

HOTHFIELD NEWS

BY THE COMMUNITY FOR THE COMMUNITY

VOLUME 11 NUMBER 5 May 2020

HOTHFIELD PARISH COUNCIL

We are living in extraordinary times, and the far-reaching effects of the Covid crisis will be felt for some time. It is warming to hear of so many wonderful acts of kindness in our village, and it is important to take a moment to thank those who are making this crisis a little easier, from checking on vulnerable people to the hard work put in by the many local volunteers – and, of course, the NHS staff.

At the time of writing, the lockdown has been extended for another three weeks and it will be quite a while before we are all back to normal. Although I have at least enjoyed the reduction in traffic along the A20; and how blessed we are with such wonderful weather!

It is very important that we maintain our focus on fighting this infection and saving lives by continuing the Government's advice to Stay At Home:

- Only go outside for food, health reasons or work (but only if you cannot work from home).
- If you have to go out, stay a minimum of 2 metres (6 ft.) away from other people at all times.
- Wash your hands as soon as you get home.
- Do not meet with others, even friends and family. You can spread the virus even if you don't have symptoms.

This crisis will end, that is certain; and hopefully we will emerge stronger.

Our KCC member Charlie Simkins wants to publicise the excellent support services available, as follows;

'The County Council has many obligations but at present one of its main aims is to provide support for elderly and vulnerable people to prevent additional hardship at such a difficult time. In this regard, in collaboration with central government, local authority partners, the voluntary community and the NHS, the county council has set up a helpline called KENT TOGETHER. This can be reached by telephone on [03000 419292](tel:03000419292) on a 24 hour basis or by internet at www.kent.gov.uk/kenttogether. In the first week 1279 calls were made to the helpline, and 2129 different requests were processed. I would encourage everyone to publicise this service.'

The next Parish Council meeting on 6 May cannot be held in the normal manner, so we are making arrangements for this meeting to be over a virtual platform. If any residents wish to contribute during the public interval, then please contact the Parish Clerk parish.clerk@hothfield.org.uk with your name, address and email, and we will do our best to provide a virtual secure connection.

My best wishes to you all; be safe!

Ian Lloyd, Chairman HPC

Fevers and epidemics

The current global epidemic has led me to look in the village's archives to see what references there might have been to diseases that might have afflicted the parish in the past.

The History Society's own publication about the village in the 20th Century makes reference to the school being closed in 1900 due to a measles epidemic, in 1902 for chicken pox and in 1906 for scarlet fever. This mainly affects children and results in a bright red rash, a sore throat and fever. Hothfield Church's register of burials records three residents who died of scarlet fever in 1863.

Rev. Harry Russell, in his research of the parish up to 1902, found reference in the church register of burials due to another fever: "In the winter of 1776-7 mention is made of "an epidemical eruptive Fever which went thro whole families chiefly among ye younger sort, & hath done the same about seven years before";

Indeed, the records for 1777 show a resident who died of 'fever', and previously another in 1757, but there were three in 1808, so that seems to have been a worse year. In those days the population of Hothfield would have been about half what it is now (in 1811 there were 66 houses and 416 people over the age of 16 living in the parish).

Chris Rogers



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SAINT MARGARET'S CHURCH



For weddings, baptisms, etc. Contact the Parish Office calehillpcc@gmail.com 07395 910317

Services at Saint Margaret's are suspended for the duration of the Coronavirus epidemic. Readings, prayers and a short sermon will appear each Sunday on the Parish website,

<https://www.calehill-westwell.uk/>

Where you can also find links to on-line services

Save this date for
St Margaret's Church
Hothfield's Angel Festival
November 28th & 29th 2020



We would be delighted if you would create an angel to decorate our church

THE BENEFICE OF CALEHILL WITH WESTWELL



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HOTHFIELD NEWS

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The deadline for the June 2020 issue is 20 May.

Letters and articles for publication are always welcome. Advertising is free to businesses working in, or for, the Parish of Hothfield. Email the Editor for information on advertising prices for outside companies.

Coronavirus

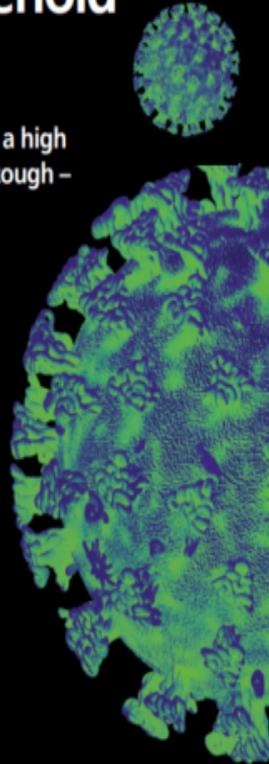
Isolate your household

Stay at home

If you or anyone in your household has a high temperature or a new and continuous cough – even if it's mild

- ⊗ **DO NOT** go to your GP or hospital.
- ✔ **Go to NHS.UK** to check your symptoms and follow the specialist medical advice. Only call NHS 111 if you can't get online or your symptoms worsen.
- ✔ **Protect** older people and those with existing health conditions by avoiding contact.

Find out how to isolate your household at nhs.uk/coronavirus



Hothfield History Society



V.E. Day in Hothfield

In 2008 we received a letter from a former soldier who had been based at Hothfield, when there was a large army camp on the 'common' at the end of World War II.

F 'Arthur' Bridges wrote: "For a long period in 1945 I was an 18-year-old Corporal in 9th Btn. the Worcestershire Regt. on Hothfield Common. The 9th Worcestershire were situated on the left hand side of the road [Cades Road] and on the right hand side was a Btn. of the Royal Warwickshires. So you had 2btns – approx 1200 infantry soldiers – camped there. I say camped, but from a Worcestershire point of view it was a fine posting. The Nissen Huts were in good condition and

all paths and in-camp roadways immaculate. There was a very good bath area, a fine Mess Hall and always plenty of hot water."

Arthur was still here when the war ended and the army dug a trench in the shape of a large 'V', filled it with tar and set it alight to mark the Victory in Europe.

Arthur also recalls "I was of course there on May 8th which was V.E. Day. Most of us were given a 24-hour pass. A lot of us travelled to London (back early hours to the Halt). The rest went into Ashford."

In those days the train station in Westwell, known as Hothfield Halt, was still fully functioning and well used by the troops. It's now the site of the Tarmac plant.

Chris Rogers



VILLAGE HALL LOTTERY

April Draw Results

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Regrettably, due to the current coronavirus crisis and following Government advice, the House will not open for the rest of the season this year. The house tearoom will close until the end of May at the earliest, and the gardens will close from 5pm Wednesday 18 March 2020 until further notice.

MAY ON HOTHFIELD HEATHLANDS 4

With the lock-down extended in a grim situation that touches everyone in myriad ways, the words of Octavia Hill, social reformer and co-founder of the National Trust ring so true: *the need of quiet, the need of air, the need of exercise and, I believe, the sight of sky and of things growing, seem human needs, common to all and not to be dispensed with without great loss.* Many of us are missing the heathlands, the walks, volunteering, training and surveying, all suspended. Essential care of the animals continues and local walkers are keeping gates shut.

We can all take small steps to protect wildlife in our gardens; cut out the chemicals that kill the goodies, the birds who eat the poisoned baddies, use peat-free compost, allow hedge garlic for orange tips, herb Robert, teasels for goldfinches, nettles for peacock butterflies, ivy for holly blues, long grass and dandelions for many insects, the food of all nestling birds. Wild and untidy doesn't mean bad but rather a haven for wildlife, some of which, like dormice, will not emerge from hibernation until May. The Kent Wildlife Trust Facebook page <https://www.facebook.com/KentWildlife> provides informative daily photos and ideas of how you can still engage with wildlife.

Visitors are still welcome to visit Hothfield Heathlands on foot as part of their daily exercise. We have taken most catches off gates so that you can open without using your hands. Remember that there is still livestock on site so all gates still need to be left closed.



CARNIVOROUS PLANTS ON HOTHFIELD HEATHLANDS

My favourite plant (well for today anyway) on the Heathland will only become obvious from the chilly waters of the upper bog in May. The carnivorous round leaved sundew, *Drosera rotundifolia*, overwinters as a hibernaculum, a small globe of curled up leaves tucked into the sphagnum moss. As the water warms up a rosette of ground-hugging leaves unfurls to its full 2-inch width and gets to murderous work. Growing in acid nutrient-poor habitats, its small fibrous root system provides light anchorage but absorbs water, while green fleshy leaves, flower stems and sepals make food through photosynthesis, supplemented by the nitrogen-rich soup extracted from the dissolved bodies of insects captured by the extremely sensitive long-stalked sticky glands on the leaves.

Sarah Raven in her book *Wild Flowers* states that up to 2000 insects can be caught by one plant in a summer. That's a lot of supply flights. Although small, the plants are easy to spot from the causeway, tiny patches of reddish green, singly or in glistening colonies. It's worth using binoculars to observe the plants in detail.

From June through August a wiry stem uncoils from the centre of the rosette, bearing tiny white flowers of six petals all on the same side of the stem, apparently floating a few inches above the plants, the distance enabling pollinators to reach the flowers and avoid the traps below. The flowers open successively, and in poor weather (think Scotland) flowers remain closed and can self-pollinate. The



flower stem hardens and the seed capsule persists in autumn as the plant curls back into a hibernaculum. The seeds need a cold winter – stratification – to promote germination.

The common name sundew describes the plants' appearance, every leaf filament is tipped with a drop of viscid liquid that glistens like dew in the sun, deceiving insects into thinking they are landing on water. *Drosera* is from the Greek *drosos* = dew, dewdrops, *rotundifolia* describes the round leaves. The other native sundews are great sundew *Drosera anglica* and oblong-leaved sundew *Drosera intermedia*, both scarce species.

Thomas Culpeper in his *Complete Herbal* of 1653 noted that *the hotter the sun shines, the moister they* (the

leaves) *are* and recommended the juice of the leaf to destroy warts and corns. Richard Mabey in his *Flora Britannia* reports that herbalists promoted the liquid to preserve youth, strength, and vitality. Workers on the Lancashire peat carrs called it *youth grass*, and harvested it as a kind of catch crop. In Europe spices were added to make Ros Solis liquor to preserve youthful looks, strength and longevity. The ability to entrap made it a love charm and in 1968 youngsters stole bits from a specimen in Douglas Museum to put in the pockets of persons they fancied. The collectible 1958 Brooke Bond album of *Wild Flowers Series 2*, illustrated by Charles Tunnicliffe, includes cards of *Drosera rotundifolia* and butterwort.



5 Charles Darwin, sundew and hard-boiled egg

The fact that certain plants trap insects had been recorded by various naturalists across the world. Erasmus Darwin, Charles Darwin's grandfather, thought that sundew caught insects to prevent them preying on the flowers. It was Charles Darwin who first proved that that some plants are carnivorous, trapping and feeding on insects. Darwin recorded sundew and butterwort (*Pinguicula*) growing in peaty ground in Tierra del Fuego in 1833 during his journey around the world on *The Beagle*.

In 1860, the year after the publication of *On the Origin of Species by means of Natural Selection* he first observed insects trapped in the leaves and movement of the 'tentacles' of two of the three British species of sundew, while visiting Hartfield, East Sussex. He wrote *This made me think it probable that the insects were caught for some special purpose*. Looking for more evidence of how plants gradually adapted to different conditions, Darwin started a series of thousands of experiments by himself at his Kent home, Down House, and by his scientific colleagues. He examined and recorded everything minutely, how tentacles are triggered into trapping an insect, how just one tentacle touched would trigger a reaction, the roles of different tentacles, the time taken to entrap, the more an insect struggled the quicker the capture, the time taken

to digest, uncurl, start again, how unabsorbed hard chiton is left to blow off the leaf, the cellular structure and function of the glands, the changing nature of the secretion which, he discovered, produces an antiseptic as well as the gastric juice that turns the insect into nutritious soup, the streaming movement of protoplasm in the cells that provided the movement of the tentacles. That leaves only responded fully to material likely to provide nutrition, not to rain, blown leaves or dust, nor the salt, saliva, sugar, soot, hard-boiled egg and other material tried by Darwin, showed that the plant only used energy to preserve itself.

The round leaved sundew was the first subject of Darwin's 1875 book *Insectivorous Plants* a detailed study of how adaptation by several genera of carnivorous plants to difficult conditions produced change i.e. evolution. On the *Drosera* genus he concluded

The three most remarkable characters possessed by the several members of the Droseraceae consist in the leaves of some having the power of movement when excited, in their glands secreting a fluid which digests animal matter, and in their absorption of the digested matter.

and asked

Can any light be thrown on the steps by which these remarkable powers were gradually acquired?

There is no need to wait for a socially-distanced book delivery to read Darwin's account of feeding sundew

hard-boiled egg, it can be read online at

<http://darwin-online.org.uk/content/frame/set?itemID=F1217&viewtype=txt&pageseq=1>

Mea Allen's 1977 biography focusses on Darwin and his Flowers.

Sundew around the world

The sundew family, Droseraceae, is one of the largest of the carnivorous plants with nearly 200 known species, occurring all round the world, something that Darwin already knew, thanks to courageous explorers and collectors. He would have been intrigued by the modern hybrid, *Drosera rotundifolia* 'Charles Darwin'. Round leaved sundew is native in all northern regions, i.e. transboreal. I found it at elevation in chilly acid seepage above the Cypress Bowl ski area north of Vancouver. West Coast First Nations used the leaves to remove warts, corns and bunions; called *many hearts* by the Haida, they used it as a good luck charm for fishing. More than half the known species occur in Australia. In dappled or deeply shaded forests in Victoria State, I was thrilled to find several species in a single square yard, some ground hugging with disproportionately large single flowers, some wispy climbers with nodding bell-shaped leaves, all in flower. There were more in the Blue Mountains and on North Head Sanctuary, overlooking crowded Manly beaches, the ferries chugging across to Sydney and humpback whales migrating south while the few remaining Manly penguins hunted offshore, returning to shore at dusk as the shy bandicoots and pygmy possums emerged to feed. In New Zealand I saw *Drosera arcturi* at 2,430 ft on the Dobson Walk in Arthur's Pass, and tuberous *Drosera*



auriculata adapted to the hot sulphurous margins of the Rotorua mud pools.

But it is round leaved sundew, his beloved *Drosera*, that got Darwin experimenting with carnivorous plants. Crossing the upper bog causeway we walk alongside what Darwin called *a quiet but lethal war* of highly complex processes, the study of which helped lay the foundations of the modern search for biology's underlying rules, including plant movement – tropism – and the development of hormone rooting powder. How lucky we are to have this plant protected here. as it is well out of its main areas of occurrence in the UK because of habitat loss. Elsewhere, peat extraction is still destroying the sundew habitat. SSSI designations and the work of wildlife trusts reflect the urgent need to protect the original wild inhabitants of these spaces.

Margery Thomas





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We are following government recommendations and so all face to face scouting has stopped. Cub camp and many other events have been cancelled. We are still in contact with our young people and making suggestions for how they can spend their time and work on badges. Scouting is an incredibly important part of the growth and development of young people and we can't wait to get back to doing it properly

Terry Lister
Group Scout Leader
07748818660

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| find out more: www.wkps.org.uk
secretary@wkps.org.uk 07919 871543

AUNT JEMIMA'S ISOLATION DIARY

Day 1: I have stocked up on enough non-perishable food and supplies to last me for months, maybe years, so that I can remain in isolation for as long as it takes to see out this pandemic

Day 1 + 45 minutes: I am in the supermarket because I wanted a Twix

Day 2 heard from my family: granddaughter opened the fridge and let out the biggest sneeze of her life.

Day 3: heard a weird noise coming from some corner of my room . Hope it's a nice ghost.

Day 4; cheered loudly for the leaf that blew across the garden faster than the other leaves.

Day 5 (I think): It's like Las Vegas in our house. We're losing money, drinks are acceptable at any time, and nobody knows what day it is.

Day 6: How am I doing? I just wiped down a packet of antibacterial wipes with an antibacterial wipe, so I'm fine.

Day 7: I have discovered that my top three hobbies are restaurants, bars and non-essential businesses.

Day 8: Today I finished Netflix.

Thoughts:

Knowing me, when all this is over, I'll probably fancy a nice night in.

I'm starting to understand why the cat always runs out of the house when the front door is opened.

The year is 2075. 'Grandma, why do you sit outside in all weathers?' 'I can remember when it was illegal.'

Self-isolation is a great time to do those things you've always wanted to get one; write the book, organise the wardrobe, cook exciting meals. Now it's my fifth day on the sofa. I wonder what catfood tastes like.

In a few weeks' time 80% of blondes will have vanished.

You thought dogs were hard to train? Look at all the humans who can't sit and stay.

Isn't it weird that ordinary people are supposed to have savings for emergencies, while billion-pound corporations are on the brink of bankruptcy after two weeks?

Introverts, please put down your book and check up on your extrovert friends. They are not OK.

Me drinking at home alone 2019; Sad, disturbing loser.

Me drinking alone at home 2020; Citizen, inspiration, hero.

Humans: There's no way we can shut everything down in order to cut emissions, slow climate change and protect the environment.

Mother Nature: Here's a virus. Practice.

Hothfield Parish Council

HOTHFIELD GARDENERS' COMPETITION



Saturday 4th July

Sadly it will be necessary to cancel the Competition this year because of the Coronavirus emergency situation.

As I am sure many residents will have been spending extra time in their gardens this Spring & Summer, we would invite you to take photographs of your flowers, shrubs, vegetables etc, and send them to the Editor of the newsletter over the next few months.

We hope the Competition can return in 2021.

Penny Sutcliffe