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# HATHERN HERALD

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## GOOD MORNING!

Our Short Story is back with a brisk walk around Hathern with Bram.

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## DAVID PILLING

Read about the extraordinary flying life of our Meet the Neighbours subject David Pilling.

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## HATHERN TOGETHER

Just what is or who are the award winning Hathern Together?

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PUT A SPRING  
IN YOUR STEP!



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## WELCOME TO THE SPRING EDITION OF THE HATHERN HERALD.

Welcome to the first edition of 2020 – and what an edition it is! A brim full 24 pages including lots of new features!

Where do we start? Well apart from all our usual articles we present the first in a new series, Past Times, brought to you courtesy of Hathern Local History Society. This will focus on residents from the past who have taken that brave step and not just moved from the village but emigrated to foreign parts – quite an undertaking a century or so ago. And strangely enough, in our Special Feature – Hello Hathern, we have the much more recent story of Jessica MacInnes who has travelled in the opposite direction moving from South Africa to Hathern!

Following from our previous edition's article about Alfred Warbis' sketching of Hathern there is more art in the form of a feature about other artists who have chosen Hathern and its locality as a subject to paint or draw – check out Hathern in the Art Gallery. Yet a further new series is Know Your Councillor where we profile our local Borough and County Councillors – this time starting with Cllr Keith Harris.

We also have the very welcome return of our Short Story and we are delighted to be able to publish another, with a very local feel to it, from our resident author Jo Symon. Finally we can't leave without a mention of our Meet the Neighbours feature about David Pilling – "pilot extraordinaire" – the man with one of the most enviable and action packed careers you can imagine – so much so we have had to run to three pages!

That's all for now – good reading.

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BEST WISHES FROM THE HATHERN HERALD EDITORIAL TEAM – ROY DANN, DAVE NEVILLE, MARTIN CLAYTON, DAVE CLEGGETT AND ELLA-MAE HUBBARD, AND A SPECIAL THANKS TO SEAN HALE, LAURA BYRNE, JESSICA MACINNES, ANTHONY WHITE AND JO SYMON FOR THEIR CONTRIBUTIONS.

## BOROUGH COUNCILLOR KEITH HARRIS

I was born and lived, until I was eight, in the tiny villages of Peggs Green and Griffydham in a family of coalminers (both grandfathers and father). We then moved to Sileby and ran a grocer's shop and finally moved to Loughborough when I was fifteen. My grandfather thought he detected a spark somewhere and launched me onto a course of education. Hence I didn't follow the mining tradition, the right choice in the end as the mines closed anyway. I went to Loughborough Grammar School, loved learning languages and then to Liverpool University to study German. During that course I spent a year in Germany where I became fluent in German with a Swabian twang. From the age of 15 I took part in exchanges with Schwabisch Hall.

Having studied Law and passing the Common professional Exam I couldn't pass all parts of the Final Exam. That seemed to be telling me something - so I returned to languages. For a while I taught evening classes in German at Loughborough College and also brushed up my schoolboy French and taught A Level. I then qualified in teaching English as a foreign language and spent most of my career teaching English for Speakers of Other Languages, ending up teaching Academic English to foreign students who wanted to study in the UK.

I have been married for 39 years to Christine, who was Mayor last year and attended several events in Hathern in that role. I never fancied having children but Christine's son provided me with triplet step-grandchildren! I love having fun with them, playing football and guitar, growing stuff together on the



allotment and taking them to amusement parks.

In my free time I read a lot, especially literature and popular science (the ones with no equations!), I love indie and classical music and learning languages, having taught myself to speak Spanish and some Italian. My allotment is where I grow a large amount of the food we eat, over 35 varieties of vegetable. As you may have guessed I'm a vegetarian all the time and a vegan most of the time. I'm fairly active cycling everywhere and I have been playing 5-a-side football every week for nearly 30 years.

As I wanted to devote some time to it I waited until retirement before becoming a councillor, having been elected in 2015 and re-elected in May 2019. I enjoy trying to get things done for residents and love working in the community. Hathern is perfect for that with so many devoted volunteers and so much to get involved in. I help out at every Hathern Village Association event and I joined the library volunteers when the community library was set up in 2016, do a staffing slot every third Saturday and take part in the annual sponsored walk. My mother supports this work by baking cakes and donating items for fundraising events. Oh, and by the way, I attend Parish Council meetings to deal with any Borough issues that arise.



## FLOODING ON THE A6

What a winter it has been, with some of the most sustained periods of heavy rainfall ever recorded in the UK. Generally Hathern has been spared the worst but the problems created on the main A6 by successive floods at either ends of the village have affected many villagers as well as those travelling through. At the time of writing the road has been closed three times since November and has caused distress and disruption to many hundreds of local people. The Parish Council (PC) has been working hard over this period, and prior to that, with our County Councillor, Betty Newton to firstly get Leicestershire County Council Highways (LCC) to clear the flooded areas, by pressure jetting, and then to reopen the road. That has happened but not in a timely manner, and nor has the road closure process itself been managed well by LCC. We have made strong representations to LCC about this as well as making constructive suggestions on how matters can be improved. However the key issue is one of resolving the systemic problem with the drainage system, both gulleys and, specifically the section adjacent to St James View, the culvert beneath the road. There are now very positive

signs that LCC have finally recognised this. The PC is in direct contact with LCC's Director of Transport and Environment, who is responsible for this area, and has received assurances that the necessary work will be done. Hopefully by the time you read this we will have seen some action on the ground.

The PC's Facebook page has also played an important role being used to share up to date information with and between residents about problems at the flooded locations. During the week of the most recent flooding episode in February the site was viewed 25,000 times! So if you haven't already used the site it can be found at:

[www.facebook.com/hathernparish](https://www.facebook.com/hathernparish)



## NEW PUBLIC SEAT

We are delighted that, as a result of a significant donation, we have been able to provide a public seat for the verge opposite Hathern Cross in the centre of the village.

The extremely kind donation has been made by Tony and Ann Croft, who also made the very helpful suggestion that it should be located near to the Cross.

It's an obvious and appropriate place for a seat and it's surprising that nobody has suggested this before!

**Thank you both.**





## MAINTENANCE OF OUR GREEN SPACES

The PC has recently gone to tender for its four-year contract to maintain our public green spaces in the village and we received a number of competitive tenders in response. We are pleased to have engaged Brian Mee Associates (as part of the B&MG group) as our principal service contractor here. Their team, headed by Wayne Headley (who is a parish councillor himself), will be responsible for the grounds maintenance of all of the Council's properties together with the cutting of the roadside grass verges that we take on for Leicestershire County Council.

The competitive tender process was very successful in helping the Council hold down its costs for these important services over the next four years to the same level as its previous contract.

You may also have noticed the amount of tree surgery the PC has had done over the past few months, in the cemetery, Hathern Park,

and on our sports ground. Tree work is becoming an increasingly significant part of our budget as we are experiencing more extreme and windy weather. The PC has over 150 mature trees on its public land and has to ensure that each is in a healthy and safe condition, and so much of what we do is preventative, rather than reactive, surgery. Some of our trees are subject to Tree Preservation Orders or are in Conservation Areas and we then need to seek Planning Permission in order to do any surgery. We thank those residents, affected by what can be long delays before we can start work, for their patience.

## VANDALISM AT THE LEYS

Unfortunately, we continue to suffer vandalism at the Leys green space. It is heart-breaking to see recently planted shrubs uprooted and destroyed and the hard-landscaped area further damaged. This has followed the spate of vandalism we reported in a previous issue of the Herald.

We have taken a number of steps to help preserve this area including introducing some further railings to help protect the small retaining wall we have recently rebuilt following its demolition by vandals last year. Furthermore, we are working with Hathern Baptist Church, whose building is adjacent to our public area, to explore the possibility of locating CCTV cameras to oversee both the church and the leys area itself.

If we do identify the perpetrators we will not hesitate to provide CCTV evidence to the police and seek prosecution.

## THE PARISH PRECEPT

It is that time of year when we all receive our Council Tax Bills. In order to work for the village, the PC raises funding through the Hathern Precept, ie that very small part of the Council Tax that goes directly to the Parish Council. To date we have been very successful in holding down increases in what residents are charged via the Precept. This year, and by reaching into our financial reserves again, we have managed to hold the increase in charges to 3.6 % for the forthcoming year. That is still lower than charges were in 2017/18 and mean that for an average Band D Council Tax payer the annual cost is just over £51.

# HATHERN IN THE ART GALLERY

One fine day – probably in 1889 or 1890 an artist settled down on the Hathern bank of the Soar and sketched the scene in front of him. Anyone who fell into conversation would have realised that he was not from these parts. He was James Orrock born in Edinburgh in 1829, a prominent illustrator, landscape watercolourist and art collector. A strong advocate of J M W Turner, he owned several of his works and is now believed to have altered works by other artists in his collection. On the BBC Fake or Fortune programme, a possible unknown John Constable painting, Sea Beach Brighton, was confirmed as authentic, although it had been significantly overpainted by another hand. It was known that a similarly titled painting had been in James Orrock's possession, so the finger of suspicion was pointed in his direction.

James Orrock painted scenes from all over the country including many in Leicestershire – Bradgate Park was a favourite location. One of the works he produced that day on the Soar shows Normanton church and until recently, this was the only known painting by him of a scene in our area. It is displayed in the Auckland Art Gallery, New Zealand. However, David Smith, chair of Normanton Parish Council carried out research and located a James Orrock painting simply entitled "The River Ferry", auctioned in Ireland in 2010. It turned out to be of the Normanton chain ferry.

The Victoria and Albert Museum has a print from an etching entitled "Stocking Weavers, Hathern" by Constance Mary

Pott dated to between 1890 and 1910. Born in 1862, she attended the Royal College of Art to study industrial design, however she was more drawn towards fine art and was taught engraving by Sir Frank Short. After graduating, Constance became a highly respected teacher at the College. Her etchings include scenes from around the country. It isn't known how she came to produce an etching of stockings in Hathern.



Normanton on Soar: James Orrock



The River Ferry: James Orrock

The golden age of the railway poster was undoubtedly 1890 to 1960. Some of the finest commercial artists were commissioned to produce artistic and stylish posters. Produced to entice holidaymakers, railway poster land was full of happy people enjoying themselves in locations the length and breadth of the country where, it would seem, the sun always shone. Once regarded as ephemeral advertising, the railway poster images are now seen as important artwork.

John Francis Bee was one of those artists. Born in Wolverhampton in 1895, he studied art in Europe and the Near East before becoming a professional commercial artist. He worked in Loughborough and Liverpool, and was responsible for the only poster promoting Leicestershire. In addition to his commercial work, he produced several watercolour landscapes and village scenes. In 1940, John Bee produced a painting published in the Artists Magazine. Simply entitled "A Leicestershire Village", the location isn't given but it is of Hathern Cross. John Bee recorded, "This is a type of village whose architecture is all too often dismissed as being ordinary and uninteresting, but it has its charm nevertheless."

Are there artists today who take inspiration from Hathern and its surroundings? Rita Sadler has been teaching arts and crafts for 17 years and has produced an acrylic painting of "Hathern Road to Shepshed". Rita said, "I find inspiration from my immediate surroundings, my home, garden or the back lane where I walk our dog every day. I am happiest working from life. I love painting outdoors and my natural instinct is to put down what I want to say as quickly as possible to catch the atmosphere and mood. It focuses my attention on the important elements in order not to be distracted by the details."

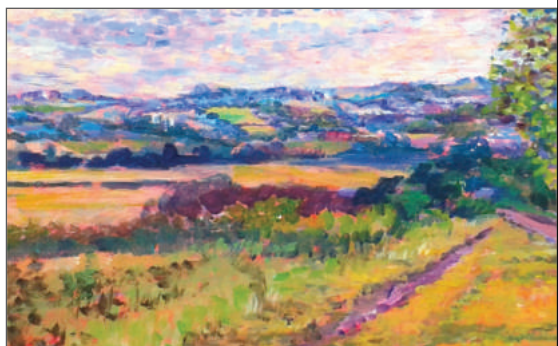
Hathern has its own thriving art group that meets in the library Monday afternoons and no doubt our village will provide artistic inspiration for years to come.



**Stocking Weavers, Hathern:  
Constance Mary Stock**



**A Leicestershire Village: John Bee**



**Hathern Road to Shepshed: Rita Sadler**



# IT'S OUR BIRTHDAY

## Hathern celebrates four years of the Community Library!

It doesn't seem long since we were telling you 'now we are three' and yet, on Saturday 25th January 2020, Hathern Community Library (HCL) celebrated its fourth birthday as a community library.

Being a community library means that the library is completely run by a team of dedicated volunteers (we currently have 33 signed up!), including the management team – Leicestershire County Council handed over the control and day to day management of the library, and others like it, to the communities due to a lack of funding and they now rely on the volunteers to keep the library going.

The birthday celebrations this year also had special significance as the library originally opened in 1955, making it 65 years in total as a library, serving the village. We hope you'll agree that we've come a long way in that time, and we are still evolving.

The birthday party itself had a fantastic atmosphere – thanks for joining us if you did, we hope you enjoyed the cakes! It was great to see so many faces visit the library on the day, regulars and newcomers alike. This was a great opportunity for us to throw open the doors and show off a little of what we do.

Everyone was kept busy during the party, with refreshments on offer, a book sale and a raffle (with the drama of Chair of the Board of Trustees, Resh Kandola, winning one of the main prizes, and subsequently holding an impromptu auction to sell it on!) – your support for events such as these is gratefully received as it helps fund the day to day



overheads for the library, and the birthday party helped to raise just over £220.

A little under 100 people visited on the day, which is quite an impressive feat in only two hours for the smallest library in Leicestershire! Resh thanked everyone who attended and supported the event, not least the volunteers who organised it, "HCL's strength lies within its group of volunteers, and I am especially proud as we have the best team – thank you to all of you for your continued support and hard work."

Hathern Community Library is about so much more than books. To celebrate British Science Week, we held a series of events



including a morning of edible earthworms, fizzing balloons and marshmallow magic to see the fun in science for our junior scientists, and a series of bite-sized science evening events on trees and woodlands, the science behind science fiction and nuclear science for beginners. This is alongside our regular reading group, All Join In children's sessions, craft and chat and art group. If you do attend any of our events, it would be great if you could tag us on social media – you can also find our latest news there and on our website [hatherncommunitylibrary.org](http://hatherncommunitylibrary.org)

Support for our fundraising means that we can keep the library going and provide a valuable resource for the community. As always, there are so many ways for you to get involved. And if there's something else that you think we should add to our repertoire, get in touch and see how we can work together to make it happen!



## HCL SPONSORED WALK 2020

2019 saw a very successful HCL annual sponsored walk, so much so we're doing it again! The Wicked Walkers will be putting their best feet (and paws) forward on Saturday 23rd May 2020 and tackling the 17 mile circumference of Rutland Water – a lovely route, on good footpaths, but still a significant challenge – particularly as they are going to try and achieve it over a single day, rather than the 2019 two day walk! Everyone is going

to be ready for food and a well deserved drink by the end of the day.

This is a key fundraising event for the library, especially as we have a clear target to keep improving the library facilities and services we provide.

**To support this event, you are welcome to join us on the walk or to sponsor the group (please contact [Bill billeivers@sky.com](mailto:Bill.billeivers@sky.com) for more information on signing up or donating!)**





# HELLO HATHERN

## A VIEW FROM AN OUTSIDER

The task at hand– to uncover Hathern and all its beauty. I arrived in the United Kingdom on the 10th of January 2020. After having been out on holiday twice before, this time there was no going back. I have officially moved here and I'm currently in the process of making it my new home.

My husband and I decided after our last visit (June 2019) that we would one day return and start building our future in this beautiful country. I have lived in sunny South Africa my entire life (28 years) and so I will be honest in saying that I did go into this decision rather uncertain as I didn't quite know what to expect. Sure, we had been for visits, we knew what the houses were like, how the roads were, and we had a basic understanding of the traffic circles. We did plenty of sightseeing, exploring the typical places like London and got a good feel for the tourist life. But living in a country compared to being over on a holiday is completely different. So, although I could envision myself living here, in reality, I now had to do it, hence my hesitation.

It didn't take long for me to settle into this decision though, all it took was the warm reception I received from this beautiful village. My parents have stayed in Loughborough

since they immigrated just over four years ago. Whilst renting, they resided in number 2 Old Forge Close, which they thoroughly enjoyed. When the time came for them to buy, they wanted the perfect house in the perfect village. For a while, they couldn't quite find the perfect house and moved to Thringstone for the time being. But because of the warmth they felt back in Hathern, they carried out their search and have since returned.

Staying here has been an absolute pleasure as this village never ceases to amaze me. I have been surrounded by a community feel that has left a lasting impression. From the numerous events that they host throughout the year, enthusiastically presented in the "Hathern Together" hand guide, to the proudful conservation of its history. I've been walking through the village, appreciating the little signs posts along the streets with a brief background story of the particular street for those interested.

I stand back and take it all in, as it is rather overwhelming at times. To see how everyone comes together to help one another, taking a keen interest in getting involved to uplift the community and creating fun activities for families to participate in. Something that is



missing back in South Africa. There are various groups that one can join depending on what appeals to you, starting from the Hathern FC (football team) right through to the Hathern dance group that enjoys getting together for a little bit of fun and dance. The best part of it all is that everyone is made to feel welcome and the heart-warming feeling spreads throughout the village.

I was now in a new place and calling it home, so naturally I needed to explore. The most noteworthy part of it all is how much freedom people have. The houses are not barricaded in and the windows are free from burglar bars. The cars are lined up in the streets and there are no electric fences or large gates keeping people in.

Come rain, snow or sleet people walk to work, catch public transport and exude independence while doing so. Parents walk their kids to a very quaint school; older kids make their own way and the elderly are free to take a morning stroll with their dogs... Just like in the movies.

Eager to learn, I searched for more. I discovered the local village store that has all those little necessities doubled up as a convenient post office. I'm still getting used to the fact that over here the postal service is a reliable and effective means of communication.

Now there was no slowing me down and because I'm an avid reader I joined the local Hathern library, this is where I felt a genuine good nature and helpfulness. Following this was the efficient service I received from Dishley Grange Medical Practice

upon registering for the NHS. All of these experiences have helped settle my mind and create a state of comfort.

The next thing on the agenda was to make an appearance at the Anchor Inn, a pub with true historic meaning to the town of Loughborough. After all, I can't move to England and not experience traditional pubs. And just like that, I was sold, I had a delicious meal served with a wonderful smile and engulfed in a snug environment which was perfectly fitting for the winter.

The friendliness and support doesn't end there, I just recently obtained a degree in media and journalism through the University of South Africa and I have dreams of one day working in the industry. Because of this, my mom took to the Hathern community group that can be found on Facebook and advertised my personal blog that I created to document my journey. In a flash, I was in contact with the Hathern Herald team and this article is the result.

With a new season comes new experiences and I am excited to encounter springtime in Hathern. With plenty of festivities lined up, I will come to learn so much more which will simply add to this grand adventure. Even though opportunities might one day lead us to venture to other parts of England I will be eternally grateful that this is where it all began. I was welcomed with open arms, received service with a smile and plenty of support. As a result, it makes me excited to see what our future holds and I will forever remember Hathern.

**Jessica MacInnes**



My house in South Africa



My house in Hathern



A village Heritage plaque

# “DAMSELS” & “DRAGONS”

I'm writing this article in the aftermath of storms Ciara and Dennis that resulted in some of the most serious flooding along the River Soar for many years. It was hard to recognise the scenes of flooding as the same gently flowing river we love to walk along and observe as a haven for all sorts of wildlife.

Now I love watching birds throughout the year but there is often a bit of a lull in late Summer as we await the big migration events that take place in Autumn. However, the vacuum created by the absence of bird life is quickly filled by other fascinating winged creatures and among my favourites are the dragonflies and damselflies. There are 17 species of damselfly and 23 species of dragonfly in the UK and they are found in almost every habitat. Knowing the difference between the “dragons” and the “damsels” is handy. As a rule, the damselflies are smaller and slimmer, and they rest with their wings folded whereas the dragonflies are larger and always keep their wings spread outwards.

They are incredibly ancient insects and roamed the skies 250 million years ago in the Jurassic period – some as big as eagles! They are voracious predators feeding on other insects and are perfectly adapted as aerial hunters, catching up to 95% of the prey they go after. As is characteristic of all predators they have huge eyes which take up most of their head and enable them to look forwards and backwards at the same time. Their “souped-up” colour vision is better than anything ever seen in the animal kingdom. Studies have found that they can see ultraviolet on top of blue, green and red and it is likely that they can recognise polarised light coming off reflective surfaces like water. It's therefore no surprise that 80% of their brain is associated

with their visual processes.

The second adaptation they have as aerial predators is their flight. The way their wings and wing muscles are constructed enables them to beat their wings very slowly at around 30 -40 beats per second. This enables them to move their wings independently and makes them masters of aerobatics – they can fly backwards, hover like a helicopter and perform hairpin turns at extreme speed.



The damselflies are very graceful fliers and one of my favourite sights along the river during summertime is the Banded Demoiselles. These are quite a large damselfly and have large butterfly-like wings. They are commonly found along slow running lowland streams and rivers, particularly those with muddy bottoms – just like our stretch of the River Soar in fact. If you wander along the river between April and September, you are likely to see these beautiful metallic blue damsels with their very characteristic “slow-motion” style of flight.

Another interesting aspect of these fascinating insects is their lifecycle. Dragonflies and damselflies come together to mate in a “wheel” position, often taking place when they are in flight. They then deposit their fertilised eggs onto submerged plants or directly into the water where they will remain until the following spring when the nymphs hatch out. These nymphs are fierce aquatic predators, eating almost any living thing that is smaller than they are! After a few years of voracious eating the nymphs are fully grown and the following spring they leave their aquatic habitat by climbing up the stems of water plants. Once they are out of the water the skin on their backs splits and a dragonfly or damselfly emerges. I’ve observed this spectacle several times and it is fascinating to watch the dragonfly or damselfly slowly expand and then pump up their wings in preparation for their aerial journey. The immature dragonflies and damselflies are small and pale, and it takes a number of weeks for them to mature into the beautifully coloured insects we see during the summer.

I’m really looking forward to those lovely warm summer days when I can hopefully spot a Common Darter or Azure Damselfly and spend some time observing these fabulous creatures along the river or around my garden pond.

**Happy nature watching!**  
**Sean Hale, Hathern Wildlife Group**





# GOOD MORNING

It was one of 'those mornings' – a 'good to be alive morning' so people say. It was still relatively early, just after seven and the sun had been up for about an hour, gradually warming the world, respectfully nudging wildlife awake with its gentle caress. Flower heads were already spreading their petals and nodding to the sun as if to greet and welcome the hungry bees noisily buzzing in the still air. Swollen flower-buds too seemed to sense their own imminent contribution to nature's table, bursting with pent-up enthusiasm like small children on a Christmas morning. The few remaining dew-drops had attracted several of the bees, perhaps needing to refuel before buzzing off again.

'Hey Bram, c'mon buddy, let's go walking!' He raised his head, looked at me with hope-filled eyes and sprang to life, stretching his legs like a sprinter warming up for the 100 metres. Head pushed through his collar and lead and we're through the back gate and off. As we walked past the village allotments Bram snuffled in the hedgerow and disturbed the resident black cat, who arched his back and glared at us as he reluctantly gave up his prime sunny position. He'll go back to it when we've gone. We continued our way to the river, walking past the blackthorn hedges with their tiny white flowers promising their autumnal bounty of sloes. Bram was off the lead now, in the last enclosed field before the river. The farmer has left this field to fend for itself for the last two years, resulting in a wealth of interesting tufts of grasses and accumulated weeds that seemed to fascinate Bram as he raced around in a mad dog way, annoying birds as they tried to peck away at hidden seeds and insects.

We finally reached the river and began to stroll along its river bank, Bram splashing enthusiastically in the shallows in mock

attempts at chasing the gliding swans. Normanton on Soar's village church stood on the opposite bank, about 30 metres across from where we stood, and in its shadow the dark green waters of the Soar pushed lazily towards Zouch and the weir. One or two dog-walking groups were walking towards us, rather spoiling the tranquillity of the morning with their raucously shouted dog commands, studiously ignored by their dogs I noticed. Nevertheless, we acknowledged each other in the time-honoured tradition of 'Hello – what a glorious morning!' before going our separate ways, the dogs reluctantly following their respective owners. As we got level with the wooden holiday homes on the opposite bank, we decided to head homewards before the sun became too uncomfortable for Bram. Needless to say, he didn't like that idea so it became my turn to annoy other walkers with my own shouted commands, and I was inwardly chuffed that Bram came to heel immediately. Now heading across fields towards the Stints cattle sheds we passed the two fallen trees that still looked startled to find themselves laying on the very grass that they had shaded for the previous hundred years or so. Past the cattle sheds now and Bram missed the fleeting glimpse of the resident dog fox as he slunk into the shadows. Rising to the top of the footpath we could look down on the newly built red-bricked houses of Daisy Bank, once open fields, now full of cars and black tarmac drives. Pausing for a moment, catching the scent of hawthorn blossom, I couldn't help but think about the rabbits that used to provide such fun for Bram as he crashed through the grasses to chase them. Now, one or two could be seen in the distance by the footpath, quiet and unmoving as if they didn't quite understand where all their fields and their larder had gone. Progress. Or where the woodpecker has gone, the one who lived in the old oak tree that had stood in the middle of the fields for countless summers. Chopped down because it was diseased, so they say, to make way for more houses. Pity no-one thought to give the woodpecker a new home. Progress.





Ah well, let's go home Bram, I must be getting old and cantankerous, feebly raging against change and the new world order of things. Isn't it funny how one or two little thoughts, innocuous in their own separate way, when joined together can have such a big impact on our feelings? Things that we have taken for granted for many years without giving them due respect, unaware that they would be taken from us bit by bit until the slow realisation dawning of irreplaceable loss. Hedgerows gone, trees gone, fields gone, flocks of sparrows gone, starlings and blackbirds disappearing, foxes and badgers penned in by buildings until they end up as road-kill, rabbits with no home and no larder. Progress.

The bell ringers, Tony's gang, have just started pulling on their ropes, the bells sounding individualistic and angry with their discordant chimes waking up those few villagers remaining asleep. And now sounding more resonant, pleasing, as the teamwork and rhythm reaches mutual agreement. What a glorious village sound! Is there any better? Well, possibly; the droning background hum of lawnmowers, the enthusiastic shouts of 'Owzat!' from the cricketers in the park. Or my favourite, the chink-chink of ice cubes in a tall glass of gin and tonic. Bram doesn't bat an eye as we walk past the church, surely it must hurt his hearing? But he's fine, snuffling along past Church Cottage with its old 'sit up and beg' bicycle propped against the hawthorn tree in the garden. Must be someone living there who has a yearning for the good old days, whatever they were. Or a sense of humour! Perhaps it's Sean's old bike from his paper-round days.

Over the Village Cross now, thinking about all those people years gone by who would have used the steps to mount their horses after Sunday church. And now along Dovecote Street, past Ben's hairdressing shop; then the black and white cottages, then along past Joan's bungalow; now at The Barn with its quirky sloping footpath, to the crossroads

at Wide Street posing its inevitable game of chance – how to get across safely without being surprised by a hidden car. Now up Tanners Lane past the house on the corner that has dog bowls of water that give Bram and other dogs such a welcome drink, before heading towards Jeff and Marina's place, the old Doctor's Surgery, such a pretty butter-milk yellow cottage with budding wisteria along the length of its western-most wall.

Nearly home Bram, not long now, getting really hot too. Wildlife seems to have quietened down a bit now, no longer the frenetic 'must be first' shouts and rushing of wings. Perhaps the strengthening heat from the sun has cast its soporific spell already. I can still hear the bees in the background, they just keep on doing it till the sun goes down. Perhaps that's why they call them industrious.

Phew - here we are at last Bram, home again. What a fabulous morning and what fabulous weather. How lucky are we to live in such a lovely part of the world! Breakfast now buddy, c'mon! Makes you feel good to be alive!

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# DAVID PILLING

Say 'Hello' to David Pilling, our Hathern resident who has probably spent more time in the air than most of us have spent driving our cars. Yes, he was an airline pilot. But not your everyday airline pilot, oh no! Here's a question for you;

**'How many different models of aircraft and helicopters can you name?'**

Well, during his flying career David has probably flown most of them. He has flown a total of forty-one, yes, forty-one different aircraft, including helicopters, an extraordinary number. How about air-freighting camels to tribal chiefs deep in the Omani desert? Done that. Or counting rhinos in Kenya's Tsavo National Park from a helicopter? Done that too. As a rough approximation from his Flight Logs, David estimates he has flown seven million miles! To put that into context that's to the Moon and back fifteen times! Or flying around the earth's circumference three hundred times! Whichever, it's a shed-load of Air Miles!

Here then is the brief potted history and remarkable story of an equally remarkable man.

Originating from the village of Begbroke near Oxford and educated at Wellington College, in the early years of the 1960's David responded to a Daily Mirror advert for the Royal Navy, who wanted men to train as pilots. Passing the initial tests, off to Britannia Royal Naval College Dartmouth he went for pilot training, flying from Plymouth Airport the initial aircraft of his illustrious career, including Tiger Moth, Jet Provost and Hawker Hunter.



After two years of David flying fixed-wing aircraft the Navy decided more helicopter pilots were needed; David was posted to Royal Naval Air Station Culdrose where he trained to become a helicopter pilot, and for the aficionados the first helicopter he flew was a Hiller 12-E, then a Whirlwind 7. Sonar-dipping for submarines was carried out from a Wessex Mk5, then he was posted to HMS Hermes. About this time, the mid 1960's, Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe) had declared 'Unilateral Declaration of Independence' from Britain, and the so-called 'Beira Blockade' was formed, Royal Naval ships patrolling the Mozambique Channel off the East Coast of Africa, in efforts to stop oil supplies getting to land-locked Rhodesia. David, now as a trained Wasp helicopter pilot was on-board the Frigate Ashanti. Needing vital spares, the ship docked into Mombasa where David and several colleagues took the opportunity to gate-crash a hotel party, after which they drove their hired Mini-Moke to a beachfront house. Chatting up one or two of the single girls there, David shamefacedly admitted that he would very much like to know where their ship was docked, as they themselves hadn't a clue! Pilots huh! That chance meeting would have earth-shattering consequences for both David and the girl he spoke to; more of that later.

During two weeks of relative inactivity, the Naval Officer in charge tasked the helicopter pilots to assist the local Kenyan authorities. Flying the Wasp, David flew sorties throughout Tsavo National Park with David Sheldrick, the founder Warden of Africa's biggest Wildlife Park for Protected Animals to monitor and record the wildlife species there, including rhinoceros.

On this same tour of duty was an official visit to Muscat, capital of the Sultanate of Oman, to facilitate the hierarchy handover of power from the Sultan to his son Qaboos bin Said Al Saïda, a staunchly pro-westerner and passionate moderniser of his nation and people. Qaboos asked David many questions about the Wasp helicopter. This meeting too would have a considerable impact on David's career.

David married the girl from the beach-house. (We did say it was earth-shattering!) Now living in England, far-flung horizons beckoned. Eager to travel the world David spotted a job opportunity, still with the Royal Navy, out in New Zealand. So, he asked the powers that be, that if they would send him and Gina (beach-house girl) out there, flying Wasp helicopters, he would remain in service. Not taking kindly to blackmail, the Navy said no.

So, David left. Jobless. After writing 250 letters asking for a job, he was eventually offered a choice of two, helicopters in the New Forest or fixed-wing in Inverness. Gina wanted the New Forest, so they moved to Inverness! Now flying what David calls 'puddle-jumpers', short-range Comanche and Jet Ranger, David collected three American oil-rig engineers from Edinburgh in the Comanche and landing at Inverness indicated their waiting helicopter standing idle on the apron. "If you'd make your way to that helicopter the pilot will be with you in a moment." he said. The Americans were noticeably perturbed when David followed them and sat in the cockpit as their pilot

onwards to Invergordon!

After four years David was offered a fabulous job opportunity that only someone with his flying qualifications and experience could fulfil. The Sultan of Oman had formed an Air Division of the Royal Omani Police and needed a suitably qualified pilot to join, so leaving Inverness David became a Superintendent of this new Air Force, issued with police uniform, whistle and pistol. Shortly after his arrival the Force purchased a Lear Jet, which David was qualified to fly, which meant transporting personnel over vast expanses of desert became much quicker and more comfortable than by helicopter. And because of the increased flying ability of the jet, more unorthodox manoeuvres became available.

Out of the blue, or rather out of the advertisements in 'Flight' magazine, David was offered the position as a pilot for Orion Airways. Returning to England, David left Gina and family in their hastily purchased property in Worthington and flew to Seattle for three months flight training on Boeing's fleet of the '7' series. As Orion, latterly Britannia was predominantly a charter airline for the Horizon Travel Group, winters found little use for the aircraft or crew, so new routes were identified for these slack winter periods, typically, for David, Peru-Columbia-Florida.



Because of his impressive skill-set and experience David was always in demand. There followed brief periods of employment with subsequent airlines including Ambassador, Sabre, Easy Jet and then Flying Colours, JMC Airlines, then Thomas Cook at East Midland Airport.

Or should that be Pilling Airways? David had contrived to get his two air stewardess daughters to be on the same flight with him as Captain, flying to Lanzarote! Strange to relate, the cabin crew announcement of "Your pilot today is Captain Pilling and crew attendants are Sophie Pilling to the front and Sarah Pilling to the rear!" just didn't register with the passengers! David's son Jonathan didn't fly, he was too busy training as a brewer. (It was Jonathan in fact who became instrumental in the setting-up of Wicked Hathern Brewery, and in the compiling of the beer recipes.) Then onto Fly-Jet, subsequently named as Silver Jet, which attempted to re-vamp the flying from Luton to New York into a luxurious travel experience, converting a

300-seat aircraft into a one-hundred bed only aircraft. Well, that didn't work very well did it!

Mandatory retirement at 60 meant that briefly, David was without a flying job, until another job offer came through for a most unlikely destination – Riga, Latvia, flying for Air Baltic, for the final six months of his flying career.

Most memorable experiences of David's career include the beach landings at Barra in the Scottish Islands; the speedy and acrobatic Lear Jet; transporting camels in a Canadian-built Buffalo to the Sultanate's tribal chiefs in the desert of Oman.

Now, after 22 years living in Hathern, David is a volunteer at the library, and has recently joined Hathern Voices at the Church.

David's wish for the village? **"If you see some rubbish, obviously dropped by mistake - Bin It!"**





# JAMES NORTH OF HATHERN

Moving to another country is a big decision, especially when it means a long and dangerous journey. Immigrant stories over the last 200 years tell of people escaping a difficult past or lured by promises of a better future. One such story was of Hathern born, James North who was to meet an unfortunate end.

James was the seventh child of 14 to John North and Hannah Foulds. He moved to Loughborough when he was 18 and married Sarah Shepherd at Stanford-on-Soar four years later in 1845.

In 1849 James aged 26 and Sarah 20 with children Hannah aged two and baby Frederick took a life changing step and travelled as 'assisted immigrants' to Australia on the ship "Ann Milne". The ship departed from London on Jan 27th and arrived in Port Phillip Bay, Australia on May 19th – yes it took over three and a half months in what would have been pretty uncomfortable conditions.

This was clearly quite an undertaking for parents with a very young family. Like many others around this time the voyage was subsidised (ie "assisted") by the state of Victoria for the purpose of passengers being

employed on their arrival, and duly John worked as a blacksmith in Port Fairy.

In 1860 the couple were on the move again emigrating with their growing family on the ship "SS Active" to the major port of Lyttleton in the North Island of New Zealand before settling in Portobello, Otago where James farmed 315 acres. He worked and lived in Portobello for a further 17 years raising a family that totalled 11 children (two born in England, four in Australia and five in New Zealand).

However tragedy struck on 18th September 1877 when James North drowned during a tremendous storm in Otago harbour – all witnessed by one of his sons from the shore line. The Otago Witness, the local paper, gave the full story of the tragic event...



## Steerage class on the Ann Milne.

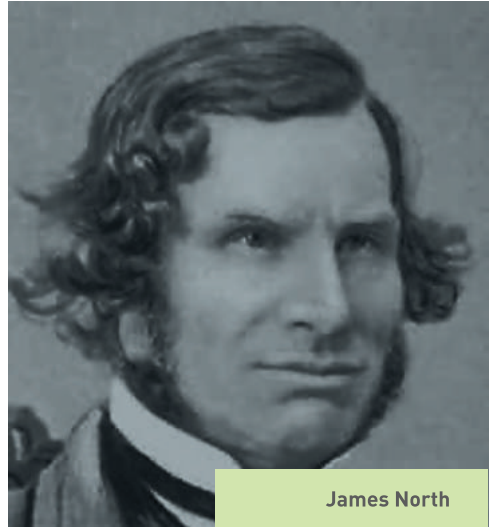
'There were 232 Immigrants principally Scotch and English with a few Irish, comprised of 43 married couples, 34 single men, 32 single women and 80 children under 14 years. On the voyage there were 6 births and 5 deaths (1 man, 2 women, 2 infants)'

Passengers to Port Phillip from Southern England and Ireland 1849-1851

*'Tuesday's gale was one of the heaviest that had ever visited the district....it needed no expert to prognosticate extreme danger to anyone rash enough to venture afloat single-handed in an open boat. A young man named North of Portobello reported at the Pilot Station that he had seen his father swamped in his boat and drifting into the channel. They launched a boat to go to his assistance but the gale was too heavy ...nothing has been seen of the boat at the Heads'*

It must have been a very tough life for Sarah after this tragedy but she survived another 30 years and died in 1907. One of James' and Sarah's children Hannah was an early signatory to a petition for women to have the vote in New Zealand - she died in 1935.

**Anthony White, Hathern Local History Society**



James North



Sarah Shephard



Hannah North

### Did you know

that Hathern Local History Society has an extensive web site, at [www.hathernhistory.co.uk](http://www.hathernhistory.co.uk), that is updated with new material on a regular basis – take a look.

# HATHERN TOGETHER

By the time you are reading this, no doubt you will already have had another issue of the Hathern Together What's On Guide on your doorstep – slightly earlier than last year! That's because the team are moving to a "Spring/Autumn" setup, bringing you brochures in April and October of each year.

It's hard to believe that the brochure you've received will have been the fifth edition produced since January 2018. In that year, 49 events were put on over the course of 12 months to highlight the broad range of groups and talents this village holds.

The Hathern Together project wasn't initially setup to be just that platform however – the Parish Council put the idea out to existing groups within the village to commemorate three anniversaries for 2018. Those were the 700th anniversary of Royalty visiting Hathern, the 400th anniversary of the oldest bell in the church tower, and of course, the 100th anniversary commemorating the end of World War One. At the time, all groups were invited to come together to create a calendar of events under the title of Hathern 2018.

Throughout the year, over 12 groups, including Hathern History Society, Hathern Church & Hathern Village Association to

name but a few, ran events ranging from Wine Walks to Medieval Courts, Open Gardens to Christmas Fayres.

It was through the success of 2018 that it soon became very apparent that this was not a one-off idea – and thus the group decided to adopt the permanent name Hathern Together, and a brochure for the first half of 2019 was duly created!

The structure of the group has remained consistent throughout – the group is essentially a working forum, meeting every six weeks or so. Nearly every village community group is now represented by at least one member at these meetings, where ideas for resource sharing, joint events and bigger ideas are discussed. A small amount of funding is granted each year by Hathern Parish Council to support these events, specifically whereby without the event would either not happen at all, or would not be financially viable. This has also helped to make a number of the events completely free of charge to enter.

There have already been some great success stories from coming together as a working group. These include events such as Scrooge, last December, which saw our very own Parish Council Chairman taking on his calling role as Ebenezer. This Easter sees Hathern Library, Playschool, and Youth Club, come together to put on an Easter weekend too, something not to be missed. And of course, Hathern's Big Week returns, with an action-packed calendar involving almost every group in the village. All of these efforts to date were recognised when Hathern Together won the Rural Achievement Award for Community Engagement in Leicestershire and Rutland last year.





The 2020 events calendar sees an even bigger example of community spirit however, on Friday 8th May. Now a public holiday, Cross Street & Gladstone Street will play host to a Street Party, to commemorate the 75th anniversary of VE Day. Hathern Primary School have opened up their Cross Street site too, so the centre of the village will be full of games, music and celebrations. Almost every group in the village is playing their part in a way, it'll be an event not to be missed. Alongside Hathern's own itinerary, we will also be joining the national running order of the day (more details of which can be found at [www.veday75.org](http://www.veday75.org)) You'll find the full order

of the day on your invite, included in this magazine.

We hope you'd all agree that Hathern Together really does provide something for everyone. If you want to find out more about what they're doing, be sure to join them on 8th May, as well as at Meet the Neighbours, as part of Big Week, on Saturday 6th June. If you want to put on an event in the village but aren't attached to an existing group, let us know! We'd love to hear from you.

**Martin Clayton, Hathern Together**



# Hathern's BIG week

BRINGING THE COMMUNITY TOGETHER



# 29 MAY – 6 JUNE 2020

EVENTS LISTED IN YOUR WHAT'S ON GUIDE  
DELIVERED TO EVERY HOUSE • FROM SHOPS & BUSINESSES • ONLINE & ON FACEBOOK  
[WWW.HATHERNONLINE.CO.UK](http://WWW.HATHERNONLINE.CO.UK)