

# HATHERN HERALD



The Hathern Parish Council Magazine

## SPRING 2023

[hathernparishcouncil.org.uk](http://hathernparishcouncil.org.uk)



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# WELCOME

...to another edition of the Hathern Herald.

I can't believe I'm entering my third year as editor of this magazine - time has flown by.

The Spring issue is always a difficult one for news as very little happens in the village over the winter months - we just love our outdoor events too much and need warmer weather for those - however, the Parish Council have been beavering away around the village and you'll notice we have a LOT of new trees. See page 4 for details on the community woodland.

We also have - quite by chance - a bit of a wildlife theme in this edition too. Head over to page 12 to see some cracking photos from Hathern Wildlife Facebook page. Our short story this time is wildlife based too, thanks to Jo Symon for these reads.

The Library has also been busy, celebrating 7 years as an independent community library, no less. See what they've been doing and how you can join in on page 14.

Finally, the most anticipated article I think I've known for the Herald - part two of the Spencer's Bakery story! It's a fascinating read and your comments and feedback about part one have been so positive that I'm sure you'll enjoy part two!

Until the next time.

*Benjamin Hardy*

Benjamin Hardy  
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## INSIDE YOUR SPRING ISSUE

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### PHOTOGRAPHY

ROY DANN, HATHERN HISTORY SOCIETY



## SPECIAL FEATURE

### JOIN THE HERALD TEAM

If you have ever fancied a spot of journalism, taken an interest in local history, or even enjoy meeting & talking to interesting people, then maybe you fancy joining the Hathern Herald contributing team?

Our writers make contributions to each edition of the Herald and although you may think that this could be an onerous task, it really is something that anyone can do. The magazine comes out quarterly and not every contributor is published in every issue - you may only need to do one or two articles a year.

#### Meet The Neighbours

Our writers for this item meet people of interest in the village and find out about their lives and work. Many have come back and said how interesting this can be, finding out about people they would normally pass in the street or see on a dog walk.

#### Open For Business

Although we haven't featured this article for several issues, Open For Business is a great

#### COMMUNITY MATTERS

way to get noticed in the village. Maybe you have a business in Hathern and would like one of the team to come and help you put an article together?

#### Village History

Do you know something interesting about the village? Maybe you live in one of Hathern's many historical buildings and you can provide information that would make an interesting read - our readers love the historical articles that feature in the Herald.

#### Special Features

We regularly print Special Features which can include a range of subjects. From interesting hobbies to fundraising to factual local information.

Whatever your reason for wanting to contribute, we'd be very happy to hear from you. Please get in touch with the team by emailing:

[hathern.herald@gmail.com](mailto:hathern.herald@gmail.com)



**H**athern now has a proper woodland – albeit a very young one! Around 14,500 trees have been planted on land owned by Charnwood Borough Council (CBC) near to Golden Square to create a 15- acre community woodland for future generations of Hathern residents to enjoy. It was great to see around 90 local people volunteering to help out during the special community planting sessions organised by CBC and the Parish Council – in total some 1,700 trees were planted in this way – a fantastic effort!

The project is being supported by Hathern Parish Council, who will be providing funding for the maintenance of the area, and Forestry England who have provided around £50,000 of funding to create and develop the woodland. The scheme has also been registered under the Queen’s Green Canopy initiative in honour of the late Queen’s leadership of the nation over 70 years.

Very recently we were given the opportunity to find a name for the newly planted woodland and so the Parish Council invited residents to suggest appropriate names – by the end we had 40 ideas to choose from. The name we have decided on is Avederne Wood. Avederne is the earliest recorded name for the village now known as Hathern and is mentioned in the Domesday Book from 1086!

Avederne Wood is one of the biggest tree planting schemes ever undertaken in one location in Charnwood and is also expected to contribute to CBC’s commitment to become Carbon Neutral by 2030. It is estimated that after 30 years, the woodland will have the potential to capture up to 1,323 tonnes carbon dioxide. Not only that but it will increase biodiversity in the area, create new wildlife habitats and provide a great recreational green space for visitors.



If 14,500 trees weren’t enough Hathern Wildlife Group has recently planted around 40 fruit trees on the site - so lots of scrumping opportunities in years to come! And one last thing - a very big thank you needs to go out to the dedicated and small band of residents who rescued hundreds of trees after they were flattened following periods of high winds across the site in late December.

## DAISY BANK

**W**e are almost there and hopefully by the time you read this the public green spaces on Daisy Bank will be in the ownership of the Parish Council. One big hurdle, that has taken nearly four years to resolve, is the replacement of 30 dead or dying trees on the site. This has been the responsibility of Wm Davis, the developer, who has dragged its’ feet most of the way on this. Following the intervention of the Parish Council, Wm Davis recently contracted Leicestershire County Council to complete the work and that was finally done at the end of January. Wm Davis is also committed now to remedial work on the children’s play area and that should be done very soon.

We are currently finalising the land transfer agreement with Wm Davis and aiming to complete the adoption in the 2022/23 financial year. Once we have ownership of the green spaces we will be looking to see if we can site a litter/dog bin on the estate – long overdue I know. We will also need to look at grounds’ maintenance and that of the children’s play area.



## PHOTO ID FOR LOCAL ELECTIONS

**A**head of the local elections on May 4th Charnwood Borough Council (CBC) is urging residents to check they have an accepted form of photo ID to allow them to vote. For the first time voters across England will be required to show photo ID when voting at polling stations in May. Residents without one of the accepted forms of ID will be able to apply for free ID called a Voter Authority Certificate which can only be used for elections. A list of accepted ID is available on CBC’s website, along with more information about the new requirement, frequently asked questions and details of how to apply for the free ID. For more information, visit [www.charnwood.gov.uk/VoterID](http://www.charnwood.gov.uk/VoterID)

Those who require a Voter Authority Certificate are being encouraged to apply before the deadline of April 25th. Residents should first make sure they are registered to vote before applying.

## PARISH PRECEPT

**W**e all receive our Council Tax bills at this time of year. 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. With the hardships that many families are facing this year, and by reaching into our financial reserves, we have managed to hold the precept level for the forthcoming year to the same as it was for the 2022/3 year. That means, for an average Band D Council Tax payer, the annual charge will stay at just over £54.

# THE FOUNDING OF SPENCER'S BAKERY:

## PART TWO "FRED"

**P**art One of this history ended with the closure of the Co-op bakery in 1950 and the consequent loss of Ev Spencer's job as the village's baker. Part Two covers the events which led to the foundation of the business to the rear of the Kaiapoi Cottages on the Loughborough Road but there is more to tell about Ev before Fred's part in its establishment takes centre stage.

Only aged 56 in 1950, Ev still needed to earn a living, of course, and his eldest son, Reg, (who had become a foreman at the Brush Electrical Engineering Company Limited, down by Loughborough railway station), procured him a job on what was known as "the chain gang". The loading of heavy machinery which this entailed proved too arduous for him, however, and he soon became seriously ill which culminated in his being hospitalised in the Royal Infirmary in Leicester. Here it was discovered that his kidneys had become detached owing to the years of bending over the bread-making troughs (pronounced "trows") while mixing by hand. Sons Reg and Eric were called in by the doctor and told that, while there was no cure for the problem, Ev could be "patched up" and given –more or less – an extra 10 years of life (it actually turned out to be 16), provided he gave up beer and only drank water which had been boiled. Accordingly, from that day on he never drank another drop of beer, which was quite a feat of self-discipline given his previous form of



HERBERT EVERARD SPENCER — "EV"

visiting every pub in the village when delivering pikelets and, according to his grandchildren, his habit of always having a jug of ale close to hand. Two stories illustrate the strength of character which enabled him to follow the doctor's orders to the letter.

### Story One

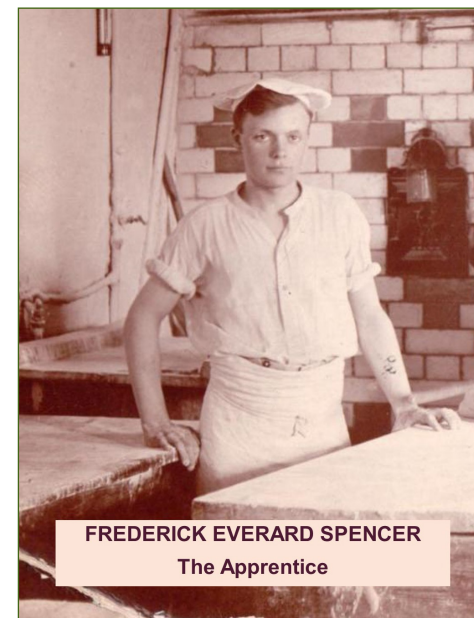
When the Co-op installed a new tiled oven in the bakery in Hathern, Ev had to go to Shepshed's Co-op bakery to help them so he could continue to supply bread for the village while the work was taking place. One day, the manager of the Shepshed bakery, with whom Ev obviously did not get on, instructed him to take an enamelled quart jug to The Black Swan when it opened, fill it with beer and bring it back. At 10.30 a.m. when the pub opened, Ev went as instructed but did not return until 2.30 p.m. and the manager "went ballistic". "I told you to bring that quart jug of beer back!" he fumed. "Aye," Ev replied. "You told me to go at half past ten but you didn't tell me what time to bring it back!"

### Story Two

The Co-op bakery's oven in Hathern was a public one and at Christmas villagers used to bring their turkeys, cockerels and joints of meat to be cooked for their festive meals. Placed in the oven in tins with the names of the owners chalked on them, Ev used to "cook them off" ready for collection when the pubs closed at 2.30 p.m. so many villagers would not sit down to eat their dinner until 3.00 p.m. On Boxing Days, Ev provided the same service for the Liberal Club Committee for their Christmas Dinner, when he would cook joints of beef and jugged hare which he delivered to the Club in Dovecote Street. Once there, of course, he would stop for a beer or two and on one occasion (when he had been there for quite a while and given that he needed to be up early the following morning to begin baking) Ethel, his wife, went to the Club to fetch him. When she got him home she said, "That's the first time I've ever been in the Club," to which he replied "Aye, and it'll be the last!", it being an entirely male preserve in those days.

And now to Fred who, having completed his National Service, returned to the village in 1952 and obtained a job at Barker's bakery in Loughborough. Even before he left to join the army, Fred had always said that he was keen to start up a bakery business on his own account but not having the wherewithal to do so or a suitable location, it seemed that, like his father before him, he would not be able to fulfil his dream. That same year, however, the redundant stockinger shop at 154 Loughborough Road – which had belonged to Ethel Spencer's grandfather, Charles Moody – became available and Ev, Reg and Eric contributed £50 each to transform it into a bakery. As Reg was still working at "The Brush" and Eric was a coach finisher at Yeates, Ev gave Fred permission to use his name for the business so it became "F E Spencer's".

Following his spell in hospital, of course, Ev only did light work at the bakery (which he continued to do until just before his death in 1966) but his experience and expertise was clearly fundamental in ensuring that his ambitions – and those of Fred – were finally realised.



FREDERICK EVERARD SPENCER  
The Apprentice

Starting up a business then, of course, was – as now – a risky undertaking but their market research had been done well (Reg took a week off work and went round the village knocking on doors to gauge the level of interest) and Ev's previous reputation as the Co-op baker was already so well known that many people had said that if he ever started up on his own they would become customers. Even so, success was not guaranteed but from the very first day they baked and delivered their own bread in 1953, their wildest dreams were realised. In an age when bakers delivered to the door of a customer's house, Ev and Fred had run out of that morning's production by the time they had served all the properties between the bakery and Garendon Avenue



meaning that they had had to go back to bake more. According to records kept by Reg, the total of the takings for their first week was £43 so since a loaf of bread in 1953 would have cost 6d or 7d – i.e., about 3p – a rough calculation suggests that they had baked and delivered over 1500 items in all, an astonishing triumph of excellence and enterprise for such an embryonic venture.



SPENCER'S BAKERY

So that is how “F E Spencer’s” came to be established, the business and its workforce rapidly going from strength to strength. Reg came to the firm in 1955, followed by Eric in 1956, and then they were joined by Reg’s

children, Ian and Yvonne, whose own children – Ian’s Lisa and Liam and Yvonne’s Christopher – also became members of what was, in every sense of the term, a family concern. Having bought Eric and Fred’s share of the business and turned over the whole of it to Ian and Yvonne in 1992, Reg retired in 2002 and under their ownership it became, simply, “Spencer’s Bakery”, the name under which it traded until their own retirement and the bakery’s closure in 2016, to be much missed by all who had been privileged to sample its products for the past 63 years.

As told to Peter Sergeant by Ian Spencer and Yvonne Leeson

Photographs courtesy of Hathern History Society, Ian Spencer, Yvonne and Garry Leeson

For further information about the bakery and its success, an article in The British Baker, published on 10 February 2006, entitled “Keeping it in the family” may be accessed by the following internet link:

<https://bakeryinfo.co.uk/news/keeping-it-in-the-family/607834.article>

## SHORT STORY

# THE FOX, BADGER AND VILLAGE

His ancestors had lived in the same family den for generations, even back to the days when the fields surrounding the bramble thicket were being worked manually by farm labourers steering big, plodding horses as they dragged the ploughshares through the rich, loamy soil. The village was much smaller then, and much quieter, with fewer villagers walking the footpaths. Nowadays the footpaths were full of noisy people who all seemed to have an inquisitive dog that bounded un-checked across fields chasing the fox’s scent, but they were always thwarted by the dense brambles concealing the den. The brambles had been there forever, or so it seemed, with some of the oldest branches thicker than a man’s wrist, with savage wicked thorns to match. An impenetrable shield of brambles that had resisted all attempts of removal over many years were the den’s greatest asset, providing a secure habitat where the fox family reared their young. The dog-fox himself had been born and raised here nearly six winters ago and had himself provided food and comfort for his own offspring.

He lay quietly in the long grass in the neglected corner of the unkempt field, the late afternoon sun gently warming his old bones. It was still too early to start searching for today’s food, not until he would feel a bit safer as the cloudless blue sky darkened into night. His anticipation of food was tempered by his memories of the previous evenings search, which had not gone as well as usual. Everything around me is changing he thought, and changing so quickly too. The slow, almost imperceptible growth of the village had been

quite easy for the fox to adjust to; but just recently the building of houses had increased so rapidly it was making his head spin. Almost daily it seemed old tracks which he had padded along countless times had been blocked off by wooden styles or metal curved swinging gates. Areas of lightly wooded countryside surrounding the village were ripped up, disappearing and being replaced by rows upon row of brick-built houses. And the wildlife he and his family pack so depended on was also disappearing at a frightening rate. He could not remember how long ago it had been since he had last eaten rabbit, all



their burrows had been destroyed when the huge earth-moving machines had churned the hedgerows into muddy debris. And his nightly forays in search for food were taking longer and longer – some nights he would return to the den with nothing to show for his long hours of searching for something to eat. One of his daughters, the vixen of the neighbouring skulk family, had moved her den almost three miles from where she had been reared to get away from the massive machines that made so much noise and created disgusting clouds of foul-smelling fumes. And the hunting was much better where she had moved to, with more rabbits that had also relocated their burrows further away from the village. Trouble was, crossing the black tarmac road to hunt

for the rabbits in the woods was fraught with danger from the hurtling non-stop stream of vehicles and the consequences of being hit by a metal-monster was just too much to contemplate. So, resigned to his ever-decreasing search area, he was continually adapting to the opportunities that arose. More houses meant more villagers. More villagers meant more rubbish being thrown away. And that was becoming his main source of food now. He knew where the best piles of rubbish were nightly stacked and if he was very careful, he could quietly eat his fill from thrown away cartons and tins.

Several nights ago, he had discovered a different though unlikely source of food. One of the gardens in the village had several suet balls laying on the grass, probably thrown there to feed birds. Initial tasting, though tentative, had confirmed his decision to try this new snack. Chewy, certainly, but quite filling too. Filing the location of the garden into his 'food source memory' he had continued his nightly village search vaguely pleased with himself. And for the next three nights he had found the same garden and the same suet balls, as if they had been especially thrown there deliberately for him.

Until last night. When his self-congratulatory frame of mind was rudely shattered. As he had padded softly up to the garden wall, with his mouth watering at the thought of munching the tasty suet balls, a soft snuffling and grunting sound brought him to an abrupt halt. Slowly raising his head above the hedging atop the wall, the moonlight lit up the garden lawn like floodlights on a football pitch. And there, munching away on his suet balls was a badger! Not just any badger either. The fox recognised him as the biggest badger from the allotment sett, up the track from the den. Their food-searching paths had frequently crossed as they navigated the village and the surrounding

fields. Not a particularly nice badger either, being ferociously protective over any food finds. The fox silently lowered himself below the wall and retreated into the dark shadows.

Feeling slightly dismayed at the thought of the badger stealing what the fox now regarded as 'his' suet balls, he slunk away further into the village to search out his remembered food sources, and gradually scavenged enough scraps to satisfy his hunger, and returned to the den.

And now here he was. Planning for tonight's food search. He was contemplating starting out much earlier than usual, trying to gauge the time of his arrival at the suet-ball garden



just as it was sufficiently dark for maximum safety and security but hopefully before the big badger got there ahead of him. So timing was all important. Neither the fox nor the badger contemplated a physical confrontation, as the consequences for either of them could spell disaster. Sure, the badger was a lot heavier with a thick protective coat of fur and had razor-sharp claws, but the fox was far more agile, lightning quick with powerful jaws. So, no, they were not going to fight, they would retain a respectable distance from each other as they had done over the years.

With the sun now sinking from the sky and the evening silence descending over the village,

the fox decided that now was the time, and set out. He padded silently along the well-trodden footpath with overhanging trees that seemed like a dimly-lit green tunnel to where it turned to go up into the village. As he turned to follow the track he could hear and smell the horses in the stables just there – they had probably caught his scent on the soft twilight breath of wind and disturbed their evening rituals. He continued up into the village, with the football pitches and playgrounds deserted now that it was dark and the villagers home in their brick-built houses.

He continued his silent way into the centre of the village, all his senses flaring now as he neared the suet-ball garden. He momentarily paused in the deep shadow of the stone wall, straining his utmost to direct his acute sense of hearing towards the garden. Silence. With an easy athletic bound he leapt up onto the garden wall and stared motionless at the lawn in front of him. There they were, suet-balls for his supper! Pausing for just a second to double-check for any competition from the badger, the fox began munching his way through the first of the several balls laying on the grass.

He had eaten three and was just about to start on the remaining balls when his

alert mechanism warned him of danger. Whipping around in the blink of an eye he saw badger, motionless, silently watching him from across the lawn. Unmoving, with ripples of confrontation crackling in the air around them, they stared each other down for several seconds. And then, as if by mutual understanding and agreement, they cautiously began to eat the remaining suet balls, sharing what was left until all the food had gone. The fox and the badger silently looked at each other for a moment before they both began to edge away from the garden and quietly made their separate ways around the village to continue their respective food search.

After another hour of scavenging around the village, the fox returned to his den, skillfully evading the protection of the monstrous thickets of thorns, his belly comfortably swollen from his food search. Well, he thought, as he finally relaxed, closed his eyes and stretched out on his bed of dried grass, that was a success after all. I think I'll do the same tomorrow! And soon, all that could be heard from the bramble thicket was the quiet snoring of a contented fox.

Jo Symon



SPECIAL FEATURE  
**HATHERN  
WILDLIFE GROUP**

**T**hese photos have been published on the Hathern Wildlife Facebook group page. The group started four years ago and now has over 400 members. These include people who live in, or visit the Hathern area plus some “ex-pats” who like to keep in touch. The group includes some highly accomplished photographers who regularly post stunning photos of Hathern’s wildlife plus keen-eyed local bird watchers who have recorded a number of rarities. That led to Hathern being featured as a bird watching location in a recent edition of Go Birding magazine.



Photos courtesy: Keith Challenger, Amber Davey, Diane Musson & John Roulston.

COMMUNITY MATTERS  
**HATHERN  
 COMMUNITY  
 LIBRARY**

**S**o much seems to have happened since our last article – We’ve had Christmas, celebrated the library’s 7th birthday with a birthday party and raised over £200 for Shepshed Food Bank, along with collecting an impressive amount of food donations, welcomed Chinese New Year with rabbit-themed stories and crafts, improved our energy rating from F to C by making changes like insulating the loft, held our first seed swap and installed a new outside light. We’re looking at reviewing our opening hours to make sure that we’re open when library users most want to visit the library and following up on the feedback from last year’s volunteer meeting. We had 295 borrowers borrow books between October – December last year, and 16 new members join the library, which is amazing! Keep an eye on our social media and our website for upcoming events, like Big Week activities, Coronation-themed events, craft workshops and more!



**VOLUNTEERING OPPORTUNITIES**

We have a few gaps in the rota that need filling, so if you’re willing to take up an extra shift, or know someone else who might be interested, please let us know. It’s a really rewarding experience, and you will get to meet lots of new people! We also have some more specific duties that we need people to take up to keep the library ticking over smoothly, namely:

- Co-ordinating the Early Years Foundation Stage class visits and liaising with school generally
- Running the Reading Group
- Representing the library at Hathern Together meetings
- Liaising with other village groups
- Monitoring training needs
- Managing the volunteer rota

**LOTTERY**

Hathern Community Library Lottery is based on the National Lottery and pays out each week on the Bonus Ball. Each ticket, from 1 to 59, costs £2 and 50% of the proceeds goes to



the winner, 50% being retained by the library. In the event of no one having the winning ticket, the prize is rolled over to the following week, for one lucky person! The Lottery is a vital and significant part of our fund raising, giving us a broadly predictable level of income and actually covers about half of our annual running costs. This contribution has become increasingly more important to us as we have gradually lost grant income since we became a Community Library 7 years ago. If you would like to support us by buying a ticket (or two!) every now and again - or even better by bagging yourself a permanent number - you can contact us through our Facebook page, or by email ([janesorby@btinternet.com](mailto:janesorby@btinternet.com)). Payment can be made through PayPal, bank transfer or cash. Our Lottery members are a loyal bunch of people who like the rest of us, want to see the library stay open, welcoming both the village and the wider community. If you can spare £2 a week, please consider joining us - the more tickets we sell, the higher the winnings!

**SPONSORED WALK**

Sadly, last year’s sponsored walk to raise funds for the library didn’t happen, for various reasons. If you’re interested in helping to organise or participating in a sponsored walk this year - it can be any length, anywhere - please do get in touch!

**OPENING HOURS**

- Tues 14:00 - 18:00
- Weds 10:00 - 12:30
- Thurs 14:00 - 18:00
- Fri 10:00 - 12:30
- Sat 10:00 - 12:00

**CONTACT THE LIBRARY**

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# Hathern's BIG week

BRINGING THE COMMUNITY TOGETHER



# 27 MAY – 3 JUNE 2023