

Easton Village Newsletter

Easton Village Newsletter

July 2021

Issue 189

EASTON WILDLIFE 2021



The Spotted Flycatcher has become a species of great conservation concern in Europe and the UK following a period of prolonged and accelerating decline, so it was with great excitement that a couple of breeding pairs were seen in Easton last year! One pair was at *Springfield* and the other at *Fiddlers*, where both birds were ringed before being returned to the wild.

These tiny birds over-winter in Namibia and are normally expected to return around mid-May – an astonishing journey of around 7,500 miles each way, with the attendant hazards of bird-hunters in Europe. How on earth do they manage not only

to make the journey but also to find their way back, independently, to the very same garden in England?! One other male returned to *Brook House* on 10th May and on 17th May a ringed male was seen at *Crown Cottage*. This was identified as one of the pair that raised a brood at *Fiddlers* in 2020 but there was no female to be seen. However, all that changed on 19th June when a very active pair of Flycatchers appeared by the garage at *Fiddlers*! The BTO were notified and came round to inspect them and initially this was a puzzle. From their rings, we know that they are the same pair from 2020, the female being the same bird from *Springfield* in 2019. The pair were constantly visiting and hovering in front of an old nest in the wisteria, which is probably the 2020 site. Sometimes they were food-carrying and first impressions were of provisioning chicks, but the nest was actually empty, collapsed and not refurbished. The revised view is that the female is only just back, and that the male was carrying



insects for her as part of courtship feeding. Time will tell if this does materialise into a nesting attempt, but nonetheless it is nice to see them back and reunited! The *Crown Cottage* male appears still to be unpaired although there may be a female tucked away somewhere, perhaps in the ivy.

And still on the subject of birds, earlier this month a Racing Pigeon visited John and Nina in Broadweir! Not knowing whether it needed assistance or not, they offered it food and water and then went out for a walk. Shortly afterwards, they saw it again on the path at *Fiddlers* and – here’s something not a lot of people know! – as well as being triple-ringed, the yellow ring indicating that it was indeed a racing pigeon, had it allowed itself to be caught, it should have had its telephone number stencilled on its wings so that the owner could be notified! But we couldn’t catch it and it was probably just resting on its journey.

JGH

BEE ORCHIDS



We are indebted to Vicky Arbuthnot for the photograph of some Bee Orchids she found up Hartham Street! Bee orchid flowers (*Ophrys apifera*) are native to the U.K, but the flowers are threatened in some areas, largely due to urban development and agriculture. The plant is protected where populations are vulnerable, including Northern Ireland. The Bee orchid is a sneaky mimic - the flower’s velvety lip looks like a female bee so the males fly in to try to mate with it and end up pollinating the flower. Sadly, the right bee species doesn’t live here, so this orchid is self-pollinated in the UK.

SCHOOL BUSES IN THE VILLAGE

Helen Mayer

After hearing a complaint about the buses coming through our village, I thought I would take this opportunity to write about our school buses, particularly for those who have never needed to use them or who have not needed to use them for some time.

Currently there are two school buses which service our village - one for Hinchingsbrooke (senior school students) and one for Spaldwick (primary school students). These buses are supplied by the council as our village is over a specified distance, set by them, from our catchment schools and this service has been running for many, many years. The exact routes of these buses can vary over time depending on how many children need to use them in each village. At present Hinchingsbrooke students have to travel on two

different bus routes morning and evening to fit in with this schedule. In the morning the bus takes them almost an hour in the opposite direction from school to pick up children from all the nearby A14 villages but as this service is invaluable to us, we have to put up with this and drag our reluctant teenagers from their beds to be out of the door by 0720!

As a rough guide for bus times, the morning Hinchingsbrooke bus is generally in the village between approximately 0715 to 0730 and the Spaldwick bus 0815 to 0830. Coming home, both buses can arrive back any time between 1530 and 1600 but they try and minimise their time in the village as much as possible and move to allow cars to pass and overtake when they can.

The bus stop on Easton Road is the only drop off and pick up point for our village, unlike years gone by when the bus used to actually drop children at their doors. The Hinchingsbrooke bus does, however, reverse into the top of The Lane to ensure all the students can get off safely and also it needs to turn around and travel back out to the A14 for its next stop. The Spaldwick bus runs from Spaldwick village, through Stow Longa and into our village before continuing its journey to Ellington.

We parents really appreciate our buses and drivers, as we entrust to them the safe transport of our children to and from school for us, and we really find it sad that there are complaints about this essential part of our daily lives. The schools actively discourage us driving our children there as this would clog up the roads and make the immediate areas around the schools unsafe with cars parked everywhere and children all over the place, to say nothing of the added pollution. Bearing in mind how big Hinchingsbrooke School is and its proximity to the hospital, if all the hundreds of parents drove their children in, instead of using the buses, it would be absolute carnage! Good luck if you needed to get to the hospital urgently!

So if you get stuck behind a bus or have to move out of the way for a bus, please do be mindful of the above points. We have been at the bus stop twice daily in term time in all weathers since we moved to the village nearly 7 years ago (lockdown was an exception) and have seen some selfish and dangerous drivers doing anything they can to get round the buses - overtaking, undertaking, driving up grass verges, almost driving in ditches to save themselves a couple of minutes and not caring whether our children are in their way or not. However, as of September this year we will no longer be allowed to be at the bus stop as it is not "cool" to meet the senior school bus as our youngest moves up. We will miss this routine and having a chat with other parents and indeed any villagers who pass at that time and obviously the bus drivers themselves.

It is not a job I would fancy doing but they seem to love what they do, except when they are criticised for doing their job. It is a massive responsibility to drive a bus load of children in all weathers, bringing them back home safely at the end of every day, but we are all grateful for the service they provide for all our youngsters. A village without the children would be a very sad place indeed.

SAVE THE CHILDREN FUND

Many thanks to those who kindly donated to this year's appeal. The Kimbolton branch, which also covers all the local villages, managed to raise £1,957 in total. This included some on-line giving, proceeds from a cake and card stall, and donations – a very good result in the present circumstances.

CHURCH SERVICES IN JULY

Sunday 4th July - Easton Summer Festival

09:30 Parish Communion

10:45 Summer Festival followed by Picnic

18:30 Kimbolton School leaver's service at St Andrews, Kimbolton.



Sunday 11th July. Kimbolton Summer Festival

9:30 Parish Communion

10:45 Summer Festival followed by picnic

Sunday 18th July. Covington Summer Festival

9:30 Holy Communion

11:00 Summer Festival and picnic



Sunday 25th July. Spaldwick Summer Festival

9:30 Parish Communion

10:45 Summer Festival and picnic

18:00 Kimbolton Evensong

In addition, Holy Communion is celebrated in Kimbolton at 10.30 a.m. every Wednesday.

---oOo---

The deadline for the August newsletter is 25th July