



October 2018

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DE-FIB SAVES A LIFE

A defibrillator installed by villagers at Letwell after a fund raising campaign has helped save the life of a 50 year old father of triplets. The man - who works as an NHS psychiatrist - was enjoying a bike ride with some medic friends when he started to complain of a tightness in his chest as the group rode along Lamb Lane negotiating the long incline from Penny Lane towards the junction with Ramper Road. The man mistook the pains initially for indigestion, and told his friends he'd been okay once he'd rested for a while and got his breath back. But his condition worsened as the cyclists paused by the roadside closer to Letwell, and he suffered a cardiac arrest and collapsed into unconsciousness.

Alerted to the location of the de-fib by the ambulance service, the group rushed to fetch the portable machine from outside the village hall, and used it immediately to re-start the man's faltering heart.

The cyclists - most of them doctors - administered CPR until an ambulance dashed their friend to the specialist cardiac unit at Sheffield's Northern General Hospital. One of the man's colleagues, who works as a doctor and lives in Firbeck, told FLAG: "There are heart attacks and there are heart attacks, and this was a bad one. One of his major arteries was blocked, and there's a good reason why that artery is often called the widow maker, and causes so many deaths.

"Administering CPR is important in situations like this, but the longer that goes on the less chance there is of a recovery, and it was de-fib that made the difference in this case."

The man is recovering well after surgery to fit a stent. The doctor added: "One of the medics on the bike ride was the paediatrician who delivered the triplets, and he went to visit him in hospital. He's not back on his bike yet, but he's doing fine."

Campaigners, who funded the de-fib from the proceeds of a cabaret night, say the incident illustrates the value of the machine in the village. Resident Rita Harrison, who helped organise the event, said: "I think it's absolutely amazing that it's helped save someone's life. The people at Start A Heart, the Rotherham charity which helped set things up, got quite emotional when I told them what had happened."



*Human Scarecrows rest awhile at Firbeck...
More Photos and Story inside Flag*

NEWS FROM FIRBECK PARISH COUNCIL

Remember to keep early evening on Sunday December 2nd free for this years' Christmas Tree Festival. As usual this coincides with the first week in advent. Further details will be sent out by leaflet nearer the time, but if you would like to sponsor one of the smaller Christmas trees to line the paths to the church and the hall please contact Cllr. Caroline Jopling on carolineonfirbeckparishcouncil.com. Thank you.

Concern was raised by cllr. Chris Stanton at the last meeting that there has not yet been ratification from the Secretary of State for approval of the plans for Firbeck Hall and work may not start until May next year. Given the already poor state of the building, another winter will only make things far worse. Our clerk is to contact Matthew Peck to ask what interim steps can be put in place.

Cllr. Wendy Hamilton attended the planning board meeting at Rotherham Town Hall on Friday 7th September held to determine whether Ineos could erect a 60 meter exploratory drilling rig on land directly adjacent to Woodsetts. A statement prepared by Firbeck Parish Council was read out at the meeting asking the planning officers to reject this application on a number of grounds. This is the second time RMBC planning board cllrs. have voted to reject the proposal by Ineos. At their last meeting Firbeck Parish Council unanimously voted to contribute to 2 shale gas consultations raising concerns about removing shale gas planning applications from local control to a central government departmental inspectorate, possibly leading to the compulsory acquisition of land. There is also the intention to make exploratory shale gas well pads a Permitted Development Right obviating the requirement for planning permission at that stage.

Other news from the council includes continued participation in the winter partnership scheme involving clearing icy pedestrian areas around the village hall and the bus stop. There was discussion about horse riders who have had difficulty with careless motorists not slowing down or giving enough room to riders. There is a move to try and provide road signs to slow down motorists coming into the village from each of the access roads. The recently felled cherry tree which was damaged by a lorry was discussed. Cllr. Caroline Jopling is trying to negotiate with RMBC to ensure this is replaced by an appropriate species. Concerns were also raised about an application for joining 2 tracks together between Stone and Kingswood Lane which has gone through as a permitted development. Notification signs posted by the applicant were difficult to see and our clerk is to write to RMBC to raise this issue.

Cllr. Wendy Hamilton

WHO'S EATEN ALL THE PIES

Hearty portions of pie and peas were on the menu as villagers at Letwell and Firbeck both celebrated with harvest festival suppers.

The event at Firbeck raised £370 with the proceeds going to support St. Martin's Church and the Tear Fund in Indonesia. A successful auction did much to boost the final total.

The Letwell supper raised £178 towards the cost of the new noticeboard at Sr. Peter's. A music quiz proved a big hit with the contestants singing for their supper!

NEWS FROM FIRBECK-CUM-LETWELL WI

Thankfully the weather has turned a little cooler after the sweltering summer we've had in time for us to start our autumn programme by learning how to do Line Dancing. And we had lots of fun trying even the ones who thought they had two left feet! (And we got quite hot).

Apparently, not only is line dancing good exercise, but it also helps sharpen the mind (all that remembering how to do the steps and routines).

Our quiz team will be starting once again in the South Yorkshire Federation quiz in October, and they'll be hoping to do as well as last year. Also in October Sarah Moss of Potty Boss will be showing us how to do Pot Painting. This should put us in good stead for our craft day in November at Firbeck Village Hall. The craft workshop is on November 17th and Dee Mitchell will be showing us how to do folk art painting, and members will be able to try other crafts. A chance to learn a new skill perhaps, have a natter, make new friends and a few Christmas presents too.

Grandma Abson will be telling us about Christmas Traditions at our December meeting. Of course there'll be food and competitions to put us all in the mood for the festive period.

We start in 2019 with Helen Ensor of the RSPB British Bird Watch telling us all about the birds to look out for during the winter. We have plenty of Group and Federation events on the horizon which will keep us busy in the months to come. In a limerick competition at Whiston afternoon WI member Pam Ward came up a very apt limerick for the WI...

*"I belong to the WI
Which is a marvellous alibi
For learning and laughter
And friendship ever after
You should certainly give it a try."*

If you're interested in any of our activities please contact the secretary on 01909 540751.

WILL THEY EVER SLOW DOWN?

FLAG was delighted to see Streetpride installing roadside safety bollards on Lamb Lane - one set by the junction with Penny Lane and the other on the bend beside Haven Farm.

Both locations have been the scene of countless accidents over the past few years caused by motorists driving far too fast.

Are the new measures likely to make any difference??

FLAG wagers that nothing will slow the numpties down.

Three cars, two of them BMWs, were involved in a high speed crash within a week or so of the bollards going up at Haven Farm.

The road was closed all afternoon, and firemen had to cut one woman from the wreckage. Witnesses say it was a miracle nobody was seriously hurt or killed.

FIBRE FINALLY ARRIVES AT FIRBECK

We're all being told to have more fibre in our diet. Well, finally, the village of Firbeck can now get Superfast Fibre Broadband in their homes. Openreach eventually connected the cabinet near West Lodge towards the end of July.

There are pockets of the village, Four Lane Ends and the Yews, which are connected to different cabinets, and are still too far away from them to benefit from Fibre. For them the fight goes on.

As reported in the last issue, the Firbeck cabinets are capable of giving speeds up to 80 MBps, and some parts of the village are achieving close to this. However, there still appear to be issues with the copper and aluminium cabling in sections of the village, limiting them to 30 MBps. In a bizarre lottery, St Martin's Close is affected, whilst the adjacent houses on New Road aren't. Whilst this is significantly better than pre-fibre, and more than some would need currently, dependence on fast internet in the home will increase rapidly.

Chris Stanton, Chair of Firbeck Parish Council, is one of those affected by the limited speed, and will be taking up this issue with Openreach on behalf of the village. He is trying to get a picture of which parts of the village are getting the speeds promised by their provider and which aren't. If you are one of those who is getting significantly less than promised speeds Chris would like to know and can be contacted on 01709 818927 or cdstanton@hotmail.com.

Our love affair with Openreach was further tested when they turned up unannounced and closed the roads to the village on Scarecrow Weekend to make repairs to their copper network. Unfortunately not the parts mentioned above. You couldn't make it up!!

David Burke

WHO'S THE DRINK DRIVER?

FLAG would love to know the identity of the passing motorist who drinks and drives through Letwell - tossing his empty cans of Fosters lager out of his window as he travels down Ramper Road.

A recent clean up revealed at least 15 identical cans littering either side of the verge. A similar number had piled up at the same location when the parish council carried out a previous litter pick earlier in the summer.

Keep your eyes peeled, and let FLAG know if you spot the culprit.

CHRISTMAS IS COMING

They say that there's no such thing as a free lunch. At Letwell, however, residents can look forward to a free night out in the run up to Christmas.

The village's annual festive party takes place at the village hall on the evening of Saturday December 8th with the committee picking up the tab. Pie and peas - from Eatons the Tickhill butcher - are on the menu, and there will be a seasonal quiz, and festive music from Dinnington Brass Band with the chance to sing along to the carols.

Villagers should bring their own drinks, and are being encouraged to phone Martyn and Andy - on 731626 or 540694 - to guarantee food orders well before the event.

THE LONG HOT SUMMER....GOOD NEWS FOR THE BIRDS, BUT NOT THE EARLY SEASON SPUDS

David Wright presents the latest edition of Nature Report....

Well, it would be remiss of me if I didn't mention the hottest (and probably driest) summer ever in the UK. My first early potatoes on my allotment at Laughton were a disaster through lack of rainfall. Surprisingly though, my main crop potatoes just sat through the drought looking healthy enough. Then came a few hours of rain which must have done the trick because the plants produced an abundant crop of fine potatoes.

The hot, dry summer seemed to benefit the local bird population. House Sparrows continued breeding much later than usual. I'm told by a local gamekeeper that the now not-so-common Grey Partridge bred very well. Ground nesting birds such as partridges and pheasants struggle to raise young in cold wet springs, so conditions were perfect this year.

I understand from the British Trust for Ornithology that all its satellite-tagged Cuckoos returned to Africa in very quick time this year. The reasoning is that breeding and feeding conditions were excellent.

I don't know how ground-feeding birds such as Blackbirds fared, given the rock-hard ground, but no doubt they will have found alternative food sources.

Southbound migration started early this year - presumably due to excellent breeding conditions. I noted three Wheatear on the airfield on 24 August and a Whinchat present there the following day.

Two Firbeck residents were intrigued by the unusual appearance of a young Blackbird, but having viewed a photograph I concluded that it was indeed a Blackbird. Another Firbeck resident was delighted to report the annual visit to her garden of a Greater Spotted Woodpecker. And yet another Firbeck resident has a blind hedgehog in her garden which she's feeding.

Until this week I'd not seen a Mallard in Firbeck for many weeks, and the culprit may be a mink which I saw along Lamb Lane Dyke on two consecutive days in late September.

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Cock House Sparrow

MORE GREAT MUSIC AT LETWELL

Letwell's programme of live music continues on Saturday November 10th with the appearance of BBC Folk Award finalists Gilmore and Roberts - whose previous visit was a huge success.

Katriona Gilmore (fiddle, mandolin and vocals) and Jamie Roberts (guitar and vocals) met while studying at the Leeds College of Music, and have emerged at the forefront of the contemporary folk/pop Americana scene with stand out performances at some of the UK's biggest acoustic festivals.

Tours of mainland Europe and Canada and a UK tour supporting rock legends Fairport Convention have added to their prestige in recent times. The pair have been pronounced as "hot property" by music critics for taking "English folk and scruffing it up with indie rock drama...."

Katriona learned the violin at school, and started playing local folk clubs with her guitarist father at 14. She joined pop sensations Tiny Tin Lady in 2006, and went on to play with the Albion Band and The Troggs for a time.

Barnsley boy Jamie - the brother of Folk Award winner and recent Letwell visitor Kathryn Roberts - joined renowned English folk band Kerfuffle in 2007, and has performed with Nancy Kerr's Sweet Visitor Band.

Marty Craggs, ex Lindisfarne star and lead singer with The Happy Cats, long time favourites at Letwell, returns on Saturday December 1st accompanied by Grammy Award winning guitarist Trevor Sewell.

Expect a blend of Lindisfarne, mixed with a classic or two from The Happy Cats, some Bob Dylan, with a touch of Dire Straits and The Animals thrown in for good measure

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



Gilmore & Roberts - Heading to Letwell

THE MAIMIE JANE CHARITY

Mary and Mike Webster were residents of Letwell for just over 5 years. Very sadly Mary died as a result of a car crash in March 2016. When the crash happened Mary was on her way home from her church, the Baptist Church in Retford where she had been a member for over 25 years.

Mary loved her association with the church and the charitable work that was done under the church's umbrella. One of her favourite charities supported poor and orphaned children in Kenya.

After Mary's passing Mike and her son Chris decided to carry on some of Mary's work and indeed created a charity in her name : The Maimie Jane Charity. This charity is now registered with the Charities Commission and largely supports three orphanages/schools in Kakamega County in the west of Kenya. These settings look after just over 1,000 children and approximately 200 adults.

Until Maimie Jane intervened these children and their teachers/carers had virtually no medical cover, and children regularly died as a result of malaria and other treatable illnesses. From September of 2017 the charity employed a Qualified Nurse practitioner, and funded all of his pharmaceutical requirements and his transport & associated costs. This Nurse - he's called Eric - travels around the three sites on a six days per week basis holding open air clinics for the children and their adult mentors.

No children or indeed adults at these three settings now die from treatable illnesses. Further a budget is also in-place from the charity to fund hospital treatment for more serious ailments. The charity also supports the children with learning and teaching equipment, shoes and clothing. Indeed we are in the process of supplying sewing machines to enable staff to make uniforms, shirts, blouses, trousers etc. We are currently building new classrooms at one of the sites and plan to build a new medical centre and girl's dormitory.

The funds to support these initiatives are raised through charitable events, such as the annual ball at The Olde Bell Hotel at Barmby Moor, a charitable golf day held in June, donations from individuals and financial support from Precedo Healthcare, which is Chris and Mike's healthcare staffing Agency.

One hundred per cent of funds raised go to the children we support. The trustees, of which there are six, do not take any remuneration whatsoever. When we travel to Kenya, we pay for travel and hotels from our own pockets

If you would like to follow the progress of Maimie Jane, or indeed give support to this great work, please feel free to contact either Chris or Mike through the Maimie Jane web page or directly on cw@maimiejane.com

Mike Webster



Maimie Jane Charity: Caring for families in Kenya

LETWELL'S LOUISE GALLOPS TO THE RESCUE

Louise Addy, well known in Letwell for her commitment to re-homing battery hens, has taken on a daunting new challenge. It all started last month when she found out that a group of abandoned stray ponies were about to be shot.

Here Louise tells the story in her own words...

The crazy chicken lady turns into the crazy horse lady.....

After hearing of plight of 12 Shetland ponies that were about to be euthanized, we felt we had no choice but to take them in.

The ponies had been abandoned in a children's play area in Doncaster and left to fend for themselves. They were seized by Doncaster Council under the Control of Horses Act and the owners were given five days to claim them or ownership passed to Doncaster Council. Unfortunately they were unclaimed and they were all due to be shot on the 21st September. Four of the ponies (two mothers and two foals) went to TAK, the local horse rescue in Kiveton, but they just didn't have space for the other eight. So the eight little souls arrived at Peppers Field on the 20th September... Peggy and her foal Dennis, four little Shetlands mares, and poor Danny and Baby Coco Pops.



Coco Pop - Safe at last

We realised quickly that Baby Coco Pops mum wasn't among the females we had and rang the council to check if there was another mare somewhere. Unfortunately, there wasn't and so she was very much on her own.

At around only 3 months old and only just old enough to be weaned, she has been a huge worry and seems so lost. They were all terrified. Most of them hadn't been handled, so getting close enough to cut their terribly matted manes and tails has been a very slow process. As with all animals, their up keep will be very expensive, with an initial vets bill of £850 for a passport, microchip and Tetanus jab each, plus castration for Dennis and Danny. We will need to do a lot of fundraising to cover just the basic costs. We intent to find them forever homes once they are healthy and friendlier. If you would like donate to assist in their up keep please take a look the following www.sjmicros.co.uk/peppers or if you have any bric-a-brac you would like to donate so we can do a car boot sale or two please let me know.

Louise @peppers field

RESOUNDING SUCCESS

Nursery Rhymes was the theme for the 2018 Firbeck Scarecrow Weekend.

There were over 40 interesting, puzzling and delightful Scarecrows that entertained the many visitors to Firbeck over the weekend, and this was down, mainly, to the residents of our lovely village. Well done all of you who made such an effort for this popular event in our community calendar.

Firbeck Village Hall hosted a great stop off point for those hard working Scarecrow Spotters with refreshments of delicious homemade cakes and sandwiches. The Hall provided a lovely environment to socialise and discuss the Scarecrow Trail with family and friends, beautifully decorated with lots of activities to amuse young and old. Photos with Patch the Scarecrow produced colourful memories, while long lost memories were revisited with the large selection of Nursery Rhymes on display on each of the tables. Decorating the gingerbread Scarecrows produced big smiles from all the children who took part.

How many sweets can you get on a gingerbread Scarecrow? The Scarecrow family made an appearance on Saturday afternoon, delighting everyone they met on the Scarecrow Trail.

All in all the weekend was a resounding success which everyone enjoyed and even better it raised substantial amounts of money for the three local charities, Bluebell Wood, Shiloh, Aurora and Firbeck Village Hall.

Jane Crownshaw
35 New Road
Firbeck

CAN YOU HELP, PLEASE

For sometime now I have been interested in setting up a Community Support Scheme in Firbeck - a snappier name required! Several residents have shown an interest but have quite rightly expressed some concern about how much time this might involve. The idea of the scheme is not to provide support to people who require help on a long term, regular basis, as this would need to be provided by the authorities.

It is rather to offer some short term, occasional support to residents undergoing a difficult time. It could involve such things as transport to medical appointments and help with shopping. We all rely on families, friends and neighbours at times, but they are not always free to help when needed.

At our last Parish Council meeting it was agreed that I would try and form a working party to see if we can progress this scheme. If you are interested in helping please contact me at wendy.fpc@outlook.com.

Thank you.

Cllr. Wendy Hamilton

OUT OF SIGHT - OUT OF MIND?

Clearly not the case with Firbeck Hall where a large proportion of the hundreds of Friends of Firbeck Hall can never ever have really seen the place. For over 10 years none, but a few favoured souls, have been allowed entrance and a close view. But, in spite of that, our campaign appears to have finally been successful with work to repair the Hall and redevelop of the grounds scheduled to commence in May 2019.

The irony is that the security fencing of Firbeck Hall came about as a direct result of our committee's very first action. This was to write to the then Conservation Officer at RMBC pointing out his responsibility for the terrible state of the Hall. Very quickly the then owner was threatened with an official Repairs Notice enforcing immediate action. This resulted in temporary roof repairs - and barbed wire fencing enclosing the whole of the property, together with signs denying entrance.

Thus ended the access to the Firbeck Hall grounds, which we had enjoyed since it closed as a rehabilitation centre. Although technically private property there had been no restrictions; - indeed, the security staff were mostly friendly and would enjoy a chat. I was a daily dog walker and it was in those days that I came to love Firbeck Hall. Both the Hall itself and the grounds which, at that time, were magnificent with abundant wild life - and with wonderful contrasts of trees and flora and fauna. Particularly impressive in the early spring were an endless host of snowdrops, which were then quickly replaced by daffodils.

I haven't seen Firbeck Hall in its current delapidated date. I know there has been damage to the structure and that the grounds are overgrown and most of the wildlife has disappeared, much of it as a result of the shooting that has become a regular occurrence.

We are told that once the Hall is restored and the new development is completed there is a possibility that a number of paths could be established with a right of way throughout the extensive grounds, but generally in those areas that don't encroach on the new habitations. I certainly hope so. It will be wonderful to enjoy Firbeck Hall and it's beautiful surroundings once again. And for many others, no doubt for the very first time.

I know of only one location in Firbeck where it is possible to see Firbeck Hall fairly closely, without breaking the law. Once the leaves have fallen it is possible to see the the southwest of the Hall from the end of Lime Avenue, over the barbed wire fencing.

A longer distance view is available from the bridal path which crosses the field (once Firbeck Hall Country Club's golf course) between Salt Hill and Rough Wood.

Sid Ellis

COFFEE AND QUILT DAY AT LETWELL

Those clever ladies from Dovecote Quilters are all set for the biggest event of their year - the annual coffee and quilt day at Letwell Village Hall on Friday October 26th. Entry is priced at just £2, and there will be coffee, cakes and soup served throughout the day till 3 pm.

The doors open at 10 am, and if previous shows are anything to go by there'll be no shortage of beautiful things to swoon over and admire. Lots of hand-made craft items will be available for purchase, and the denim lady from Tickhill - FLAG knows no more about her than that!! - will be offering an array of denim for sale.

Inevitably, first prize in the raffle will be an exquisite Dovecote quilt.

Proceeds from the show will boost local scout funds with the profit from the raffle going directly to help send Scarlett - a local girl guide - to a jamboree in America.

APPEAL TO DOG WALKERS

One of the loveliest reasons for living in Firbeck is the ability to go out of your house, find yourself in the countryside and walk your dog. However just recently there have been a couple of incidents where a puppy and its owners, whilst out walking, have been approached by larger, boisterous dogs off their leads. This has resulted in the owners having to step in to rescue their puppy from these overwhelming advances, causing distress to both themselves and their dog.

If you have a dog which you know is unpredictable, please could you keep them on a lead or ensure they are wearing a muzzle. Hopefully this will ensure everyone enjoys their dog walks. Thank you.

CONTEMPORARY FOLK AT FIRBECK

Live music returns to Firbeck Village Hall on Saturday 24th November 2018 with a concert from the contemporary folk band Ranagri. Featuring musicians Dónal Rogers (Vocals/Guitar), Eliza Marshall (Flutes/Whistles), Ellie Turner (Electric Harp) and Joe Danks (Bodhrán/Tenor Guitar) who have come together to create some exciting new music. They fuse Celtic folk roots with quality contemporary songwriting and produce an electrifying mix of original virtuosic instrumentals, haunting melodies, vivid storytelling and a unique take on old and new folk songs.

Ranagri will be showcasing material from their freshly wrapped new fourth studio album and from their critically acclaimed releases 'Voices', 'Tradition' and 'Fort of the Hare'. Support comes from acoustic duo 'Plumhall'.



For tickets contact Nick Wilson on 01709 709406, nwilson33@hotmail.com or online at www.wegotickets.com/event/442608

STARS OF THE FIRBECK SCARECROW WEEKEND

