

Pitcombe News



and a very Merry Christmas to all

December 2010 / January 2011

The **PITCOMBE NEWS** welcomes contributions
from its readers

Articles for publication should be sent to the

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keep up to date at
www.pitcombepc.org.uk
THE PITCOMBE WEB SITE
for details of the Parish Council, Minutes etc.
details and bookings of Hadspen Village Hall

**The DEADLINE for the FEBRUARY issue is
Friday 21st January**

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

PITCOMBE NEWS

SAVED . . . by the Clarks. There will be life after Christmas for the *Pitcombe News*. James and Katherine Clark will be taking over as editors. For those of you that do not yet know them, they moved here with their two children in 2008 coming from a village with a thriving magazine and so realise just how important a means of communication it is. James lectures in Medieval history at Bristol University and finds time to be a parish councillor and Katherine administrates at Bath University.

On page 5 Hamish Craig remembers how the very first magazine started. Looking back on the problems Joan Sawyer had just to use her typewriter producing the PN has been a breeze.

Then just turn over the page and decide whether you could really do something for the parish in which you live by becoming a parish councillor. You don't have to decide this minute, but maybe you would like to start thinking about it?

Maria Samuel writes her last Computer Bytes column on page 8. When Maria started the column not all that many people in the valley had computers, now something like 80% of us sit down regularly in front of a screen. Maria has helped countless people to get started, send e mails, load photographs and all those other fancy things that you never ever thought you would manage. So it is huge thanks to her for all the help she has give her readers. And its mammoth thanks from me for all the support she has given me over the past years.

The latest person to sit down in front of her very own computer to figure out what to do next is Tina Harley. Next turned out to be writing an article about beekeeping and what it takes to produce those jars of honey that are always the most desirable of products for auction at the Harvest Supper. See page 14.

Len Bright doesn't get out much any more, but he derives enormous pleasure from watching the birds from his kitchen window. He and son Ian have written about feeding birds in the garden, particularly important with snow on the ground. If squirrels attack your feeders they have found a way around it. Read how on page 10 and save yourself a lot of trouble. If you are passing Honeysuckle Cottage Len would love to see you and show you the feeders. (cont page 19)

PITCOMBE PARISH COUNCIL

Elections are not due to be held until next May, but now might be a good time to remind you that due to resignations, the Parish Council is presently operating with only 5 members. The full complement is 7. Due to my conflicting commitments as District Councillor, I will not be standing for reelection. That means that we will have at least 3 vacancies.

Being a Parish Councillor is not an onerous job. We meet once a month to discuss local matters including any planning applications which have been notified to the Council. We are each responsible for a portfolio (such as looking after the roads and bridges in the parish). You will find more details about them on our website. And we are more than lucky in having an excellent Parish Clerk in Rosie Morgan.

Over the years, Parish Councillors have achieved a number of things on your behalf. The last Council was instrumental in closing down the slurry lagoon. This council has provided grant aid to help towards the alleviation of the floods that caused so much damage at Pitcombe and Cole two years ago. I and the other Councillors would be very happy to sit down and talk with anyone who wants to give something back to his/her community. If we lose our Parish Council, we lose our say in what we want for ourselves in the parish of Pitcombe. And that is not a pleasant prospect, is it?
Mike Beech 01749 812 335
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NATIONAL CENSUS

On 27 March 2011 all residential households in the UK will be taking part in a National Census. Information from the Census enables central and local government, health authorities and many other organisations to plan housing, education, health and transport services for years to come.

The Census statistics also feed into the allocation of funding for local authorities and play a major part in our ability to provide local services, so it is crucial the population estimate is as accurate as possible.

The Office for National Statistics (ONS) is responsible for running the census in England & Wales.

ONS will be looking for people who are prepared to help with distributing forms locally. If you would like to know how to apply for such a job - please see www.censusjobs.co.uk Additional information about the 2011 Census can also be found at: www.census.gov.uk

HADSPEN VILLAGE HALL

Enter the festive session with party bookings every week until Christmas! Our next big event will be the Village Hall Christmas Party on 11th December – tickets are selling fast so act now.



The Village Hall AGM was held on 18 November and gave an account of the year's activities and events. The Treasurer presented the state of accounts noting that the 2nd installment of £1,000 has been paid back on the interest free loan. He then confirmed the current financial position of the Hall. The Chairman outlined the future priorities. There are two main concerns i.e. hall acoustics and the water logging of the car park. We believe we have found a solution to the acoustic reverberations by fitting a sound insulation material to the ceiling. We now need to raise the necessary funds to implement this improvement. With one or two ideas in mind, the water logging problem is still under investigation.

We have secured the reinstatement of the annual maintenance grant of £450 from the PPC. This will be shown in next year's accounts but it is unlikely to be continued in light of the current economic down turn.

On completion of the AGM members of the community in attendance were treated to a glass of wine and a selection of splendid cheese and nibbles. Also on display and attracting a lot of attention was a series of estate maps dating from 1813.

On 20 November a Christmas Market charity event was held in aid of Motivation attracting people from a wide area. This event was very well attended with an array of quality products on sale.

We are considering a series of local heritage themed presentations such as "How man has influenced the land in our area" and "Industrial archaeology in the local landscape". To gauge local interest in these subjects David Jury has agreed to give a presentation on Somerset's Rivers – this is scheduled for **18 February**. In September we are planning a presentation on the Somerset & Dorset Railway with many photographs of the old stations in our area.

If you would like to give a presentation to the community on any subject please let me know. We now have a projector for this purpose.
Jim Linden. Chairman Trustees - 01749 813145.

HADSPEN & SHEPTON MONTAGUE WI

November saw the first Monday afternoon meeting of the winter which helped brighten up a rather dreary day. It began by running through County News which outlines coming events as well as containing interesting information. Did you know that 14,000 pennants are required for the London 2012 Olympic and Paralympic athletes? The aim is to present a pennant to each athlete as a personal gift from you to them. They will also be stringing them together for some amazing exhibitions leading up to the 2012 Games. If you are interested details can be found on www.quilts4london.org.uk. They can be made in any shape, design and by anyone regardless of their level of ability.

Several members had attended the County Annual Meeting at Westlands which had been a most enjoyable day, particularly as Adam Henson, the Cotswold sheep farmer who is a presenter on the BBC Country File proved an excellent main speaker. As well as being a farmer and television presenter, he runs the renown Cotswold Farm Park, home of rare breed conservation which attracts over 70,000 visitors per annum.

Carole Wyatt reported that she and Celia Wheadon had won 3 out of 4 matches in the WI Short Mat Bowls Pairs competition at Creech St Michael just missing out on the semi-finals.

Sylvia Reed introduced Brian Shingler the guest speaker for the afternoon. He gave a most interesting talk about the history of Church bells and played recordings of bells being rung in many of the local churches describing the bells and how many were hung in the towers. Members were then invited to ring the hand bells he had brought and attempted to play some Christmas Carols! I'm sure members won't mind me saying that he faced quite a challenge and his patience must have been severely tested, but amid great hilarity we almost got there in the end!

Tea and biscuits were served to round off a most entertaining and enjoyable afternoon. The next meeting will be the Christmas Supper to be held on Monday, 13th December at the President's home at 7.30pm.
ACW



The Guernsey Literary and Potato Peel Pie Society by Mary Ann Shaffer and Annie Barrows. "Every now and again a book comes along that is simple yet effective, readable yet memorable. This is one such delight, a uniquely humane vision of inhumanity to lift the most cynical of spirits".

we've come a long way, baby

When Gill and I first came to Pitcombe, the magazine was produced by Joan Sawyer in the basement at Carpenters. She reached the basement via a trapdoor under her bed. Having moved the bed and lifted the trapdoor, she used to climb down a wobbly ladder onto a table, which itself was on an undulating mud floor. Joan then typed or retyped all the articles, often having to "translate" several hand written ones. Then she ran off the copies on a "Bandagraph" machine often re-emerging with purple stained hands. The magazine was produced for the three parishes of Pitcombe, Shepton Montague and Bratton Seymour. Her one joy was, after a few years, a present of an electric typewriter.

After a while, it became too much for her and Gill and I took it on. Soon after, she moved to Sexey's Hospital. It was, then for Joan and us a fairly onerous task and we (well Gill) retyped many articles. In those days, cut and paste meant exactly that. A form of sellotape came onto the market, so that, using this, the pasting was not obvious. The Bandagraph disappeared and for the final few years we did get them photocopied.

In due course it was suggested that the magazines for the ten parishes were combined and they were all incorporated into Decibels, which has become the Dove. *Hamish Craig*

The new Pitcombe Parish News began life in 2001 with Ken Elliott and the hugely computer literate Constance Earl in attendance. The headmaster of Sexey's School agreed to photocopy the pages at very reasonable rates.

Along the way it changed its name and typeface and became illustrated. Although the PN is produced on my magic Apple computer, cut and paste techniques are still used albeit at a click, and it is still photocopied but on a very fast, very complicated machine. One big change, we can be read on line in colour! *Susan Chamberlain*

BBC Radio Four's ANY QUESTIONS

**is coming to
SEXEY'S SCHOOL
14 January 2011**

Tickets will be issued on a first come first served basis

For details

e mail tcoles@sexey.somerset.sch.uk

The River Brue's Historic Bridges – Part 2

In the November issue I wrote about that section of the River Brue from source to West Lydford. This time I will be looking at one of my favourite sections from West Lydford to Glastonbury.

From Lydford the river winds through cider apple orchards to Tootal Bridge. The structure is early C18 and is built of lias stone with three semi-circular arches, a solid parapet, pointed in the centre and curved end returns. Unusually it has two rows of voussoirs to the arches. On the upstream side there are two cutwaters designed to take the water around the bridge piers and thus protect the foundations. On the top of one of these cutwaters rests a flat stone in which a square hole is sunk. It is said that it once held a cross. Records show that there was a bridge of a single arch in this location in the C12 and due to its imminent collapse was completely rebuilt in 1719.

From Tootle Bridge the river takes a northerly direction to Baltonborough Flights, erroneously shown on the Ordnance Survey maps as Dunstan's Dyke which according to John Moreland's article "The Brue at Glastonbury" was created some 40 years earlier by diverting Southwood Brook to provide the water source for a mill leat which provided power for Baltonborough Mill. The original course of the river from Tootle Bridge is now called Cunlease Rhyne which rejoins the river just below Baltonborough Flights. From Baltonborough Flights the river itself travels west and then north west to Wallyer's Bridge at Baltonborough.

There was a bridge of two arches here in 1503 which carried a road which linked the Glastonbury manors of East Pennard and Butleigh. Wallyer's Bridge was known as Baltonborough Bridge in 1686 and as Wallgate bridge in the 18th century and was rebuilt in 1723 and again in 1799. The existing structure, built in 1972, is a single arch built of stone with a concrete deck and a metal railed parapet.

From Wallyer's Bridge the river flows in generally the same direction to Butt Moor Bridge and on through Kennard Moor and South Moor to Cow Bridge, south of Glastonbury. Cow Bridge is worth a look if passing. Built around 1930 it is an early example of a concrete reinforced structure.

From Cow bridge the river flows in a westerly direction along a straight channel to Clyce Hole or Prior's Weir. This straight channel was constructed circa 1C2 to provide the flow for the Glastonbury Mill Stream that starts at Clyce Hole. From here the river continues to flow westerly to Pomparles Bridge (Bridge of Perils) which carries the A39.

The existing Pomparles Bridge was built in 1912 and is a reinforced concrete arch bridge designed by Edward Stead, County Surveyor of Somerset County Council. Leyland described it as a " Bridge of stone of 4 arches communely caullid Pontperlus, wher men fable the Arthur cast in his Swerd." Phelps in his History of Somerset gives an illustration of the bridge which existed before the rebuilding in 1826. From this it appears that the bridge had 2 arches, one semicircular in shape, the other a pointed arch, possibly built in the C15. During excavations for a new bridge in 1912, the remains of second round arch were found to the South. It was regarded as C12 work.

The old bridge, the predecessor of the medieval stone bridge, was referred to in documents of 1163, but may have been pre-Conquest in origin. The excavations which located the pre-Conquest causeway north of Street also encountered heavy oak timbers which might be part of the structure of this bridge . However, a C10 charter appears to refer to a stone bridge carrying this road.

From Pomparles Bridge the river changes direction to a generally northern flow and after a short distance the river flows into an engineered channel which changed the course of the original river flow. The new channel was probably constructed circa C12. The river passes beneath Cradle Bridge, previously known as Madeload Bridge, which carries Porchestall Drove and then beneath a disused railway bridge which originally carried the Somerset & Dorset Joint Railway, Highbridge to Glastonbury line. This is also the location where the disused Glastonbury Canal Aqueduct crossed the river. It continues to flow northerly to Cold Harbour Bridge where it joins with the mouth of the Glastonbury Mill Stream.

There are some delightful easy walks throughout this section which I can recommend. *David Jury*

On Friday 18th February 2011 I will be giving a talk and presentation in the Village Hall of my walks along some of our wonderful Somerset Rivers. The presentation will include a wide range of photographs taken along rivers probably both known and unknown to you. It will include elements of Somerset's Historical Heritage from the medieval period to present day, including a look at the canal fever that took place within our county in the 18th century, and also wildlife and conservation. The event is to help Village Hall funds and will include a break for refreshments, so please book the date in your diary and enjoy a little bit of summer in what can sometimes be a dreary month.



COMPUTER BYTES

Security Updates: Despite the improvements Windows 7 makes over Vista and XP, some people will prefer to stick with their existing operating system. As long as you keep downloading and installing the latest security updates, there is nothing wrong with this, but you should be aware that Microsoft will not release security updates forever. All versions of Windows have what Microsoft called 'support lifecycles'. When the end of the lifecycle is reached, support ends and no further updates (security-based or otherwise) will be released.

If you are running a version of Windows that is no longer being issued with security updates, you are leaving yourself open to attack. To get the longest possible support, ensure the latest Service Pack (SP) is installed. XP users running SP2 or earlier, for example, no longer receive updates, but those running SP3 will be supported until at least 14 April 2014. To ensure you are running the latest XP service pack visit www.windowsupdate.com; Vista users click START, ALL PROGRAMS and then WINDOWS UPDATE.

Translate: Google Translate is an incredibly easy-to-use service that recognises more than 50 different languages. All you need to do is copy the text you want translated and paste it into the text box. Translate will attempt to detect the source language for you but you can specify this if you prefer. The translation will then appear to the right; if it doesn't, click the Translate button. Click the Listen button, and both the source and translated text will be read out loud. If you have a large document to be translated, it is also possible to upload a complete text file and have the whole thing translated in one go; just click the 'Translate a document' link. As with all automatic translation tools, results are not always perfect, but it is a great way to get the gist of what foreign text says without having to spend time learning a new language (ha ha)!

I must add that it is not advisable to use 'Google Translate' to write emails and documents in a language you don't speak though!!

Maria Samuel (woodcott13@btinternet.com)



The Girl Who Played with Fire by Stieg Larsson, the second of the trilogy. This is a treat in store for anyone not yet acquainted with Lisbeth Slander. The films of the first two are electrifying but read the books first or you will be mystified

Who will join your table this Christmas?

It was foggy last Christmas Eve as I made my way to Bath Abbey for Midnight Service. As so often at a Christmas Mass I wondered who might join us at the Lord's Table. There is something very moving about watching people come to receive Communion, particularly on occasions such as Christmas and All Souls Day. I often wonder about their stories, and why they have come. I wonder too, about the table that they might sit down at later on Christmas Day, and with whom they will share this feast that is at the same time both material and mysterious.

In my address, I spoke of the regard that Muslims have for Mary the Mother of Jesus. Mary plays an important part in Muslim tradition, particularly for women, many of whom in different languages, are named after her. At childbirth a Muslim mother is given sweet dates, as tradition has it that such gifts were given to Mary on the birth of Jesus. I spoke of Mary providing a place for dialogue between Christians and Muslims.

In the line of people who came forward to receive the sacrament, or a blessing were a small group of visitors from Pakistan. I prayed for them, making the sign of the cross on their foreheads. After the service we stood in the Abbey Square bidding one another Happy Christmas, the group surrounded me, smiling and offering enthusiastic season's greetings. 'We are Muslims from Pakistan,' they said, 'Thank you for your Christmas message about Mary. We wanted to come to worship tonight'. Their host, graciously and kindly told me that he was something of a nominal Christian, but had come because his Muslim friends had been so anxious to come to worship the gift of the Christ child to the world. For me it was the best Christmas present of 2009.

Later that day as we sat down with new born grandchildren, lots of noise and chaos of a family dinner, the first away from home in nearly forty five years, I thought a lot about my Christmas gift of the night before. I recalled some words of Henri Nouwen when he spoke of 'the table as being one of the most intimate places of our lives. It is there we give ourselves to each other...We invite friends to become part of our lives. We want them to be nurtured by the same food and drink that nurtures us, and it is the place where we want to become food for each other; a place which can become a time of growing communion with each other.'

That says much of what Christmas is about. A time to receive the unexpected gift; a place to acknowledge that strangers are those who have not yet become friends; The table provides not only food to share, but a place where God becomes food for us; and we become food for one another. A happy material and mysterious Christmas. +Peter Bath and Wells

Our Feathered Friends

Do you feed the wild birds? If you do not, you are missing out on an entertaining spectacle you can view from the comfort of your own home at little cost. Prince Charles feeds the birds on his estate and insists on doing it himself when he is in residence.



There are lots of different bird tables and feeders on the market ranging from inexpensive, to top of the range for the more elite amongst us. Consideration of the site for your bird table and feeders is quite important. It needs to be close enough to your window for you to observe the birds without having to use binoculars. In fact, if you place pieces of finely cut bread on your windowsill, the birds soon get used to coming right to it and will look at you through the window. We have some blue tits and great tits which tap on the window in the afternoon if we have forgotten to put their bread out at 3 p.m. I'm not sure how they coped with the recent time change to G.M.T.

The type of feeders you require depends largely on what you intend to supply as food for the birds. We use two feeders, a plastic one which we partially fill daily with mixed wild bird seed and a fairly substantial metal wire cage type one which we keep partially filled with peanuts. The reason for the partial filling is to try and foil the greedier visitors to the table such as squirrels, crows and magpies. They are extremely resourceful creatures and it has taken years to find ways of preventing the loss of the feeders altogether. Quick release shackles like those found on dog leads are a useful addition to the top of the feeder for easy removal for storage or filling, but need to be hung from an eye set in from the edge of the bird table to prevent theft.

We have our regular visitors to the table. As the feeders are hung up there is an eerie feeling of being watched by many pairs of little beady eyes. It is then a race to see who arrives first, even as you are still there. During the summer it would be one of the robins to arrive. They are probably the most domestic of the wild birds and follow you around the garden hoping to get a free meal as you dig or weed.

The blue tits and great tits are always around brightening up the day with their colourful plumage. The sparrows and dunnocks also have their place as regulars cleverly scooping up the food from the ground which the other birds so kindly tip from the feeders. The chaffinches and greenfinches also add their touch of colour to a dull winter's day. One of the latter resembles an overgrown canary as it expertly pecks at the peanuts.

We also have less regular but frequent visitors. The less conspicuous long tailed tits generally visit as a family with as many as five visiting at one sitting. The blackbird sang for all he was worth during the summer, entertaining us on those hot sunny days when we could sit outside to enjoy a well earned cuppa or a cool beer.

The larger birds tend to be more timid. Both species of woodpecker visit the nut feeder, although the great spotted visits more frequently and on one occasion brought the whole family including three babies to the garden. Any odd scraps of food, we put into a dish on our lawn. The magpies, crows and jackdaws wait until they think the coast is clear before swooping down to pick up some tasty titbit, carrying it swiftly away to consume it undisturbed. The smaller birds also like to fly to close cover to eat, so keeping our hedgerows are very important for them.

The most brazen of the large birds must be the pheasant. A few years ago we had a cock bird which strutted around under the bird table. It became so tame it would eat from my hand. We were glad to see that he has been successful enough to produce five young which are now big enough to fly over the tall hedges. Let's hope they stay around for many years to come. *Len & Ian Bright*



NEIGHBOURHOOD WATCH



Right, repeat after me . . . I will always lock my car, I will never leave parcels or my sat nav in a visible place, I will always lock the garage and house doors and I will never, ever, leave my keys on a window ledge close to the door and visible from the outside. I will also not be silly and leave my handbag lying open in the supermarket trolley. Good, you have passed part one of the test.

You've heard of this before BUT they keep trying, because the world is full of gullible people so, once more, *con brio*, repeat . . . nor will I respond to a card posted through my door from a company called PDS (Parcel Delivery Service) suggesting that they were unable to deliver a parcel and that I need to contact them on 0906 6611911 (a Premium rate number). DO NOT call this number. It will cost you £315 apparently as the call is to Belize.

There, you have just made your local Neighbourhood Watch person and your Community Support Officer very happy.
Susan Chamberlain. NW. Hadspen

St. Leonard's Church



December 2010

5 Dec 9.30am	Morning Prayer Advent 2	Old Testament Isaiah 11 v 1 - 10 New Testament Matthew 3 v 1 - 12 Psalm 72 v 1 - 7, 18 - 19	Carole Wyatt Willie Constantine
12 Dec 11.00am	Holy Communion BCP Advent 3	Epistle James 5 v 7 - 10 New Testament Matthew 11 v 2 - 11	Philip Pidsley Clergy
17 Dec 6.30pm	CHRISTMAS CAROL SERVICE		
19 Dec 4.30pm	Cluster Service LAMYATT Christingle Advent 4		
25 Dec 11.00am	Holy Communion BCP Christmas `Day	Epistle Hebrews 1 v 1 - 12 Gospel John 1 v 1- 14	Wendy Crane Clergy

NB Readers for January will be notified.



Father Figure by Ann Widdecombe, a novel about family life in one street. "Not necessarily what one would expect from this author".

Visit of the Bishop

As previously announced the Bishop of Bath and Wells attended the Patronal Festival of St. Leonard's on Sunday 7th November. This was a quite splendid occasion and was attended by a large congregation of parishioners and some visitors. Members of the Bruton Choir sang an anthem and boosted the singing generally under their choirmaster Harry Mills. The Bishop gave a thoughtful and, at times, very amusing sermon which was greatly appreciated. Following the service a large section of the congregation moved to the village hall for the reception and the Bishop spent at least an hour talking to all the parishioners. A great deal of work went into the preparations and it is fitting to mention the quite magnificent floral displays by Wendy Crane and all who produced the refreshments for the reception.

All in all this was a memorable occasion in the life of St. Leonard's.

Remembrance Sunday

Another large congregation assembled for the annual service of Remembrance made all the more poignant this year following the casualties in Afghanistan. Canon Alan Watson led the service and enthralled the congregation with his memories of the 1939 – 1945 War when he lived in Kent. Although the First War seems a long time ago and remote from a small parish in Somerset, it is worth noting that losses in that war were from families that still reside in Pitcombe.

Future Events

This is a very busy time of the year for St. Leonard's. Please note that the **Carol Service is on Friday 17th December at 6.30 p.m.** Please do not be put off if you think that there may be problems with parking. Members of the PCC will be on hand to help with this. Following the traditional service of carols and lessons there will be a glass of mulled wine and mincepies – not to be missed. During the service the crib will be blessed and no doubt the vicar will invite the children to come to the front of the church. This is a service for all the family. We do hope that there will be a huge congregation for what is one of the most atmospheric occasions of the year.

Christmas Day – Holy Communion at 9.30. The PCC have deliberately arranged the service for 9.30 a.m. so that everyone will be able to come and still get the Christmas Dinner on the table at the appropriate time.
Ken Elliott (Lay V-Chairman Pitcombe PCC)



Notes from a Hobby Beekeeper

The past two years have seen an explosion of worrying articles about honey bees in the national press. Some are about colony collapse in the USA for which research has not yet found a reason, though a build up of chemicals used in agriculture is high on the list of possible contributory causes. In America bees are transported thousands of miles to pollinate crops, which is more lucrative for the beekeeper than just producing honey. The almond orchards in California rely solely on this efficient little pollinator. Since 80% of the world's almonds come from there, it is very big business. Possibly this movement is causing stress making bees more susceptible to disease.

Many people have given up bees since the Varroa mite arrived in this country in 1992. At the moment there is no effective treatment to eradicate it, but things can be done to reduce the number of mites in a hive. The mite is a vector for diseases so it is essential to reduce their numbers. It is thought swarms that become feral colonies will only survive a couple of years before becoming overwhelmed by Varroa infestation.

Enough doom and gloom. After a couple of disastrous summers, this has been a productive year. At the Harvest Supper people mellow as result of good food and wine, and have bid generous amounts of money for a jar of Cole honey. I thought you might like to know what practical steps are taken to keep my bees happy.

The most commonly used hive in this country is the National hive made of a brood box containing 11 frames of wax foundation (dimpled sheets of wax from which bees draw out cells in an organised way). In the spring super boxes containing 10 smaller frames for honey storage are added usually one followed by another when the first is about $\frac{3}{4}$ full. If the hive is near fields of rape, up to 6 supers may be needed on one hive! Many pots of honey but of indifferent quality. So that the queen cannot lay in the supers a queen excluder is placed between the brood box and the first super. This is a wooden frame surrounding wires spaced so that worker bees can move to and fro, but the larger queen and drones cannot. At the height of the season a colony will consist of 50,000 or more workers (sterile females) 1 queen and several hundred drones (males).

By now the bees, around 20,000, will be clustered in the centre of the hive. These over winter bees are physiologically different having fat bodies not present in the flying season. The life expectancy of a worker is 6 weeks, a queen 3 to 4 years, and a drone just one season. It is said

that drones are noisy , lazy individuals who play no useful function in a colony except for mating with virgin queens! Having harvested the honey in

August, I treated the colony with a Thymol gel to get rid of Varroa mite, fed them with sugar syrup to replace their store of honey and put a mouse guard over the entrance.

It will be February before I need to make sure they have enough food as the queen will start to lay this month. At this time of year they are given fondant as they are not able to get rid of the excess moisture of syrup. The end of March/ early April is the time to open up the hive hoping to find the queen, eggs, brood in various stages and cells containing pollen (protein) and others with honey.

In May the colony will be at full strength, and will need a regular weekly inspection to check for signs of swarming. There are ways of preventing swarming which can be explained another time. When a swarm does occur the queen leaves the hive with the foraging bees leaving the young bees and unhatched brood, including a sealed queen cell behind. In June there is a lull in the nectar flow . This month there may be some sealed honey to take off which will taste quite different from the August harvest. So the season continues with regular inspections.

Bees can be great time wasters. On a sunny day there is nothing more soothing than sitting on the grass watching the bees flying to and fro with their pollen baskets stuffed full and counting how many different coloured pollens you can see. I then try to identify the plants they have been collecting from using my colour chart. *Tina Harley*



PITCOMBE NEWS

Running this publication on a month to month basis involves a great deal of work and the parish is indebted to Sue Chamberlain who has produced this admired publication for the last seven years. Parishioners might not be aware that there are former members of the parish from as far afield as Trowbridge and Street who regularly receive the News as well as members of adjoining parishes. Sue has not only produced the monthly editions but has been able to maintain its neutrality, if there are possibly contentious issues, and simple reported factual information. The main organisations of the Parish including the Parish Council, the Village Hall and the Church will be delighted that there will still be a means to publicise their activities. *Ken Elliott*

CHRISTMAS CHUTNEY



350gr pitted no-soak prunes
275gr pitted dates
450gr onions, peeled
570mls cider vinegar
1 dessertspoon grated fresh root ginger or 1 heaped tsp ground ginger

50gr sea salt
75gr allspice berries
450gr Demerara sugar
275gr dried apricots

The dried fruits and the onions need to be chopped very small which can be done in a food processor or with a sharp knife and lots of patience.

When they are all dealt with, put the vinegar in a large saucepan with the salt and the ginger, then tie the allspice berries in a small piece of muslin or gauze, very securely, so they can't escape and add these to the pan.

Bring everything up to the boil, then stir in the chopped dried fruits and onions together with the sugar. Leave it all to simmer very gently without a lid for about 1½ hours, or until the chutney has thickened. Stir it from time to time during the cooking period. When it is ready, you will be able to draw a spoon across the surface of the chutney and make a trail that doesn't immediately fill up with surplus vinegar.

Spoon the cooked chutney into warmed sterilised jars, seal well with waxed discs and tight lids, and label as soon as it is cold. Store the chutney for a month to mature before eating. (You will need a 1¾ pint (1 litre) preserving jar).

Delicious with cold cuts, pork pies or hot sausages, and it goes splendidly with matured Cheddar or pate. *MS*

HUNT THE MISSING TABLECLOTH

**Is there a green and white check Village Hall tablecloth
nestling at the bottom of your ironing basket??**

Call Jean Linden - 01749 813145



The Lost Gardens of Heligan by Tim Smith, the romantic and dedicated quest to rediscover once-wonderful gardens. "A must for a gardener".



The Court at Windsor by Christopher Hibbert, published in the eighties. "A good read about upstairs downstairs".

A Visit to the Galapagos

Tucking into my breakfast of fresh pineapple and guava with cereal, my chair was yanked violently backwards. Righting myself just in time, I accepted the apologies of my travelling companion as she lurched back to the table while the ship rolled in the swell. Soon after I was on deck in sturdy shoes, lifejacket and my new shorts. It is many years since I had worn shorts, but I had read that we would be clambering out of inflatable dinghies on to rocks or into shallow waters when we visited the Galapagos Islands. Our little white ship receded as our dinghy sped away bouncing over the waves towards the island. There was no sign of human habitation, and certainly no landing stage. We swung our legs over the fat side of the dinghy into knee-deep water, and waded on to the deserted sandy beach. Not entirely deserted, as there was a sprawl of sea lions asleep at one end. Like all the animals and birds on the islands they ignored us completely. We had been told to get no closer than two metres to any wild life, and they did not stir as we had a closer look. They spent their time sleeping, swimming or fighting. Believe me, when they had a confrontation the humans made themselves scarce pretty fast.

Further on we walked on black lava flows from the 1825 eruption – extraordinary formations where it had flowed into the sea, leaving gaps and blowholes where the brilliant azure sea rushed in, splashing the bright orange crabs that covered the water-line. Sea lions and fur seals sunbathed on ledges. In the sea a penguin paddled past and a sea turtle swam just below the surface, poking its head above water from time to time. Blue footed boobies (the size of very large seagulls) were on the rocks, poised to dive, their feet an astonishing bright mid-blue. Further on the lava had cooled into a long series of wrinkles, like skin on jam or porridge. The only plant starting to colonise this area was the occasional grey bristly lava cactus, and the only ornament a complete whale skeleton bleached white against the black lava.

Stretching into the sea was a black lava flow blotched with bird guano. Gazing at it I realised I was looking at about 80 marine iguanas, motionless, perfectly camouflaged, spread-eagled in the sun, waiting for their body temperature to rise until they had the energy to go swimming. They are blotchy black, up to 2'6" long including their narrow whippy tails, and look like small dinosaurs. Because they were completely still, because we'd been told they eat only algae, and because they took absolutely no notice of us, we were able to get really close to them, sometimes having to break the two metre rule just to keep following the naturalist guide.

On the way back we paused at a little inlet to admire a pair of sea lions with a pup, just as a bachelor sea lion decided to come and try his

luck. The change from complete torpor was immediate. The barking, flailing, thrashing and splashing were quite phenomenal, until the young upstart lolloped away.

Back to the beach and into the sea to the dinghy. The relatively dignified slide into the water on arrival was a contrast to our efforts to get back in again, as the side of the inflatable was higher than our bottoms. Let's just say I was glad I had shorts on. We climbed out on to the landing platform at the back of our little white ship, where a crew member hosed our feet down before we were allowed on. That evening before dinner we saw from the back of the boat a tumult of fish swirling and leaping, obviously rounded up into a tight shoal by bigger predators. A couple of pelicans perched on the boat's landing stage, dived in frequently to catch and gobble fish and then return to their vantage point. We eventually made out the predators - three 6 foot sharks circling round. Everything was moving so quickly in the poor evening light that my photos are appalling, but it's a sight I shall never forget.

Alison Shingler



Our Hidden Lives, The Everyday Diaries of a Forgotten Britain 1945 - 1948 ed. Simon Garfield. Personal and entertaining accounts of five ordinary lives. "Better than a great many novels".



Spitfire Women of World War 11 by Giles Whittell, "a fantastic read" about women delivering aircraft to the RAF during the war.



Ladysmith by Giles Foden, about the battle in South Africa in 1899. "Historically very interesting but does not reflect well on the British.



Brothers by David Talbot, the hidden history of the Kennedy Years. "An interesting read if you are into politics and history".

I am going on a bit, but there is a lot this month so ...

Alison Shingler went to the Galapagos Islands, how fabulous is that? Not many of us will ever get to them but you might want to save every penny after reading her article on page 17.

Dotted around the Magazine at the sign of the holly you will find some good reads. Cathy Brook asked various people around the parish what they would recommend and this is a selection.

There's lots more, so get yourself a hot drink, make a piece of toast, butter it thickly, add a layer of Vegemite, Marmite if you must, and put your feet up.

My huge thanks to everyone who has helped me with the Pitcombe News over the years, but particularly to Ken Elliott and Connie Earl who got me started, Maria Samuel, who kept me going and David Jury who is always but always willing to help.

And many many thanks to the Headmaster and Staff of Sexey's School who photocopy the News so efficiently each month. I shall miss seeing them it's been such a delight to drop off the original each month.

Thank you too to those who deliver it each month. Wendy Crane in Pitcombe, Daniel and Kevin Spratling in Cole and now the Hartnell family also. Daughter Georgina used to deliver it, but she has gone off to the Royal Veterinary College in London to become a "veterinary". It takes the rest of the family to replace her. Kathryn Moon delivers more magazines than anyone to those living along the Cole Road, Peter Wyatt drives around the outlying areas and Ken and Jenny Elliott cover Hadspen. Thanks to all of you. You have been so supportive.

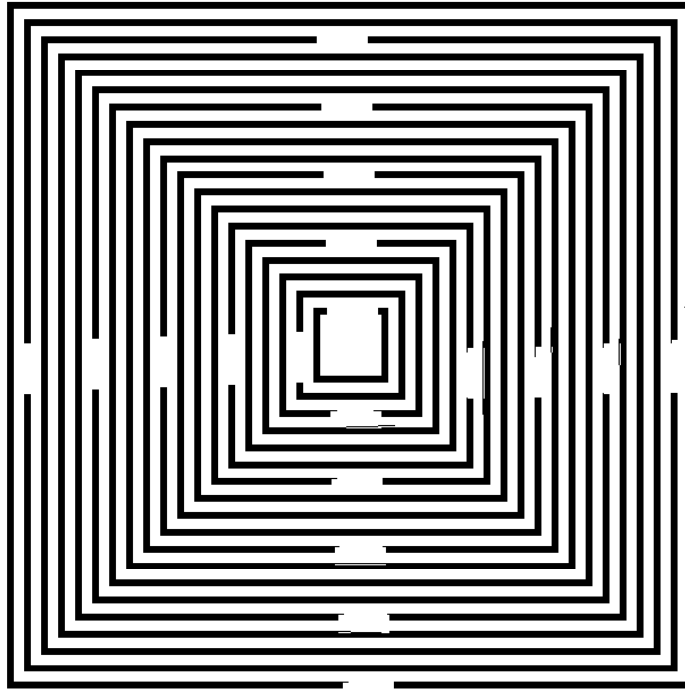
Right that's it. I'm off. Goodbye and Happy Christmas.
Susan Chamberlain, Editor



HADSPEN CHRISTMAS MARKET

Jean & Willie Constantine would like to thank everyone who kindly came along and supported the above event.

The attendance was the highest yet and raised approximately £1500 for MOTIVATION.



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The Jubilee Hall, Batcombe

Doors open 7.15pm

Screening 7.45pm

Friday 10th December 2010

NOWHERE BOY

(dir. Sam Taylor-Wood)

2009/97 mins/15

Nowhere Boy is the lively depiction of the teenage years of John Lennon during the late 1950's and the complex relationship between Lennon, his aunt Mimi (with whom he lived) and his mother Julia. Beautifully filmed under the direction of the artist Sam Taylor Wood, with excellent performances from Kirsten Scott Thomas and Anne-Marie Duff as the estranged sisters and a great rock 'n' roll soundtrack.

Licensed Bar ~ Soft Refreshments

Free Parking ~ Wheelchair Access ~ Hearing Loop

Membership and advance reservations:

ROB SAGE 01749 850934

Information on our films:

ELIZABETH HUNT 01749 850304

CHRISTMAS PARTY

**SATURDAY 11 DECEMBER
HADSPEN VILLAGE HALL**

7.00PM

**SUPPER
GLASS OF WINE
TOMBOLA
RAFFLE
CAROL SINGING**



TICKETS £9.00

**CHILDREN UNDER 12 - £4.50
CHILDREN UNDER 5 - FREE**

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HADSPEN - LIZ THOMAS 01963-350556
PITCOMBE - DAVID DRURY 01749 812149**