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# THE BRADLING STONE

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THE NORTON IN HALES MAGAZINE



Issue 13—April 2020

# Editorial

This month's cover photo accompanies a lovely article written by Carol Swales: 'Dad, there's a buzzard in the birdbath!', which I hope you'll all enjoy.

Thanks go to Chris Green who, after producing interesting and information articles for the past three years, has passed the Nature Notes baton to the Curious Raven of Betton. Welcome to him.

Please keep sending your photos and articles to: [editorbradlingstone@gmail.com](mailto:editorbradlingstone@gmail.com) . As ever, the quirkier, the better, particularly in these challenging times!

## What's On In April?....

As you might expect, all of the diary events for April are cancelled because of Coronavirus. All church services are cancelled and the pub and the Jubilee Hall are closed until further notice. Looking further ahead, the events listed below are, of course, subject to change as the precautions against the spread of the virus develop.

## Further Ahead....

4 May	Mucklestone WI	Jubilee Hall	7.15 pm	Talk by Brian & Barbara Hatton
15May	Audley Male Voice Choir	St Chad's Church	7:30pm	Tickets from Alan Dutton & Mel Rees
13 June	Village Festival	Village Green	1:00pm	
Reminders	Date for the next month should be sent to <a href="mailto:secretarybradlingstone@gmail.com">secretarybradlingstone@gmail.com</a> by the 15th of the month at the latest. Future events can be flagged up as required. Articles/contributions should be sent to <a href="mailto:editorbradlingstone@gmail.com">editorbradlingstone@gmail.com</a> by the 18th of the month.			

## Village Festival

The village festival is currently planned to take place on Saturday June 13<sup>th</sup> It is now highly unlikely that the event will take place in June, but be assured that this much anticipated event will be rescheduled for later in the year. We have already we had people booking stalls to sell crafts, books and artisan food. There will be a BBQ run by two local gents, with a South African food theme. Cream teas will be in abundance in the beautiful setting of the church grounds, and donations of cakes are always welcome. The dog show has proved to be a great attraction, and we are now seeing inter-village rivalry for prettiest dog or waggiest tale, so make sure your dog is brushed up and ready to be best in show. There are now quite a few villagers with classic cars, tractors, motorbikes and traction engines, so please bring them along. There is a safe dedicated area to park them and people available to 'stand guard' over these beautiful motors.



If anyone would like to get involved, either by having a stall, donating cakes or helping on the day to erect gazebos and unload cars, please contact Carol and Bev on 658983, who will direct your help to the organisers of the respective sections.

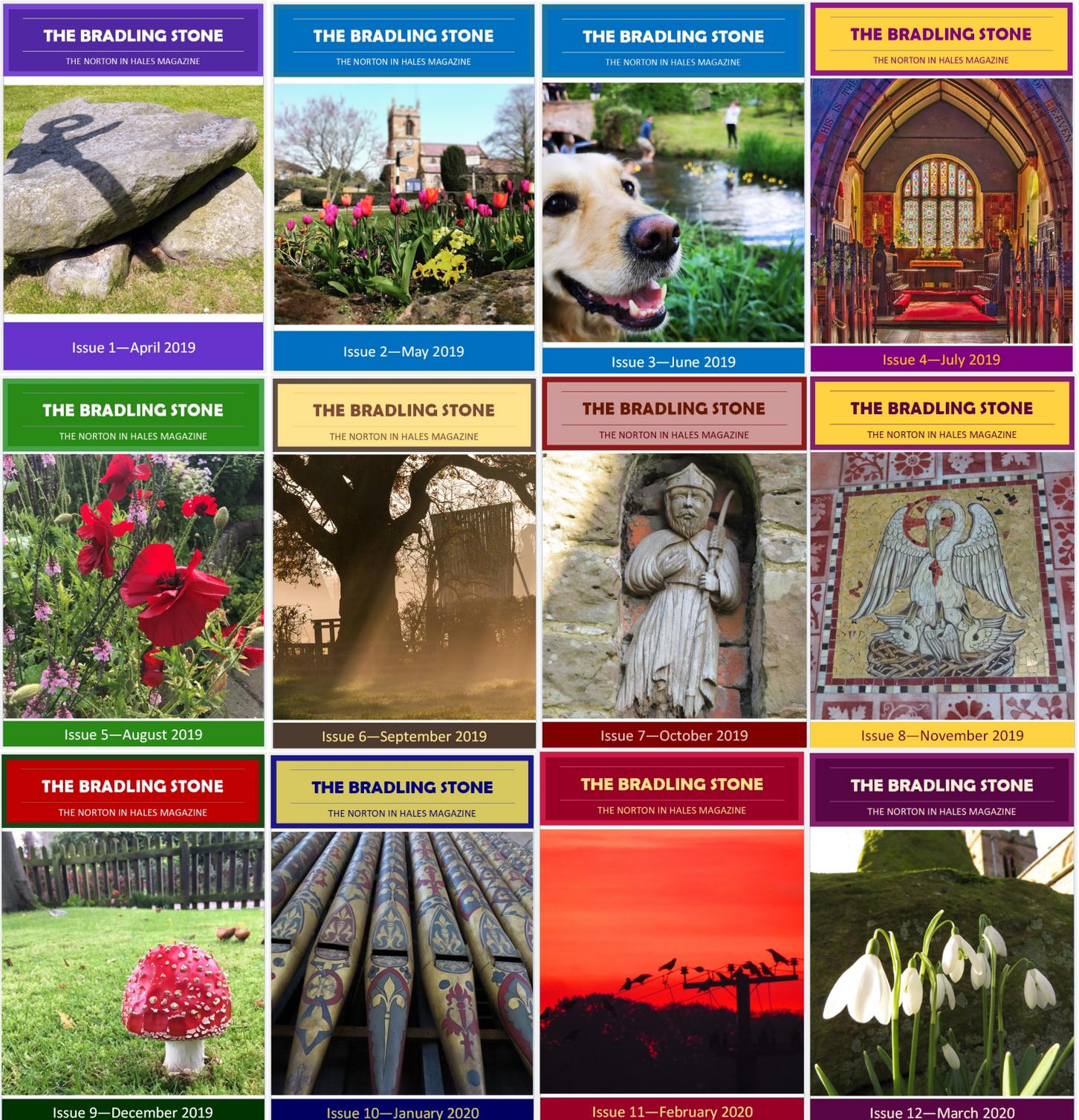
Patrons have contributed to the annual cost of the magazine and we wish to thank them for their valuable contributions. If you would like to become a patron then please contact the secretary: [secretarybradlingstone@gmail.com](mailto:secretarybradlingstone@gmail.com)

# What's In A Name? Why The Bradling Stone?

Some people have asked why we called the magazine The Bradling Stone. The main reason we decided to use a slightly abstract title and full-page cover photos was to make our publication different, and to try to avoid some of the usual clichés associated with village magazines, which can sometimes be visually dull and are often little more than 'advertisers'. For those who don't know, at the centre of the village green is the "Bradling Stone" where, according to folklore, any male found working after noon on Shrove Tuesday was either beaten, bumped (bradled), or rolled on the stone, depending on which source you consult. This year, as far as I'm aware, Shrove Tuesday on 25 February passed without incident, but I'm lining up an afternoon of sloth for the next Shrove Tuesday on 16 February 2021, when the only 'work' I'll be doing after midday will be shovelling down a mountain of pancakes for fear of being on the receiving end of a good kicking!

## Every Picture Tells A Story

I don't think that anyone could accuse our magazine of being visually dull if the following montage of our first year's covers is anything to go by!



# Nature Notes

The official first day of spring (vernal equinox) in the UK is given on the calendars as Friday 20<sup>th</sup> March; however, Thursday 19<sup>th</sup> March is argued as the correct astronomical date, which would be the earliest date for 124 years.

What is so special about the vernal equinox? It's the time when day and night lengths are almost equal, and for plants daylengths are important growth stimuli. The microclimates that exist also have a real effect on progress. Around our fields there are a few places with hedgerow growth, but travelling to Newport down the A41 you will see plenty of green shoots and blossom on the blackthorn, probably slightly warmer due to the traffic. I believe the blossom to be blackthorn, as opposed to its cousin the whitethorn (hawthorn); the blossoms are white with lemon-coloured stamens whereas the hawthorn flowers are pale pink mixed with creamy-yellow centres. The hawthorn also produces the red berries whilst blackthorn produce the dark purple sloe, well known for its inclusion in gin, giving sloe gin. I was lucky to have worked on an old estate in Hertfordshire where hawthorn trees were encouraged to grow straight up within a woodland, similar to the cricket bat willows also farmed; when felled and dried for two years the hawthorn made fantastic firewood.

In the hedgerows there is quite a bit of growth on the elder, which is often the first tree to produce new leaf, hopefully leading to plenty of elderflower for wine-making in the summer and elderberries for wine and jam-making in the autumn. The extraordinary mistletoe is also thriving on some trees. This plant is a parasite (hemiparasite) taking nutrients and water from its host, but also producing food from its own leaves. Birds eating the sticky berries will apparently wipe their beaks, adorned with sticky seed, onto other trees where the seeds grow into the bark of host trees. It is a plant steeped in folklore and myths, but one of the reasons for bringing it into the house at Christmas is because it remains green over winter and brings life and colour into dark days. The myths and folklore make for entertaining reading when you put your feet up at the end of the day.



We have yet to see whether the oak or ash break bud first, as there is a saying that suggests that "if the oak comes out before the ash then the summer will be a splash, whereas if the ash comes out before the oak then the summer will be a soak". There is no scientific evidence to support this, and should the dreaded 'ash dieback' take full effect, with up to 90% loss of our ash trees, then we will have nothing to compare. Ash dieback is caused by a fungus called *Hymenoscyphus fraxineus* which gets into the vascular system of ash trees thus reducing the ability of the tree to draw nutrients and water up into its upper branches, leading to death. A good list of symptoms is available on the Woodland Trust website.

Walking around we are also now getting the 'winter gnats', which follow you for a time after you walk through them, often at head height. These are probably *Trichocera annulate*, perhaps the most abundant and adapted to the cold. Were you aware that 2019 was the International Year of the Fly? It would make a great pub quiz question. Other flying creatures seen lately are the thousands of starlings displaying remarkable coordinated flight manoeuvres, the noise as they fly overhead is like a strong wind getting up and they become quite raucous after landing (and messy).



As a splash of colour we have been sent a picture of crocuses in the snow, taken at the end of February by Sue Mayer. Crocus are part of the Iris family with the spice saffron being procured from the autumn flowering *Crocus sativus*. If you wish to send one of your own images for inclusion in Nature Notes' then email us and we will include it where feasible; we will also put your name in the corner of it. Also email if you have any more weather-related sayings.

We are currently setting up a special email address for Nature Notes, but in the meantime report your sighting to [editorbradlingstone@gmail.com](mailto:editorbradlingstone@gmail.com)

# Dad, There's A Buzzard In The Birdbath...



Bird watching and nature in general has been something that I have always loved but not always had the free time to enjoy. My father, for as long as I can remember, has taken me bird watching in all parts of the world. He was in the Royal Air Force, and we were fortunate in being posted to Singapore, and for most of my childhood in Germany. I did sometimes wonder if the birding trips into local woods and undergrowth was not just a fun and educational jaunt with my dad, but more my mother kicking the pair of us out of the house.

Life moves on, and I left home to find myself still birding but without my constant companion. He taught me well, and I started to photograph the birds that I saw and send him photos of the more rare or exciting ones seen. This did not stop at birds; there were sightings of dolphins, basking sharks, porpoise, and many, many more. He must have been so sick of the photos!

Over recent years I would see something and pick up the phone with the usual "Dad Dad Dad, you will never guess what I have just seen" and, regardless of the time of day or night, regale him with the latest find. Regretfully, my father died eight weeks ago and the loss is not easy to come to terms with, as anyone who has lost a parent will appreciate.

The saddest thing is that today, for the first time since he died, I have just had one of those "Dad Dad Dad" moments, and as he is no longer here to share it with me, I thought I would share it with all of you. "Dad, there's a buzzard in the birdbath". He would have liked that.

**Carol Swales**

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# In Bloom

Each year the Royal Horticultural Society (RHS), who oversee the In Bloom competitions, choose a theme for entrants to focus on. This year it is 'Grow Social'. Not good use of the English language perhaps, but which can be interpreted as the use of gardening to include as many people as possible: social gardening.

To reflect this, they have reduced the marks available under the heading of horticulture to 40%, whilst marks for community involvement and care for the environment have risen to 30% each.

We have not put any new bird boxes up for a couple of years, so with extra emphasis on the environment this year, is there anyone out there who would be willing to make some for siting in the village and at the pool? The group would be willing to pay for the timber. Also on the bird front, if the group were to buy a large bird feeder, would anyone be willing to keep it topped up with seed provided by the Bloomers?

Snowdrops are a welcome sight in spring but are not particularly visible in the village, although the group have now got some established clumps at the pool. By the time you read this, a working party will have split established clumps and planted the resulting bulbs at various locations, so that in a year or so they should be more in evidence.



Nigel Passmore splitting snowdrop clumps and planting amongst the daffodils by the bus shelter.

The colour scheme for the village this year will be purple and orange, and, of course, to help with environment, open (i.e. not double) flowered plants will be preferred. If you have a choice of what to plant in your front garden this year, it would be great if you match these colours.

For those that missed them, here is a photo of the crocus in the churchyard this year. The crocus have been planted by the schoolchildren over recent years, thanks to the Rotary Club. Here a honey bee is taking advantage of their generosity!



There Will Be No In Bloom Meetings Until Further Notice

# In Your Garden - April

Perennial flower plants are all available in garden centres for planting now. The large pots seem very expensive, but they are often also available as small plants in special offer schemes. In spring these will soon grow as large as the expensive ones just a few weeks later! Alternatively wait for the In Bloom plant sale at the beginning of June where there is often a good selection!

Perhaps you wish to grow some annuals to brighten these uncertain times and do not want to visit garden centres - you could still perhaps grow some from seed which, of course, can be purchased by post. They will be a little bit later in flowering but it is amazing how plants do catch up. Try some dwarf dahlias!

These lovely ones are sold by Suttons for under £4 including postage.



April is peak sowing time for vegetables and a whole range can be sown now. As a reminder, these include beetroot, carrots, turnips, leeks, radishes, spinach, Brussels sprouts, summer cabbage, lettuces, pickling and salad onions, peas, parsnips, broad beans, leeks, broccoli, cauliflower and various herbs.

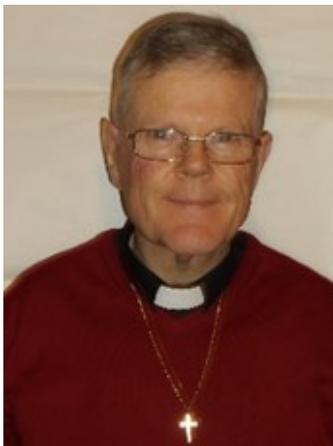
Lawns benefit from feeding in the spring, and this keeps them looking lush and green, even if you have to mow a little more frequently!

Gladiolus corms can be planted now, although these do grow rather tall, dahlias likewise. The dwarf dahlias are better for a small garden, but to keep them flowering spent flowers should be regularly removed. Lilies are very colourful and should still be ok for planting at the beginning of the month.

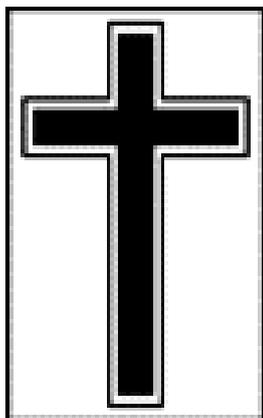
Summer gardening can be made easier by 'mulching' the ground now. The Bloom group use bark fines (ground up tree bark) from Tony Hamer in Market Drayton. The bags are rather large but could be shared between neighbours. Smaller bags are of course available from garden centres. Weeds are suppressed and moisture is retained.

If you are tempted to plant out tender annuals in pots for an early display, then garden fleece is invaluable to cover them up on cool nights as we cannot be sure of not having a frost until the end of May.

# A View From The Vicarage



April might be known for showers which bring May flowers, but it is also opening with the climax of the season of Lent in the Church. The first Sunday is what we call Palm Sunday—to mark Jesus' triumphal entry into Jerusalem on His path to the Cross. Normally, we celebrate with palms and communion in a single service in our benefice at St Mary's Chapel (in the Aston Village Hall) and weather permitting, we parade around the village to witness to our Lord waving our palms. The service is followed by a bring-and-share lunch. Everyone is invited to join us. Sadly, the Church of England has suspended all public worship services until further notice, so we will not have this gathering this year.

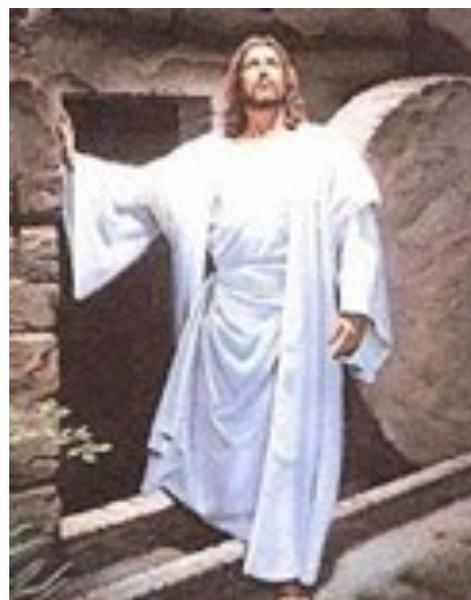


The triumph of Palm Sunday, of course, led directly to Good Friday and Jesus' horrible death on the Cross and burial in a cold, stone tomb. It is a most solemn day for Christians as we hear the story of Christ's trial, judgement, and execution. We listen as our Saviour walks to the Cross to take the punishment our sins deserve. Why? Simply because God loves us!! Our sin separates us from our heavenly Father and there is nothing we can do to atone for our wrong-doings, let alone bridge the chasm. But God loves us enough that He sent His only Son Jesus to sacrifice His life in order that God's mercy and grace could be extended to us. By His death, we are washed clean and receive God's righteousness which enables us to enter God's eternal Kingdom. We would mark this solemn occasion with a service in church at 2:30pm, so I invite you to open your Bibles at that time and read the story.

While we know the outcome of that tragic day so long ago, it's hard to imagine how Jesus' followers, friends, and family felt as they watched Him hanging on that Cross. Their world was dying before their very eyes. Their hopes were enveloped by the blackness of Christ's death. They must have been filled with fear and trepidation, because in those days, once the authorities had killed off the leader, they tended to round up the supporters and get rid of them too. When Jesus died, their dreams of the Father redeeming His Creation appeared to die with Him.

The Good News is that God raised His Son Jesus to new and eternal life on Easter Sunday morning! Death was conquered and no longer held a grip on those who accept Jesus as their Lord and Saviour. The eternal gift emerged from that tomb with Jesus—open to all who will confess His name! On Easter Sunday morning we rejoice that our heavenly Father loved us enough to redeem us and adopt us into His eternal family.

As spring makes its full appearance in natural splendour, it all reminds us of the new life we receive through Jesus' death and resurrection. It is glorious! It is special! And it is the most precious gift of love from our heavenly Father. Focus on God's love and the new life all around us in nature rather than on the fear and panic of the coronavirus pandemic. My faith keeps me from fearing any disease and death because I know eternal life in God's Kingdom await me when my time on earth is done. That's the Good News of Easter, so while we can't come together to worship, we can still rejoice that Jesus is alive!



Rev. Don Alcock—Telephone: 01630 647 911—Email: [dga952@hotmail.com](mailto:dga952@hotmail.com)

# The Hunt Comes To Norton

'Horses barely stopped galloping and jumping all day in this oasis of delectable hunting country'; so wrote Frank Houghton Brown in the widely read 'Horse & Hound' magazine of 6 February 2020. He had enjoyed a full-on day with the North Staffordshire Hunt during the second of their two meets in Norton in Hales in January. "To be made so welcome in grassland when it is this wet shows a remarkable relationship with farmers" wrote Brown. The latter meeting was a top-class day's trail-hunting "in this old-fashioned bit of hunting country". Over 40 riders started the day with a good attendance from foot followers for both hunts. Field master was Jonathon Jarrett MFH for both meets. Senior Joint-Master Ann Hartley MFH explained that the hunt's remarkable relationship with the farmer is partly due to the hunt's fallen stock service. 'We still pick up fallen stock from the farmers and they really do appreciate the service we do', said Ann, who is in her 20<sup>th</sup> season in office. Here are some images of both meets in our village, and in spite of difficult ground conditions, all went well, and the day was much enjoyed by hunt members from the North Staffs and visitors from other hunts who joined in the day".



The North Staffordshire Hunt has a heritage that goes back to around 1820 and is renowned as being a friendly field of followers. They follow a traditional pack of foxhounds both on horseback and on foot and currently the hounds follow a laid scent trail. They have widespread support from local town and country followers, and their traditional Woore Boxing Day Meet attracts well over a thousand supporters from local towns and country. Since the enactment of the Hunting Act 2004, the Hunt has adapted the way in which it operates so as to comply with the provisions of the Act. It provides a vital service to the equestrian and farming community through its fallen stock service. The North Staffordshire Hunt Point-to-Point Races at Sandon on Easter Saturday is a great event in the local social calendar, usually attracting thousands of followers.

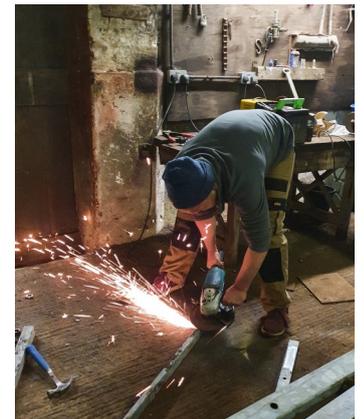
**Ron Lucas**

## Wacky Races



Work is now underway! The team are currently building the chassis from scratch and are learning some new skills along the way. In order to accommodate the body work (to be a scale model of a very famous vehicle!) The chassis needs to be very accurate, and decisions are still being made about the position of the seat for the driver.

Thanks to everyone who has donated materials and advice so far. If you want to know more please speak to any of the team - Andrew Mackay, Chris Worton, Rob Hammind, Dave Mason or Chris Green in the village.



Share your interests or passions with: [editorbradlingstone@gmail.com](mailto:editorbradlingstone@gmail.com)

# Bowling Club Report

Unfortunately, just when the new season was about to get underway, I have been informed by the British Crown Green Bowls Association that all bowls matches are to be suspended until further notice as a precaution against the spread of Coronavirus.

The members have been working hard during the winter and early spring, despite the wet weather, mowing and preparing the green, which will be in great condition ready for the first matches when the current restrictions are lifted.

Once we get underway, the green will be very busy, with various teams playing on each day of the working week. Each league has its own website where all the fixtures can be found and as the season progresses all the results appear week by week. The league tables and individual performances and averages are updated after every match.

During the season there are in-house competitions and practise nights which are held on Wednesday evenings.

New members are always welcome, the club has plenty of woods so that anyone can just come down and have go.

**Jim Blackburn**( secretary)

## Parish Council Report March 2020

The Parish Council met on 10<sup>th</sup> March. Six members of the public attended the Meeting. Representations were received during the public session regarding footpaths, potholes, clearing of ditches and support for the Church clock. An update was also received on the progression of plans for the proposed community car park.

The Parish Council welcomed a new member, Cllr Dave Mason, who was co-opted onto the Council.

The 3 Parishes Neighbourhood Plan 'Big Questionnaire' has now been compiled and will be delivered to all homes in the parish.

Councillors agreed to order some lamp post poppies to be display to commemorate VE Day on 8<sup>th</sup> May. These will then be re-used for future Remembrance Day events. Councillors considered purchasing signage to remind people to clear up after their dogs. It has been noted that there has been a significant increase recently in dog fouling, which is very disappointing. In the interests of health and safety, and in order to keep the villages clean, residents are asked to please clean up dog waste.

The Parish Council's next Meeting is scheduled for 12<sup>th</sup> May 2020, which is the Annual Meeting of the Parish Council. The Council usually holds the Annual Parish Meeting on the same date; however, due to the current Coronavirus pandemic these Meetings may be subject to change if the Government issues a directive to prevent the holding of these statutory public Meetings. Please check the Parish Council website for updates.

The Parish Council will endeavour to operate a business-as-usual policy regarding the holding of all other Meetings; however, in the interests of public health and safety prevailing national and local circumstances may mean that some Meetings will have to be cancelled. The Parish Council website has useful contact details and links to official websites/phone numbers for official guidance. A special helpline has been set up for those vulnerable members of our community, or those in self isolation, who may require help over the coming weeks and months. **See the back page of this issue of the Bradling Stone for contact details.**

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## ANNOUNCEMENT

Due to the Covid-19 pandemic and in line with current Government advice we have decided to cancel the following:

Quiz and Brewery tour (24.03)  
Cricket Force and membership event  
(29.03)

Junior training at Grove School (Tuesdays)

Please accept our apologies in respect of this decision that has been made with the best interests of all parties concerned.

# Jigsaw

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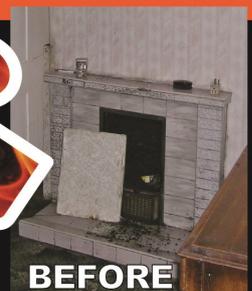


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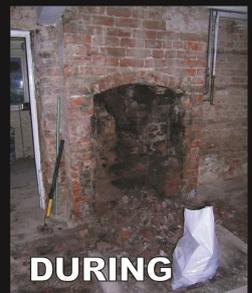
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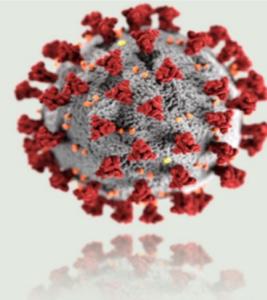
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# Norton In Hales

## Coronavirus Support



With the most recent government advice and the impending isolation measures for the vulnerable and over 70's we are looking to build a village support network.

We are sure that the village community is well prepared and we are already keeping an eye on our neighbours ensuring they have all they need, however the idea behind this initiative is to bolster any support already in place and ensure that our entire community has all the support it needs through these challenging times.

Over the coming months we will be utilising various communication methods for you to make requests for yourself or someone you are supporting locally for any of the following (but not limited to)

- Additional support required no matter how big or small - just ask and we will try our best to support.
- Any request for items from the village inventory (see below).
- Any offers of time which could be used for anything from picking up supplies, mowing a lawn, dog walking, the list is endless.

We will also be looking to create a free village inventory full of useful items that will help over the coming weeks and months such as spare over the counter medicines, food supplies and of course loo rolls but unfortunately you will need to supply your own wine!

If you have anything to offer the inventory, please message us and we will come and pick it up.

We are very lucky to live in such a fantastic community here in Norton in Hales, as always we are stronger together and will come out of this an even closer community than before.

We will be dropping notes through all doors containing the following contact information, detailing ways to get in touch to either offer or request support.

Telephone: **033 000 111 64**

Email: **Info@nortoninhales.org**

WhatsApp: **033 000 111 64**

Facebook: **Norton in Hales**

All methods of contact above are monitored by members of the Norton in Hales community so please rest assured that you'll be speaking to a friendly voice.

If you use WhatsApp then please add this phone number to your contacts and send a message with the word "Subscribe", this will add you to a group that will keep you informed of any important news regarding Norton In Hales and its surrounding areas.

**The adjacent cut-out form has been produced by the Shropshire Star, so that you can offer help to your local neighbours who may be self-isolating.**

**If you need additional help to support your neighbours, please get in touch with the village support co-ordinators whose contact details are listed above.**

**Hello, if you are self-isolating I can help...**

My name is

I live at

My phone number is

If you are self-isolating due to COVID-19 I can help with:

Picking up shopping

Urgent errands

Collecting prescriptions

A friendly phone call

● Stay at home for 14 days if you or anyone in your household has either:

● A high temperature – you feel hot to touch on your chest or back

● A new, continuous cough – this means you've started coughing repeatedly

● People with symptoms living alone should isolate for 7 days

● Do not go to a GP surgery, pharmacy or hospital.

● You do not need to contact 111 to tell them you're staying at home.

● Advice can be found at [www.111.nhs.uk](http://www.111.nhs.uk)



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