

# CHARLTON LINK

Village News for the People of Newbottle & Charlton

ISSUE 421 MAY 2024

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and our advertisers*



## Head in the Clouds!

Pete Smith, Headteacher at Newbottle and Charlton Primary School will literally have his head in the clouds on Wednesday 8th May when he takes on a skydiving challenge from Hinton Airfield in aid of the Charlton Playing Field Project.

Mr Smith said: "In a moment of weakness, I agreed to do my very first skydive. I want to raise vital funds to improve the playing field space, for the community that includes the children and families in the school. I would love your support if you could make a donation, no matter how big or small.

I am very nervous but I know everyone will be behind me to face this exciting but daunting challenge!"

If you'd like to sponsor Mr Smith, you can use the QR code here or find his page at <https://www.justgiving.com/crowdfunding/headinthecLOUDS>



Pete Smith's  
JustGiving page



Read the Link in colour at [www.charltonandnewbottle.com](http://www.charltonandnewbottle.com)

*Charlton Link Editor: Julia Rands, [juliarands@hotmail.com](mailto:juliarands@hotmail.com)*

## Nature Notes

Our biggest excitement recently was finding a baby snake in the veg garden. It was not much bigger than a large earthworm – perhaps 6–8 inches – and we thought it was dead as it was completely unmoving. We took it up to the house to identify it and that was easy as it had a yellowish collar around its neck which marked it as a grass snake. These are our biggest snakes – they can get up to 4 feet long – but they are completely harmless, to us, at least, though they are a menace to any passing frogs and toads, which they swallow while still alive. They also eat small mammals and birds (how do they catch those?) The females lay 10–40 eggs in rotting vegetation, so compost heaps are good, and the eggs hatch in early Autumn. Like all reptiles, grass snakes hibernate, hiding away usually from October to April, which is another reason not to be too tidy in the garden. They need cosy undisturbed hiding places. The baby snake that we found must just have emerged from hibernation, and the sunshine revived it so we put it by the pond as all grass snakes love water.

This morning there was an Orange-tip butterfly and a Speckled wood along the hedge on the Farthinghoe Road, and we've seen the first Holly blue in the garden, along with more Brimstones. There should be lots of orange-tips now as their food plant, Jack-by-the-hedge or Garlic Mustard (*alliararia petiolata*) seems to have spread everywhere – every verge and every hedge seems to be full of it. (It's growing like a weed all over our garden too). This plant has round bright green leaves and grows to 2 foot or so with a cluster of small white flowers at the top – and if you crush a leaf it does smell of garlic. It's possible though that the plants get cut down just when they have baby caterpillars on the leaves which doesn't do much for the butterfly's life cycle.

At the time of writing the meadow saxifrage is coming out in the cemetery. We've written before about this plant, which is a classic hay-meadow flower, with a basal rosette which survives mowing and grazing, and a spike of pretty white flowers which go over and set their seed before the hay is cut. As there are very few traditional hay-meadows still in existence, the meadow saxifrage is now a very rare plant, and Charlton cemetery is one of a handful of sites for it in this county. Colin Boyles, who looks after the cemetery, is careful to strim and mow round it until it is gone over, and its patch this year is we think a bit bigger than it has been. At the bottom of the cemetery, near the five-barred gate, there is a patch of Cuckoo flower or Lady's Smock, a very pretty pale pinkish-lilac flower which tends to like dampish places so it may not survive for long in the cemetery which is on a very dry sandy soil. It is presumably called Cuckoo flower because it appears at the same time as one might expect to hear a cuckoo calling: if only we did.

There is a huge patch of Comfrey along the verge opposite the houses on the Farthinghoe Road. This plant is very popular with organic gardeners as it is full of nutrients for plants and breaks down very quickly as a soil conditioner or as an addition to the compost heap. It is a slightly hairy plant of the Borage family and had the old country names of 'Boneset' or 'Knitbones', as it was traditionally used as a dressing for broken bones.

At the moment there is cherry blossom everywhere along the hedges and in woods, and in the garden the pear, damson and plum blossom has been and gone in that order, with the apple coming out now. It has been such a mild (but wet!) winter that spring is racing ahead. (We had our first picking of asparagus in mid-April – it always used to be a May crop). This is the time when we hope and pray that there will be no vicious late frosts to ruin the fruit.



## **The Charlton Plant and Produce Swap is back**

**Friday 23 May, 3.30pm - 5pm**  
**Village Hall car park**

Bring your spare seedlings or marmalade mountains and swap them for someone else's surplus.

No spares? Don't worry we'll take cash too, with all profits going towards Hall funds.

### **Countryside Quiz**

Come and join Quizmaster Michael Loggin on **Monday 13th May**, for a very special Countryside Quiz.

Michael will be hosting his Quiz at the Rose & Crown. There is sure to be lots of fun and laughter!

Register your team of up to 6 people at  
[charltonplayingfields@yahoo.com](mailto:charltonplayingfields@yahoo.com)

All proceeds will go to the Charlton Playing Field Project.



## **For those who knew Hazel Haskin, here is the lovely eulogy given by her brother at her memorial service on 22 March 2024:**

I'm Robert Frost, and Hazel was my big sister – by seven years. Hazel lived for 97 years, all but two were lived in Charlton. Hazel was born in the Rose and Crown in 1926, to Emily Freda and Tom Frost. Our father, Tom, was the licensee, having taken over from Grandma Frost, his mother.



Our village school was under Miss Taylor, in the 'little' room and Miss Harvey in the 'big' room. Hazel made friends with many pupils who remained friends throughout her life. One of Hazel's tasks was to get me to school when I first started – first day fine, but the second day I found to be an intrusion on my freedom. I lay down in the gutter outside the Rose and Crown, kicking and screaming. It was Hazel who had to deal with that and get me into school.

I also remember Hazel bike riding off to Brackley High School in all weathers, looking very smart and grown up in her school uniform. During her last years there, she 'outgrew' her strength and lost a lot of schooling. Hazel hated being tall.

She loved tennis and hockey and became captain of the school teams. Tennis was her main love. The village was very lucky that the Birkenhead family encouraged everyone to use the courts at the Cottage.

Life went on quietly in the village and the Rose and Crown until World War Two broke out and Hinton aerodrome was established. Hazel was by then a very attractive teenager, which I am sure attracted many a young RAF person to the Rose and Crown, and possibly why the beer allowance ran out very quickly.

After leaving school, Hazel worked at Hunt Edmunds, the brewers in Banbury, as secretary. Around 1952 one of her school friends went to live in Canada and encouraged Hazel to follow. She worked in Montreal for RCA Victor for two years, but the climate wasn't to her liking, so she came home via our Aunty Hetty who lived on Long Island.

After a while, Hazel became secretary to the headmaster of the American school on the base at Croughton. It was there that she first met Richard. Eventually he was honourably discharged and went home to the USA. But England and Hazel got the better of him and they were married in Newbottle church in January 1993. Together they took part in many village activities – the Stroke Club, the Charlton Link – and the annual Fete and Tennis Tournament, which she loved.

After Richard died, she became more chairbound. She still enjoyed visits from all her friends, cousin Paul, Jo and Buster the dog, Marilyn who took her Sunday dinner without fail, Linda who always visited Hazel when she was in hospital and Liz and Alan. Alan became our link to Hazel – looking in every day, keeping an eye on the general upkeep of the bungalow – even dealing with a flood.

I'm sure Hazel will be fondly remembered by her village friends.

**Goodbye Hazel – Charlton will miss you.**

# CHARLTON BIG BIKE RIDE



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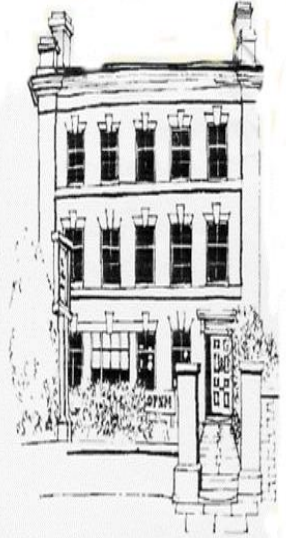
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hello  
Spring



We look forward to seeing you  
in our garden soon  
Tel: **01295 811317**

It was wonderful to welcome so many people into church for our Springfest'24 event, and at our Easter service. In their different ways they were both celebrations of life, and the rich blessings we receive from God.

My thanks go to everyone who organised and participated in Springfest. Thanks are also due to our wonderful band of cleaners, flower arrangers and all who prepare the church for Easter and the other great occasions in the Church's calendar. Additional members of our flower arranging team are always welcome. If you'd like to try your hand at it do contact me on the number below.

The next month or so might feel a bit like normal service has been resumed, as we return to our familiar daily routines after the Easter holiday. For the earliest Christians it was anything but normal. Their lives became a heady mixture of fear, confusion, hope and joy as they came to terms with the Resurrection of Jesus Christ.

After the tragedy of the Crucifixion, and the shame that some of them felt in having deserted Christ after his arrest, it would have been understandable had they retreated to their 'comfort zones'. Some of them were fisherman. They could have taken up their old occupation and removed themselves from danger and insecurity.

In fact they all went on to lead lives that took them to unfamiliar places and into dangerous and unpredictable situations. What drove them to such lengths? The short answer is the Resurrection. People don't readily give up all that is familiar and secure. If the Resurrection had not happened, if in fact it was all just a publicity stunt to try and keep the 'Jesus project' going, the movement would have quickly run out of steam. Instead it now has around 2.4 billion followers worldwide.

These numbers are testament to the new life and blessings that people continue to find in the events of the first Easter.

With all good wishes,

Father Matthew

Tel. 811364, email: [fathermatthew.r@icloud.com](mailto:fathermatthew.r@icloud.com)

Facebook/St James's Church, Newbottle & Charlton

## **FORTHCOMING SERVICES & EVENTS**

**EVERY SUNDAY IN CHURCH AT 9.30AM**

**WEDNESDAY 1ST, 15TH AND 29TH MAY AT 10.30AM**

**AN INFORMAL GATHERING FOR PRAYER, MEDITATION AND FELLOWSHIP  
AT 5 GREEN LANE. FOR MORE INFORMATION CALL EILEEN ON 811654**

**WEDNESDAY 8TH AND 22ND MAY AT 9.30AM**

**AN INFORMAL SERVICE OF HOLY COMMUNION OR PRAYER,  
AT 7 CARTWRIGHT ROAD, FOLLOWED BY REFRESHMENTS**



## CHARLTON SUMMER FETE

**SATURDAY 13th JULY**

Charlton's traditional garden fete in the beautiful gardens of The Cottage is always popular and raises vital funds for our beautiful parish church, St James' Newbottle.

Delicious teas, tennis tournament, egg-throwing, fun dog show and all the other games and stalls combine to make it a really enjoyable afternoon.

**BUT WE STILL NEED HELPERS!** And new blood and new ideas! If you would like to help, even just a little, please contact Eleanor Bland or Deborah Hayter via the editor of the Link (email on front page).

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## Newbottle & Charlton School Update

We hope you had a lovely Easter despite the weather. The Easter holiday build went well, we had the school hall ceiling replaced and it is all back to normal now in school. Children are starting their summer topics which include Under the Sea (Reception), Monarchs (Year 1 & 2), Vikings (Year 3 & 4) and Unheard Histories (Year 5 & 6). Year 6 have their Sats in a few weeks time before both Year 5 and 6 go on their residential to Longtown near the Breacon Beacons for 5 days near the end of May.

We have a our yearly Mayday Event - slightly later than the actual Mayday - on Friday 17<sup>th</sup> May. Please come and see the children take part in maypole and country dancing. Afterwards, families have created businesses where they will be selling their wares which may include treats, trinkets or other exciting products.

I am very nervous about my skydive coming up soon on Wednesday 8th May (see page 1).

I'll be completely out of my comfort zone! Please wish me luck!

**Mr Smith**  
Headteacher

**FRIDAY 17TH MAY**  
**2:40PM**

**FAMILY  
ENTERPRISE  
AND MAY DAY  
EVENT**

**COME AND SEE THE CHILDREN PERFORM  
COUNTRY AND MAYPOLE DANCING**

**AFTERWARDS COME AND BROWSE THE  
FAMILY ENTERPRISE STALLS**

In aid of The Charlton Playing Field Project  
and Newbottle and Charlton School PTFA



Friday 14th June  
7.00pm til 11.30pm  
At Charlton Memorial Hall

**TICKETS £25 INCLUDING A FULL BBQ MEAL**  
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([ticketsource.co.uk/charltonplayingfields](https://ticketsource.co.uk/charltonplayingfields))  
10% discount if you book before  
15 May. Use code **EARLYBIRD** at checkout



## Great night out at the Village Hall

We were lucky to have the very talented Farnham Maltings theatre group visit with their play *The Band Back Together* in April. The audience were treated to an excellently written and performed play with great music too. The proceeds from the bar and raffle will be added to the funding secured recently, to make more improvements to the windows and curtains at the hall.

The Village Hall AGM will take place in June, check out next Month's Link for the date and come along if you'd like to find out more about Trustees' plans.

# Charlton Calendar 2024

<p><b>April</b></p> <p>15<sup>th</sup> – Parish Council Annual Village Meeting</p>	<p><b>May</b></p> <p>8<sup>th</sup> – Head in the Clouds in aid of the playing field</p> <p>13<sup>th</sup> – Countryside &amp; Wildlife Quiz in aid of the playing field</p> <p>20<sup>th</sup> – Parish Council Meeting</p> <p>Plant &amp; Produce Swap – in aid of the local food bank</p>	<p><b>June</b></p> <p>8<sup>th</sup> – Charlton Big Bike Ride in aid of the playing field</p> <p>9<sup>th</sup> – 2pm Charlton vs. Fritwell Cricket Match (at Charlton)</p> <p>14<sup>th</sup> – Old Skool Disco in aid of Newbottle &amp; Charlton Primary School and the playing field</p> <p>23<sup>rd</sup> – 2pm Charlton Village vs. The Rose &amp; Crown Cricket Match</p>
<p><b>July</b></p> <p>6<sup>th</sup> – Children's Charity Car Wash in aid of the playing field</p> <p>7<sup>th</sup> – 2pm Charlton vs. Hinton Cricket Match (at Charlton)</p> <p>13<sup>th</sup> Charlton Fete &amp; Tennis Tournament in aid of St James' Church</p> <p>18<sup>th</sup> – Community Tea, Newbottle &amp; Charlton School</p>	<p><b>August</b></p>	<p><b>September</b></p> <p>Panto 2025 auditions &amp; rehearsals begin</p> <p>16<sup>th</sup> – Parish Council Meeting</p> <p>22<sup>nd</sup> - Harvest Festival, St James' Church</p> <p>27<sup>th</sup> – Charity Auction in aid of the Playing Field</p>
<p><b>October</b></p> <p>Halloween Activities – in aid of the playing field</p>	<p><b>November</b></p> <p>11<sup>th</sup> – Act of Remembrance, Charlton War Memorial</p> <p>18<sup>th</sup> – Parish Council Meeting</p> <p>Quiz Night in aid of the playing field</p>	<p><b>December</b></p> <p>Charlton Living Advent Calendar</p> <p>15<sup>th</sup> – Carols in the Car Park</p> <p>Carol Service – St James' Church</p> <p>24<sup>th</sup> – Christmas Eve; First Communion of Christmas, St James' Church</p> <p>25<sup>th</sup> Christmas Day; Holy Communion, St James' Church</p>

**DMJ**  
**Home Improvements**

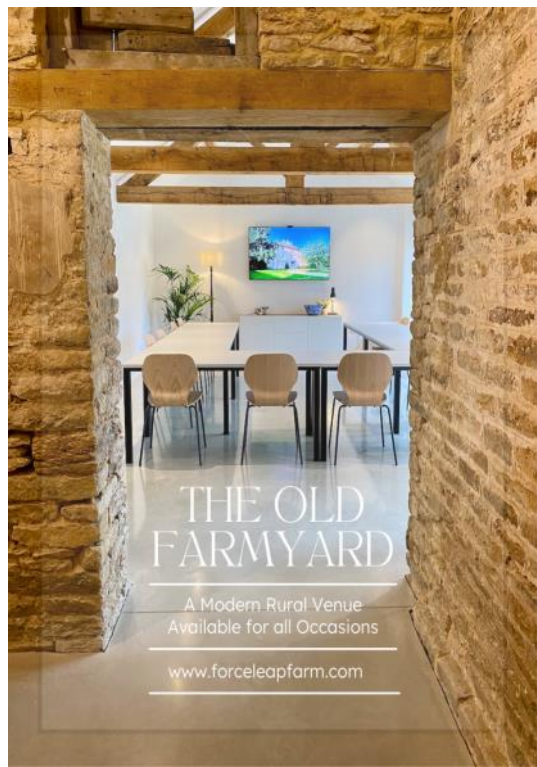
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