



August 2016

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REV. JACKIE TAKES OVER



Jackie

A new face is taking charge of church affairs in our two villages. The Rev. Jackie Lidgate was about to be licensed and installed as Priest in Charge of the United Benefice of Firbeck with Letwell and Woodsetts as FLAG went to press.

Jackie, who lives at Carlton in Lindrick, will be undertaking her pastoral duties as a Self Supporting Minister - which means she'll be working on a part time basis at St. Martin's, St Peter's and St George's and won't be paid.

The appointment comes within weeks of the Bishop of Sheffield suspending the Benefice and deciding not to appoint an Incumbent as Rector or Vicar "for the time being." The new arrangements are likely to be in place for at least five years.

Firbeck's Alan Tolhurst explained that Rev. Jackie would need to "manage her timetable with deftness and skill," but stressed the new priest would "try to meet all reasonable requests."

Alan went on: "The arrangement will mean that residents and parishioners will need to keep in mind her limited availability and assist her in maximising her time in the Benefice."

"While the above arrangement might not meet everyone's wishes or expectations, it should be borne in mind that the alternative option could well have seen the Benefice without the support or leadership of its own clergy person, but be part of a larger less personal grouping."

*Rose, the Hawk, Makes a Surprise Crash Landing
at Letwell Fayre (full story on rear page)*



FRIENDS OF FIRBECK HALL

There is little to add to our last report on Firbeck Hall in the April edition of FLAG. Overall, prospects appear encouraging with the project at an advanced stage approaching submission of a full planning application.

The District Valuer's review has been completed and is back with the owner and his development team but, as we have always been aware, progress to the planning application is inevitably a long and complicated process.

We await the Conservation Officer's latest report on the current state of deterioration and its effects the basic structure of the Hall itself. In fulfilling their responsibilities in respect of listed structures, RMBC are obliged to carry out regular inspections, the latest of which is somewhat overdue.

If you are not already a Friend of Firbeck Hall, but have an interest in the past, present and future of the Hall, please consider joining us. Subscription fee is £1.00 for which you will receive our regular Newsletters and updates on any developments. Contact our membership secretary: email, friends@firbeckhall.net or telephone 01909 732191.

Sid Ellis

WEST COAST SOUNDS ARE COMING

Hit band Prelude - a five piece outfit heavily influenced by harmony-based soft rock acts such as Simon and Garfunkel, Joni Mitchell, Crosby, Stills, Nash and Young and The Eagles - promise to bring a little bit of West Coast America to Letwell on Saturday September 24th.

The band from Newcastle are best known for their inspired acappella version of the classic Neil Young song After The Goldrush which brought them worldwide success reaching the top 20 in the UK, No 12 in the USA and No 1 in both Canada and Australia.

Prelude - likened by many to Fleetwood Mac - have toured widely throughout the UK and US, and played major stadiums alongside Don McClean and Joan Armatrading.

Original members Brian Hume, guitar and vocals and Irene Hume, vocals and percussion, plus Ian Vardy, guitar and vocals, have now been joined by Keith Tulip on bass and Paul Hooper, formerly of The Fortunes, on drums. The band's most recent album - the much acclaimed Belle Vue Sessions - featured ex Lindisfarne star Steve Cunningham on bass and accordion.

Tickets priced £12 are available from Martyn and Andy on 01909 731626 or 540694.

*Anyone wanting tickets for the bus trip to Boy On A Dolphin's show at Sheffield City Hall on Saturday December 17th should phone 01909 731626 ASAP.

HOLIDAY BAG SNATCH

Holidays sometimes don't work out as expected - and a criminal act committed far away from home can destroy the best laid plans in the matter of a few terrifying minutes.

Letwell couple Jane and Duncan Biggins were targeted by an opportunist thief as they drove through Spain heading for a short break in Valencia. Duncan had left the car to use the loo at a motorway garage when the man appeared at the side of the front passenger door looking intently at Jane and her handbag lying on the floor of the footwell.

The man walked away towards a car parked up nearby, but then pointedly spun round staring at Jane. Within a couple of seconds the man was leaning into the car reaching across Jane to snatch her handbag.

Jane told FLAG: "I realised the man was staring at me before anything happened. I thought he was going to do something, and I looked at the ignition and I could see the keys were in place. My brain was telling me to take the keys out, but my hand just wouldn't move. I just froze.

"I thought he might try and take the car. I was more bothered about myself than my handbag.

"I was tussling with him when he got the bag, but he yanked it off me bruising my shoulder."

Jane jumped from the passenger seat as the thief - who appeared to be Moroccan - ran away, and fled with an accomplice in their car.

She added: "I ran after him shouting for Duncan and screaming 'He's got my bag....'"

The couple's passports and return plane tickets vanished with the bag along with Jane's bank card, camera, mobile phone and the keys to their holiday villa. It took them three whole days to sort things out with the bank, the airline and the British Consul.

Jane says the experience came as a terrible shock. "It did spoil the holiday, and it did leave me feeling quite nervous."

MAKE A NOTE OF THE DATE AND BE PREPARED TO TRAVEL THE WORLD!

Firbeck is preparing to host its third scarecrow event on the weekend of September 24th and 25th. The theme will be "Around Firbeck in 80 Days." We are hoping that everyone who made scarecrows last year will take part again, and many more people will have a go too. So start planning now - and who knows where we will end up.

Please let me know if you decide to take part so that I can make sure your scarecrow's location is on the route plan.

Contact Anita: Tel 01709 818927 email stantona50@yahoo.co.uk

POTHoles - THEY'RE GOING TO GET FIXED

Wondering what happened to the re-surfacing of heavily potholed Lamb Lane??

Rotherham MBC have told FLAG that the work - originally scheduled for May - will DEFINITELY go ahead sometime during the summer. Streetpride couldn't offer an explanation for the delay, but an official promised: "It's still in the programme, and will be done, Definitely."

RINGING OWLS, KESTRELS & TREE SPARROWS

Chris Lilley was spotted at work recently checking on the progress of ringed birds at Letwell. Chris gives a short insight here into his work...

Springwatch on television this year showed birds being ringed. Are you aware birds are ringed in and around your villages?

I live at North Anston and hold a permit to ring birds issued under The Wildlife & Countryside Act by the British Trust for Ornithology (BTO). I regularly ring around this area. Bird ringing involves the fitting of small, uniquely numbered, metal rings onto the legs of birds. Identifying birds as individuals helps us to gain an understanding of changes in the survival and movements of bird populations.

Since late April myself and another ringer have been visiting large bird boxes, many in your area, erected by property owners and also a local bird watching group named SK58Birders who meet regularly at South Anston.

We are particularly interested in Owls and Kestrels. Barn Owls are currently nesting in boxes near Dinnington, Anston, Slade Hooton, Firbeck, Woodsetts and Thorpe Salvin. I'm sure there are more and would be interested to know where. A special licence is required to look closely at Barn Owls when nesting. The bird ringing group to which I belong, Sorby Breck Ringing Group, holds such a licence.

So far this year we have placed rings on 20 Kestrel chicks from 5 nests. A Kestrel chick ringed in 2015 was found earlier this year in East Yorkshire. Kestrels are in decline again after recovering from the effects of organochlorine pesticides, possibly linked to reduction in prey availability and changes in first-year and adult survival rates.

I have a particular interest in Tree Sparrows. I currently run one of only six projects in the UK based at The Butterfly House, North Anston, where a large colony live and nest in scores of boxes erected by the owner. The purpose of the project is to establish how long these birds live. Since 2012 I've placed rings on 1025 Tree Sparrows at this location, recapturing nearly 400. I, nor any other bird ringer, has caught one of my ringed Tree Sparrows away from The Butterfly House, so where are they going? The permanent population is around 50, so if you notice a Tree Sparrow on your feeders with a metallic ring on its right leg I would be interested to know, as in all probability it's a bird I've ringed.

Chris Lilley (01909566837) clilley@fsmail.net



Peregrin Falcon

UPDATE FROM FIRBECK PARISH COUNCIL

Firbeck celebrated the Queen's 90th birthday with a Church Service and a 'Bring and Share' lunch jointly organized and sponsored by the Village Hall Committee and the Parish Council (see separate article in Flag). Cllr. Julie Dunker and her husband, Brian, ensured the village flower tubs were beautifully planted for the occasion

Cllr. Caroline Jopling and Cllr. Chris Stanton recently attended a meeting with RMBC Planning Officer Matthew Peck to discuss any potential planning application relating to Firbeck Hall in the future. It was noted that windows, doors, roof and structural work would be a condition of any planning permission and would have to be undertaken prior to any additional development at the site. The owner of Firbeck Hall has intimated that a public meeting about the development will be arranged in the future.

Cllr. Andy Sheil prepared a letter to support the setting up of a defibrillator response scheme in Firbeck. The Parish Council has been advised that the scheme is being progressed, subject to software issues being resolved. Another First Aid Course has been offered by the ambulance service for the 28th September-the first course was a really excellent and comprehensive one culminating in how to use the defibrillator in the event of an emergency.

The general state of the roads in Firbeck has been of great concern, however the Parish Council is delighted to have received news from RMBC that we can expect New Road to be resurfaced this October. Thanks to everyone who has helped highlight these problems to RMBC. For future information, potholes can be reported via the council website. You log on to RMBC and scroll down to 'Council Services' on their homepage, click on 'See more services', then on 'Report it' and follow the instructions. It is a very easy but effective way of highlighting any issues we have with the roads.

At the Annual Parish Meeting it was announced that the Clerk to the Council, Angela Harrison, will be leaving in the near future to take up a post in a bigger council. This means that we will be looking for a new clerk. If there is anyone interested in considering taking up this role please contact one of the councillors.

Two members of the library service attended to talk about the consultation on the proposed changes within this service including stopping the mobile library. Feedback and suggestions for alternatives to some of their proposals were aired.

Cllr. Wendy Hamilton prepared and delivered an interim report on the results of the questionnaire on behalf of the Steering Group. Residents would like to see the Parish Council sponsor events, would like a Welcome Booklet to be available and are interested in having talks around different subjects such as wind turbines, fracking and conservation. There is a lot of interest in the environment and the preservation of wildlife and a great deal of concern about the very poor state of the roads. Although there is a general feeling that the precept is spent satisfactorily, there is some concern about the amount spent on administration. The questionnaires also present some very interesting, practical and positive ideas for our village and we look forward to finishing the process of collating all the responses and setting some aims for the future.

Cllr. Wendy Hamilton

FIRBECK'S CELEBRATION OF QUEEN ELIZABETH II'S 90TH BIRTHDAY

Celebrations began with a Service of Thanksgiving in St. Martin's Church led by Mrs. Diane Barringer. The hymns and Bible passages were chosen because they were known to be held in particular regard by Her Majesty.

The Service was followed by a 'Bring and Share' lunch in Firbeck Village Hall which was attended by many residents and their friends of all ages. As usual the shared food was absolutely fantastic-thanks to everyone for their amazing contributions. The food was enjoyed outside in the fresh air with umbrellas and gazebos welcome at times. But in true Firbeck fashion odd spots of rain could not dampen the enjoyment of the occasion!

The children were well catered for with an extremely popular bouncy slide, a 'Hook a Duck' pool and an art corner where glitter was the order of the day! We were all well entertained by some splendid young dancers who also delighted us with their Maypole dancing enthusiastically led by Enid and Derek Bailey.

All Firbeck children received a commemorative mug kindly donated by the Parish Council. We were also pleased to present mugs to some very special guests who, like the Queen, are nonagenarians.

Thanks go to the Village Hall Committee and to the Parish Council for organising and sponsoring this excellent free event.



Firbeck Celebrates Queen's 90th Birthday



AND LETWELL CELEBRATES TOO.....



Letwell Celebrates

The celebrations at Letwell attracted around 60 people to the village hall - which was decked out for the occasion with bunting and Union Jack flags galore.

The street party - which had been eagerly anticipated for weeks on end - was moved indoors once the weather forecast materialised threatening lots of wet stuff early on the Saturday morning. In the event, it proved to be a cosy affair with space at a premium once all the tables and chairs were in place, but the happy band of Royalists had a ball nonetheless.

Cooked meats and warm baked rolls were provided by the village hall committee with the assembled gathering bringing along their own salads and desserts.

Four travelling minstrels, headed by Roger Brooks, who truth be told had only journeyed round the corner from his home on Ramper Road, performed a medley of Royal tunes. Ukulele player Michael Tinsley brought the house down with a rousing rendition of George Formby's *Leaning on a Lamp Post* - said to be one of Her Majesty's personal favourites.

Thanks go to the village hall committee for arranging the fun and games.

BUSY TIMES FOR THE FIRBECK-CUM-LETWELL WI

Since the last report, we have been rather busy. We had a great day out at Tissington Hall, and had a good wander round Letwell with a delicious lunch afterwards, Then in June and July we learnt how to crochet and make jewellery and also helped out at the Letwell Street Fayre.

So now we are preparing for our 70th Anniversary in July, which will be celebrating our WI being in the two villages, by having a party with burgers and beer on the menu at Letwell.

On the 18th August we will be holding an Afternoon Tea at Lake House, The Yews, Firbeck, from 2 till 4.00 pm. There will be a cake stall, produce, pictures and card stalls, tombola and raffle and entrance is £3 which includes refreshments – now we're just praying for a lovely sunny day. All welcome!

After all that, we settle down to our autumn programme by having a Sports Week in September! No rest for the wicked! And we will hear all about Support Dogs with Liz Kenyon in October.

If you are interested in any of the above events, please contact the Secretary on 01909 540751.

LIA NEEDS A REST!!

Letwell's brave biker Lia Emmerson-Boot returned home last week bone weary after pedalling her "little legs" all the way from Edinburgh to Sheffield. Here she tells FLAG all about the four day charity marathon...

4Challenge was established in 2015 to support those who find themselves battling cancer through raising significant funds for Weston Park Hospital Cancer Charity. Like many who seek to stand alongside those going through unimaginable suffering, we wanted to find a way to challenge ourselves – physically, mentally and emotionally.

In 2015 we raised close to £40,000 for the charity, and £10,000 was used to provide Digital Information Systems in the Radiotherapy and Outpatients waiting areas of Weston Park Hospital. I am proud to say I took part in 4Challenge 15 which was a 380 mile bike ride from London to Sheffield with a team of 16 riders. I did this for Rowena Bradwell, my Aunt, who lived in Letwell for many years, and sadly passed away in 2014 with a brain tumour.

This year I signed up again... I'm a mad woman I know!

With a team of 16 male riders and me (the only female!) the challenge was to complete a 310 mile ride from Edinburgh to Sheffield, via the Lake District, just with a lot more hills than last year. In fact the best way for me to describe the hills is they totalled up to 75% of Mount Everest. Now that's a LOT of climbing, especially with my little legs!

Day one took us from Edinburgh to Lockerbie, day two from Lockerbie to Kendall, day three from Kendall to Huddersfield, and finally Huddersfield to Sheffield on day four.



For 2016 our target is the £33,000 it takes to run the hospital's complementary therapies clinic offering treatments to patients and their carers. I am very proud to say as a team we have so far we have raised over £20,000, including offline donations. Giving us a grand total raised of £60,000 in two years, a incredible amount, I'm sure you will agree.

Your'll likely see me out and about on the bike so please say hello! My next cycling challenge is in August, when I'm doing the coast to coast ride, 2 girls, 2 bikes, 11,000ft of climbing, 150 miles and less than 24 hours to complete!

If you would like to donate, or know more about 4Challenge, please visit here:

<http://www.4challenge.co.uk/donate/>

Thank you everyone who has donated in the village.

Lia's Back Home

RARE BIRDS AND MOTHS ALL AROUND

David Wright has enjoyed an eventful summer so far with lots of rarely seen visitors calling in. David tells all in the latest edition of his ever popular Nature Report...

Here we go, stuffed with goodies. A nice bird for me on 14 April was a Peregrine Falcon on Lamb Lane. We don't see too many of these large, powerful falcons in the local area. Following up April's report of a successful bird feeder in Firbeck, we have a late report from mid-April of a Redpoll on the feeder. A Firbeck resident was pleased to see a Wheatear on Flat Lane on 19 April. Another Firbeck resident reports his pleasure at watching a Greater Spotted Woodpecker on his garden feeder throughout the winter. And yet another Firbeck resident reports successful breeding by a pair of Moorhens this Spring.

We have nesting reports of two pairs of Barn Owls, with at least three chicks successfully bred. It's also very good to report two pairs of Spotted Flycatcher nesting in the area.

Finally, on 7 May, I became possibly the last person in Firbeck to finally see a Red Kite in the area. Interestingly, it was being attacked by a Common Buzzard.

However, the highlight for me was seeing a singing Reed Warbler at Langold Lake on 27 May. This is a new bird for me on the local patch. This plain, brown and buff warbler is a summer visitor from Africa. I once saw a Sedge Warbler at Langold Lake – just once – and the addition of a Reed Warbler is a real treat.

Two Firbeck residents have recently had great enjoyment from their moth trap, which has produced all kinds of moths, including Blood-vein, Brimstone, Common White Wave, Flame Carpet, Green Carpet Moth, Heart and Dart, Poplar Hawk Moth, Peppered Moth, Rosy Rustic, Scorched-wing Moth, Silver-ground Carpet, Swallow Prominent, Treble Lines, Treble Lines (darker version) Waved Umber, plus a beautiful Crane-fly. All the insects are safely released after being recorded. Keep up the good work.

Finally, not such a goodie in the case of the Farmland Birds appeal. Only a few people purchased copies of the Riff Reign album, but every little helps. On the plus side, the album is popular internationally, and the band now has fans in 87 countries.

David Wright 01709 813360 davidandgwenneth@gmail.com

LORRY CURB AT GILDINGWELLS

David Wright has enjoyed an eventful summer so far with lots of rarely seen visitors calling in. David Progress has been made at last to try and curb the menace of huge articulated lorries using the narrow and windy route along Red Quarry Lane and Rotherham Baulk at Gildingwells as a short cut between the M1 and the industrial estates at Carlton in Lindrick.

Years of pressure have finally paid off with Rotherham MBC agreeing to erect warning signs on the approach to the route near the comprehensive school at Dinnington. The local town council along with the school authorities have backed the campaign to try and safeguard pupils crossing Doe Quarry Lane.

Villagers at Gildingwells have been told the signs - declaring the route as Unsuitable for HGVs - will be in place before the new school year begins in September.

THANKS GO TO FLAG

A tentative telephone call concerning a potential spam e-mail led to two old friends making contact after twelve years. We have FLAG to thank for this as it seems to be available on the internet these days! Martyn Sharpe, as editor of the magazine, had received the following e-mail; Hello, My name is Agneta and I am from Sweden. 2000-2003 I lived in China, my neighbor was Chris and Anita Stanton. I have lost all contact information about them.

Today I tried again and found their names under this address. If you know them, would you please ask Anita to

send me an e-mail!

Martyn rang me to make certain that it wasn't spam before forwarding the details.

I was very excited as Agneta and I had spent almost four years living next door to one another and had whiled away the days exploring Nanjing together. We had even holidayed together a couple of times and had cruised along the Yangtze River prior to the completion of the Three Gorges Dam. However it took some weeks before I replied to the e-mail. There was so much to write, but I didn't know where to start after almost twelve years with no contact. In the end I sent a photo of a sign, which I knew would amuse her as it is a rough translation of a Swedish phrase, which she used regularly, slippery floor.

By chance my e-mail arrived on her 65th birthday and I received a jubilant brief reply followed by a long letter bringing me up to date with life in Hallsberg.

We are looking forward to continuing our friendship and I hope to visit Sweden again in the near future. Agneta and Roger have built a new house a few metres from a lake where they swim, fish and relax...sounds like heaven! I'm off to pack my bag!

Celebrating Advent, German style, in China 2004.

Gabi, Anita and Agneta



LETWELL IN 1900 - FAR FROM THE MADDING CROWD

While digging through the internet, FLAG picked up this fabulous newspaper extract from the Leeds Mercury, which details Letwell as it was in 1900. Probably the only difference is the current lack of pigs!

Letwell is first noticed in an account of services due by tenants of the Honor of Tickhill in the reign of Henry II. Thomas de Letwell was said to hold an acre of land here by serjeantry, and the service of receiving a brachet (or hound) at the Feast of the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin (September 8th), and to have 31/2d. per day for keeping it through the winter.

The Letwell Manor, held for two centuries by the ancient family of Mauleverer, was sold by Sir Ralph Knight in 1662, who had established himself at Langold a few years previously. It was his descendant, John Gally Knight, the brother of the "Yorkshire Ruskin" and his wife, who made Letwell the admirable little village we see today.

According to the "Humour of Yorkshire Nomenclature," let loyalists go to Lealbolm, landlords to Letwell, and Litigants to Settle. Yet Letwell looks still, as in the days of John Gally Knight, like one of those villages specially cared for by a good squire, and attached to his park; so that common landlords might stand but a poor chance of getting any sort of footing in it.

And in its compactness the village makes a delightful little vignette, which might be called "far from the madding crowd." so retired is it from the workaday, knockabout world. The stranger is conscious of inquisitive faces peering out of tiny windows; of sheep-dogs that know the difference between native and stranger; of gray walls here and there clad with ivy; of a tiny post-office, where little or no business is ever done; of a bit of green which answers the purpose of a grasshopper's doorstep to three or four red old domiciles; of little pent-house porches of wood, where martins twitter; of the cottage of Moses Marsden, the village sexton; of yellow flowers one has never seen before growing up house sides and by palings; of a wain over whose sides and tail-board are piled garsel and pliant fence-laths, which the farm-man is raking down with a fork; of a private road at the bottom of the street, and a gate thrown across it, the road passing on into waving woods, and the only living thing visible a pig grubbing on the bank by the gate-house.

In the midst of a delightful daisied meadow studded with fine forest trees stands a picturesque octagon pigeon-cote of red brick. Pathways meander across fields, and in a large grange at the back of the village several rustic figures are moving.

A violet and speedwell lane leads up to the little Late Gothic Church of St. Peter hard by, built of blue-grey Limestone, with slates to match, and a little blue-grey tower verging on the quaint. The edifice was much injured by fire in December, 1867, but was carefully restored two years later by Sir T. W. White, Bart., of Wallingwells, and subsequently nearly every window was glazed with stained glass.

A more peaceful spot on a summer's day it would scarcely be possible to find in the Broad Acres. The Churchyard commands very extensive sylvan views. Laughton-en-le-Morthen spire - one of the finest in Yorkshire - pricks up like a needle above a belt of wood about three and a half miles to westward in a bee-line. All among the churchyard cowslips is this inscription to Henry Burghby, a cherub of nine years :-

This lovely bud, so young and fair.
Called hence by early doom.
Just to show how bright a flower
In Paradise would bloom.

If you want to read more like this, we got it from www.rotherhamweb.co.uk/district/letwell1900.htm

LETWELL DEFIES THE WEATHER

Letwell's annual summer fayre was hit by a torrential downpour or two - but the crowds turned up as usual on July 2nd determined to have a good time come what may.

The Hawks of Steel falconry team from Thoresby Hall stole the show with a stunning display of aerial stunts. The star performer - a falcon called Rosie - brought gasps from the audience by flying free through a tunnel of outstretched arms. Rosie seemed unconcerned by the fun and games going on all around, and even surprised one or two visitors by landing on top of their umbrellas as they walked along the village street.



Thurcroft Brass Band, guests at the show for the last five years, added a touch of oompah to the proceedings while the Heartsease Country Dancers went through their energetic paces accompanied by the Jolly Beggars folk band. New village residents Martin and Louise Shaw added to occasion by bringing along their prized collection of World War Two military vehicles, and dressing up in uniform.

Letwell's younger visitors seemed perfectly happy all afternoon jumping up and down on the bouncy castle, clambering all over the fire engine, and sounding the siren on the visiting police patrol car. The first ever Letwell Mouse Hunt proved a big hit with the children as well. All the usual traditional sideshows, splat the rat, pot smashing and the coconut shy did a roaring trade. As expected, the snail racing attracted a slow stream of visitors. A girl snail - aptly nicknamed Michelle!! - was rumoured to be the fastest of the day.

The proceeds, which go to St Peter's Church, totalled around £2,200 - a huge achievement given the weather on the day.

