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Insects on hogweed, mixed media with pencil notes by Mary Newcomb:
Nature's Canvas, Compton Verney Summer Exhibition

Why Art? Is the question we pose in this issue:

- Meet the 'Swooning Shepherdesses' at Upton House
- 'Nature's Canvas' and 'Seasons' - two new exhibitions at Compton Verney
- Penny the Potter considers what she will make next!
- A review of TV's 'The Repair Shop' examines its popular appeal.

PLUS:

- Two more racy 'first car' write-ups for the petrol-heads!
- 'What's in a name?' Provides insights into medieval Tysoe
- A heart-warming football coaching story for U12s
- AND MORE!

WHITE FLOWERS

White flowers are a distinctive and welcome feature of spring. The early flowers of Blackthorn have been superseded by Hawthorn and several other species. Hawthorn, often called May, is seen commonly in hedgerows, and there are a good number of plants in the new wildlife hedge in St Mary's Churchyard. Much folklore/history is associated with Hawthorn, for example, the Glastonbury Thorn. This particular Hawthorn flowers twice a year and is considered to be an unusual form, or sport, of the common species. There is a widely held superstition that bringing Hawthorn flowers into the house will be followed by illness and death; indeed, their strange smell is considered by some to be reminiscent of decaying flesh. Hawthorn can support more than 300 insects, including the caterpillars of several species of moth, and its flowers provide nectar and pollen for bees and other pollinating insects. The haws are eaten by birds, such as Redwings, Fieldfares and Thrushes, as well as small mammals, and the dense foliage protects the nests of many species of bird, including the elusive Nightingale.

Equally spectacular is Cow Parsley, a member of the carrot family, which has a range of alternative names including Queens Anne's Lace and Kex. Cow Parsley is important as an early source of pollen for a variety of insects. Its flowering is also a good indicator of the first appearance of the Cabbage Root Fly – a pest of members of the cabbage family!



White Dead Nettle

Other white-flowered species blooming at the moment include White Dead Nettle, daisies and Garlic Mustard. White Dead Nettle provides pollen and nectar for a range of insects, as do daisies, and the leaves of Garlic Mustard are one of the main foodplants of the caterpillars of the Orange Tip Butterfly – recently spotted in St Mary's Churchyard. All of these plants can be seen in the churchyard.

Rosemary Collier

MAKING SPACE FOR NATURE

At the time of writing we're more than half-way through 'No Mow May'. We're one of many parishes/councils taking part in this important initiative. *Thank you for your support.* The main flowers you'll have seen on the verges in the village are daisies, buttercups and dandelions. Dandelions, in particular, are one of the most vital early spring nectar sources for a wide range of insects. They have lots of very small flowers collected together into a composite flower head which produces 40 times more nectar than a daisy and 8 times more than a buttercup. Many nesting birds depend on insects as a food source and the first stage of a survey of bats in St Mary's Churchyard, associated with the planned repairs to the church, revealed three species (Pipistrelle, Brown Long-Eared and Lesser Horseshoe), all of whom feed on insects.

Rosemary Collier



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