

# Love Lydgate Community

## Local Butterfly Update 2020

The butterfly season was somewhat mixed in 2020 with a good spring and summer and a poor autumn. Records were mostly made from sightings in the garden which backs onto the park, although forays into the park area were virtually non-existent due to the Covid pandemic. Local walks yielded several sightings to boost the records.

The season began with a late March sighting of a Comma. This however proved to also be the last, not a good year for this butterfly (pictured front cover).

Throughout April there were frequent sightings of small tortoiseshell and peacock butterflies. 2020 proved to be a good season for both species, the former bucking national trends. (Peacock caterpillar pictured on front cover).

The orange tip butterfly was also on the wing in late April, the male easily recognisable by the orange tip on its wings. Small whites and green-veined whites were around in numbers by May and the red admiral made its first appearance in June, always a welcome visitor to the garden.

Speckled woods have been frequent in previous years but failed to appear in any numbers this time. I had one sighting of a painted lady but suspect that this was a release from a butterfly 'kit' that is popular with children. Curiously, it spent most time feeding on the nectar of the flowers on a rowan tree (Sorbus Vilmorinii).

There were the usual gate keeper, ringlet, meadow brown and large whites around in July and early August. The buddleia once again did a superb job of attracting small tortoiseshells, peacocks and red admirals throughout its flowering period of August and early September.

Quickedge Road proved to be a very popular location for sighting a number of species of butterfly on sunny days throughout the summer, and small heaths were spotted in the fields along the paths to the north of Burnedge Lane.

The season came to a very abrupt end in late September as favourable summer weather was replaced by the cool and damp October, a disappointment which may impact the winter hibernators – peacock, small tortoiseshell, comma and red admiral. Hopefully, butterflies will return in force this year, important indicators of both our environment and climate trends, we cannot afford to be without them. (Paul Titmuss)

## Lydgate Tunnel

Today Lydgate Tunnel lies abandoned and forgotten, but in fact it deserves to be admired as part of the impressive "architecture that the railways built", a tribute to the work and skill of contractors, miners, navvies and the LNWR engineers who built it more than 150 years ago.

Its impressive entrances, the first at the end of Station Rd in Grotton and the second in a deep cutting off Mossley Rd, Grasscroft, easily pass unnoticed. The tunnel itself might be completely invisible to most of us were it not for the spoil heaps that mark the sites of the four shafts sunk at 230 yard intervals, to provide access and ventilation to the tunnellers. The first of these is the most obvious, in the field between Coverhill Rd and Lydgate Church, the second is now part of the White Hart car park, a third lies next to the football pitch behind St Annes Crescent, and the last is at the end of Beech Lane. The engineers also took advantage of a disused shaft, part of an abandoned colliery at the Grotton end of the tunnel.

The ground through which the miners dug was largely rock and strong shale, which they excavated by explosives, but there were also smaller areas of loose shale and clay removed by pickaxe. The spoil was lifted, via the shafts, to the surface by two locomotive engines each working two shafts. The excavations were then propped by larch beams until masons and bricklayers could line the walls and roof. The deepest shaft was 240 feet and took over six months to sink. The tunnel is 1,332 yards long. Work began in 1852 and the first train ran on July 4<sup>th</sup> 1856 and for the next one hundred years it carried passengers and freight between Greenfield and Oldham. The branch line was officially closed on April 13<sup>th</sup> 1964. (Gordon Whitehead)

(Picture on front cover with thanks to Saddleworth Historical Society—Volume 28 no 2, Summer 1998).

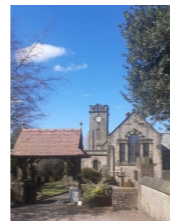
## St Anne's Church out of Lockdown (Rev Pat Gillian)

We are hopefully on our way now out of full lockdown and looking forward to welcoming everyone back to St Anne's Church without restrictions.

We have 12 weddings and 16 baptisms for the second half of 2021 as couples and families have been waiting until they could invite families and friends to their special occasions. Next year we have 10 weddings booked and 2 baptisms so it looks like we will be busy over the next 12 months.

During the past 15 months we have tried to 'do church' differently. At times, the doors of our building have been open but with restrictions on numbers who could attend. At times we had to close the building. Reflections and small services have been put on WhatsApp and the Saddleworth Team website. We ensured that different and special services were celebrated, eg Christmas, Easter and Whit-Friday, with large numbers of people watching from all over the world.

Our church community supported and helped those unable to go out shopping and those isolated at home, with many of our members coming forward to offer their help in this way. We at St Anne's are always ready to welcome people into our church. If you would like to discuss anything with me, please contact me - **Revd Pat Gillian** 01457 870162 or [patgillian@cofeinsaddleworth.org.uk](mailto:patgillian@cofeinsaddleworth.org.uk)



(Photo, Caroline Ellis)

## The Last Word ....

Thank you to those who have contributed to the current issue. If you would like to get involved by sharing your news and pictures, contact [lovelylydgate@btinternet.com](mailto:lovelylydgate@btinternet.com). Deadline for Autumn 2021 issue, **15th August 2021**. (Kate Tunn-Editor)



## The First Word .....

I hope you are all feeling that little frisson of tentative excitement as we begin to look forward. Things are happening! People feel confident enough to start planning ahead. In Love Lydgate we are doing the same.

We will hold our AGM on June 1<sup>st</sup> in the Parish hall at 6.00pm and as well as reflecting on last year we will be thinking about the events we can hold in the future.

The Great Get Together is planned for June 26<sup>th</sup> at the White Hart, the popular Monday exercise class will hopefully start up again at the Parish Hall in middle of the same month and the Saddleworth Male Voice Choir have been in touch with the Larks to plan our next concert. Exciting! The care of the planters and village generally continues but we are getting short of people to help. Why not join us at the AGM and see what you can do? It is **OUR** community. And thank you to the children from St Anne's school for their colourful posters supporting the 20mph scheme which is coming soon, see picture below.

Jennifer Greenwood Chair of Love Lydgate



## Parish Hall update

As you know, what is now the Parish Hall was originally gifted to the village as the school in 1869. In the following years, many local people have been through its doors. Where are they now? The two boards record the first step into life after primary school for some. They list the names of those who 'matriculated' between 1924 and 1956. In those days most young people left school at 15 but some took the matriculation examination and went onto the Grammar School, some earning scholarships to Manchester Grammar School. Is your name on the board or do you have a relative listed there? We are putting together the memories of these pupils and any others that went to Lydgate School at this time. Some of the letters are beginning to fade and the wood needs attention. They are very nearly 100 years old! I am planning to get in touch with the Repair Shop for advice and hopefully their help. Your interesting stories make get us noticed! Please get in touch.

In the meantime, the refurbishment of the hall is well underway, but more money is needed. We are so grateful to all the local people who have given money or their time and skills to help the project. We are redecorating the main hall in August and the Beer and Brass event should have raised enough to buy blinds. We still have the kitchen and toilets to work on. If you can help in any way, please get in contact. This is our heritage and our future. (Jennifer Greenwood)



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## Love Lydgate Community

### Guinness Record Breaking Cook along!

This is the easy to make record-breaking recipe from Marks & Spencer Chef, Chris Baber. I took part in the recent live record-breaking attempt which broke the record for the most number of participants in a Cook Along.

#### Sweet Pepper and Pesto Risotto (pictured front cover)

1 veg stock cube 1/2 jar sundried tomatoes, drained and chopped  
3 tbs olive oil 30g Italian risotto rice  
3 tsp garlic 1 jar roasted red peppers drained and diced  
4 tsp green pesto To Serve: Basil leaves, Grana Padano, (optional)

#### Method

1. Pour 1 litre of boiling water into a pan and add the stock cube. Bring to a gentle simmer and set aside.
2. Heat olive oil in a large pan, add the garlic, gently sauté for 3-4 minutes.
3. Add chopped sundried tomatoes and cook for 2-3 minutes, stirring occasionally.
4. Next, add the rice to the pan and gently toast for 2 minutes, stirring constantly to prevent it sticking.
5. Add the warm stock a ladle at a time, ensuring each addition is almost fully absorbed before adding the next. Continue adding the stock until it is all incorporated into the rice, around 15-20 minutes. Add a little more water if necessary. The rice should retain some 'bite' in the very centre.
6. When the rice is cooked, add the roasted red peppers and warm through for 1 minute. Stir in the pesto and remove from the heat.
7. Serve topped with basil leaves and freshly grated Grana Padano if you like. Serve with crusty bread. Delicious. (Ruth Trickett)

### Diary of a local farmer

As we approach the middle of May, winter still seems to be hanging on with cold days and freezing night-time temperatures, with the odd flurry of snow. It has been quite a change from last year when April and May seemed to be the best months of the year for good weather - perhaps this year it is yet to come.

The milking cows are now out in the fields for a few hours during the day but when the heavy showers come, they are soon ready to come in again. They know where it is dry and warm. The young stock which would usually be out day and night are still inside, but when the weather improves they will be able to go out.

Within two to three weeks, we should be cutting the grass for winter feed, it looks like it will be a very light crop for first cut this year.

One thing we are noticing these days are the number of deer living wild around us, it is now a common sight to see small groups grazing in the fields especially in the early morning when most people and their dogs are still in bed.

It seems odd to see daylight at 9pm and then wake to a frozen car or even a covering of snow. Apparently, this April has seen the highest number of frosty nights since 1970 - things can only get better. Farmers always need something to moan about!

## Love Lydgate Community

### Pondicherry and Pi

Whilst working in India six years ago, I was diagnosed with leukaemia and had to come running back to England to save my life. However, before I was forced to abandon this enormous country, I was determined to see as much of it as I could. Thereafter every weekend and on days off for the next three months, I hopped onto planes to North, South, East and West.

Pondicherry is in the South — a beautiful place with French street names and a big French influence. Also, it is the setting for the metaphysical film, Life of Pi. On one such weekend, I was staying in the outskirts of Pondicherry. I had decided to take a walk to find the al fresco eating area and it was then that I was confronted with the most unexpected sight. A colourful, totem pole sculpture.

It stood at peace. Quiet, alone and unapologetic in the tranquillity of the gardens. There was just the heat of India, the sounds of insects and birdsong and the absolute stillness. I felt remarkably calm and in a sudden state of mental remission from the stress and fear of my cancer.

This simple structure was assembled out of individual cheap, plastic water pots. These were commonplace everywhere in India, indeed an everyday humble household item. However, all together and working as a team they seemed to have a strength and stoicism all their own. Perhaps I took it as a sign because I immediately bought six of different colours. How to get them home though? In the event, I left most of my belongings behind and managed to get all six on the plane.

The intervening six years have flown by. I have come to terms with the changes to my life and learned how to manage my illness and the pining for the loss of working abroad. I am now back doing part time work, but all the time those pots have waited patiently in my shed.

Covid's third lockdown saw the motivation necessary to get me moving on a project that was years overdue.... and I have finally built that strong structure (pictured front cover).

Perhaps it lacks artistic integrity a more apt description being, clumsy, corny cheap plastic silly - but whatever it is – it doesn't really matter because its colour and fun is made for me alone. It is a powerful message that will remind me that I can be forever unified and happy, just like Pondicherry and Pi. (Linda McLaughlin)

### Lydgate Nature Watcher

Firstly, I will try to get you smiling at the observation of starlings. In 2019, I asked you to look for the flying displays (murmuration), when hundreds of birds put on a display before settling for the night, roosting on branches or power cables, (pictured front cover). Electricians amongst us will know that a working power cable gets warm, so the birds use them to keep comfortable and cosy. Sometimes they get too warm and then the birds will start to shuffle and hop about noisily.

I have been asked why some birds migrate and others don't. Starlings are a good example of both. This year we had a warm and dry start with the result that large numbers have stayed in GB. Others, who were travelling south, changed their minds and also stayed here. There are, of course, many varieties that have done the opposite.

We have a bird table in the garden which we keep topped up with seeds, fat balls, peanuts and niger seed. The table is on a post about five feet tall. A cheeky field mouse, who lives in the dry-stone wall surrounding the garden, has discovered this source of food and will run up the pole, take some peanuts and run back down and into the wall again. It then carries on doing this for about thirty minutes or so until it can eat no more! Field mice are very small, have big ears and very short tails.

Finally, swallows and swifts. Swallows have been seen in area but in very small numbers due to having been held up on the continent. The swifts are still on the way and are due early June. Keep watching! (Ian Merckel)

### It's never over till it's over!

Now in my 48<sup>th</sup> year of working for the NHS as a nurse without a break in service, retirement was almost in reach. Historically goals of retirement had been thwarted, but this time the date was set in stone. Dreams of lazy days and gardening duties were to be put on hold a while longer. Like many others who had their 'best laid plans' such as weddings, big birthdays, anniversaries and seeing their brand-new family members for the first time, all put on hold because of the pandemic.

For me, the change of direction came when the Covid vaccine was finally rolled out early in the year and then it was all hands to the pump/syringe, including mine. It has been a privilege to work alongside such a diverse range of people and professionals. The vaccine hub runs like clockwork because of an amazing team of volunteers who direct the patients down the rabbit warren also known as corridors. The administration staff who ensure the myriad of paperwork is executed with precision, as the objective is to vaccinate 500 people per day in my hub. Every Covid vaccine given, I feel is a step closer to winning this fight against Covid 19 and winning back some of the freedoms I so took for granted.

My day usually starts at 05:45. Day shift starts around 07:30 for half the staff, with a quick cuppa and then preparation for the day. A normal day is 08.00 to 20.00, many working the 12-hour shift with the occasional 22:00 finish time. My last 14 hour shift went very quickly, it was hopefully enabling the community who were fasting, to fulfil their religious obligations. This worked well and we were rewarded with Biryani for our supper that night, made by the ladies who were also fasting. Afternoon shift is usually 12:00 to 20:00, but staff work whatever they can, usually working their days off and weekends, whilst juggling their day jobs.

The patients have been an absolute joy, some needle phobic, some very excited at the prospect of getting themselves protected and in turn protecting the ones they love.

It has been an amazing experience being part of this fight and to end my career doing my small part in ending the misery and loss of life which so many have experienced during these unprecedented times.

They say if you love your work, it is not work. I love my work and have never regretted my career choice.

Take good care of one another and stay safe. (Elaine W)

### Lydgate's 'other' Pub

I am standing in the centre of Lydgate . . . Looking for a pub with no beer.

Well in truth, The Ram isn't a pub anymore but a beautiful home with enviable views. However, a couple of centuries ago The Ram was at the very centre of all that was good, bizarre and downright bloodthirsty.

Taking in the cottage's sedate exterior it's hard to believe it was once the entrance to a boozier where local gentry adjourned after a hard day of sporting activity. Yes, bull baiting and dog fighting – deadly games played for big wagers by the communities' high rollers. In fact, there used to be an original oil painting hanging in the White Hart illustrating a cockfight in Lydgate the 1830s. It was reproduced in Ammon Wrigley's "The wind among the heather" published in 1916.

There were also curious competitions: grinning through a horse collar for a new hat, porridge eating by young women for a new bonnet, treacle eating by young men for a new shirt. There were even smoking competitions for women over 60 for a new bed gown... All innocent enjoyment.

The last bull baiting took place in Lydgate around 1833. It seems police, motivated by rowdyism and drunkenness, were finally successful in ending the barbaric events. What of the Ram?

In his admirable book on old local pubs, author Robert McGee highlights its checkered history. Records show it was built in 1781 by William Newton and the first innkeeper was Ann Newton who gave another licensee Phineas Mellor as surety.

John Robinson was the third generation of his family who would be landlords of the pub for most of the century after it was bought by his grandfather in 1812. And in 1873 the pub was bought by Benjamin Gartside of Brookside Brewery, Ashton, along with the adjoining three cottages for a princely £850. The pub finally closed in 1931 after police objected to the renewal of its licence and it was sold two years later and turned into two cottages. (Ken Bennett)

### Welcome and Introduction from Anne — New Church Warden at St Annes Church

The role of church warden is vital to the health and well being of our church and often very demanding.

My main responsibilities are to liaise and support clergy in the Saddleworth team, care for the congregation; ensure proper records are kept, all valuable items are secure and annual inventory and insurance is up to date. I am also wedding/baptism coordinator and verger at funerals and weddings!

On a different note, before I retired, my working life was spent as a nurse with the NHS, the latter 25 years as a sister in ICU and CCU. I have three sons who were all baptised at St. Anne's. I love walking, but my big passion is gardening. I grow a variety of vegetables and flowers and, growing too much, I often share produce with family and friends.

I am at church most Sundays and would be delighted to see you. Just ask for me as you arrive and I promise you will be made most welcome, we have child friendly areas too! (Anne Smith)

