



October 2021

Copy Deadline for next issue January 10 2022

## **BEWARE THE FRAUDSTERS**

Villagers are being urged to beware the danger of fraudsters after a long-time Letwell resident was almost robbed of thousands of pounds in a clever scam.

With the help of police and staff at two banks Doreen Bussey was able to foil the scammers in the nick of time - but Doreen still doesn't understand how the criminals accessed her account details in the first place.

Tesco Bank sounded the first alert with a phone call telling Doreen that a large amount of money - amounting to £5000 - had been withdrawn from her card.

The transaction had been tracked down to Carlisle and the funds had been used to buy a large quantity of cigars.

Tesco reacted quickly and credited Doreen with the missing cash - but two days later she got a call from a man claiming to be from Natwest telling her that £7000 had been stolen from her account to pay Churchill Insurance.

Sounding plausible, the man said the bank had traced the fraudster to one of their own employees, and provided Doreen with a new account number and sort code to set up new arrangements. Then the man - who somehow was calling from a genuine Natwest phone number - told her to pay £6000 into the account, and said he'd call back within hours to check the transaction had gone through.

Rightly suspicious, Doreen called the police, who intervened straight away, and thwarted the fraudsters.

Doreen urges people to be more vigilant. "I still don't how it happened," she says, "and how the scammers managed to get my card details. The whole thing has been a nightmare."

\*Doreen tells her own story inside this issue of FLAG



*Found in a local field  
coin 1700 years old*

## NEWS FROM FIRBECK PARISH COUNCIL

Now that we are back up and running with normal council meetings in the village hall we would be delighted to see you there. We meet generally on the fourth Wednesday of the month - every two months. Our next meeting will be on Wednesday 24th November at 7pm. Our agenda is always posted on Firbeckonline and a paper copy will be on the village notice board before the meeting. As you know, our parish is part of Dinnington Ward and our local ward councillors have committed to having at least one of them attending our parish council meetings as a matter of course. In this way, not only can they keep abreast of matters of concern to us here in Firbeck but they can let us know of initiatives ward and borough wide which may be of interest to us. So expect to see "Ward update" as a regular item on our meeting agendas going forward.

We last met on the 22nd September 2021 when we discussed a number of things including:-

- supporting the Village Hall committee with their grant application for funding the planned new garden
- having a second de fibrillator located in the telephone box and in the interim agreeing to its continued use this winter as a food donation point (for the Rotherham Food bank) organised by Jane Crownshaw
- launching an art competition to design a comparative mug to mark the Queens Platinum Jubilee next year as a first step in what we hope will be a programme of activities and events celebrating the Jubilee working with other organisations in the village.
- how we can maintain and possibly better display the wooden village sign at the junction of Kidd Lane and New Road
- plans for a new village sign and planting on the grass verge on Kidd Lane
- arrangements for the annual Christmas tree event to take place on Sunday 28th November
- getting clarity on RMBC's grass cutting/verge maintenance in the village
- next steps towards formulating our Neighbourhood Plan

## NEWS FROM FIRBECK PARISH COUNCIL

In other news;

**Firbeck Hall** – Many people have been asking us what the situation is regarding the planning application at Firbeck Hall and we have been trying, with the assistance of Cllr. Whormesley and our MP, to find out if the application for the extended development has been withdrawn since, as we understand matters, the planning department and the district valuer do not support the application. To date we have no news on this but a further application has been made to have some conditions attaching to the earlier permissions (RB2017/0875 & 0890) varied which would seem to suggest that the developers are reverting to the initial scheme - we have yet to consider this new application as details were slow to be uploaded to the planning portal. You can find this on the RMBC planning portal under reference RB2021/1801.

**I love Firbeck project** – Cllr Jo Pittard gives us this up date :

In the last edition of FLAG, we shared information about this year's entry to the RHS Britain in Bloom digital competition.

The village response was fantastic: at short notice we had residents litter picking, strimming verges, weeding and tidying, along with tending to their own gardens, ahead of taking photos to submit with the online entry. A number of residents also took the time to email in photos of their gardens, providing a comprehensive library of images from around the village.

We are really pleased to share that Firbeck was awarded two certificates, one for overall achievement and a second for Excellence in Community and Environment, both of which reflect the hard work undertaken and pride everyone shares in our village. We'd like to thank everyone for their contribution to preparing the village- it looked fantastic!

Copies of the certificates, along with the assessor's comments, will be placed in the village noticeboard for everyone to read.

We will now await the opening of registration for the 2022 Britain in Bloom competition: we will be looking to enter both the Spring and Summer judging, which should revert back to a face to face judging process. More details will be released in the coming months, but a heads up to start planting those bulbs and planning your spring displays, ready for an April judging.

We plan to properly launch other exciting aspects of the project in the spring of 2022.

Enjoy the inevitable leaf sweeping tasks that the autumn weather blesses us all with!

Caroline Jopling (Chair FPC)

## DRAINS AND TREES

Two outstanding projects should begin at Letwell in the next few weeks.

The flooding on the Ramper - which has been a persistent problem for several years - will see a new drain installed by RMBC.

The council have made several site visits, and have re-assured the parish council that the work will be undertaken in the autumn.

Residents living nearby are anxious to see the project completed before the winter weather and heavy rain hits home.

One neighbour told FLAG: "We are used to seeing a lake appear on the road. When the water freezes it's so hazardous for passing traffic. We just want to see the new drain in place."

Once completed, the new drain will carry floodwater safely under the road. A connection will then be made to take the excess water under the fields at the back of the village to the pond.

The second project involves the removal of a large diseased tree which stands on the triangle of grass at the junction of Church Lane and Gildingwells road.

RMBC say the tree - which shed a huge branch a few months ago - is unsafe and cannot be saved.

The parish council plans to replace the lost tree with a new sapling - which would also commemorate the Queen's Platinum Jubilee next year.

## "SOMEONE LOST THEIR MONEY 1700 YEARS AGO..."

Ace Letwell metal detectorist Christina Warr tells FLAG about her latest incredible find in a field on the edge of the village last week...

"The coin I found is Tetricus Junior, I hope you can make out the crown and face in the photograph on the front page of FLAG.

You may think counterfeiting is something that only happens now, but it has been happening for centuries.

"During the second half of the 3rd century there was great political and financial collapse. At this point there was large scale minting of imitation Roman coins. These are known as 'barbarous radiates,' and the most frequently copied were the antoniniani of the Gallic rulers Tetricus Senior and Tetricus Junior (ca.270-273).

"One thing for certain is we will never know if it is real or counterfeit, but someone lost their money here in our local fields 1700 years ago.

"Our village and fields have been occupied longer than you might think.

"If you have a garden or field you would like me to search please feel free to get in touch."

Christina x

## UPDATE FROM FIRBECK-CUM-LETWELL WI

We are at last returning to some form of normality and we started with our monthly meeting in September. Sue Barton gave us the history of scarves and sarongs (Cleopatra apparently wore them) and we were then shown how to tie our scarves in different styles...some of us more dextrously than others!

Our October meeting has Maggie Watkins telling us of the history of the Pilgrim Fathers - their 400th anniversary was last year.

It has been decided that our winter meetings (November, December, January and February) will be in the afternoon at 2.00pm at Firbeck Village Hall. We will resume our evening meetings in March next year when the weather has improved.

In November, Janice Arblaster will be helping us with a craft project. December, we have our Christmas party (Yule and Fuel). At the January meeting, Sheila and Frank will be letting us know how The Show Must Go On and our local author, Steph Varah, will be relating the ups and downs of writing her book - The Woodsman - in February. A very varied programme - something to interest all of us.

If you are interested in any of the above and would like to join us, please do not hesitate to contact the Secretary on 01909 540751.

## POPPY APPEAL 2021

Last year the Poppy Appeal was badly affected by Covid 19 with house to house collections, a major source of donations in Woodsetts District, banned. This year's centenary Poppy Appeal launches on Thursday 28th October and Remembrance Sunday is the 14th November. In Woodsetts District, including Firbeck, Gildingwells and Letwell, poppies will be available in the usual places and local volunteers will be back making house to house collections.

Every poppy makes a difference to the lives of our Armed Forces community and 100 years on, your support is as vital as ever.

A number of local organisations and individuals take wreaths and other remembrance items and I can provide these items to others if requested, preferably as soon as possible. I am always pleased to hear from potential volunteer house to house collectors, both for this year and the future.

Chris Stanton – Poppy Appeal Organiser – Woodsetts District.

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## NATURE REPORT

Phew! This is a red-hot October report!

Starting with a rare bird in Firbeck! A resident contacted me about a bird of prey he'd seen close-up in his garden in early June. He described it as greyish black, bigger than a Blackbird, but smaller than a Wood Pigeon, with a pink beak and feet. His description is a perfect match for a male Red-footed Falcon, a rare bird that sometimes strays into England from the continent in May/July. Gwen and I once saw a female in Norfolk many years ago. The bird is mainly found in eastern Europe and Asia, but its numbers are falling due to habitat loss. It's migratory, wintering in Africa.

Continuing with the raptor theme, I've had a report of a Little Owl with three chicks in Firbeck in early July. There are also reports of Red Kite, including one I saw on Kidd Lane on 16th August.

Firbeck residents have reported several sightings of Green Woodpeckers on their lawns – presumably feeding on ants. These sightings always give pleasure, as the bird is stunningly attractive.

A property in Firbeck was graced with three House Martin nests, which is great news.

I was delighted to see Yellowhammers on East Field Road and Penny Hill, Firbeck in mid-July. This declining species is now on the Red List of Conservation Concern.

The first report of Autumn Migration (to Africa) came in the form of a female Wheatear on the airfield on 21st September. I had a walk on the airfield on 1st October which produced Carrion Crow, Linnet, Red-legged Partridge, over a hundred Rooks, Skylark, Stock Dove and Wood Pigeon.

A Firbeck resident send me a stunning photo of an Elephant Hawk Moth taken at her house on 18 July. The huge caterpillars look like elephants' trunks and have eyespots to scare off predators.

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*Elephant Hawk Moth*

## CHRISTMAS FAIR AT FIRBECK VILLAGE HALL

After last Christmas everyone deserves an extra special Christmas 2021! So wrap up warm, and start your festivities early at Firbeck Village Hall Christmas Fair. On Saturday 18th December, between 4pm and 7pm, the Village Hall carpark will be transformed into a winter wonderland, complete with lights, music, traditional Christmas stalls, games to delight young and old, and of course a visit from Santa himself!

Sing-a-long to your favourite Christmas Carols played by Thurcroft Brass Band while enjoying a mulled wine (or hot chocolate), some delicious warming food, and a mince pie or two. Browse the Christmas Market stalls, filled with reasonably priced handcrafted gifts, and an assortment of homemade tasty festive treats, whilst the children visit Santa and his trusty elf or enjoy a game of 'Hook the Christmas Duck'.

Everyone is welcome and entry is free so put the date on your calendar now so that you don't miss out on all the fun!



## CANDLELIT CHURCH CONCERT WITH TOP CLASSICAL TENOR

Sheffield's foremost classical tenor is to perform alongside keyboards player Lewis Nitikman at a special pre-Christmas candlelit concert at St Peter's Church in Letwell.

Gareth Lloyd is co founder of Opera on Location which is dedicated to performing opera in unusual spaces, and boasts a formidable reputation as musical director of the Easy Street Theatre Company.

The hugely talented performer promises a wide-ranging programme of popular classical pieces. His performance of Nessun Dorma has won much acclaim in the past.

Canadian Lewis, a regular visitor at the village hall with his song writing partner John Reilly, says the acoustics at St Peter's guarantee a night to remember.

"I've been to the church, and the acoustics are something special. Gareth's voice is perfect for the space."

The concert takes place on Saturday December 18th at 7.30 pm.

Tickets priced £10 - which include a drink at the interval - are available from Martyn on 01909 731626/07909 960 422 or Matt on 07746 871 392.



Tenor Gareth Lloyd

## LETWELL COMMUNITY GROUP

Letting you know what is going on in Letwell

Over recent months a number of changes have been made to the administration of Letwell Village Hall. The management of the hall has been passed to the Parish Council. If you would like to book the village hall contact Janice Sharpe on 01909 731626 or call at 4 Barker Hades Road.

From this re-organisation the Letwell Community Group was born. The remit of this group is to fund raise for the benefit of Letwell parish, enrich the lives of Letwell residents by fostering exciting, interesting, fun events and to generate a good community spirit by being as inclusive as possible. The community group will comprise of a regular core of people, who will meet regularly. We welcome and encourage input from residents, who might want to contribute on a casual basis.

What do we have planned? There will be a monthly get together on the last Friday of each month starting 29th October. The village hall will be opened at 18.00 hours for anyone in the village to meet and use the facilities. During the evening the monthly lottery draw will be drawn. A music night is booked for November 6th when John Reilly and Lewis Nitikman will be performing. The Christmas party is on Saturday December 11th when Dinnington Brass Band will play with a raffle, quiz, lottery and pie and pea supper. New Year's Eve is already being planned and more details will follow.

If you would like to receive emails about what is going on send an email to [letwellvh@gmail.com](mailto:letwellvh@gmail.com) asking to be added to the group. All email addresses are kept private. There is also a new Facebook page which will detail events and other information for Parish residents only. (Search for Letwell Village Community Group).

We are looking forward to seeing at the village hall very soon.



*Letwell village plaque*

## REMEMBRANCE SUNDAY

Letwell's remembrance Sunday service will be starting at 10 am on November 14th.

Services at St Peter's usually begin at 9.30 am, but the later timing is necessary so the congregation can gather and pay their respects at the war memorial on Gildingwells Road.



## FRIENDS OF FIRBECK HALL

The situation at Firbeck Hall remains unchanged and at a standstill with virtually no significant activity over the whole of 2021.

With the rejection of their major enterprise for an over-55s gated community, the owners One Construction, are left with the original approved plan for conversion of both Hall and Stable block into apartments together with a number of large luxury dwellings.

Of course, in the intervening period, circumstances are considerably changed, particularly in respect of costs and availability of materials.

The latest activity we are aware of is a planning application covering some minor but necessary changes to the original plans.

All the evidence to date indicates that there will be no effective activity over the rest of this year. Although the major objective of the 'Friends' has been virtually achieved with both Firbeck Hall and it's stable-block restored, the lack of further progress certainly concerns us.

Sid Ellis

## VILLAGE LOTTERY

The cost of the monthly village hall lottery at Letwell is going to rise from £4 to £5 from the start of the new year.

The £4 charge was applied way back when the lottery started in the mid 90s.

All the funds go towards the upkeep of the hall.

The draw offers a monthly first prize of £50 with £100 on offer at Christmas. The second prize has increased in recent times - thanks to an increase in the number of people taking part - and now offers the runner up £30 or more.

## RATS AND FROGS

Rats have been causing a problem at Letwell - stripping trees of apples in a garden on Gildingwells Road.

Rodent activity at the village pond has also increased.

RMBC, who are paid by the parish council to keep the rats at bay, have reported an increase in numbers at the site.

Apparently it's to be expected once the fields are harvested, or so the council rat catcher told FLAG.

On a happier note, frogs have been leaping about merrily on Barker Hades Road.

One small juvenile was even caught jumping about the kitchen of a house last week.

You'll be pleased to hear the householder grabbed the wandering amphibian and returned him - or was it her - to the wild.

## CHANGES AT THE VILLAGE HALL

Letwell Parish Council has taken over responsibility for running the Village Hall. The need for the change was necessary with the signing of a new long-term lease with the Diocese of Sheffield, who own the hall.

The original lease was negotiated by the parish council after a five year fund raising project to save the building from collapse. At the time the hall had been condemned by the environmental health department at Rotherham MBC, and was unusable. Worse still there had been fears about the building being converted for residential use.

Meanwhile, the parish council plans to re-start the highly successful music programme at the village hall in the new year.

More details will be revealed in the next few weeks as bookings are made.

## PLAQUE FELLED BY WINDS

Gale force winds in early October brought the Letwell village sign crashing to the ground.

The cast iron, hand painted plaque has stood in pride of place on the grass verge across the road from the village hall for 25 years.

It came from a specialist foundry in Norfolk, and was bought by the parish council boosted by funds from the family of former villager Keith Clarke, who helped rescue the village hall from dereliction and died in the mid 90s.

Thankfully, the heavy sign itself was undamaged, but the bracket which held it in place on the oak post broke with the impact. On examination the post - which ended up laying on the ground - was found to be beyond repair.

Letwell parish council are hoping to make good the damage in the next few months, and the plaque should be back in residence on Barker Hades Road before too long.

There are plans afoot to have the sign re-painted before it returns to service.

## FIRBECK WINS AWARD FROM RHS JUDGES



## THEY TOLD ME TO TRANSFER £6000

My name is Doreen Bussey. I live at Letwell, and I hope by sharing my story in FLAG I can save you from losing thousands of pounds to the scammers.

My story begins just a few weeks ago with a call from Tesco bank informing me that a large amount of money had been spent on my card. After some security questions the fraud squad was on to it and it was revealed that the card had been scammed. The amount taken was £5,000 for an on line purchase in Carlisle of cigars.

Money was credited back to my account - job done or so I thought!

But two days later Nat West got in touch with much the same story only this was a much bigger scam.

The man informing me of what had occurred told me my card had been used for £7,000 of insurance from Churchill .He said it was a fraud carried out by a member of the Nat West staff,. and to prove it he gave me a new sort code and account number.

He told me to transfer £6,000 into the account and said if anyone asked why I needed to do it say it was for my grand-daughter. He said he would ring at 2 o clock and check if it had been done.

My reaction was to inform the police and they came and took a statement.

The phone never stopped ringing from 2 o clock to a quarter past 3, but the police told me not to answer until the number that had been flashing up all the time stopped.

I rang the number eventually, and guess what ,,,,it was Nat West Bank. The scammer had been using the bank line all the time!!

How they manage to keep an open line like that of the bank beggars belief but they can .....

Nat West sorted it out, but because the Nat West and Tesco Bank cards were in the same wallet the scammer got them both.

Huge lesson learned!!

I've now bought a special scam proof wallet.

I urge you all to protect your cards and if you are of a certain age. Do not let people say they target the old and vulnerable.

Age is a number and at 80 I am not old and a lot of the time we make ourselves vulnerable with the decisions we make and indeed the decisions we don't make.

I hope you find this information of interest and helpful

Regards Doreen

# A FLORILEGIUM SHEFFIELD'S HIDDEN GARDEN

Local Firbeck resident Valerie Oxley has been busy during lockdown writing and putting the finishing touches to her new book, *A Florilegium Sheffield's Hidden Garden*, written for the Florilegium Society at Sheffield Botanical Gardens.

The book features over 100 illustrations from the Society's Archive, now stored at Sheffield City Archives. Each illustration is accompanied by a plant profile, stating when and where the plant was found in the wild and explaining something of its history, uses and botany. It is a book for everyone to enjoy, whatever the season.

The Sheffield Botanical Gardens are a much-loved venue in the heart of the City, they have been the home of the Florilegium Society since it was formed in 2002. Members normally meet monthly in the beautiful Dorothy Fox Educational Centre, for lectures, workshops and painting days. Some members live locally in Tickhill, Harthill, Worksop and Retford.

The Society is affiliated to Chelsea Physic Garden Florilegium Society as well as similar Societies at Hampton Court, The Eden Project, Brooklyn Botanic Garden New York and Sydney Botanic Garden, Australia. The Sheffield Florilegium Society is the fourth Florilegium Society to produce a book highlighting their plant portraits.

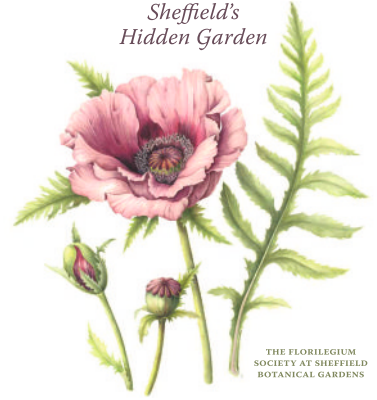
The book contains articles about early florilegia dating from the early herbals, a history of the Society and a history of the Society's Herbarium. Included is a history of the Botanical Gardens written by Alison Hunter the Gardens' historian.

Publication date is July 2021. Copies can be obtained from the Crowood Press, [www.crowood.com](http://www.crowood.com)

Hardback £25

## A FLORILEGIUM

*Sheffield's  
Hidden Garden*



THE FLORILEGIUM  
SOCIETY AT SHEFFIELD  
BOTANICAL GARDENS



*Getting ready for the Britain in Bloom judges*