

# Easton Village Newsletter

August 2019

Issue 166

## FARMER BURTON'S COUNTRY TALK



I have just taken my dogs for a lovely walk down the green lane towards Spaldwick. The Sun is shining, skylarks are flying above and William Brown's wheat has just started to turn in colour. How lucky we are in Easton to have walks like this! William's wheat will be ready to harvest in about two weeks depending on how much sun and rain we get. Yesterday I heard that they were harvesting Winter Barley at Stow

Longa. My harvest will be a little later as I'm only growing Spring Barley, so it could be three weeks before we get the combine rolling. Talking of combines, I have spent the last week trying to get ours ready. It has been sitting in the barn for nearly a year, so it will need a careful check-over to make sure everything is working properly and ready to go. The knife needed sharpening, the air conditioning needed re-gassing, belts and chains checked to the correct tension, greased all the nipples and cleaned the radiator. The grain store has also been cleaned and sprayed out for the new grain. The weeks before harvest seem to vanish with lots of jobs to do! We have also been busy making hay and haylage for winter feed from the grass fields and margins and the weather was ideal for this.

This coming Autumn we may be growing some Winter Wheat again as I'm having to plough up my two-year legume (grass fields) and re-establish them elsewhere. This will be a first wheat after a break crop, so it should yield quite well, hopefully. The Oilseed Rape harvest has started but fewer farmers are growing this crop because of the problem with Rape Beetle. Some suffered so badly that it had to be ploughed up.

Many of you might have heard on the news about the slaughter of 40 lambs in Northamptonshire. This happened in three separate cases within the farmer's fields and must have been carried out by a professional butcher and slaughterman. Northampton police force are asking the public to be observant at night to activity in farmers' fields and this applies to all areas.

## REMEMBERING ALASDAIR

Alasdair Graham, who sadly died on 20<sup>th</sup> June 2019, was a community-minded individual who will be very much missed by the whole village. He served as a trustee of the Easton United Charities for a number of years and proved to be very organised - for example, taking photographs of charity land to provide records. It was he who organised the provision of the village defibrillator, which continues to be kept at the side of the garage at The House and he also arranged the first aid training for those who were interested in learning how to use it and carry out CPR. Additionally, he undertook the task of improving the drainage on The Lane by clearing gullies and underground pipes so that the surface water has somewhere to drain away.

Alasdair was always considerate and had a quirky sense of humour; when he rebuilt the roof of his garage with the original intention of providing a room for his daughters, it was ceremoniously named 'The Skylounge'. He also got involved with the construction of the bus shelter – an episode that he took very personally in view of his professional qualifications – and was mortified when a severe gale lifted it bodily from its position and dumped it in the field on the other side of the road, where it had to remain until after harvest! At another time, father and daughters acquired a small dinghy (named "Rona"!) which was occasionally seen floating on the village brook. This had its moment of glory when the junction with the A14 flooded and firemen borrowed the boat to try and rescue Mrs. Williams from the house at the haulage yard – albeit unsuccessfully as she refused to leave without her dog, which the firemen refused to take! So Mrs. Williams stayed put, the *Rona* was bobbing on the A14 tied to a signpost and the firemen left!

Alasdair will always be remembered with affection by all who knew him. We are all grateful for the legacy of the work he did for the village and we extend our sympathy to Rona and all his family.

### CHURCH SERVICES FOR AUGUST

At the time of going to print, details of the services in the seven parishes were not yet available. For more information, please ask the Churchwardens or check the Benefice website at [www.kymchurch.org.uk](http://www.kymchurch.org.uk).

### SPOTTED FLYCATCHERS IN EASTON



Via Brian Davies, Michael Holdsworth of the British Trust for Ornithology was contacted and he visited the next day. The young ones were too big to be ringed so he set a net and traps for the adults and with 10 minutes he had captured both birds. After being weighed, measured and ringed, they were released with their feathers a little ruffled but unharmed. They were soon back feeding their young. He did confirm that to his knowledge this is the only breeding pair in Easton this year, so if you have seen any others in our village please let Brian or myself know and we will pass on the details.

The second photo shows a close up of the male bird (there is very little outward difference between the sexes) about to be released after its adventure.

### Steve Thomason

Two birds had caught my eye in our garden in the last couple of weeks, and last week we identified them as Spotted Flycatchers - the same subject as the talk Brian Davies had kindly arranged for us this time last year. The birds only appear back in the UK around May or June time, and normally only stay for a couple of months.

Our new residents typically sit in the same place in a tree next to the house, so unwittingly obliged for a few photographs in between diving out and back targeting various insects. We discovered there was a nest that had two fledglings in, and in the first photo it has its mouth full, ready to top up the hungry babies.



**Deadline for the September Newsletter will be Bank Holiday Sunday, 25<sup>th</sup> August.**