

Your Parish MAGAZINE

What's on in
Seer Green
& Jordans

March 2022



**SGG spring
show**

**Films at
Jordans
Picture House**

**Mothers Day
Flowers**

**Toddlers in
the Woods**



one pound

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From the Editors

March is a busy month with St David's and St Patrick's days traditions to celebrate plus Shrove Tuesday and Ash Wednesday in the Church calendar. More events are returning locally and in person like the SGG Spring Show and local Theatre productions. 'Toddlers in the Woods' is proving a great way to build resilience in the young! Talking

of resilience, read about the Seer Green Scouts news! We look forward to more outdoor ventures in 'those March days when the sun shines hot and the wind blows cold: when it is summer in the light, and winter in the shade' (from Great Expectations by Charles Dickens).

Phil Moody, Sue Puttergill and Carol Wright

Next Month's Magazine

Please send all contributions for the **April** issue to:

editorseergreen@gmail.com by **7 March**. Diary dates for the next two or three months would be very welcome.

Articles should be **300 words max** and photos should be jpeg format, preferable 300 dpi.

Please note any items submitted may be edited for space, content or style.

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 - FC (adults) Art Anderson 07919 027351

Seer Green Village Choirs
 Jane Smith 07759 841205

Thought for the Month



2 March, Ash Wednesday, sees the start of Lent; traditionally a time of fasting and penitence. Many will give up something such as chocolate, alcohol or plastic usage (very challenging). Others may decide to give Lent a positive slant by adding something such as joining a study group to learn more about Jesus, or doing an extra good deed each day.

The past two years have been very difficult for all of us, especially so for those on the front line in the NHS, or who have lost loved ones and been unable to say goodbye to them. Everyone has worked very hard to see us through these times, but not everything has gone right and there have been criticisms, recriminations and bitterness. As we take stock there will be things we regret both personally and nationally – in church terms we will be penitent.

Whatever has gone wrong in the past, whatever life throws at us day by day and in the future, there is always something to be thankful for and it is this that helps keep us going and looking forward to a brighter future.

Let's make Lent 2022 not just a time of fasting and penitence, but a time of thankfulness. We have so much to thank God for. We live in a beautiful area with friendly people, community spirit and good schools. In our benefice, we have a new rector, Rev Dan Beesley, which means we can now look forward to appointing a vicar for Holy Trinity. While we wait we are very grateful for Jenny, Paul and Janna taking our services and our wardens keeping the church going.

Whatever else we do, let's thank God for one person or thing each day during Lent; it will lift our spirits too!

Linda West



Church Events | News

Church news

Baptisms

Rev Jenny and Janna have had the pleasure of hosting baptism preparation for 8 couples who are planning on having their little ones baptised. After 18 months without any baptisms it has been lovely to have had 4 children baptised during January and February and we look forward to welcoming more into the church family over the coming months. If you would like to find out more about baptism please do get in touch, whatever age you are!



Freddie's baptism



Maisie's baptism



Amelia's baptism

Our search for a new vicar continues...

With the appointment and installation of Rev Dan Beesley as Rector of the Benefice we are now able to move forward in our search for a new vicar for Holy Trinity. A small group from the PCC is putting together our parish profile to entice the right person to apply for the position, and the job advertisement will be advertised later

in the Spring. We are hoping and praying to have someone in post by the autumn.

175th Birthday

In 2022 Holy Trinity has its 175th Birthday. At the moment we are trying to think of ways to celebrate this special milestone. If you have any ideas, or would like to get involved please do speak with the Church Wardens or one of the ministry team.

The Great Seer Green Easter Egg Hunt is back!

More details to come at the beginning of April but book the date in your diary for a family friendly easter egg hunt with challenges around the village and yummy prizes to be won.

For more information please contact Janna on 07764 490960, or jannaholder@talktalk.net.



Holy Trinity Services in March

- 6 Mar 8am BCP Communion Service, in person only
10am All-age Service, in person and YouTube
- 13 Mar 10am Holy Communion Service, in person and YouTube
- 20 Mar 8am BCP Communion Service, in person only
10am Morning Praise, in person and YouTube
- 27 Mar 10am Holy Communion Service, in person and YouTube

Ash Wednesday

2 Mar Benefice Service for Ash Wednesday, CSG

Our streamed service will be on our YouTube channel:

<https://tinyurl.com/yc6nj52p>

For more information about families' activities, please contact Janna on 07764 490960.

Services may be changed if circumstances dictate. Please keep an eye on our Facebook page or website for more information.

Baptisms, weddings and funerals

Baptisms

- 16 January Emilia Angell
Freddie Chesterman
- 23 January Maisie Milner

Memorial Service

- 19 January Robert Lomas



Contact us

Holy Trinity website

www.seergreenandjordanscofe.org

Church Wardens and
General Enquiries

Jane Spoerry 01494 677328

Janine Dunnell janine.dunnell@gmail.com

Reading for Lent

Suggested by Rev Jenny Tebbboth - Assistant Minister

I have been reading 'Cries for a Lost Homeland' by Guli Francis-Dehqani; forced to flee her home country of Iran at the age of 14 and now the Bishop of Chelmsford. Her six chapters are based around the words of Jesus from the cross interwoven with reflections on her own life and experience of loss. I suggest reading this book at a leisurely one chapter per week and if you can share it with a group for some discussion, so much the better. She touches on deep questions of suffering, forgiveness and identity and I have found her perspective has given enabled me to own the words of Jesus in a new way. *Canterbury Press £8.99*

For group study you might also try the Diocesan course 'Come and See' based around the Lord's Prayer.

<https://www.oxford.anglican.org/come-and-see/>

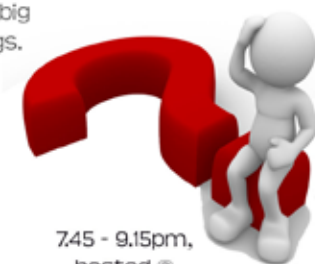


What do you think?

Join us for an informal evening with relaxed discussion as we explore our big questions and enjoy yummy puddings.

10th & 24th March
7th & 28th April
12th & 26th May

"WHAT'S THE MEANING OF LIFE?" "DO I HAVE A PURPOSE?" "IS THERE MORE TO LIFE THAN THIS?" "IS THIS IT?" "A GOD?" "WHAT AM I DOING HERE?"



7.45 - 9.15pm,
hosted @
Seer Green Baptist Church

Alpha is led by Louise Gilbertson & Janna Holder and supported by SG Baptist Church & Holy Trinity Church
For more information please contact Louise 07983 882260 or Janna 07764 490960

February charity of the month – Wycombe Women's Aid



Holy Trinity Church, Seer Green and Jordans nominates and collects for a charity each month of the year and this month's charity is Wycombe Women's Aid.

Wycombe Women's Aid provides a refuge and offers emergency, temporary and safe accommodation for women on their own and women with children who are escaping domestic violence.

The refuge not only provides a confidential safe house where women and children can go if they are escaping domestic violence, but it is also safe place where there are employees available to support women in deciding what they want to do next.

Wycombe Women's Aid also has a dedicated children's service which aims to meet the emotional, physical and educational needs of all the children living in the refuge. It provides a safe and supportive environment in which children can play, experience new activities, talk about their experiences of domestic violence, spend time with other children who have had similar

experiences and increase their self-confidence and self-esteem.

Donating is easy!

You can still donate by using the blue charity envelopes in church. During these socially distanced times, you may find it easier to donate directly by a bank transfer.

Account details

Lloyds Bank
Wycombe Women's Aid Ltd
30-94-28
02309363

If donating online, please consider gift aid. For a Gift Aid Form, please email rachel@rachelgibson.org

Non-financial donations are also gratefully received. Many of the families are on a low income and items in need are:

- Good quality second hand clothes and shoes
- Good quality second hand toys
- New toiletries
- Nappies and baby wipes
- Towels (new or good quality second hand)
- School uniform
- Food

Village Events | News

Your Mother's Day Gift Sorted!

Come along and buy a beautiful bouquet, planter, bulb or fresh spring flowers from Seer Green on Saturday 26 March, outside the shops on Orchard Road.

Hello, my name is Alexios and I am raising money for my Explorer Scout Jamboree trip to South Korea in the Summer of 2023. I would love you to come along and buy from a selection of stunningly made arrangements made under the expert eye of Rachel Gibson, Seer Green's resident professional florist.

We start selling at 9.30am, be sure not to miss out.

If you would like something bespoke, then please pre-order at:

rachel@rachelgibson.org
07957684109

To guarantee your stunning bouquet, advance orders are welcomed and encouraged.

See you on **Saturday 26 March**

Back by popular demand!
Pop Up Florist Shop

Mother's Day Flowers
Saturday 26th March
9.30am onwards

The Green, Seer Green
Outside shops on Orchard Road

Hand tied bouquets, bulbs, planters and bunches of spring flowers

Please order in advance to ensure availability
Rachel Gibson rachel@rachelgibson.org / 07957684109

All profits towards 1st Seer Green Scouts
representing UK at World Scout Jamboree South Korea 2023

Seer Green Gardeners

Face to face events return

Big thanks to everyone who took part in our first ever participation survey. We now have a much clearer picture of people's interests when it comes to gardening support and it's informing our 2022 planning. Check our website for details as they develop. Early dates confirmed so far are:

Friday 25 March, 7.30-9.30pm Jubilee Hall - Our 2021 Springfest included a very popular Zoom talk by gardening expert, Timothy Walker. This year, he'll be educating and entertaining us in person. Follow the link on the website to the Eventbrite booking form

Saturday 26 March - return of our Spring Show in the Baptist Church Hall. Why not put in some (free of charge) entries this year? Classes are listed at seergreengardeners.org.uk and include home-made food, seasonal flowers from your garden or allotment and houseplants. Open to all in the afternoon for viewing exhibits, prize-giving and of course, tea and cake! Free admission.



March is definitely one of my favourite months of the year for gardening - the season of promise ... no matter that many of them may be dashed by autumn!!

If you'd like to share your gardening queries, ideas and achievements, there's a new SG Gardening WhatsApp group.

To join it, just drop an email to seergreengardeners@gmail.com



Tips for March

- Clean and check garden tools. Chesham's Workaid is a great charitable resource for sustainable buying or disposing of all manner of gardening kit.
- If you grow annuals and/or veggies in containers, it's not necessary to start afresh with new compost each year. Instead just take out the top few inches and spread it around established plants or veg seed beds, then top up with new.
- It's a bit early for most veg sowing outdoors, but not for broad beans and onion sets. Re-use plastic pots, garden centre modules etc to give other crops an early start indoors. Somewhere cool is best to stop them growing too fast and becoming leggy.

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One Can

Seer Green has been fantastic in supporting One Can Trust for the last 2 years. The team at the warehouse are always on standby with a trolley to unload your generous donation into.

Unfortunately, the warehouse shelves are looking really empty – the situation has become a lot worse this year with the reduction in Universal Credit and the rising cost of fuel and food.

We now have 5 collection points in the village as the Baptist Church has kindly offered to put one outside the entrance. The others are Best One, rear of 5 Coat Wicks, 46 Orchard Road and Walton House, Manor Crescent.

The most needed items are always Tinned meat, i.e. stewing steak, mince, chicken etc, UHT milk, tinned vegetables and tinned fruit.

I update the list on the Community What's App group for specific items, but those above are always urgently needed.

If you can donate, we can help to make the lives of some families in need slightly better and reduce their worry of how they're going to feed their children.

Janet Stewart



Seer Green Allotment Association News

*We go, in winter's biting wind,
On many a short-lived winter day,
With aching back but willing mind
To dig and double-dig the clay.*
(Excerpt from The Diehards by Ruth Pitter)

This March we hope to enjoy an AGM together in the same room and plan a year ahead without restrictions of numbers and distance, our problems with the seasons being somewhat confused are ongoing however.

Whilst we work our plots with happy autonomy (and help from others when needed) we hold organised working parties on communal projects involving whole site maintenance and improvement. Sustained with hot drinks and cake these are enjoyable sessions held at the beginning and

end of the growing season, and are a good way to get to know each other and share skills.

Around this time of the year some plots are looking ready and willing for the great promise that is Spring. Greenhouses will have been emptied of last season's grow-bags and pots, cleaned ready for the seed trays and small pots that begin the great endeavour. Broad bean seeds sown last year will already have emerged from the soil. Ponds cleared of fallen leaves awaiting the arrival of frogspawn...oooh it is an exciting time.

But it is important not to get carried away, winter is not yet finished with us.

Charlotte Baggins for SGAA



Relaunching the Seer Green & Jordans Society

Following a few years of relative inactivity, the Seer Green and Jordans Society has been reinvigorated by the Our Living Village project and we're now establishing a new group to lead this important local society. This is a great opportunity for anyone interested in getting actively involved in discovering and protecting the past, present and future of our two wonderful villages.

Current activities include our continuing in-depth research programme to maintain and extend the content of the Our Living Village website at www.ourlivingvillage.org; organising an archaeological drone survey of a potential Manor House site in Seer Green; nominating local ancient trees and woodlands as part of HM The Queen's Platinum Jubilee Celebrations; and identifying

local heritage assets to be included in the Bucks Council Local Heritage List.

Please do get in touch if you're excited by any of these activities, or indeed if you want to launch your own local initiative. This is an invitation not only to long-established residents but also to newcomers wishing to actively engage with the history and the future development of your new community, as well as for young people looking for hands-on experience in using some of the most advanced research technologies including GIS software, website development, Lidar, and 3D drones.

Alan Kell - Seer Green and Jordans Society

alan.kell@igsystems.co.uk

Registered Osteopath

Preston Lee BSc (Hons) Ost.



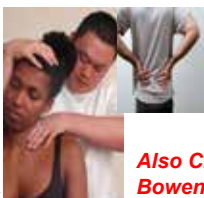
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Getting organised for Easter!

Easter Biscuits

These biscuits are traditionally served at Easter and make a delightful change from chocolate. Although a little old fashioned in taste using mixed spice and currants, they never fail to delight children with animal inspired shapes representing new life.

Ingredients

- 150g butter
- 150g caster sugar
- 2 egg yolks
- 60ml milk
- 50g currants
- 350g plain flour
- 5ml (1 tsp) mixed spice
- Glaze:
- Egg white
- 30ml (2 Tbsp) caster sugar

Method

Preheat the oven to 180°C fan.

In a large mixing bowl, beat the butter and sugar until creamy.

Beat in the egg yolks.

Add the milk and currants.

Sift in the flour together with the mixed spice and mix to form a firm dough.

Knead lightly on a floured surface until smooth.

Roll out to approx. 0.3cm thick and cut into shapes using cutters of your choice.

Place on baking trays and brush with egg white and sprinkle with sugar.

Bake in the oven for 8-10 minutes or until lightly browned.

Cool on a cooling rack.

Helen Lindsey-Clark



Eight O'Clock Club - Global Warming talk

Passion, the sharing of knowledge, lively discussion, healthy debate; just a few of the experiences shared during Bob Hall's interactive talk and responses to our own carbon footprint. Heat Pumps, home insulation, electric garden tools, amount of cement in buildings, food, population and transport were some of the issues discussed.



Climate Change was seen as very relevant from the enthusiasm of the topic by those present, especially for younger generations and it's encouraging to know that our own communities are trying to do their bit for the Planet.

It emerged that even ten years ago there was a Low Carbon Group running in Jordans where Climate Change was being discussed.

Sunspots, ocean currents, and active volcanoes can all affect temperature, and it was staggering to hear that the last time CO2 levels reached current levels, was 3 million years ago!

To reach even net-zero emissions by 2050, global emissions need to fall

by 95%. The quick-wins have been achieved, so what happens next, given that the eight warmest years on record actually occurred in the last 8 years! Should we be aiming for absolute-zero rather than net-zero?

Winters are predicted to be up to 30% wetter, and Summers between 1%-6% warmer. Earlier Springs have been reported for some time, as much as a month earlier recently. Evidence of this is seen locally with gardeners highlighting plants flowering at unexpected times.

More intense heatwaves, storms, tropical cyclones, and droughts are also expected, with the richest 10% of the world responsible for approximately 50% of carbon emissions. Something to ponder as we make those daily choices!

Next meeting

Thursday 2 March 8.00pm – Seer Green Baptist Church

'What a Load of Rubbish' - the management of our household recyclable waste and the environmentally friendly processing of our general rubbish.

Jez Elkin - Waste Awareness and Education Manager FCC Environmental Services.

Cost £3 to include coffee/tea and biscuits

Elizabeth Lee

Toddlers in the woods

Friday mornings - Crutches Wood, Jordans.

Toddlers in the Woods, the outdoor group for accompanied pre school children run under the auspices of Holy Trinity Church, is thriving!

The seasonal, sometimes very cold and at other times damp, mornings don't deter the Toddlers in the Woods leadership team and the families, who turn up week after week, from layering up and appearing with such enthusiasm at the Centenary Clearing.

So why are we all there? Primarily it is to have fun but also to become more aware of what is right on our doorstep that we can learn about, create things from, and play in. No need for commercially produced equipment, all our toys are very woodland friendly.

We bring the woods to life with our active and loud singing, our 'marching' up and down the woodland

paths (great for keeping warm) and of course our laughter.

The sessions are very child led and through their enthusiasm to explore, to create and to sing our weekly hour in the woods becomes great fun.

Yes the inclement weather is challenging but learning to be resilient is a life skill that really benefits us all.

Finally - it brings the presence of Holy Trinity Church into our village and that I welcome. All are so welcome and really the only requirement is that the children have some connection with one of our 2 villages of Seer Green and Jordans.

We look forward to seeing you!

All

Please note that during the month of March we will continue to sing the 'Welcome Song' at 9.30 to allow an extra 15 minutes to get on those essential layers.



Jordans Picture House



We are now putting together our Long List of films for the Season September to May 2023.

Please let us know if you have any suggestions!

Our Programme for March

Friday March 11: "Eye in the Sky" (15) 2018

Cast: Helen Mirren; Aaron Paul; Alan Rickman. Director: Gavin Hood.

Col. Katherine Powell, a military officer in command of an operation to capture terrorists in Kenya, sees her mission escalate when a girl enters the kill zone triggering an international dispute over the implications of modern warfare.

<https://tinyurl.com/3j99m5uz>

Received 3 wins and 10 nominations. A gripping film.

Doors open at 7.15pm
programme starts 8pm.



Sunday March 13: "Maiden" (15) 2018

Director: Alex Holmes. Cast: Frank Bough, John Chittenden, Bruno Du Bois

The story of Tracy Edwards, a 24-year-old cook on charter boats, who became the skipper of the first ever all-female crew to enter the Whitbread Round the World Race in 1989.

Nominated for 1 BAFTA Film Award with 8 wins and 11 nominations.

Doors open at 3.15pm
programme starts 4pm.



You may find it useful to look up these films on either of these websites:

www.imdb.com or
www.rottentomatoes.com

Tickets £8 from:

www.jordanspicturehouse.co.uk
(no booking fee!); or

Jordans Box Office:

Alan Sealy
alan@janetsealypartnership.com
01494 873205

Seer Green Box Office:

Gill Pettman
gillyp4@btinternet.com
01494 678050

We all look forward to welcoming you to our ongoing programme of films. Check www.jordanspicturehouse.co.uk

Jordans Picture House Committee

Good News from Jordans Village Community Shop

A 'hot key' has now been installed for the Parish Magazine in the shop!

This means there is no need to pay with cash - the magazine can now be bought using a credit/ debit card, Apple Pay/ an advanced credit account and of course cash.

The Editors of the Parish Magazine would like to thank the JVCS for this great news.



Seer Green Scouts Triumph!

The results from the The Quest Scout Night Hike at the beginning of February are just in and great success again from 1st Seer Green Scouts. We couldn't be prouder of our young people who have bounced back from lockdown with great determination and strength.

After a cold, wet and dark 16km hike around Amersham, Coleshill, Winchmore Hill and Penn, with challenges and activities at all the 12 check points, SG3 team came in 3rd overall (out of 43 teams) and won 'The Muddy Boot' Trophy for 1st place in the Misbourne Valley District.

The other two Seer Green Scouts Teams came 16th and 28th, and all our teams finished the hike, which was a fantastic achievement as 10 teams did not finish.

As ever it was a great experience and we are very grateful to all the parents and organisers of the event who put in a lot of time voluntarily to put on such a huge event. And many congratulations to all our Scouts who took part. Great job!

HRH even visited the event!

Rachel Gibson



Pace - The Big Walk



Pace BIG Walk – Saturday 23 April

For the children at Pace, walking can be a big challenge. However, taking a few tentative steps can lead to much greater independence. YOU can help transform young lives by putting on your own walking shoes and joining us for the 2022 BIG Walk.

This year's BIG Walk routes take in beautiful views and scenery through woodlands and parts of the Icknield Way and the Ridgeway Trail.

Choice of four routes:

18m - Watlington to Wendover

12m - Chinnor to Wendover

6m - Princes Risborough to Wendover.

The Superhero Mile - John Colet School.

Registration - Wendover Memorial Hall, Wharf Road, Wendover, HP22 6HF.

Parking is available at the John Colet School.

This is a great opportunity to set yourself a challenge for 2022 and have some outdoor fun.

£15 entry includes:

- Fundraising and training support, ideas and tips
- Refreshment stops with water and snacks
- A BIG Walk t-shirt
- A medal
- Support team.

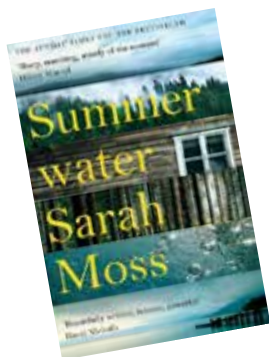
By taking part in the Big Walk, you will not only have the opportunity to explore this beautiful countryside in a completely unique way, but you will also be helping us to provide life changing support to the children and young people who access Pace services.

To sign up visit <https://thepacecentre.enthuse.com/cf/the-big-walk-2022>

If you have any queries, please contact Kelly.houghton@thepacecentre.org.



Janet's book reviews



Summerwater – Sarah Moss

It's summer, it's Scotland, it's raining unrelentingly, and the story takes place over 24 hours.

This is a short book, just over 200 pages, and yet so much is packed into it. Each chapter highlights a different family or couple staying in one of the wooden lodges. Starting in the early morning rain, the mother who is obsessed with exercise as a way of escaping her family, to an elderly couple venturing into the nearest town, some children playing on the lakeshore, and a young, newly engaged couple trying to simultaneously orgasm, there's not much plot to begin with.

The menacing tension slowly builds, really without you realising why or how. Moss's storytelling and writing style is incredibly captivating, it unexpectedly drew me in.

Summerwater gets under the shifting skin of 21st century British life without seeming to try very hard, then tears it wide open. Probably best not to read it on a grey, rainy day!

The Maid – Nita Prose

From the first chapter, you engage with Molly the maid. She is unique in every way; her personality captivates the reader.

Molly's life revolves around her job at the Regency Hotel. Being proud to be a maid, she takes her job very seriously, but she struggles in social situations and has few friends.

Her life takes an interesting and adventurous turn when she finds one of the wealthy residents,



Mr. Black's dead body. Then the story takes a darker turn. It is one of the most original and entertaining crime stories that I've read for a long while. Prose's witty and life affirming one-liners are absolutely delightful.

Part cosy crime, murder-mystery, romance and social commentary, The Maid is a really good read. It's already being made into a film – read it first!

Anne Robson Trust



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Being able to access support whilst a loved one is dying is really important for a number of reasons. Gaining knowledge of what may happen towards the end and having a sense of 'preparedness' helps both the person dying and their family gain as much control as possible.

Please visit <https://annerobsontrust.org.uk/helpline-service/> to find out more.

Introducing the Anne Robson Helpline - If you or someone close to you is dying, you can talk to us.

At the Anne Robson Trust we aim to be there to listen to anyone who is struggling with the imminent death of someone they care about. We know

Theatre dates for your diary

Young Theatre Of Beaconsfield will be performing **Alice's Adventures In Wonderland** at various times on 21, 22 and 23 April at the Curzon Centre, Maxwell Road, Beaconsfield. Tickets available on youngtheatre.org.uk

Chiltern Shakespeare Company will be performing **Romeo and Juliet** at Home Farm, Hall Barn, Windsor

End, Beaconsfield, at various times from 5 - 10 July.

Tickets will be available at the beginning of April from **fourways.org.uk**

Ann Wyllie

Tweet of the Month for March

Blackbird – “Praise for the singing”

One of the most delicious moments of spring is the first Blackbird's song. Throughout winter, Blackbirds (*Turdus merulus*) call or mutter, and first-year males tune up in February. But the real music begins in March, and carries on through summer until all the speckled young are fledged.

Bird 'calls' are used to keep in contact while flying or foraging, to warn of a predator, or create a reaction in other birds. Blackbird's repertoire includes various 'pook' and 'wick wick' alerts; a shrill repeated 'seeee' which warns the young to stay under cover (delivered from a hedge last May in response to my presence); the evening 'chink chink' alarm rumpus; and others.

Bird 'song' is used to establish territory, or in some species, to pair-bond. Songs vary in complexity and may not even be vocal, e.g. the woodpecker's drumming note is its

'song'. Both Blackbird sexes may murmur quiet 'sub-song', but the full song is performed only by the male.

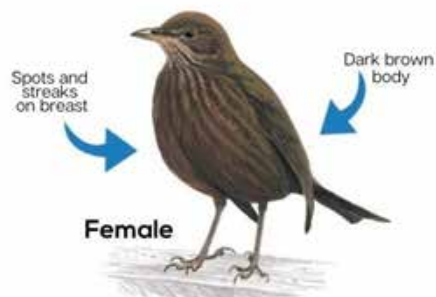
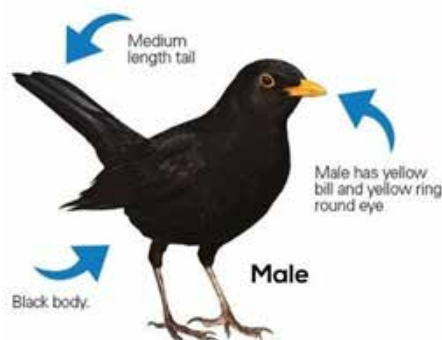
Despite the Beatles, you won't hear 'blackbird singing in the dead of night', but he starts in the pre-dawn darkness, and is pouring his heart out by the time 'morning has broken'. The song is a sequence of freely improvised melodic verses in a rich, flutey voice, each typically ending with a few squeaky notes. Blackbirds extend their musical repertoire over a lifetime, including mimicry of other species, and local dialects develop.

There were 5.1 million resident Blackbird pairs in the UK in 2016: a BTO green-listed species. Numbers are multiplied in winter by Scandinavian birds enjoying our balmy climate.

Blackbird song: <https://tinyurl.com/57wkazwd>

Blackbird alarms: <https://tinyurl.com/yckvdwja>

Nora Bennett



Picture credits: male and female blackbirds, RSPB; juvenile blackbird, Anne Burgess, Creative Commons Attribution-Share Alike 2.0



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The Environment

This year, we are running a series of articles on the environment. This month, we look at Ash dieback.

Ash is the second commonest woodland tree in the Chilterns after beech, and probably the commonest in hedges and gardens. Ash regenerated well after the 1987 and 1990 storms. It is fast growing and useful for firewood and timber, and rarely damaged by grey squirrels eating its bark, unlike most other native broadleaved trees.

Sadly, many trees are being affected by ash dieback caused by fungus *Hymenoscyphus fraxineus* (formerly Chalara) spreading via airborne spores. While younger trees usually die, mature trees take longer to affect and can survive: ashes are prolific producers of bunches of seeds ("keys"), so populations may recover - over many years.

Ash dieback came from Europe to England in 2006, and millions of trees are affected. Safety is key: dead branches become brittle and fall; while trees weaken and split and may be affected by other fungi causing the roots and base of the trees to decay and collapse. Hence trees near buildings, roads and overhead wires may have to be felled. Tree surgery has little benefit: ash dieback

frequently kills regrowth, as fungus spores come from toadstools on leaf stalks from last autumn.

Rapid climate changes, the impact of pests and diseases on other tree species and browsing by deer adds to the problem.

We may lose 90% of our ash over the next decade, so woods and landscape are likely to change. However, some may resist this disease, so we need to aid woodland recovery by retaining healthy ash and by planting alternative trees such as small leaved lime, English oak, field maple, walnut and wild cherry.

You need a Forestry Commission licence to fell live ashes, and council permission if the trees are in a Conservation Area or covered by a Tree Preservation Order. Woodland owners can apply for a Plant Health Grant to replant under the Countryside Stewardship Scheme.

(This is a synopsis of an article in Outstanding Chilterns – also, see: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/managing-ash-trees-affected-by-ash-dieback-operations-note-46a>).

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