

HBC LADIES' NEWS

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Welcome

Welcome to May's edition of the **HBC Ladies' News**.

Many thanks to Ian for his very informative Nature Notes. I am sure we are all looking forward to warmer weather.

Congratulations to Barbara again who found **42** words of three letters and more from the word 'Spring'. A small prize is on its way to Barbara.

Do not forget to check on the recent **Heroes of the Faith** from Canon J John's website - [Hudson Taylor](#) and [John Stott](#) (Click the name to read more)

If you have a favourite Summer dessert or cake, please send to the Editor your recipe so that it can be included in next month's edition.



Next Month

In the June edition:

- Update on the Food Hub as it celebrates its first birthday
- Future plans
- More hints from the Garden Shed
- Favourite Summer cakes and desserts



Home-Thoughts, from Abroad

BY ROBERT BROWNING

Oh, to be in England
Now that April's there,
And whoever wakes in England
Sees, some morning, unaware,
That the lowest boughs and the brushwood sheaf
Round the elm-tree bole are in tiny leaf,
While the chaffinch sings on the orchard bough
In England—now!

And after April, when May follows,
And the whitethroat builds, and all the swallows!
Hark, where my blossomed pear-tree in the hedge
Leans to the field and scatters on the clover
Blossoms and dewdrops—at the bent spray's edge—
That's the wise thrush; he sings each song twice over,
Lest you should think he never could recapture
The first fine careless rapture!
And though the fields look rough with hoary dew,
All will be gay when noontide wakes anew
The buttercups, the little children's dower
—Far brighter than this gaudy melon-flower!

Following what we are told has been the driest, coldest and frostiest April for many, many years, I wonder what Robert Browning would have made of it? His poem 'Home-Thoughts, from Abroad' starts with the famous line, '*Oh, to be in England, now that April's there*' He was, of course, writing from a hot Italy and longed for all that an English April would normally bring us, but not this year! It has been exceptional month and we all long for warmer, but not necessarily, drier days.

There is a country rhyme which says:

**"When the oak comes before the ash,
Thou be ready for a splash.
When the ash before the oak,
Then be ready for a soak"**



An English Oak



Hints from the Garden Shed

- **Feed spring bulbs** - Look forward to colourful displays next year by feeding your spring bulbs now with a tomato feed while they are still on leaf.
- **Stake perennials** - Provide support for tall and floppy plants to keep them neat and to avoid blooms trailing on the ground



- Keep on top of weeding

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Nature Notes (cont.)

Certainly the oak locally is well into leaf whilst the ash is just beginning so will we be getting a long dry hot summer? Such are the vagaries of the British climate.



Putting our climate aside, what should we be looking out for as spring gives way to summer? Hedgerows will soon be a tangle of colour with hedge-parsley, buttercups, dog-daisies and red sorrel all vying for a place to flower.

Hedge-parsley

Newly emerged butterflies will visit our gardens; species might include the brightly patterned Peacock, Red Admiral and small Tortoiseshell. The Orange-tip is already in flight together with the Speckled Wood, Holly Blue and that harbinger of early summer, the Brimstone.



A small Tortoiseshell butterfly



Migrant birds are rather late in arriving this year and are now less common than they once were, but we look forward to the Swallows and Swifts visiting us in Harston with the hope that House Martin will again nest here.

House Martins

Have you heard the cuckoo yet? Their unmistakable call is a sure sign that summer has come and after that record-breaking April what a joy that will be.



A Cuckoo

A Verse to Ponder

