beane at Aston Ford

The River Beane, although in East Herts, is really quite close to us, flowing through Watton at Stone . Hopefully, Lauren Naish, from the

Environment Agency will be talking to us about the Beane. I thought that this paragraph from the volunteers newsletter would set the scene quite nicely.

## **The Importance of Winter Recharge**

We are currently in the middle of the vital recharge period when the chalk aquifer fills up over the winter with, hopefully, enough water to keep it flowing throughout the summer. The picture is looking downstream from the bridge at Aston Ford. If we don't get a wet winter, this stretch from Aston Ford down to the Whitehall pumping station, is the most at risk of drying up. It nearly dried up last summer and the reed bed, which can be seen in the picture, spread right across the river channel, slowing the flow of water and causing silt to be deposited. Some prolonged wet weather during October and December has enabled the river to cut a channel through the reed bed once more. It would seem that there has to be plenty of water at Walkern for it to flow through the upper aquifer and maintain the surface flow in the river. If it drops too low then the river disappears below ground reappearing north of Watton. January has been very dry so fingers crossed for a wet February – sorry dog walkers!

Do join us at the Civic Centre at 8pm on Wednesday 27<sup>th</sup> April. It will cost you £4 for a single evening with children coming free, but a year's subscription would be much better value.

Judith Watson 07884946565

## Crime in Welwyn 2021



In the February magazine we reported that car crime had increased by 50% in the year to November 2021. Figures are now available for the complete calendar year, for all categories of crime, and December's car crime was no better. Four instances compared with just one the previous December.

However, it's not all gloom and doom. Overall, crime was down 10%. We can only speculate why that might be. Is it the result of our taking note of crime prevention measures recommended by the police? Did the Covid restrictions including social distancing prevent some of us from having our pockets picked or our handbags dipped? Or were we spending more time than usual at home?

The most frequently reported crime categories year after year, in order of frequency, are: Violence and Sexual Offences, Anti-Social Behaviour and Other Theft. This was true also for 2021, these three categories constituting 60% of all crime in Welwyn. But these three categories were almost 20% lower than the previous year which is pleasing to note.

Of the categories of crime showing significant reductions, Anti-Social Behaviour reduced by 40%. You might think that could be explained by lockdowns stopping us from mixing and behaving badly outdoors. But Public Order offences increased by 26%. Were we celebrating too much when our freedoms were restored?

Although bicycle thefts are very few, they did increase this past year and almost all were from Welwyn North Station. The cycle racks there are not covered by CCTV. If you leave a bike there, please secure it with a substantial lock and have your bike marked with your house number and postcode. You can take advantage of the opportunities offered regularly by local police via OWL message to do the marking for you. You should also upload a photo and description of your bike to [www.bikeregister.com](http://www.bikeregister.com) which will assist recovery should it be stolen.

Burglaries reported last year were almost unchanged since 2020 and drug offences halved. It's thought that many burglaries for small items such as jewellery are carried out to fund drug habits.

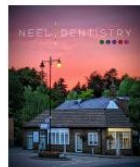
John Mitchell and Valerie Richards

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## Matthew Bourne's "Nutcracker"

On a wet and windy evening a group, largely of ladies, boarded a coach in Welwyn to travel to Milton Keynes to see a production of Matthew Bourne's Choreography of the Nutcracker.

This was an important occasion, for it was the first outing organised by Sue Knowles since the beginning of the Pandemic, and having seen many lovely ballets at Milton Keynes, and read very good reviews of this one, our expectations were high.

Despite the terrible weather and heavy traffic, the pleasant coach driver got us to the theatre in good time to enjoy a drink, before taking our places. As is usual on such occasions our well-chosen seats in the circle gave us a wonderful view of the stage, and we settled back to be entertained.

Those who had come expecting to see the 'Sugar Plum Fairy' were doomed to disappointment. This take on the ballet told quite a different story, and we followed the fate of a girl from a work house. The music was familiar, there was a 'Land of Candy' but it was all very fresh and new. Most of us were delighted by the innovative approach but a few would have preferred something more traditional.

It was a lovely evening, and despite having to queue to show our covid passes, we felt that we really are getting back to normal. It is so very good of Sue to continue to book seats, and make all the other arrangement necessary for the smooth running of such a trip. We the punters just have to turn up for the coach (hopefully on time) and then sit back and enjoy ourselves. Poor Sue has to worry about the coach turning up, cope with people dropping out at the last minute, and many other hassles. Through it all she keeps smiling and even provides chocolates on the journey.

Keep your eyes skinned for details of the next trip , which will be to the Musical 'Fisherman's friend in the Autumn.

Many thanks to Sue Knowles

Sue Keach

PS If you would like to join the Theatre Group and enjoy these well organised visits to the theatre please contact Sue Knowles:

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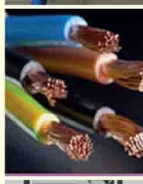
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## News from Ayot St Peter

### Thieves in the night

During the early weeks of the pandemic, we got into the habit of leaving the churchyard gate open, to help our many visitors feel welcome, and to avoid multiple people touching the same surface.

We have become used to visits from sneaky muntjac deer, who sometimes help themselves to the floral tributes. They have such small hooves, and are so subtle, that they can take their favourite roses out of a mixed display without leaving damage. They have even been known to take single red roses out of a cellophane sleeve,



Muntjac

leaving the plastic in position.

Recently, however, far more thuggish thieves have been at work. These are the beautiful fallow deer that normally



Fallow deer

inhabit the fields and woods in the north of the parish, towards Ayot St Lawrence. They have started to frequent the area near the church, strolling along the lane at night to visit gardens. They wander into the churchyard hoping for some tasty (and colourful) snacks.

Fallow deer like roses, but also chrysanthemums, tulips, hyacinths and many other flowers. They lack the small hooves and dexterity of the muntjac, and drag containers and pots across the churchyard so they can tuck in more conveniently. We often leave the gate closed now!

Continued on page 34



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## News from Ayot St Peter (continued from p 32)



At Easter, our church is always beautifully decorated with Spring flowers and lilies to mark the end of Lent. Many of these are potted plants or bulbs that can be used again after Easter is over – sometimes they are sold to residents to boost the flower fund; on other occasions they are planted in the churchyard to be enjoyed in future years.

Luckily many of the blooms in the churchyard at this time of year are daffodils, some from past Easter displays. Daffodils are safe from deer nibbling, as they contain an alkaloid that is distasteful to animals.

We welcome human visitors at Ayot St Peter, as well as animals, so do join us for an Easter service. The weekend before Easter is Palm Sunday (10<sup>th</sup> April), when we mark the start of Holy Week. The service will be led by the Rector, Revd. David Munchin.

The Easter Sunday service will be led by Revd. Susannah Underwood, followed by the traditional Easter egg hunt around the churchyard. This is suitable for everyone who is both young at heart and likes chocolate. Both services start at 11.15am.

Valerie Richards



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## Welwyn Parish Council



I always associate April with the advent of spring and summer. It is lovely to see the spring flowers and the blossom which certainly make me feel better. Writing this at the end of February we are receiving daily updates about the fighting in Ukraine. I hope when you read this article that a solution has been found and not that the situation

has escalated.

For several months we have been advertising for a new Councillor to serve the Mardley Heath Ward. At our Full Council meeting in February, we were pleased to co-opt Graham Baskerville who lives in Welwyn. Unfortunately, Graham was unable to attend the meeting as he had Covid. We are just hoping that he doesn't change his mind before he signs the necessary paperwork! To find out more about Graham please read the Parish Newsletter which is delivered to every household.

With the lifting of Covid restrictions, Welwyn Parish Councillors have been thinking of the coming months and putting together ideas for the Parish. We have just paid for a much needed renovation to the boiler at the Civic Centre and we recognize that a high percentage of our budget is required for maintenance costs, lease fees, new equipment etc. Nevertheless, we feel that your money should be put to other uses which will benefit the community. On Sunday the 10th April from 9.00am -12.30pm we will be holding our first Farmers Market at the Civic Centre. Our Clerk, Caroline, has worked hard in the planning, research and preparation for this event. We have chosen the second Sunday every month as this doesn't clash with the other successful Farmers Markets in the area. Initially the markets will have a twelve month trial and, if successful, will be a permanent feature in the village. We hope they will be successful, have the support of the Parish community and bring people from surrounding areas into our village which will benefit the businesses here.

The Neighbourhood Plan committee has produced a very interesting Parish Portrait, which has been adopted by the Council. This is a separate document to





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the actual Neighbourhood Plan and has been researched and written by members of the committee and knowledgeable volunteers. Councillor Bill Morris has worked hard on this and our thanks go to him for all that he has done and is doing for the Neighbourhood Plan. Please look at the Neighbourhood Plan website where you will be able to read the Parish Portrait. We will also be putting a copy in the library. I thoroughly enjoyed reading it and I hope you will as well.

As we have mentioned before, the actual Neighbourhood Plan cannot be completed until the Local Plan is agreed by the Inspector.

As part of the Queen's Jubilee Year communities throughout the country have been asked to plant a tree for what is called The Queen's Canopy. Welwyn Parish Council has decided to plant a Whitebeam tree at the front of the Civic Centre. This will have a plaque commemorating the event.



Whitebeam (*Sorbus aria*)

Welwyn First Scout Group has approached the Council for support to fund a new defibrillator which will be attached to the exterior wall of the Parish Office. It will be funded by a contribution from the Scouts, Parish Council, the Welwyn Festival Group and a grant. Thank you to Andy Trotter for suggesting the idea. We now have several defibrillators around the Parish and, while they are excellent to have, we sincerely hope that they will not need to be used.

Over recent months we have enjoyed the art work in the Civic Centre foyer. We are now asking for not for profit art groups and local schools to apply to have art work displayed. Please contact our Deputy Clerk Jasmine McCabe for details on 01438716667 or e.mail [clerk@welwynpc.org.uk](mailto:clerk@welwynpc.org.uk)

Please take care of yourselves and others.

Marj Otty, Chairman,  
Welwyn Parish Council

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# Woolmer Green Parish Council

## Meeting with Grant Shapps MP about the Local Plan

The Parish Council and local residents have been objecting to the draft Local Plan proposed housing site for 150 homes on Green Belt land to the east of London Road (behind Lessiters and the former Marshalls site) for over 5 years (referenced as WGr1).



Woolmer Green site WGr1

The Parish Council has argued that the Entech site (previously classified for employment but now counted as

‘windfall housing land’ and developed by Taylor Wimpey) and former Marshalls site (classified for employment then changed to housing in the latest draft Plan) provided enough brownfield land for almost all of Woolmer Green’s housing allocation.

Despite numerous meetings and objections, the WGr1 site remains in the draft Plan and there has not been any adjustment to reflect the housing on the Entech site. The Marshalls site was originally designated for employment but the Borough Council tried to change it to residential and this was challenged by the Inspector as he said it should not be changed at this late stage. There is also a Green Belt site on the outskirts of Knebworth, that is technically within Woolmer Green, which was rejected by Borough Councillors for housing but which the Inspector suggests is sound and he is now asking for it to be re-examined. Including all of the proposed sites and the Entech site. Woolmer Green’s housing target in the draft Local Plan is for over 40% growth.

However, the Inspector has rejected the Borough Council’s plan for 13,279 new

Continued on page 42

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## Woolmer Green Parish Council

Continued from page 40

homes and is suggesting that the requirement is 15,200 for Welwyn Hatfield.

Councillor Andy Gribble (Chairman of the Parish Council) and I, along with Janet Pearce, our clerk, met Grant Shapps at the end of February to express the Parish Council's frustration with the process and ask for Grant's help to preserve the Green Belt sites and to leave Woolmer Green with a fairer and more reasonable level of growth. Grant was supportive and encouraging and we await the next stages of the Local Plan process with interest. The Parish Council still hopes that the Green Belt land can be preserved for generations to come.

**Sarah Hall**

**sarah.hall@woolmergreenpc.org.uk**  
**Woolmer Green Parish Council**

## Holy Week and Easter Services

### **Palm Sunday – 10<sup>th</sup> April**

8.00am St Mary's, Welwyn - Holy Communion with distribution of Palms

9.30am St Mary's, Welwyn - Parish Communion

begins at The Plain (end of School Lane) with the blessing of the Palms and procession to St Mary's. The service will include the reading of the Passion Gospel in dramatic form.

11.15am St Peter's, Ayot –BCP Holy Communion with distribution of Palms

6.30pm Evening Prayer at Welwyn

### **Tuesday 12<sup>th</sup> April**

9pm Compline

### **Wednesday 13<sup>th</sup> April**

9.30am St Mary's, Welwyn – Eucharist with prayers for healing

8.00pm St Mary's, Welwyn – Taize Service



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# Holy Week and Easter Services

Continued from page 42

## **Maundy Thursday 14<sup>th</sup> April**

11am Chrism Mass at St Albans Cathedral

8.00pm St Mary's, Welwyn -

Sung Eucharist of the Last Supper with washing of the feet followed by the Watch until midnight \*

## **Good Friday 15<sup>th</sup> April**

12.00 – 1.30pm St Mary's, Welwyn – 'At the cross'

1.30-3pm Liturgy of the Passion at St Mary's Welwyn \*

## **Easter Day, Sunday, 17<sup>th</sup> April,**

8.00am St Mary's, Welwyn - Holy Communion \*

9.30am All age Eucharist St Mary's, Welwyn, plus Easter egg hunt \*

11.15am St Peter's, Ayot - BCP Holy Communion

plus Easter Egg hunt \*

NB No evening service

## **Easter Monday 18<sup>th</sup> April – Pilgrimage to St Alban's Cathedral**

Meet for Breakfast at Welwyn at 8.30am.

Our Holy Week Preacher will be Prof Hannah Matis, Associate Professor of Church History at Virginia Theological Seminary, USA. Hannah's doctoral research on Medieval Interpretations of the Song of Songs was published as a book, and her next book 'A History of Women in the Church' is soon to be published by Blackwells-Wiley.

She will be preaching at services marked thus \*.

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Sunday	9.30 am	Parish Communion / Junior Church
Sunday	6.30 pm	Evensong (2nd, 4th and 5th Sundays)
Wednesday	9.00 am	Morning Prayer
Wednesday	9.30 am	Holy Communion
Saturday	9.00 am	Parish Prayers

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5th Sunday:	Morning Prayer

## **AYOT ST PETER**

1st Sunday	11.15 am	Matins: ( <i>Book of Common Prayer, King James' Bible</i> )
2nd and 5th Sundays	11.15 am	Holy Communion: ( <i>Book of Common Prayer, King James' Bible</i> )
3rd Sunday	11.15 am	Family Service: ( <i>Common Worship, NRSV Bible</i> )
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# Meditation

## An Example to Follow. St Bonaventure

St. Bonaventure, known as "*the seraphic doctor*," was born at Bagnoregio, in the Lazio region of central Italy, in 1221. He was one of the second generation followers of St Francis of Assisi. He joined the Order of Friars Minor (Order of St Francis) at the age of 22. He studied at the University of Paris and became a Regent Master (Professor) of Theology. Later he was made Minister General of the Friars Minor and a Cardinal.

While maintaining a life of Franciscan simplicity with regard to possessions he was keen to study theology and equip the Friars with sound learning as part of spiritual devotion, service and mission. Besides his academic works written at the university he is known for his theological and spiritual reflections on the gospels and the life of Jesus, and a biography about St Francis.

His written works include:

*The Tree of Life:* A commentary on the life of Jesus, to meditate on the various events in the gospels.

*The Major Legend of St Francis:* Stories of St Francis aimed at increasing our own spiritual devotion and actions.

*The Reduction of the Arts:* That all study of things in the world should lead to devotion to Christ and lead back to God as their source and origin.

*The Soul's Journey to God:* This is about prayer and meditation that leads in stages to consider God revealed in the world, in our own make up and natural faculties, towards the hidden nature of God as the source of all being and the goodness of God found in Jesus the Incarnate Word.

The last two of these I find as a scientist and birdwatcher a great example to follow; the unity of observation, study and devotion.

Colin Hull