Birlingham News online

Published on the second and fourth Wednesdays of each month

No. 296 Wednesday 8th February 2023

Editorial

Few who have enjoyed the peace, tranquility and beauty of the wooded area at Swan's Neck can fail to be shocked by its sudden and unexpected clearance this week. Of course, unless there is protection from a Tree Preservation Order or a Conservation Area, a landowner has every right to do whatever they want with their land – but the lack of notice is bound to upset those who have previously enjoyed walking the public footpath there.

It is also true that there were several poplars in that area; these are short-lived trees and can become dangerous once they have reached maturity. However, as photos from the 2017 Village Design Statement show, there were also many trees there of other species.

During a previous round of felling last December (as reported in *Birlingham News* 293), the contractor decided to store the poplar logs on an area of the Jubilee Wood, destroying not only the saplings planted by volunteers just over a year ago but also some of the small trees that had survived from the initial planting ten years ago. This is deeply depressing for all those involved in the project. Nevertheless, we have been assured that the land will be restored and replanted.

In this issue we are including images from the VDS, showing Swan's Neck in its former glory, along with photos taken two days ago. We are also including a photo of the logs piled in the Jubilee Wood in December and one taken last week of the destruction caused. Finally, we are reprinting an article by David Williams-Thomas (formerly the owner of Swan's Neck), first published in the Spring 2003 edition of the *Birlingham Bystander*, in which he describes the history of another set of poplars and explains the necessity for their felling.

No doubt you will have your own views on this matter and we look forward to hearing them at news@birlingham.org.

Birlingham IW

Thursday 16th February

by Caryl Mills



The next meeting of Birlingham IW is on Thursday 16th February at 7.30pm in the Village Hall.

The February Meeting is a talk by Rowan Williams on his time on The Great British Bake-off. This is an Open Meeting so everyone is welcome to join us. Visitors' charge is £3.

Come and join us for what will be an entertaining evening.





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Jubilee Mugs

The Jubilee mugs have now been delivered.

If you have ordered one or more mugs and not yet received them or not received your refund, please contact us at news@birlingham.org.

Alternatively, leave a message on 07801 368953.



Coronation Celebrations Open Meeting

Monday 27th February

by Steve Morris

The Coronation of King Charles III will take place on Saturday 6th May, with other events on the Sunday and the extra bank holiday Monday.

The Jubilee Committee is hosting an open meeting on Monday 27th February, to which everyone in the village is invited. A glass of wine or a soft drink, plus a few nibbles, will be available. This meeting gives you the opportunity to decide how you would like us to celebrate the Coronation as a community.

The meeting will begin at 7.30pm and the aim will be to complete it within an hour. Refreshments will be available from 7.15pm.

Please come along if you would like to be involved in some way, no matter how small, or have some suggestions for Coronation activities. If you are unable to make that date but would like to be kept informed, please let us know at news@birlingham.org.

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Snowdrop Teas 2023

by Caryl Mills

Snowdrop Teas will be held in the Village Hall on the February weekends of 11th/12th, 18th/19th and 25th/26th.

As usual we are looking for help from villagers to raise money to help the Friends of St James' keep the fabric of the building in good order, keep the churchyard looking as fabulous as it does and to make improvements to the heart of the village. We are looking for people to serve teas, set up and take down the tables in the Village Hall and most importantly bake the cakes that we are renowned for.

If you feel able to help then please contact me at caryl-mills@hotmail.co.uk or 07766 657666.

St James' Church Opening

by Adrianne Woodward

St James' will be open for the whole of the month of February from 10.30am to 5.00pm.

This will give visitors and villagers the opportunity to admire the amazing flower arrangements, browse the sales table and perhaps buy a pot of snowdrops.

This year the snowdops have been planted and nurtured by Maryanne Dyer and her band of helpers.





Snowdrops for sale and in St James' churchyard, 8th February
(Photos: Nikki Hollier)

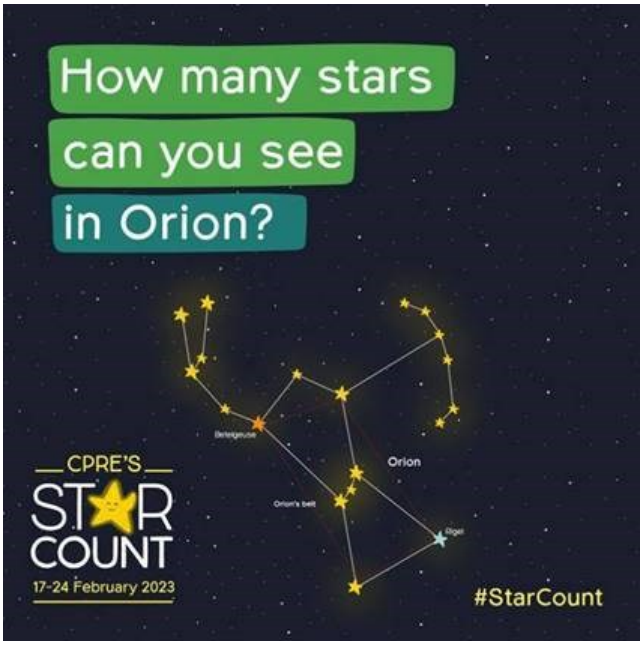




Look skywards in the Cotswolds for CPRE's Star Count 2023!

17th–24th February

by Mandy Pressland, Cotswolds National Landscape



Between 17th and 24th February, in celebration of our starry skies and to help protect and improve our view of the stars, CPRE, the countryside charity, is inviting the whole nation to become 'citizen scientists' and take part in Star Count 2023 – a cosmic census that will help map our view of the stars, and measure the impact of light pollution across the country.

Dark, starry skies are an undeniably beautiful sight, and a distinctive feature of the countryside – the wonder of gazing up into velvety blackness, with twinkling constellations as far as the eye can see, never gets old. But all too often, light pollution means that many of us can barely see the stars at all.

Our towns, cities, villages, buildings, and roads all emit light, and this can affect our view of truly dark skies, and cause problems for wildlife and people. Too much artificial light can impact our sleep and mental health, disrupt nature's natural cycles, and confuse wildlife. Light pollution also impacts our experience of the natural wonder of the night sky, and blurs the distinction between town and countryside.

To help understand all this, thousands of people have submitted star counts over the years, which CPRE's experts plot onto an interactive Star Count map, then analyse and compare with previous years' data. In the 2022 Star Count, 49% of participants counted 10 stars or fewer in the constellation of Orion, indicating severe light pollution, while only 3% experienced truly dark skies.



Orion constellation over Broadway Tower (Image: Russell Driscombe)

Help count the Cotswold stars by becoming a citizen scientist!

This year, we need you to help us fill up the Cotswolds section of the interactive Star Count map! We'd love to see counts submitted to CPRE from every corner of the Cotswolds, including from towns just outside the area, like Cheltenham, Stroud, Gloucester, or Banbury. Let's all join together to look up, get counting, and sending in our observations.

Taking part in Star Count is completely free, and can be done without any special equipment. You'll be part of a nationwide citizen science project. Stargazers are asked to count the number of stars they can see (with the naked eye) within the constellation of Orion, and submit their count online. Visit www.cpre.org.uk/starcount to find out more and to register to take part.

The number of stars visible in Orion is a good indicator of the amount of light pollution affecting views of the night sky, and can be compared with previous data to show how our ability to see the stars is changing.



We would love for all Parish Council, Parish Meeting and Town Council residents in and around the Cotswolds to participate as this will further help us understand how dark our night skies are.

The full details are above, but the key thing is that we need as many people as possible to join in across the Cotswolds.

Participants can do multiple submissions – so if they want to do a star hunting safari to multiple places and submit a count from each, or submit a count every evening of Star Count week from their back garden, they can! The more counts covering the Cotswolds, the better the data.

Please do participate – it's free to do so, and you don't even need a telescope!

Whilst not needed for the count, there are some useful and easy to use free night sky apps for mobile phones, such as Stellarium, which can help people locate Orion if they are not familiar with the night sky and find out more about the various stars and planets. These are available to download from Playstore/Apple for Android and Apple phones.



Swan's Neck

Left: Photos of Swan's Neck taken from the Birlingham Village Design Statement of July 2017

Right: Swan's Neck during the felling operation on 6th February (Photos: Michael Porter)













Poplar logs from Swan's Neck, stacked in the Jubilee Wood during the first felling operation, 20th December Assurances have been given that the ground will be restored and replanted (Photo: Rupert Keys)



The damaged area in the Jubilee Wood on 1st February, with the saplings planted in November 2021 flattened and surviving trees from the Diamond Jubilee planting in 2012 uprooted

The article opposite was originally published in the Spring 2003 edition of the Birlingham Bystander

The Lower End Poplars

My father, helped by me, planted the very fine poplar trees, which have recently been felled, in about 1955. He was at the time planting up all the poplar beds in Lower End and there were a few 2-foot slips left over. He wasn't sure what to do with them and it seemed a pity to throw them away, so we planted them along the hedge line. He had hoped that the poplars would, after 30 years, yield a good crop of timber that would be sold to Bryant & Mays in Gloucester for matches, or to make chip baskets. These were the baskets made of thin slivers of wood used almost universally for handling fruit and vegetable at that time. He was not to know that these markets would have completely disappeared by the time the trees were mature, so they have never been commercially felled, and have become over mature and vulnerable to storms. Poplars are, in any case, short lived trees and are prone to shed their branches unexpectedly. So, although they were pretty in spring and majestic in summer and they will be missed, a journey up from Lower End will have no risk of falling branches.



David Williams-Thomas.

Letters to the Editors

We welcome brief letters to the Editors on any subject relating to Birlingham. The Editors reserve the right to shorten letters and we cannot guarantee that all letters will be printed.

Please send letters to:

news@birlingham.org

Planning Applications

The following planning application has been determined by Wychavon District Council:

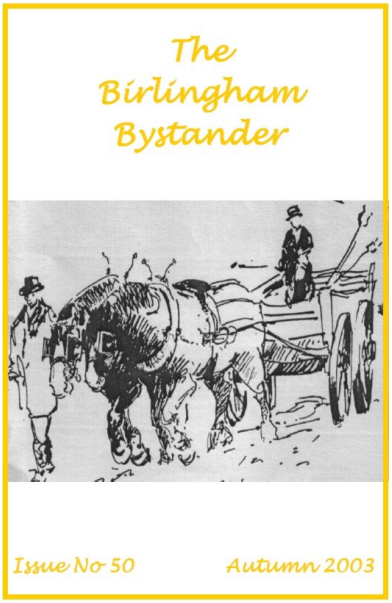
The Manor House, Lower End: Construction of a single storey orangery infill extension (Planning Application Case No. W/22/02341/HP; Listed Building Consent Case No. W/22/02342/LB). **Approved**. Full details and conditions can be viewed on the Wychavon DC website at: https://plan.wychavon.gov.uk/Planning/Display/W/22/02341/HP & https://plan.wychavon.gov.uk/Planning/Display/W/22/02342/LB.

The Parish Council comments are available at: www.birlingham.org/pc_info/pc_comments_22_02341.pdf & www.birlingham.org/pc_info/pc_comments_22_02342.pdf.

Personal Ads

Personal adverts should consist of one paragraph of text, maximum 100 words, and will be included in a single issue of Birlingham News. Please note that advertisement text will be published exactly as received. Personal ads should be sent to news@birlingham.org no later than the Monday before publication. Birlingham News is published on the 2nd and 4th Wednesdays of the month.

Bystander Archives



The Autumn 2003 edition of the Birlingham Bystander is the 50th and celebrates the landmark with some photos of earlier covers. The editorial team was joined by Bill Culshaw, replacing Michael Fairey, who had recently died.

Travel articles include a Black Sea cruise by Harry Porter and an expedition to Ladakh, India by Tim Mackenzie.

The re-opening of the Village Hall is recorded and there is a report of a cricket match between the Village and the Cricket Club. Events include the Church Fete, an evening organised by Birlingham Drama Group and the Flower & Produce Show. The newly-formed Friends of St James' presented a musical evening and supper.

Wedding are reported for Zoe Summers, Guy Stanton, Craig Brown and Rebecca Wilson. Elsie Herbert and Ethel Jennings celebrated their 90th birthdays. There are obituaries for Vic Butler and Michael Farey. New arrivals included Karl and Diana Grimston, and Bryan and Christina Horrocks.

Issue 50 of the *Bystander* can be viewed at: www.birlingham.org/village/bystander/issues/bystander050.pdf

Dates for your diary

February

Sat 11/Sun 12	Snowdrop Teas
Thu 16	Birlingham IW, 7.30pm, Birlingham Village Hall
Sat 18/Sun 19	Snowdrop Teas
Sun 19	Holy Communion, 10.30am, St James' Church
Sat 25/Sun 26	Snowdrop Teas

March

Wed 1	Cuppa & Chat, 3.00–4.30pm, Birlingham Village Hall
Sun 5	Morning Praise, 10.30am, St James' Church
Wed 15	Birlingham Parish Council, 7.00pm, Birlingham Village Hall
Thu 16	Birlingham IW, 7.30pm, Birlingham Village Hall
Sun 19	Holy Communion, 10.30am, St James' Church

Birlingham News online is available at www.birlingham.org. Details of future editions will be emailed to subscribers of *Birlingham News*. These emails are available to residents of Birlingham, their families and friends. If you know anyone who would like to receive these emails, or have any comments or items for inclusion in either the email or online edition of *Birlingham News*, or wish to be removed from the mailing list, please write to news@birlingham.org.

Birlingham News online is open to any organisation or business within the parish to promote events. Inclusion of an event does not imply that Birlingham Jubilee Committee supports either the event or the views of the organisation promoting it.

The copy date for the next edition is Monday 20th February (for publication on Wednesday 22nd February). We regret that we cannot guarantee to include any items submitted after that date.

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