Our Village Birds

Many villagers will be able to identify a number of birds that are now getting into the full swing of the nesting season. Some birds will have been with us over the the winter, others have migrated in. Ravenstone will have a wide range of species nesting in the farmland hedgerows, the wooded areas and in our gardens. They have been doing the same by adapting to changing times, population increase, agricultural methods over thousands of years. So the Blackbird or Ousel, as it was called in the past was singing its beautiful song, sounding its alarm cry and scuttling across the ground head cocked hunting for food, for millennia. 

Little was written about birds until the 16th century. The first book being in 1544 written in Latin by John Kay of Cambridge. All country folk would have had a knowledge of many species they saw throughout the year and there are many references to birds in literature written at the time. Shakespeare's plays are full of allusions to bird-life, Lady Macbeth is talking of the barn owl when she says “Deep night, dark night, the silent of the night........ The time when screech owls cry.” “The buzzard which can be seen soaring, wings motionless 500 metres above the village, appealing to man many people today was considered a stupid and lazy bird and used by Katherine to insult Petrucchio in The Taming of the Shrew. The cuckoo, now rarely seen or heard around the village is often referred to and in King Lear linked with the hedge sparrow or dunnnock, a common sight in our gardens and a favourite surrogate for the cuckoo when Lear’s fool says to him “For you now, nuncle,..... The hedge sparrow fed the cuckoo so long.....That it had its head bit off by its young”.

And so it goes on, house martins and swallows soon to arrive are mentioned as ‘guests of summer’ in Macbeth, Merchant of Venice and Anthony and Cleopatra. Robins and wrens in Two Gentleman of Verona, The Winters Tale and King Henry VI. However, house sparrows were much maligned as they were abundant in the past, sadly no more as their numbers have fallen dramatically. This decline echo's Hamlets words when he says “Winters Tale and King Henry VI. However, house sparrows were much maligned as they were abundant in the past, sadly no more as their numbers have fallen dramatically. This decline echo's Hamlets words when he says “

For you now, nuncle,.... The hedge sparrow fed the cuckoo so long.....That it had its head bit off by its young”.

Spring and Summer. If someone's garden to save a few pounds. 

Ravenstone Village Planting

In early April plants were taken from the planter attached to the village sign in Heather Lane and during the past few summers some have also been taken from the flower beds at Beadman’s Corner.

Village planting cost to the Parish Council and village Council Tax payers several hundred pounds a year, the obvious point being to make the village more attractive in the Spring and Summer. If anyone sees or hears who may be taking plants could they please contact a Council member with the information. Village planting is for all, not for someone's garden to save a few pounds.

Chairs Update

A relatively quiet few weeks for the Parish Council running up to the local elections at the beginning of May. Sadly, four of our councillors decided to stand down. Thanks very much to Geoff Plant, Jeanette Pendury, Val Pulford and David Welch for their help and support during that time on the council I feel that Ravenstone Parish Council, having had a fair few problems over the past few years, is now running smoothly and is ready to face anything the future holds. We do now need new councillors, so if anyone is interested please contact Helen our Parish Clerk. We are now in the final stages of renovating the pavilion. The changing rooms, toilets etc. will be decorated at the beginning of June followed by floor cleaning. The pavilion itself is now being used on a regular basis by various groups in the village. We have the coffee morning, Lego Church, a Boot Camp on Monday evenings and just starting a games afternoon for men. Anyone interested in any of these groups or wanting to hire the pavilion for a children’s party etc. please contact me.

Speeding is still rearing its head in the village and continues to be a serious problem. A villager, living on Main St. had a lucky escape as a car mounted the pavement as she was coming out of her front door. If you read the article in this newsletter written by Emily, you will see that she has been very proactive and set up an online petition so please sign it.

Thanks for taking the time to read our newsletter and hope you enjoyed it and found it informative, we have had some very positive comments regarding the past issues. If you would like to write an article yourself about anything concerning the village please do not hesitate to contact me or our clerk.

Sheila Lunn Chair, Ravenstone with Snibston Parish Council

Message from Emily

Hi, I'm Emily. I live in the village and attend Woodstone school. Earlier this year I got in touch with the parish council because I was concerned about the speeds in the village. After we spoke it became clear that both me and them were worried about the speed and that it needed to change before something serious happens! We are all so fortunate to live in such a beautiful village where we can enjoy going on countryside walks and play at the park but if we do not have the right speed prevention equipment it becomes dangerous, how would you feel if a friend or a family member was hit by a car? Hopefully now you are thinking what can I do to help? There are different ways: send a letter to County Hall Highways Department at the address of- Highways dept, County Hall, Glenfield, Leicester, LE3 9RA. Next, sign our online petition athttp://chng.it/WmHrjLTMyP to help all of these small acts make a big difference. Remember we have a lovely village do not ruin it by tearing through it!
Ravenstone History Group

Usually meets every 6 weeks, at 7.00pm Wednesday evenings in the almshouses chapel (Ravenstone Court).

If you think you may be interested to find out more about the history of your village, come along and join us. We are a friendly group and welcome new members.

Our recent visits have included Taylors Bell Foundry at Loughborough, the Nottingham Caves, and Glenfield Tunnel. Guest speakers often entertain us at our meetings.

We have transcribed a number of recorded interviews made with older residents of the village and we are currently embarking on a new project: we aim to research different aspects of life in the village during part of the twentieth century. Any contributions would be very welcome, so if you have information, old photos, articles, etc., please contact us or, better still, bring them along to one of our meetings.

Lego Church at the Pavilion

At Ravenstone Church we are trying to find new ways in which we can learn about what it means to be Church and to learn about the Bible together. We already have Messy Church on the 1st Sunday of each month which is for all ages.

We are beginning Lego Church which will be held in the Pavilion once a month and is for parents or carers with their children. At each session we will hear a bible story and the make that story out of Lego. It is surprising how much we remember when we have built it! The stories we are going to do in the next few months are ‘Baddies of the Bible’.

Our first one was Goliath on 30th April. The next date will be 21st May and 25th June. All from 4pm to 5pm. There will be a charge of £1 per family.

We hope families will be able to join in the fun.

For more information ring Rev. Gill Pinnington on 01530 810655

St Michael’s Church restoration

The focal point of Ravenstone conservation area is our beautiful grade 2* listed Church. Grade 2* listing is given to particular important buildings of more than special interest. St Michael’s Church was built in the 13th Century and has been altered several times, the last time in the 1800’s when it underwent a restoration.

Now two hundred years later it requires urgent attention, in particular masonry repairs to the internal and external faces of the spire where there is severe stone erosion.

The Architect who inspected the Church has made recommendations that repairs to the spire and attention be given to rainwater drainage should be carried out within the next twelve months. Other restoration work must follow with repairs to the roof, masonry repairs throughout, lead flashings and boundary walls costing many thousands of pounds. The urgent spire repairs will cost almost £90 000, some funds already being secured but there is still a significant short fall that must be found before the work can start.

Ravenstone has always been a vibrant village, small enough for people to feel that they belonged to a real community. In the past few years around two hundred dwellings have been built increasing the population significantly so it is important that everything possible is done to keep the community together, one way being through the Church. St Michael’s provides a place of worship for parents and their children, a place to marry, baptise and say goodbye to our loved ones as well as providing a geographical focal point to the village, hopefully it will continue doing so for many more years.