

HATHERN HERALD



The Hathern Parish Council Magazine

WINTER 2022

hathernparishcouncil.org.uk



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WELCOME

How has the year flown by and already we're onto Christmas? It seems like a lifetime ago that we were celebrating the Queen's Jubilee back in June and already several weeks have passed since her funeral in September - what a year and what a difference.

Life does go on however, and that is most evident in this latest edition. News from the Parish Council tells us that a memorial tree for Her Majesty will be planted on Daisy Bank, plus work has now started on the planting of the community woodland (pg 5).

Developments have been made at the Wildlife Garden (pg 12) and Hathern Community Library are planning future events too (pg 6).

We take a look back at Spencer's Bakery in a fascinating article by Peter Sergeant who has interviewed Ian Spencer and Yvonne Leeson (pg 8) and Martin Clayton has been out and about plotting a Woodland Walk which would be great for a Christmas family activity (pg 14).

I do hope you enjoy this edition. If you would like to contribute an article to any future Hathern Heralds, or indeed have something of interest to share with us, then please do get in touch.

Until the Spring, have a very happy festive period and see you on the other side!

Benjamin Hardy

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PARISH COUNCIL NEWS STAND FOR THE COUNCIL

Go on – have a think about becoming a Parish Councillor! In May next year elections take place for various local authorities including those for Parish and Town Councils. Residents can put themselves forward for election and if successful they will play an important role in serving their community. But what is a Parish Council, how does it fit with other local authorities and what does it actually do? Well let's look at the Parish Council here in Hathern to get a better idea.

Together with other Parish and Town Councils in the area we represent the third of the three tiers of local authority in Leicestershire. Next up is Charnwood Borough Council (CBC) and then Leicestershire County Council (LCC). Each of these has differing responsibilities in our community. Our seven Parish Councillors are elected from the village for a four-year term. Councillors are unpaid volunteers who serve as individuals in a team and not representatives of a political party. The council employs a clerk

who deals with administration and finance, and is the first point of contact.

The Council owns and is responsible for a range of community-based assets and amenities that include Hathern Park with its play facilities and equipment, together with the Sports Ground in Pasture Lane and, hopefully by the new year, the open public spaces on Daisy Bank. We also look after Hathern Cemetery and its approach and the allotments on Shepshed Road, The Leys green space and its community orchard, and the various bus shelters, litter and grit bins and wayside seats across the village. We receive income from some of our assets including allotment rentals, sports bookings, and lease and burial charges. All our assets must be regularly inspected, maintained, repaired, replaced and kept in safe condition for public use.

The Council receives a proportion of the council tax to help finance its operations and statutory duties. We believe in investing our funds in projects which provide better amenities for residents and improve the village environment for everyone, and where possible we look to lever those funds with grants and





funding awards in order to be able to deliver more substantial projects.

Other things we do include scrutinising and commenting on planning applications (although we don't have powers to make decisions), liaising with other authorities and utilities about infrastructure issues and investigating problems and complaints from the community. We keep an eye on crime and security issues in the village and a member of the local police force attends the Parish Council meeting or provides a report to us for the meeting.

Despite the key role the Parish Council plays in our community it is also important to recognise that there is much in the village where others, such as CBC and LCC have legal responsibility and we have no powers to directly intervene. In particular most highway related assets, including pavements, roads, verges, street furniture such as lighting, bus stops, and street and road signage are all in the ownership of LCC and as such they take responsibility for their repair and care. For its part CBC has responsibility for providing a number of services across the village including recycling and waste management, planning and building control, environmental health services, and

street management matters such as pavement parking, dog fouling, littering and fly tipping.

Alongside its statutory duties Hathern Parish Council is focused on community matters and the local environment. We support the wide range of community groups we have in the



parish, through our grant funding scheme for projects, and host the home bases of Hathern Band, Hathern Football Club and Hathern Old Cricket Club on council land. Our allotment site is home to Hathern Wildlife Group's new wildlife area and we provide financial backing for Hathern Community Library. Some of our green spaces are important sites for plant and animal bio-diversity. We have developed two wildflower meadow areas in recent years, have over 150 young and mature trees and regularly plant succession trees, and have around 1.5km of hedgerows that are maintained to support wildlife habitat and food source.

So, there are a wide range of activities and projects that our Parish Council gets involved in and that requires a good mix of people as Councillors with range of skills, experience and interests - but above all else enthusiasm and a "sleeves rolled up" attitude!

Have a think about whether you might like to join us in May.

REMEMBRANCE TREE



In remembrance of Queen Elizabeth II the Parish Council has agreed to develop a small area of the open space on Daisy Bank with an English Oak, plaque and a wayside seat. The area will also commemorate the earlier Platinum Jubilee, just as we have marked Jubilees over the past years. We hope to be able to do this next year once the public open spaces on the estate have been transferred into our ownership. Watch this space for more details.

COMMUNITY WOODLAND



Well by the time you read this the new Community Woodland should be very close to being completely planted up. As we write detailed plans are being finalised to populate the new woodland area behind Golden Square with some 14,000 saplings with the aim to finish by mid-December. All necessary funding is now in place and much has already been done in terms of infrastructure with a new field gate and a pedestrian access kissing gate provided at the bottom of the site. By the time we go to print planting should be well underway with planting days put aside to provide opportunity for local volunteers from the community to get directly involved. Let's hope all goes well and the weather is kind to us!



COMMUNITY MATTERS HATHERN COMMUNITY LIBRARY

We've had a really busy summer and autumn so far – we have been out on Daisy Bank with our gazebo, promoting the library's activities to residents there, and saw an increase in library membership as a result. We hope to do this on some of the other newer estates as well (but maybe not until the Spring – brrr!).

So, what else have we been doing? Well, we held an awards ceremony on the 25th September for all the children who completed this summer's 'Gadgeteers' Reading Challenge – 27 children completed it in total - well done to you all! We continued the theme by holding an 'Invention Convention' afternoon.

We also participated in the village scarecrow festival – volunteers in the events team created a brilliant robot scarecrow (inspired by the Gadgeteers reading challenge), who kept watch outside the library for the weekend – did you spot him?!

We hosted a volunteers' event at Hathern Club in October in order to introduce our new chair, Nadine Underwood, and our other trustees who came on board during the pandemic, and also to gather feedback from our volunteers on both the things we are doing wrong, and the things we are doing right. The event was really well attended, and we thank all of the volunteers who came for their contributions, which were plentiful, and which we are currently wading our way through!

UPCOMING EVENTS

Macramé Christmas decorations run by Library volunteer Harsha. Friday 9th December, from 1.00pm-3.00pm . During this class you will make some lovely macramé Christmas decorations. Perfect to hang on your Christmas tree or make to give as a gift. £15 per person. Suitable for all levels. All materials and refreshments included.

To book a place email:
harsha@indiainspiredcrafts.com



Our team of police community support officers and borough/county councillors will be holding regular community surgeries around the village for residents to drop in and discuss any issues or concerns they may have; the next one at the library will be on: Sat. 3rd December at 10am.

SEED SWAP

In February next year the library will be holding its first ever seed swap – now is the time to start collecting seeds from your garden and elsewhere, so you'll be able to come and exchange them for something different – exactly like a library! Just write the name and the date they were collected on one of our special envelopes, so you'll be ready to bring them to the swap next year. Flower or vegetable seeds, homegrown or commercially produced, everything will be welcome...all we ask is that they are no more than two years old, to ensure they'll germinate and grow.

SPONSORED WALK

The sponsored walk to raise funds for the library has been postponed until Spring. If you would like to join in, please contact Gill Rockett on gillrockett@hatherncommunitylibrary.org

OTHER SERVICES THE LIBRARY OFFERS:

- **ANCESTRY.COM** Interested in researching your family history? Did you know that the library has a subscription to ancestry.com? Library users can access it for free, and if you haven't used it before, we have volunteers who can show you how to use it. Just pop in or contact the library for more information.
- **AUDIO BOOKS** We have a wide range of audio books available for those who are visually impaired, or who just prefer to listen than read. Why not check out our range next time you are in the library?
- **LIBBY** Access thousands of digital eBooks, audiobooks, magazines and newspaper titles free from Leicestershire Libraries using Libby, Borrowbox and PressReader. Borrow up to ten eAudiobook titles at a time and unlimited eMagazines from Libby for up to 3 weeks. If the

title you want is on loan you can reserve it for free. No overdue charges - titles are returned automatically at the end of the 3-week loan period. For information on how to use Libby, visit the Leicestershire Libraries website or ask in the library:

<https://www.leicestershire.gov.uk/leisure-and-community/libraries/our-digital-library/ebooks-audiobooks-emagazines-and-enewspapers/libby-emagazines-and-audiobooks>



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

We will be closed for Christmas between 24th December 2022 – 2nd January 2023

Find out more by visiting our website:
www.hatherncommunitylibrary.org

THE FOUNDING OF SPENCER'S BAKERY:

PART ONE "EV"

In the summer 2022 edition of Hathern Herald an article about Hathern's famous Nelson Square cake noted that it was a product of Spencer's Bakery which was founded by Herbert Everard Spencer in March 1953. Assuming that there might be an appetite for more about the bakery and its origins, this is about its founder, known simply throughout his life as "Ev".

Born in 1894, while living with his family in Tanner's Lane, Ev left school at the age of 14 in 1908 to become an apprentice baker at the Co-op in the village (the old Hathern Co-operative Society building is on Wide Street, to the right of the entrance to Tanner's Lane – on the left of the entrance to the lane is the building which once housed the Co-op's bakery – see photographs). An apprenticeship at that time typically lasted 5 to 7 years and to broaden his experience he worked as a 'finisher' as well for Skinner's Bakery in Loughborough. During the period of his apprenticeship, he was also obliged to cycle to Leicester to complete his training where he was expected to be at work at 4 o'clock in the morning. To enable him to meet this demand, he initially took lodgings during the week in a room over a fish and chip shop: however, when he got fed up with his supper always being from the shop below – not to mention the smell – having made sure his rent was paid up to date in order not to alert his landlord that he intended to leave, he simply did so one day by lowering all of his possessions into the back yard via the washing



line and made good his escape on his bicycle!

The outbreak of The Great War in 1914 saw Ev in army uniform in the field bakeries of The Leicester Regiment "The Tigers" but though he was well behind the battle lines, it remained an experience about which, according to his grandson Ian, he never wished to talk. After the end of hostilities in 1918 he returned to Loughborough and since finding a permanent post as a baker was difficult he went to help at Harry Rose's bakery in Wharncliffe Road in Loughborough (now, ironically, a fish and chip shop called Perfic Place). Having married Ethel Roper in early 1915, he now had a wife and a four year-old son, Reginald, (the father of Ian and Yvonne who ran the bakery from 1992 until it closed in December 2016) and they all lived with his parents, Herbert (Senior) and Mary, in Leopold Street. To supplement their income, working through the night on a Friday after finishing at Rose's, Ev used to make a hundred dozen 'pikelets' (also known as 'crumpets' and – as they were "baker's dozens" – that's 1300 in total!) to sell on a Saturday. Ethel's brother, Walter, a cabinet maker, made Ev a truck with a



wicker basket with a lid on in which to carry the pikelets and these he took to Hathern to sell door to door round the village, accompanied by young Reg whose job it was to guard the contents while Ev refreshed himself, first in The Anchor and then in The Dewdrop. The pikelets sold for a shilling a dozen (that's 12 at an old penny each plus one free!) and did so like the proverbial hot cakes, making Ev £5 a week, double a working man's wage at the time. Despite the success of this embryonic entrepreneurial enterprise, however, the opportunity to open his own business did not materialise and so he continued to work as a journeyman baker in various establishments, including Skinner's from which he acquired many of the cake recipes on which his own bakery's reputation was built later.

In 1923, however, Ev's luck turned when he was offered the job of the baker at the Co-op back in Hathern where he had served most of his apprenticeship and where for the next 27 years he continued to hone his craft. Until 1935, though, there was no electricity supply to the bakery and even after it was installed only a single bulb illuminated the main working space. Given that much of a baker's work is done at night, one can only imagine how difficult it must have been to work in that little light but, more significantly, despite the various

ingredient company representatives telling Ev about the electric mixing machines which were now available, the Co-operative committee would not sanction the purchase of one and so he continued to have to mix everything by hand, a procedure which would eventually take a significant toll on his health.

In 1927, impressed by Ev's bread-making skills, one of the visiting 'reps' suggested that some of his produce should be taken to the Alexandra Palace to show at the annual British Bakers' Exhibition. On learning from Ev that he would not be able to travel to London to do this himself, the 'rep' offered to take some samples for him and the white bread he took won second prize in the all-England category (now known as Baking Industry Awards sponsored by The British Baker magazine). Of course, Ev did not quite get the recognition he deserved as the bread was 'a product of "Hathern Co-op Society Limited"' but it was a measure of the quality of his baking which eventually led to the success of his own business later. Many other awards for his products were gained in the years which followed, one of which remains a proud possession of Ian's, a beautiful bronze medal awarded to "Hathern Co-op Soc. Ltd. For Hovis Sultana Bread, Nottingham, 1934" and for which, of course, the Society continued to gain kudos. By now, though, the baker himself



change in his circumstances in early 1950. By the early 1930s, Ev had three sons, the youngest of whom was Frederick Everard, born in 1929, who in the late 1940s became – in the footsteps of his father – an apprentice baker himself at the Hathern Co-op, giving Ev vital help in the now very successful bakery as well as providing himself with a career path to follow. In 1950, when Fred was called up to do his National Service, however, Ev was left struggling to run the bakery on his own so he asked the Co-op for additional assistance. The committee turned down his request and, then, on learning from Ev that he would not be able to continue to run the bakery on his own, they simply closed it down, bringing bread into the village instead, first from the Shepshed branch and then from Coalville.

And Ev, an award-winning baker who had risen to the top of his profession, suddenly had a job no longer.

As told to Peter Sergeant by Ian Spencer and Yvonne Leeson

Photographs courtesy of Hathern History Society

The Founding of Spencer's Bakery – Part Two
"Fred" will appear in the Spring 2023 Issue of the Hathern Herald.

also took home valuable prizes, comprising such things as silver tea services and sets of fine china, and the prospect of running a bakery he could call his own was becoming ever more enticing.

Despite the reputation as a baker which Ev had now forged for himself, even so, striking out on his own seemed as far away as ever, especially in the light of an unexpected and momentous



THE OLD BAKEHOUSE—Formerly the Hathern Co-operative Society Bakery

SHORT STORY HETTY THE HEDGEHOG

Hetty yawned and stretched out her little legs, uncurling herself from the tight prickly ball shape she had slept in since the beginning of last winter, when the frosty nights were getting so cold her tiny pointed nose was suffering from the dreaded 'drips'. As any hedgehog will tell you, the only cure for the 'drips' is hibernation. Hetty could vaguely remember her Mum telling her that, but that was long ago now. But every year her Mum had been right – 'get the drips, go to bed.' So Hetty did. Every winter. She lay there now. Eyes still shut, her hearing slowly tuning in to her surroundings as she gradually emerged from her sleep. The slight movement caused the spines on her back to click and rustle together and disturbed the dry leaves of her bed. Which created an annoying cool spot just as Hetty was getting comfortable again. 'Might as well get up now' she thought, and stretched a bit more. Rolling onto her tummy, Hetty wobbled upright onto her little stumpy legs and opened her tiny mouth in the most hugest yawn ever. 'I am so hungry' she thought to herself (because Hedgehogs can't speak you know!). She moved forward and gently bumped against something. 'I need to open my eyes' she thought. Which she did. Slowly at first. Then, blinking rapidly, she could see where she was. Hidden deep inside her bed. Which was a wonderfully deep and luxurious pile of dry leaves, piled up in a quiet corner of the garden. 'I remember where I am now' she thought. And scrambled downwards to firmer ground, pushing her leaf bedding out of her way as she gently emerged from the pile of leaves and stood still for a moment. Quite still. Savouring her surroundings. She could feel the gentle warmth of the sun, easing her tiny muscles from the scrunched-up position they had been in for several months. And the sounds! Oh! the lovely spring-time sound of birdsong, trilling throughout the garden as lots of birds competed for their own spaces. And

the smells! 'Wait a minute' Hetty thought, 'I haven't got 'The Drips' anymore!' She wrinkled her tiny pointed nose in delight and breathed in deeply, tasting the air as she did so. Being a hedgehog and having the most amazing sense of smell, she could easily tell if the lawn grass had been freshly cut or flower beds had recently been dug – and they had! 'I can smell earth' Hetty said to herself, 'and if I can smell earth that means worms must be there too! Yippee!' Though what 'Yippee!' sounds like in 'Hedgehog-speak' us humans don't know. But to a hedgehog, well, it means scurrying across the grass with her spines clicking against one another as she ran to the nearest flower bed and plunged her tiny little nose into the soft, wonderfully-smelling dirt. 'Oh, just yummy!' said Hetty as she pressed herself deeper and deeper into the flowerbed. She stopped, suddenly motionless. Even her shiny nose stopped wrinkling. 'I can feel a worm under my feet!' she thought excitedly. Then, with a mad whirling of nose and feet she dived headlong into a patch of soil right there beneath her feet. Just for a second her head was completely hidden, then, she rocked backwards and emerged back into the sunlight with the most enormous wriggly worm you have ever seen, wrapping itself round and round Hetty's head as it tried to escape. 'No chance of you getting away from me!' said Hetty, 'I haven't eaten since last leaf-drop and you are going to be my best breakfast ever!' And the worm was.

Afterwards, feeling just a little bit too full-up, Hetty trundled her way to an overgrown corner of the garden where several thick-stemmed weeds supported dense shade-providing leaves and there she quietly curled up in semi-darkness, ready to sleep again now until the evening, when she would again venture out into the wild areas of the garden, searching for her dinner. With a full tummy and tired after her worm-chasing expedition, Hetty tucked her tiny drip-free nose down against her chest and wrapped her prickles around herself and within minutes she was fast asleep, probably dreaming about big, fat juicy worms.

Jo Symon



NATURE NOTES

WILDLIFE POND

We reported on the Hathern Wildlife Group Volunteers in our summer edition and thought this time we'd share with you how we are tackling our biggest project – a wildlife pond. A pond is one of the most beneficial habitats you can create. Virtually all local wildlife will use it – birds will drink and bathe in it, amphibians, dragonflies, damselflies, pond skaters, water boatmen and a whole host of other invertebrates will breed in it. Mammals will drink from a pond, too. Ponds have disappeared from our countryside, and we have precious few in Hathern.

We had sufficient space so we decided to construct one roughly 8m by 7m, over one metre deep at one end but reducing to a gentle slope at the shallow end to allow amphibians to escape. Our aim was to achieve this at minimum cost, so we asked the contractors who built the allotments car park to dig out a hole. I think it was at this point we wondered whether we had somewhat over-reached ourselves. It looked huge. The excavation needed to be profiled and the edges levelled,

luckily one of our volunteers, a landscape gardener, did sterling work with his mini digger to make a rough hole look more like a pond. Liner and underlay were our one major expense, and we were ready to install these last Autumn. Because of the size and weight of the liner we had to call on more volunteers to help. However, the weather was against us and after being thwarted on several occasions we had to postpone the work until the Spring.



Eventually it was in place and the pond filled. Now we had a bare pond without plants and edging, but wildlife arrived straightaway in the form of pond skaters. How do they get there? We had an open day during Hathern's Big Week and were delighted that 62 people, young and old, came to see what we'd been up to. The youngsters helped us build a bug hotel

out of pallets. On cue we were able to see Broad-bodied Chaser dragonflies mating, with the female laying her eggs on some rushes we'd added, before resting on the hedge.



Now more plants and rocks were needed for the edges. The people of Hathern came up trumps and we had numerous donations of materials. A big thankyou to them. We are also indebted to Mick Stevens of Tarmac Ltd who organised the donation of a good load of stone from Mountsorrel quarry. We've used chicken wire to enclose the rocks which hide the liner, and the mesh prevents them finding their way into the pond. The next stage is to construct a bog area at one end of the pond, using a liner offcut, and add more plants.

There are so many positives in the work we've done in creating the pond and the wildlife

area. Not only have we created new wildlife habitats but through working together the volunteers have made new friends. I think we'd all agree it has been good for our mental health – our coffee breaks are an important part of our sessions. Hathern's community spirit has been well demonstrated by the donations and support we've received, and costs have been kept to a minimum as we have sought to recycle as much as possible.



Why not pay us a visit? The pond is in the wildlife area at the parish council allotment site off Shepshed Road – on the left at the top of the hill. Just go through the main gate and follow the track to the bottom end. We're usually there on Tuesday mornings (10-12) and Sunday afternoons (2-4), weather permitting. You will be made very welcome.



HATHERN'S HIKES WOODLAND WALK

Fancy a Christmas Woodland Walk? At a loose end over the Christmas break? There's another woodland within walking distance!

As the Parish Council alluded to on Page 4 of this very magazine, by the time you read this planting should be well underway on the new 14,000 sapling Community Woodland behind Golden Square. If you've not been up there yet to have a look, I'd recommend it, it's a huge site!

But – spoiler alert dear reader – it does take time for trees to grow. But did you know that 10 years ago a similar woodland was planted on our doorstep? Allow me to give you a new walking route to try out with your loved ones over the Christmas Period!

Our target – the Diamond Wood. The University of Nottingham's Diamond Wood was created in late 2012 by turning arable land into native woodland habitats. The University donated land on two sites near their Sutton Bonington Campus as part of the The Woodland Trust's Jubilee Woods project to mark The Queen's Diamond Jubilee.

Over 40,000 trees were planted on a 60 acre site, with native trees such as English Oak,

Field Maple, Hawthorn, Rowan and Downy Birch planted – so maybe this is a good indicator of what we will have in our own village in 2032?

The site is split into two different woodlands – for this walk I'm going to take you to the nearest one.

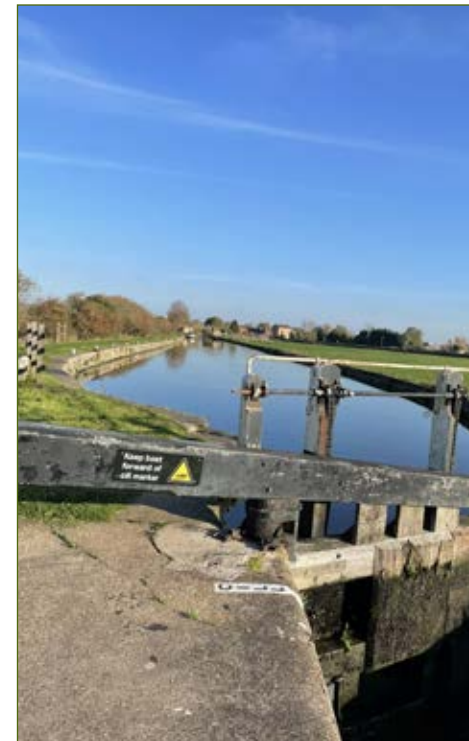
Let's start at the real middle of the village – Hathern Cross. From here, we're going to head down Pasture Lane, all the way to the end. It's about 1km to the end of Pasture Lane – passing the park and Primary School. If you're doing this on Boxing Day, there's a chance there'll be a football match on at the Football Club too! Give them a cheer as you pass.

Pasture Lane ends with a gate in front of you



– turn left here and follow the path. You'll then reach a gate and stile. From here, we're going to turn right and head toward a concrete bridge which passes over a small brook – there'll be another gate here. Once you've passed this, head North West toward the river Soar. At this stage, you're heading for a large wooden bridge, which is going to be our crossing point. If in doubt – listen for the noise! This is the noise of the Zouch Sluice Gate, which holds Merlin's Brook. Follow the path (and if you've got a dog pop them back on a lead!) and you'll end up on Main Street in Zouch, otherwise known as the A6006.

Here, you want to cross the road – be careful as there's no crossing. Once crossed, turn right and then immediately left on to the tow path for the river. Continue to follow this tow path – as long as the river is on your left, you've not gone wrong!



After just 170 metres, you'll notice the garden of The Rose & Crown on the other side of the river. Why is this important? The Rose & Crown is now under the stewardship of Caroline and George, who continue to successfully run the Three Crowns in the village. They've introduced a fantastic new food menu here alongside their drinks offerings. If you've set off mid-morning, don't worry – our return route will bring you past their door.

Ensuring the river is still on your left, follow the footpath for the next 1900 metres. Timings may vary at this point – when I did this walk I had 2 Labradors with me who adore water. They're optional to the journey but do add to the timings! At this point, make a right on to the permissive footpath (clearly signposted Diamond Wood). As you walk along this path – you've made it! The Diamond Wood is on your right hand side.

If you continue to follow the path along, you will eventually come out on to a track road, also called Pasture Lane (perhaps potholes are a feature of every Pasture Lane!). If you've ventured in to the Woodland, all footpaths will either bring you on to the Lane, or back on to the path you came off.

Once on Pasture Lane, turn right and follow the footpath south. The track eventually ends into a footpath through a field – in front of you will see the aforementioned Rose & Crown, and the buildings of Zouch. Continue to follow this footpath and you will be back on the River's tow path, with the bridge to cross directly in front of you. From there, turn left and you're back at the Rose & Crown!

Including a walk through the Woodland, this walk is 7.6km, or 4.8 miles in old money. It should take about 2 hours at a good pace.

Martin Clayton



Christmas
in Hathern

**COMING
SOON**

www.hathernonline.co.uk