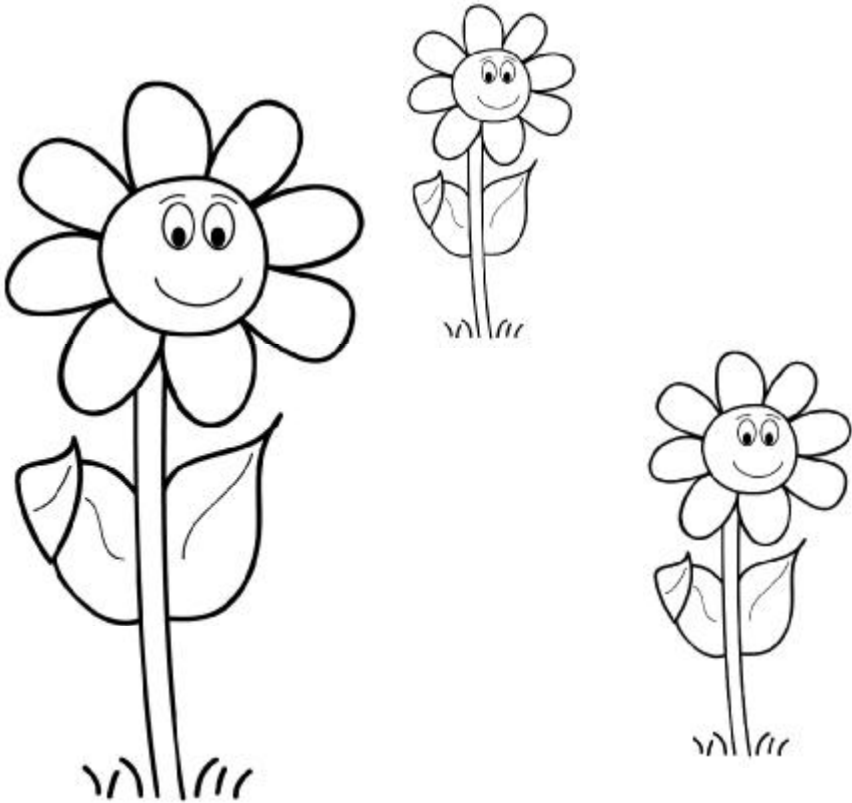


Pitcombe News



May 2009

The *PITCOMBE NEWS* welcomes contributions
from its readers

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**The DEADLINE for the June issue is
Monday May 18**

The PITCOMBE NEWS regrets any errors or omissions that may occur, we do our best to avoid them. The information contained within this publication is published in good faith. The views expressed are those of the contributors and are not necessarily endorsed by the *PITCOMBE NEWS*

PITCOMBE NEWS

Goodness gracious, the lane has been resurfaced. Actually, on the notice at the top of the lane it is called a carriageway, which technically it is of course, but that does sound rather grand for a narrow lane with the odd passing place. It is a once in a nineteen year event it seems, which, is a very strange time frame indeed. Should it be once in fifteen years and the Council is late or, is it a once in twenty years event and the Council is ahead of itself? More likely names are drawn out of a hat. It doesn't look as if it will last another nineteen years, the covering is painfully thin in places.

David Jury has been out walking not so much along the road, more along the banks of local rivers. His account of his first walk along the River Alham, a tributary of the Brue begins on page 7.

George Bunting recollects more about collecting antiques. He has had some incredible finds and had some extraordinary luck. All is detailed on page 4.

The Wine Club tasted eight wines last month, one more than usual. It was all Peter Wyatt's fault as you will see on page 7.

We look forward to seeing more people than ever at the plant sale. It has become a very popular event with people coming from as far away as Sherborne, Yeovil and Shepton Mallet. All the money raised goes towards the upkeep of the Village Hall. Now that we have such a beautiful one, the envy of many other villages, we must keep it that way to attract as many events as possible. And of course, it deserves to be kept beautiful. How many halls built of Cary stone can you think of?

Alan Billenness remembers his years as a small boy when he was evacuated here during WWII. The first installment of his story starts this month on page 11. It's amazing how much he remembers. You'll find it fascinating.

Susan Chamberlain



HADSPEN VILLAGE HALL

The chairs have arrived! Last Wednesday evening at 7.00pm just when the Bowls Club were convening for their club night, 80 new upholstered chairs arrived. We were very grateful indeed to the Bowls Club members who helped unload them.

We feel they will be a much improved addition to the facilities at the Hall particularly the four chairs with arms for the elderly or infirm.

Forty of the old blue chairs have been sold and the remaining thirty eight are available for hire at the usual rate, but if anyone would like to purchase any, they are available at £2.50 each.

We are of course most grateful to Viridor Credits and the Somerset County Council Community Chest for their help in making the purchase of these very nice chairs possible.

Having occupied the hall for almost twelve months, we are now in the process of doing the defects list for the builders. There are various small problems and one larger problem i.e. the car park, which need to be addressed before the final account is settled.

Meanwhile for all up date news and diary information please log on to our website www.hadspenvillagehall.org.

Peter Wyatt, Chairman, Trustees

**THE NEXT MEETING OF THE
PITCOMBE PARISH COUNCIL
WILL BE HELD ON
TUESDAY 14 MAY AT 7.30 PM
IN HADSPEN VILLAGE HALL**



HADSPEN WINE CLUB

The March meeting of the Wine Club was an evening of comparisons with Petter Wyatt as comparison maker in chief. We did something we had not done before, tasting two wines against each other. Needless to say, we were all for it.

First the grape: a sauvignon blanc, the flinty, crisp wine produced in the Loire alongside the luscious tropical fruit, more intense wine of New Zealand.

Next, the comparison between a chardonnay aged in steel vats from the Macon-Villages region of Burgundy against a oak matured wine from the Casablanca Valley of Chile.

Of the whites sampled, members were more or less unanimous in preferring the richness and lusciousness of the New Zealand wine from Villa Maria. The wines varied in price from £5.75 for the Chilean chardonnay to £11.95 for the Menetou Salon.

On to the reds and more specifically, the effects of tannin. We tasted a floral fruity beaujolais and a malbec dominated wine from Cahors with delicious ripe, mouth filling, sweet black fruit flavors, and sleek round tannins. No doubt about it, the Clos Triguedina 2005 at £12.50 was rather more favoured.

Finally to the eternal question, Burgundy or Claret? The wines tasted were both from the Wine Society. The burgundy was Exhibition St. Aubin Domaine Henri Prudhon 2006 at £10.95 and the Claret was Chateau Caronne-Sainte-Gemme 2004 from the Haut-Medoc at £13.50. The burgundy was a beautiful colour (perfect for a dress) had cherry, fruity flavours, a very pleasant wine indeed. The claret, a cru Bourgeois and a classic blend of cabernet sauvignon, merlot and petit verdot was deep in colour, well rounded, slightly smoky. It drinks well now but would keep and improve with age. It was the preferred wine of the evening, which was a thoroughly enjoyable occasion.

Carole came along to be Peter's right hand, pouring the wine and supplying the bread and cheese. Our huge thanks to them both.

More Serendipity

A letter came the other day from the secretary of a family history society of which I happen to be President. Among other things it suggested a venue for a forthcoming "Gathering"; Long Buckby in Northants was the place named.

It was this which brought to mind a particularly serendipitous event. About 25 years ago, and very soon after we moved to Somerset my wife and I made our first visit to Shepton Mallet. Wandering down the main street we spotted a small antique shop with a tiny display window, its name I've long forgotten. Prominent in the window was a single tea bowl and saucer.

"That looks like New Hall," said Mabs, being an avid collector of such items, "We'll go in." The interior of the shop was larger than anticipated and the proprietor, an elderly chap, soon aroused Mabs' interest by producing more examples of tea bowls, Worcester and Liverpool, Derby and Caughley, all 18th. or early 19th. century pieces.

I, meanwhile, had wandered around the shop's interior attracted by the chiming of a clock. I found it in a dark corner. It was a longcase clock in a simple oak case, pendulum driven and with a silvered brass face. It had roman numerals and two small dials, one a minute dial and the other recording the day of the month. Other details I didn't notice, being struck by the maker's name at the bottom of the clockface." John Bunting, Long Buckby" it said.

I called Mabs' attention to it, she having already acquired a couple of tea bowls. She was as delighted as I and a hurried conference took place ending with us determined to have the clock if possible. A chat with the proprietor and a close inspection ended with us, as new owners, paying what seemed a hefty price and one not budgetted for. We couldn't leave it though and it has reposed in our dining room ever since.

Once home the research began. With the clock removed from the case I found on the reverse of the face a series of repair dates starting with Nov. 25th. 1772. There followed dates at roughly 20 year intervals from 1772 to 1927. I soon added 11th. Jan 1985 and it is now time to add another since the crutch has fractured. I also dis

covered that the Bunting family seems to have surfaced in Long Buckby around 1700. My clock had been made in about 1760. It also seems likely that John (1735 - 1808) was of the same family as one Joshua Bunting who was a London clockmaker from about 1650.

Two of his timepieces are in the British Museum. I have since traced two more of John's longcase pieces, one of which is owned by a collector who found it in South Africa. As for my clock well, what a lucky find and what a grand welcome to Somerset.
<georgebunting@btinternet.com>

Friends of St Leonard's Church, Pitcombe
You are invited to attend a reception
on Friday 15 May at 6.30pm,
at Hadspen Village Hall
Followed by the Annual General Meeting
at 7.00pm

Gants Mill and Garden

This year the Mill and garden will open on 15 May to the end of September (the peak time for the garden) on second and fourth Sundays from 2pm to 5pm. Mill tours are about every half hour, with the last one at about 4pm. **NB** the change in opening days and hours.

Tea and home-made cake are served in the fuchsia and begonia conservatory, or take a tray out to one of the many small seating area around the garden.



Haddock Mousse

500 mls jellied fish stock*
12 black olives, halved
4 hard boiled eggs
300 gr haddock
500 mls milk
250 mls béchamel sauce
250 mls mayonnaise

250 mls fresh cream
salt and pepper
1 bunch watercress

1 x 22.5cm ring mould

Warm up a little jellied stock. Using a pastry brush, coat the mould with the jellied stock and decorate the base with black olives centred on the slices of 2 hard-boiled eggs. Poach the haddock in the milk, allow to cool and flake. Add the fish to the béchamel (make this with the milk in which you poached the fish). Add the mayonnaise, the remaining 2 hard boiled eggs, chopped, and most of the cold jellied stock. (The latter must not be too hard – consistency should be similar to the unbeaten whites of eggs). Beat the cream – not too stiffly – and fold in. Add salt and pepper to taste. Pour into the prepared mould and place in the refrigerator for four hours.

To unmould, dip in hot water and turn out. Decorate with a bunch of watercress in the centre and the remaining jellied stock, cut into little lozenges. Serves 6 – 8

Courtesy of Lady Henderson (Paris Embassy Cookbook)

* I suppose it is possible to use vegetable stock in the absence of fish stock. *MS*

IN SEASON THIS MONTH

Apart from asparagus, try fennel, rhubarb (outdoor) and mackerel and sardines from Cornwall.

River Walks

Sometime around September of last year I finished walking and recording the length of the river Pitt. It was such a thoroughly enjoyable adventure that have determined to continue my walks to encompass the rivers and canals of Somerset. There are in excess of sixty waterways in the County and I realise that it will take between seven to ten years to complete. My main interests during the walks will be the structures, ie the bridges, aqueducts and water mills and the history associated with these structures. I will be recording this adventure on my website. www.somersetivers.org

I have completed walking the River Alham and I am somewhere around middle distance on the River Brue. This week I completed a section from West Lydford to Baltonsborough.

The River Alham, once known as the Alauna, is formed by springs which rise north of Higher Alham, the furthest north is that which rises near Withy Wood Lane just above Harwood Farm. The river flows for approximately 10 miles from source to the mouth at its join with the River Brue. It flows south through the steep sided Higher Alham valley to Higher Alham, past Alham House, converted in the 18th century from a watermill first mentioned in the Domesday Book and used as a fulling mill in 1685¹. It's journey continues past Lower Alham Farm with its late 17th century farmhouse² and on through Westcombe. At Westcombe the river passes through what was once the emparked landscape of the now demolished Westcombe House, built in the late 18th century on the site of a woollen mill³.

South of Westcombe the river passes Mill Farm once the site of Hanham's Flour Mill⁴, and on through Batcombe Bottom to Spargrove where the mill, embanked leat and culverted tail race can be found.⁵ Its journey continues through Milton Clevedon, where there was a mill in 1086. In 1574 the mill was known as Galofers or Gullofers mills. The mill, which had two sets of stones, was rebuilt c.1760 and stood beside Milton bridge on a millstream south of the Alham. It went out of use after 1851 and was demolished by 1885.⁶

Downstream of Milton Bridge are the sites of three further mills; a silk mill called Albion Mill, Lowell's Mill which was a fulling mill in 1727, and Cutterne Flour Mill which was rebuilt in 1986.⁷ It continues on through Ditcheat, and Alhampton, before joining the River Brue at Alford.

Well worth a visit is Bolters Bridge, a magnificent medieval pack-horse bridge, which can be found south of Ditcheat near to the river's join with the River Brue.

References:

1. *Somerset HER No.44939*
2. *Somerset HER No.22053*
3. *Somerset HER No.44938*
4. *Somerset HER No.23100*
5. *Somerset HER No.23114*
6. *British History online V7 id 18734*
7. *Somerset HER No.44974, No.25385, No.23508,*
8. *English River-Names by Eilert Ekwall*

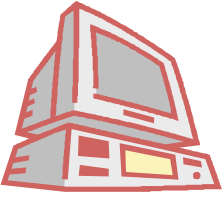


HADSPEN & SHEPTON MONTAGUE WI

The next meeting of Hadspen & Shepton Montague WI will be held on Monday, 11th May at 7.30pm at Hadspen Village Hall. The 'Resolutions' will be discussed and members are invited to submit a handmade card for the monthly competition.

Guests and new members are always most welcome.- please ring Sylvia Reed on 01749 812768 for any further information

COMPUTER BYTES



This is an interesting Windows Watch 'blog' which I retrieved from a computer magazine (verbatim) and it is worth taking note:

Windows Watch: A reader recently contacted us with news of a new 'take' on a relatively old scam. He received a call from someone to say his PC had been infected by a virus, and that if he cared to switch it on the caller would kindly take him through the process of removing it. Fortunately, the reader challenged the caller, asking for more details. A click indicated the caller wasn't keen on that idea.

This is a variant on the online 'phishing' attacks, so we contacted some security companies. While they were intrigued, they also said they had not seen any evidence of this being common – yet!

Never give out personal details to cold callers, and please let us know if you have also received similar calls.

www.windowswatch.co.uk

ID Protection from AVG: AVG has upgraded both its free and paid-for security software packages and is offering protection against identity theft. Identity Protection is focused on helping prevent thieves from using carefully targeted attacks to steal passwords, bank account details, credit card numbers and other digital valuables. It is included in the company's paid for Internet Security 8.5 but can also be bought as a standalone product for £20. The security company said it will work with any security software.

www.avg.com

Maria Samuel (woodcott13@btinternet.com)

"Some things Man was never meant to know. For everything else, there's Google."

ST LEONARD'S CHURCH



Services for May 2009

3 May	Matins	First Lesson Acts 4 v 5-12	Andrew Drysdale
9.30am	Fourth Sunday of Easter	Gospel John 10 v 11-18	Charles Brook
10 May	Holy Communion BCP	Epistle 1 Letter St John 4 v 7-21	Sunny Hill Pupil
11.0am	Fifth Sunday of Easter	Gospel John 15 v 1-8	Clergy
17 May	Cluster Service WYKE		
9.30am	Sixth Sunday of Easter		
24 May	Holy Communion BCP	Epistle 1 Letter St John 5 v 9-13	Willie Constantine
11.0am	7th Sunday of Easter	Gospel John 17 v 6-19	Clergy
31 May	Evensong	First Lesson Acts 2 v 1-21	Peter Wyatt
6.30pm	Pentecost	Gospel John 15 v26-27: 16 v 4-15	Philip Pidsley

An Evacuee Remembers

“It was the best of times, it was the worst of times”, that is how “The Tale of Two Cities” begins and whilst the words themselves may aptly describe what follows, there will be nothing to match the eloquence of the words of Charles Dickens. In fact I fear it may well prove to be more like the ramblings of an old man.

Advancing age doesn't seem to have too many advantages, but one that does stand out is how the knowledge and experience that we have gained over the years tends to direct us towards appreciating those things that have meant so much to us in the past and how they influenced our future lives. My time spent as an evacuee in Pitcombe is something for which I will always be grateful. Sadly though, I don't think I ever really thanked all those lovely people who helped me to make my life so enjoyable and who helped me through those difficult times. They helped me to learn about the things that really mattered and their kindness and understanding throughout those formative years between 1939 and 1946. (I stayed on after the war ended to complete my time at Sexey's).

My memories of Pitcombe are still quite vivid, I can remember the names of almost all the occupiers of the houses in the village and, quite a number of my friends and classmates. Where are they now? I have visited the area many times since I left, even though my aunt and uncle, Mr.& Mrs Hix who lived in Laburnum Cottages, died over thirty years ago.

They were two wonderful people who led very simple lives. Uncle Bill was a local postman, rising at 5.30am each morning and returning for breakfast around 10.30am. He would leave again at about 2.00pm for his afternoon round which took him as far as North Brewham. He must have pedalled way in excess of 30 miles a day in all kinds of weather, never complaining and then working hard in the garden or attending meetings when he got home. Later when I was in my early teens and staying with them I did his afternoon round when he had to take an afternoon off. I was well below the required minimum age but nobody seemed to mind provided I was able to get the mail on the train out of Bruton at about 4.30pm.

Both uncle Bill and my aunt together with uncle Bill's father who rejoiced in the name of Nehemiah ("Old Nim" to the lads in the village) were very strong Methodists and virtually ran the little Chapel in the village which is now a delightful dwelling known as "The Old Mission Hall". The congregation was never very large, sometimes no more than the family plus the organist. She was a rather large lady who perched herself on a very small stool and always swayed from side to side as she played, much to my amusement of course. She cycled from her home at first in Hadspen and later in Yarlington, in all kinds of weather.

However the annual Harvest Festival usually saw the Chapel packed out. It was beautifully decorated mostly by members of the family with a little help from others and produce from a wide area was always donated. As a small boy I found this to be quite exciting, particularly when the produce was auctioned off the following day by my uncle. In addition to the work my aunt and uncle did to keep the Chapel running, my uncle was also a lay preacher. This meant still more travelling for him, usually on his bike as petrol was not very plentiful. On the occasions that he took the car, the rest of the family would sometimes accompany him (5 of us 'sardined' into a Ford 8). Often that made up the majority of the total congregation.

I remember one such occasion when we journeyed to Lydford. On entering the Chapel we were met by dense smoke from the oil stove that had flared up. We could just see one electric light bulb glowing like a candle in the gloom, when a loud voice boomed out "evening Mr. 'ix". He proved to be the local congregation with his wife who played the harmonium. Fortunately his loud voice set the blackened cobwebs moving and drowned the sound of our chattering teeth. When we arrived back in Laburnum Cottages and lit the lamps we all burst out laughing as we all had blackened faces and unfortunately our clothes too were similarly affected.

Dear uncle Bill was a wonderful man – kind, generous, thoughtful and respected by all who knew him. He led a very simple but rewarding life and was a good example to me in so many different ways. He had served in the army in the first World War and was

wounded twice. It was while he was recovering in Portslade that he met my aunt at the local church and together they made a delightful couple who after their marriage, spent the rest of their lives in Laburnum Cottages. Uncle Bill's wartime experiences certainly came in useful when he constructed an air raid shelter (aka the dug out) in the orchard opposite the cottages. It was constructed principally of railway sleepers before being roofed in. Happily it was never required to be used for the purpose for which it was designed and became a very useful store for potatoes and other items from the garden.

Uncle Bill owned other property nearby, the orchard and garden land opposite Laburnum Cottages, a paddock at the end of Mill Lane (now sadly built up) and a cycle shop in Bruton over which The West End Garage subsequently extended. Over the years he had also kept a few calves and other livestock and I have a few photographs of the family haymaking on the banks of the old railway.

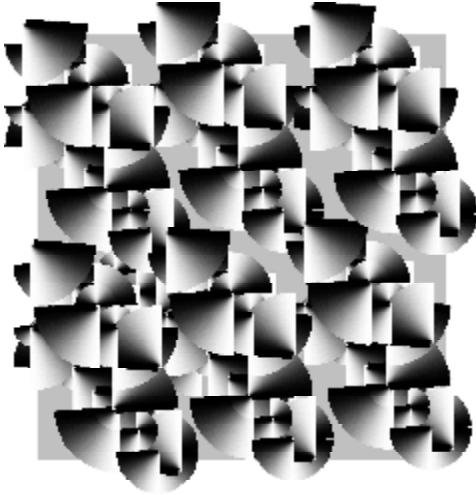
Uncle Bill had at one time owned a pony and trap for getting around before progressing to a motor bike and sidecar and several cars over the later years. In the paddock was an open top Fiat of early 1920's vintage which he paid someone to take away – it would have been worth a small fortune in later years. He sold most of his property in due course and I always regret the fact that he did not consult me at the time. As a qualified planner, I feel sure I could have helped him to maximise these assets. I am sure his main aim would have been to have helped somebody rather than to have made money for himself.

Alan Billenness



"My formula for success? Rise early, work late, strike oil."

— J. Paul Getty(1892-1976) U.S. entrepreneur - oil billionaire and art collector; took over father's oil company in 1930 and became a billionaire by 1968.



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YARLINGTON SPECIALIST PLANT SALE 2009

**For the 8th Year running Count and Countess de Salis will host
the charity Specialist Plant Sale at Yarlington House
on Saturday 16th May 10am - 4pm.**

**There will be approx 16 specialist stands in the courtyard and the two
acre gardens (with pleached limes, Italian garden and kitchen garden)
are included in the entrance fee. Buy direct from the growers and get
advice and good value**

**Supporters of St Luke & St Teresa, Wincanton will provide
refreshments throughout the day day.
The proceeds will go towards church repairs.**

Camelot U3A (University of the Third Age)

Thursday 14 May A Musical Evening 7.00 to 9.00 pm

Constitutional Club, Castle Cary

Ansford School Choir with soloists and a small band
& Wincanton Hand Bells

In aid of **Macmillan Cancer Support**

£3.00 per head will include refreshments during the interval
Members, non-members and friends are invited to come to an
entertaining and enjoyable evening

Thursday 28 May Monthly Meeting 2.30pm

Constitutional Club, Castle Cary

Speaker: **Paul Meaden** '

Financial stability in the current economic conditions. Where
are we now? Where are we going? Options to consider.

Come and have a cup of tea and listen
to this interesting speaker.

Members may bring a visitor for £1.00

Thursday 4 June Open Day 2.00 - 4.30pm.

Constitutional Club, Castle Cary

Everyone is invited to find out more about the U3A
and see the work that members have accomplished
during the year.

Mrs Sue Bridges, Chairman, Macmillan Nurses Support Group
will be presented with a cheque for money collected through
raffles, events and donations.

For further details contact Margaret Dickinson - 01963 350626

FAVOURITE THINGS

Questions from Sue Smith **AND** responses from Sue Smith. With a shortage of time this month, I decided to interview myself!

What are your three favourite places?

Zimbabwe I was lucky enough to tour playing hockey for a month, before Mugabe did his bit.

Yorkshire Dales need to travel far to beat it!

Barcelona not necessarily the nicest place I've been, but I have many happy memories!

What are your three favourite foods?

British Beef - in any shape or form

Homemade Trifle

Anything cooked by anyone else and put in front of me!

If you could invite three people to dinner (dead or alive!) who would you choose and why?

Margaret Thatcher - you could agree or disagree, but you knew where you stood, unlike today.

Archbishop of Canterbury, Rowan Williams - I would like Margaret Thatcher, backed up by me, to ask him to stop theologising (at which he is very good) and lead the Church of England forward in instilling the values of Christianity in Society. (Here endeth the 1st lesson!).

Dame Mary Peters DBE - Gold Medallist and World Record Holder in Pentathlon at the '72 Munich Olympics when Athletics was largely amateur and drug free. As an Irish athlete under constant threat of her life for representing Great Britain, I can still picture her struggling down the home straight in the last event as the time clock ticked down. She continues to remain a great ambassador for sport.

If you could pick just one of your favourite things, which would it be and why?

It would have to be beef - couldn't live without it!

**5th annual
hadspen
plant sale**

saturday 9th may

10 am – 1 pm

*with
FREE ADVICE FROM OUR LOCAL GARDENING EXPERTS*

perennials, vegetables, annuals

HADSPEN VILLAGE HALL

ADMISSION £1

TEA/COFFEE/CAKES

SUPPORT YOUR VILLAGE HALL